

MY LORD BAG OF RICE

Written By

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Based on Yei Theodora Ozaki's English translation of  
Japanese fairy tales.

INT. DUSTY, FEUDAL JAPANESE ROOM - DUSK, PRESENT

A big fairy tale book, lit by flickering candlelight, folding itself open to the first printed pages. The left page shows a skillfully ink-washed illustration of a serpent drake and a samurai. The right page shows part of the original story in kanji.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Long, long ago in ancient Japan,  
there lived a brave warrior known  
to all as Tawara Toda...

EXT. HIDESATO'S HOUSE - NEAR LAKE BIWA - DUSK, FEUDAL JAPAN

Sakura blossom petals tumble down onto the forest's floor and into the neighboring lake Biwa against the backdrop of Mount Mikami. The forest, separates the lake from Hidesato's shoin-zukuri styled house. Blooming maple and sakura trees encircle the samurai's home.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...or My lord bag of rice. His true  
name was FUJIWARA HIDESATO, and  
there is a very interesting story  
of how he came to change his name.

HIDESATO, a Japanese warrior in his 40's, dressed in traditional haori and hakama, looks longingly into the distance, facing away from his home. Hidesato buckles his two swords, slings his quiver with just three arrows on his back, and takes his large bow. He is ready to leave and without looking back to his servants, he starts out, whistling cheerfully.

EXT. FOREST - NEAR LAKE BIWA - MOMENTS LATER

Birds sing their song as sun rays dance through the leaves. Dappling the forest floor with a play of lights and shades.

An opening in the forest farther ahead shows the long bridge spanning over one side of lake Biwa.

Hidesato continues to follow the road, until he comes to the bridge.

EXT. SETA-NO-KARASHI BRIDGE - LAKE BIWA - MOMENTS LATER

As Hidesato steps onto the bridge, he hears a deep rumbling.

He walks on and sees the sleeping DRAGON KING. A giant serpent-dragon, with green scales that shimmered in the sunlight, and bright-red, long, wavy manes. It's body, as

big as a tree trunk, is blocking Hidesato's way.

As the beasts sleeps the rumbling sounds again and fire and smoke come out of its nostrils.

Hidesato looks alarmed and stops at the sight of the creature. But because he is a brave man, he takes a deep breath, and moves forward with his head held high.

When he steps on the dragons body the rumbling intensifies, this doesn't stop Hidesato. Without even one glance backward he is on his way.

As he walks forward he hears the deep slow voice of the dragon king calling from behind.

DRAGON KING

Excuse me, brave warrior.

Hidesato, surprised, pauses then turns around.

The dragon king no longer lays as a serpent-dragon but now has the form of a man, bowing. He has long, red hair reaching over his shoulders, on his head a crown in the form of a dragon's head. His dress the same color as the serpent-dragon's body, patterned with scales.

Hidesato, is still surprised but also intrigued.

HIDESATO

Was it you that called me just now?

DRAGON KING

Yes, it was I. Dragon king of the lake, my home is here in these waters under the bridge.

The Dragon King stands tall and straight, he is a proud man.

DRAGON KING (CONT'D)

I have lived here for many years and have grown a large family of children and grand-children. We have been living in terror for quite some time, and therefor I have a request to make.

The dragon king looks at Hidesato expectantly. Hidesato bows.

HIDESATO

What is it that you ask of me, oh king of the lake?

DRAGON KING

I want you to kill my mortal enemy,  
the centipede.

The dragon king points toward mount Mikami. A high peak  
crowned with trees, on the other side of the lake.

DRAGON KING

He lives on the mountain beyond.  
Night after night he comes down,  
and carries off one of my family.  
And I do not have the power to save  
them.

Hidesato shakes his head.

HIDESATO

That is surely awful.

The dragon king nods grimly.

DRAGON KING

Indeed it is. For this reason I  
have been waiting on the bridge in  
the shape of a horrible  
serpent-dragon, in the hope that a  
strong brave warrior would come  
along. Will you not help me and  
kill my enemy the centipede?

