

# Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

*Dramatic Publishing*

# Trickster Mountain or the Tengu of Kami

A play

by

EDWARD MAST

Suggested by tales and characters from Japan



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

© The Dramatic Publishing Company

\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: [www.dramaticpublishing.com](http://www.dramaticpublishing.com), or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMX by  
EDWARD MAST

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(TRICKSTER MOUNTAIN OR THE TENGU OF KAMI)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-686-9

## **IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with  
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

# Trickster Mountain or the Tengu of Kami

## CHARACTERS

(to be doubled by as few as 8 performers)

TENGU . . . a demon, male or female, of indeterminate age  
MURASAKI . . . . . a young woman  
TONO . . . . . a young woman  
GENJI . . . . . an older but still vigorous military man  
AWOI . . . . . an older woman  
YUGIRI . . . . . a businessman, friend of Genji  
PRIEST  
MOMMA . . . . . of Murasaki  
POPPA . . . . . of Murasaki  
YOSHI . . . . . a young man  
GONSUKE (male) . . . . . a bandit  
OMA (female) . . . . . a bandit  
TRAVELER (male)  
KAPPA . . . . . a polite demon  
ONI . . . . . another type of demon  
SHOKI . . . . . the Demon Queller

SOLDIERS, DEMONS, BANDITS, FORESTERS,  
STREAMS, ANIMALS, TREES

SETTING: Some hundreds of years ago in a place resembling Japan.

*Trickster Mountain or the Tengu of Kami* is not based on any single story, but is a sort of fantasia on legendary characters and tales from Japan. Readers of Japanese literature will recognize the names of Murasaki and Genji, though maybe not entirely their personalities. The Tengu and other supernatural creatures are all variants of their forms in Japanese legends. The word “kami” means something like “divinity,” and a mountain with that name is, as far as I know, an invention of my own.

## ACT ONE

SCENE: *Bare stage. Music.*

AT RISE: *A funny-looking creature with a big nose—the TENGU—comes on; looks at us for a moment; then steps aside, snaps fingers in the air.*

*At this command, a river of white silk unfurls through the air, diagonally across the stage, drawn by two ATTENDANTS. The end of the bolt is set down and, before it can flutter to the ground, two teenage young women enter and take up the silk, fondling it and sliding their fingers along its edges. They are MURASAKI and TONO. The TENGU has gone.)*

TONO. Not all this.

MURASAKI. All this. And all left over from the gown.

TONO. So beauuutiful.

MURASAKI. And a belt of embroidered gold for the sash.

TONO. He is so generous.

*(A string is plucked or a little bell rings as MURASAKI improvises a poem.)*

MURASAKI.

*his generous hand*

*a waving flag declaring*

*a so giving heart*

Is it true that Genji won the Battle of Soonjo Bridge?

TONO. They say he did. When he was younger. I am told you can read it in history books.

MURASAKI. I'll find those books and read them. Genji has met the emperor. We'll travel all over the empire, we'll meet all the famous lords and their ladies. We'll travel *outside* the empire.

TONO. You will?

MURASAKI. Why not? To the Manchu country. Farther. Who knows?

TONO. Why would you go there?

MURASAKI. Don't you want to see the whole world?

TONO. What for? I'd be happy just to be married to someone like you're gonna marry.

MURASAKI. You will.

TONO. No I won't. I'll be an unmarried toy for gentlemen all my life. That's my place. Unless some dashing bandit kidnaps me.

MURASAKI. Maybe you can come see the world with me.

TONO. I can?

MURASAKI. Why not? I'll need a personal woman, won't I? To dress me and feed me and keep the fires going in my rooms, isn't that right?

TONO. Of course.

MURASAKI. And besides, we're friends.

TONO. We are?

MURASAKI. Aren't you my friend?

TONO. Well sure, but you don't have to be *my* friend.



MURASAKI. But I *want* to. Don't you see? I'm not like those other ladies. I haven't been rich all my life like them. (*Whispers.*) I grew up in a teeny little house.

TONO. You did?

MURASAKI. Two rooms. Didn't you?

TONO. Yeah.

MURASAKI. See? I'm the same as you. I just got a stroke of wonderful fate, and now I can have all the things I want, and I never have to build a fire again, but that doesn't mean we can't be friends.

TONO. Really?

MURASAKI. You're the first friend I've made here in my new home.

TONO. Except your husband, of course.

MURASAKI. Of course. And we're not really friends yet. That happens after the wedding. Doesn't it?

TONO. How did he find you?

MURASAKI. He was hunting, I think. Riding, anyway, with his men and his servants and all, and he saw me from afar. That's what he said: from afar.