HIDESATO

I feel for you my king and as it is  
my quest to find a worthy  
adventure, I will do whatever I can  
to help.

The dragon king smiles approvingly at Hidesato. And motions  
to follow him.

DRAGON KING

I am most honored that you will,  
brave warrior. Let me welcome you  
into my palace and let us feast to  
celebrate!

The dragon king leads Hidesato off the bridge, towards the  
rim of the lake. The water parts ways, leaving two walls  
looming over them, showing of a dancing blue-green gleam on  
the lake's drained floor and revealing the king's palace, a  
temple-like building. A vividly red wooden structure with  
jade green roof tiles. Blurred images of goldfish, red carp,  
and silvery trout show on the surface of the walls. Amazed,

Hidesato takes the scene in.

INT. HALLWAY - KINGS PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

The dragon king and Hidesato walk through a richly decorated hallway separated from the main hall by moveable paper screens.

INT. MAIN HALL - KING'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS

They arrive in the main hall. On a large table are crystallized lotus leaves and flowers as dishes, and ebony chopsticks. A luxurious amount of fresh Japanese cuisine is spread out on the extravagant table. Evening falls. Around the table are the Dragon Kings CHILDREN and RETAINERS are constantly up and about making sure the table remains perfect.

DRAGON KING

Come, sit!

INT. MAIN HALL - KING'S PALACE - EVENING, FEUDAL JAPAN

The Dragon king smiles widely at Hidesato, gesturing Hidesato to take place at the table.

As soon as they sit down, GOLDFISH DANCERS come out followed by RED CARP MUSICIANS with koto and shamisen. The beautiful music and dancing that follows banishes all thoughts of the centipede.

They listen to the music and drink wine for a while.

When the Dragon King is about to refill Hidesato's cup, the palace shakes violently. The Dragon King and Hidesato both rise to their feet and rush to the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY - KING'S PALACE - EVENING, FEUDAL JAPAN

They first see two giant balls of fire on the mountain up ahead, rolling down, closing in, which will be revealed as being the eyes of the CENTIPEDE. The Dragon King points a trembling finger towards the fiery balls, standing next to Hidesato.

DRAGON KING

The centipede! The centipede! Those  
fires are its eyes, it is coming  
for its prey!

Hidesato looks to where the Dragon King points. In the dim light of the stars is the long body of an enormous centipede winding round the mountains. Hidesato doesn't show the least

sign of fear. He tries to calm the Dragon King.

HIDESATO

Don't be afraid. I shall surely  
kill the centipede. Just bring me  
my bow and arrows.

The Dragon King motions for his servants to bring Hidesato's weapons. As Hidesato receives his artillery he remembers, he only has three arrows.

Without any further hesitation Hidesato takes the bow, fits an arrow to the notch and carefully takes aim. Then he lets it fly. The arrow hits the centipede in the middle of its head, but it glances off harmless and falls to the ground.

Not intimidated, Hidesato takes his second arrow, fits it to the notch and lets it fly. It hits the middle of its head spot on, but again glances off harmless and falls to the ground.

HIDESATO

It's invulnerable to weapons!

The Dragon King loses heart and begins to tremble with fear. Hidesato realizes he now has only one arrow left, if this fails he could not kill the centipede. He looks around and across the water. The centipede has its body seven times round the mountain and is moving closer, soon it will come down to the lake. Its fireballs of eyes gleam nearer and nearer. Its reflection starts to show in the lake.

Suddenly Hidesato remembers he has heard about human saliva being deadly to centipedes. He turns to the trembling Dragon King.

HIDESATO

I believe I know the remedy! I  
remember human saliva is deadly to  
centipedes!

The Dragon King is uncertain.

DRAGON KING

But this is no ordinary  
centipede...

The Dragon King rushes inside to hide.

Hidesato determinedly takes his last arrow and puts the end of it in his mouth. He fits the notch to his bow, takes careful aim, and once more lets it fly.

This time, the arrow hits the centipede right in the middle of its head and it strikes home to the creature's brain. With a convulsive shudder the creature's giant serpentine body stops moving and its fiery eyes die.

EXT. BALCONY - KINGS PALACE - NIGHT, FEUDAL JAPAN

The sky darkens as night falls and a storm breaks loose. Lightning flashes and the wind roars angrily. It seems as if the world is coming to an end. The building is shaking.

INT. MAIN HALL - KINGS PALACE - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon King and his royal household hide in different corners of the main hall, frightened to death. The building shakes again.

EXT. LAKE BIWA - ABOVE KINGS PALACE - NIGHT, FEUDAL JAPAN

The storm rages on.

EXT. LAKE BIWA - ABOVE KINGS PALACE - DAWN, FEUDAL JAPAN

Day dawns beautifully as the night is over, the storm has past and the sky is clear. The centipede is gone from the mountain.

EXT. BALCONY - KINGS PALACE - MORNING, FEUDAL JAPAN

Hidesato stands on the balcony looking out of the mountains. He calls for the Dragon King to come out.

HIDESATO

Hear me king of the lake, come and  
join me, for the centipede is dead  
and you have nothing more to fear!

INT. MAIN HALL - KING'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon King and his royal household come out of their hidingplaces, they look hopeful.

EXT. BALCONY - KINGS PALACE - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon King and his royal household come out to the balcony. Hidesato points to where the centipede is floating on the water, that is dyed red with its blood. They are delighted with the sight of their enemy's demise.

The Dragon King is so grateful that he and his entire family come out to show their respect to Hidesato. They all bow for him and thank him in turn.

DRAGON KING

You truly are our preserver and the  
bravest warrior in all Japan. We  
shall have a feast in your honor!

INT. MAIN HALL - KING'S PALACE - AFTERNOON, FEUDAL JAPAN

A more sumptuous feast than the first is going strong in the main hall. There are all kinds of different prepared fish, raw, stewed, boiled and roasted. Everything is served on coral trays and crystal dishes. Hidesato sits next to the King and receives a glass of the best wine he has ever tasted. The sun shines so bright that the lake its light glitters like a diamond, making the palace look more gorgeous than it had by night.

INT. MAIN HALL - KING'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

The feast is done and Hidesato is ready to leave, he bows.

HIDESATO

I thank you for your feast and the  
worthy adventure, now I must return  
home.

The Dragon King and his family are upset by this news.

DRAGON KING

Please, why not stay a few more  
days. We will prepare a feast in  
your honor for as long as you wish.

Hidesato smiles and bows once more

HIDESATO

Your kindness has no limit my king,  
but I have finished what I had come  
to do. It is time for me to leave.

DRAGON KING

Very well, if you must. Please  
accept a few small presents in  
token of our gratitude to you. For  
delivering us from the horrible  
centipede.

The royal family nodded in agreement of this. Hidesato cannot refuse. He bows once more in agreement.

EXT. PORCH - KING'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Hidesato stands on the porch taking leave, a train of fish suddenly transforms into a retinue of SERVANTS, they all

wear ceremonial robes and dragon's crown on their heads. They carry four presents. A large bronze bell, a bag of rice, a roll of silk, and a large cooking pot. Hidesato is astonished by the amount of presents.

HIDESATO

I cannot accept all of this my lord!

DRAGON KING

But I insist! We can never repay you enough. What you did for us is worth atleast then times more then this.

Hidesato cannot refuse once more. And they all move out as far as the bridge.

EXT. SETA-NO-KARASHI BRIDGE - LAKE BIWA - DUSK, FEUDAL JAPAN

Hidesato, the Dragon King and the servants come to an halt. It is time for the Dragon King to turn back. The Dragon King bows deeply.

DRAGON KING

I wish you many good wishes, thank you for your hard work. We will not forget your accomplishment.

The Dragon King bows once more, and dissapears into a mist of water right in front of Hidesato's eyes, leaving his servants to accompany Hidesato to his house.

EXT. HIDESATO'S HOUSE - NEAR LAKE BIWA - DUSK, FEUDAL JAPAN

Two of Hidesato's servants are outside on the lookout for their master, AKIKO, an adolescent girl and YORI an adolescent boy. They are mumbling to eachother.

AKIKO

But Baba said he just was kept by the violent storm, and he just had to take shelter somewhere.

She says it in a way that makes it final and non-negotiable. Yori shrugs. A shout comes from inside. It's BABA, an older stern looking servant lady.

BABA

I knew I shouldn't have put you two on the lookout!

Baba hurries outside, and gives the younger servants a

hurried scolding. And points towards the forest path where Hidesato is walking.

BABA

You are missing our masters return!

When Baba, Yori and Akiko see the crowd of servants that follow him they are baffled. Baba shouts for the rest of the household to notify them of their masters return.

BABA

Everyone! Hidesato has returned.  
Come outside to greet him properly!

The rest of HIDESATO'S HOUSEHOLD comes outside in a hurry to greet their master. They all wonder amongst themselves what the retinue of men, bearing presents and banners that followed Hidesato, could mean.

EXT. HIDESATO'S HOUSE - NEAR LAKE BIWA - MOMENTS LATER

The Dragon King's servants put down the presents, and disappear in the same cloud of mist as their King had. Leaving Hidesato's servants startled. They all hurried around their master all talking simultaneously. Hidesato holds up his hand.

HIDESATO

Calm down my loyal helpers let me  
tell you about my adventure.

And as they walk inside, he begins to tell about his adventure, surrounded by his servants.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

The presents which he had received  
from the grateful Dragon King were  
found to be of magic power.

EXT. TEMPLE - NEAR LAKE BIWA - DAY

The bronze bell is being hung up in a temple.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The bell only was ordinary, and as  
Hidesato had no use for it he  
presented it to the temple near by,  
where it was hung up...

EXT. FOREST - NEAR LAKE BIWA - AFTERNOON

The loud ringing of the bronze bell sounds while the birds sing their song as sun rays dance through the leaves.

Dappling the forest floor with a play of lights and shades.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
to boom out the hour of day over  
the surrounding neighborhood.

INT. ROOM - HIDESATO'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The roll of silk is the centerpiece of a room full with different suits and clothes. On the table are unfinished pieces of clothing and different types of crafting material.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The roll of silk never grew  
shorter, though time after time  
long pieces were cut off.

INT. KITCHEN - HIDESATO'S HOUSE - DUSK

The single bag of rice is standing in a corner in the kitchen, cup after cup, after cup, is being taken out but the bag remains full.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The single bag of rice, however  
much was taken from it day after  
day, never grew less. The supply in  
the bag was inexhaustible.

INT. DINER - HIDESATO'S HOUSE - DUSK

Hidesato and his large household are all dining together with a huge cooking pot in the middle of the table. The most wonderful dishes are surrounding it. Everyone is happy.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The cooking pot was wonderful, too.  
No matter what was put into it, it  
cooked deliciously whatever was  
wanted.

EXT. FOREST - NEAR LAKE BIWA - DUSK

An opening in the forest farther ahead shows the long bridge spanning over one side of lake Biwa. The glistening sun leads to the place where the Dragon Kings palace is beneath the lake.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The fame of Hidesato's fortune  
spread far and wide, and as there  
was no need for him to spend money  
on rice or silk...

INT. DUSTY, FEUDAL JAPANESE ROOM - DUSK, PRESENT

A big fairy tale book, lit by flickering candlelight, shows the last page of the original story in kanji.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
... he became very prosperous, and  
was henceforth known as My Lord Bag  
of Rice.

The book's last page is turned, and the book closes. The light dies out.