TONO. Then what?

MURASAKI. It was so lovely. He followed me home to find out where I live. Then he came back at night and hung a spindletree branch on the door.

TONO. Just like anybody?

MURASAKI. Just like a boy from the village, as if he weren't a rich nobleman or anything. My parents didn't know what to make of it, but he came the next day by himself and said who he was.

TONO. What did your parents do?

MURASAKI. Well they didn't have much to talk about, and I was listening in the other room. So he left kind of

politely, and before I even came out to ask, my mom and dad put water on that branch, and so next time he came he knew the answer was yes. He made them a huge gift of coins, and I was engaged to a handsome nobleman.

TONO. He's kind of old.

MURASAKI. He's mature. Grey hair gives him dignity.

He's not some boy. When he visits I can hear his footsteps all down the road, like an emperor himself.

TONO. Where were you when he saw you from afar?

MURASAKI. In a meadow near my house.

TONO. Running around outside?

MURASAKI. Not running, but outside.

TONO. We never go outside here.

MURASAKI. Never?

TONO. Into the garden sometimes. But when we leave the house we go in carriages with blinds across the windows.

MURASAKI. Why?

TONO. When you live in a nobleman's house, you're not supposed to be seen by anyone else.

MURASAKI. That's not a rule, is it?

TONO. Sort of.

MURASAKI. Oh. Well. That will be fine. We have a huuuge garden, don't we? (*A knock.*) Yes?

VOICE (*TENGU as servant, offstage*). My Lord Genji visits.

MURASAKI. Oh!

GENJI (*offstage*). Does my beautiful bride receive me?

MURASAKI. Of course.

*(MURASAKI and TONO leap into poses as GENJI enters with two ATTENDANTS, one male and one female, both masked. GENJI is fifty-two years old, grey-haired, fit and muscular. He has been a samurai and gentleman all his life. He bows low to the girls.)*

GENJI. Your servant Genji is grateful for the privilege of this visit.

MURASAKI. My soon-to-be husband does me honor and must rise at once.

*(In the presence of GENJI, MURASAKI assumes a higher voice and a timid manner. She takes very small steps when walking, and never looks directly at GENJI. GENJI rises. He politely avoids staring at her.)*

GENJI. Your most fortunate impending groom will be brief in his call.

MURASAKI. The time of tomorrow's bride is the possession of her lord Genji.

GENJI. The young lady is comfortable in her surroundings, I hope?

MURASAKI. My lord's lucky young guest could not be happier.

GENJI. The young companion Tono is suitable?

MURASAKI. Tono is charming and well chosen.

GENJI. And all my young angel's desires are met most promptly?

MURASAKI. My lord's attendants are swift and zealous in their care.

GENJI. Excellent. I hope the young woman looks forward to the wedding day?

MURASAKI. My lord's bride-to-be can hardly wait.

GENJI. And the wedding night, of course.

MURASAKI. Modesty forbids my lord's young bride to express her enthused anticipation.

GENJI. And she knows that she can call on me if her least desire is overlooked.

MURASAKI. She knows it well. Perhaps...

GENJI. Does my delight require something?

MURASAKI. Perhaps my lord and his bride-to-be could go riding at some time soon.

GENJI. Is the young woman unhappy in this pavilion?

MURASAKI. My lord's wife-to-be is thrilled to be here.

GENJI. Excellent.

MURASAKI. And the fresh air of my lord's estates will bring even more delight.

GENJI. I see. Perhaps we will discuss this after the happy event.

MURASAKI. My lord's young bride will be very pleased.

GENJI. Anything else?

MURASAKI. All the wishes of my lord's new bride are met and exceeded.

GENJI. Until the day of wedding, then.

MURASAKI. Until that happy day.

GENJI (*improvises a poem, as a string is plucked*).

*with your hand present*

*the buds of spring come blooming*

*in early winter*

(*With a bow, GENJI and ATTENDANTS leave. MURASAKI resumes her normal posture and voice. She considers.*)

MURASAKI. Good. We'll discuss it. He's going to be a wonderful husband.

TONO. I hope so.

MURASAKI. It's just like a romance in a book.

TONO. Do you read books?

MURASAKI. Oh yes. Don't you?

TONO. I wish I could. Who taught you to read?

MURASAKI. My parents did. They didn't want me to be just an ordinary girl.

TONO. Of course not.

MURASAKI. I'm sorry. You know what I meant.

TONO. I do. It's okay. I *am* an ordinary girl. It's no insult to say so.

(*A knock.*)

MURASAKI. Yes?

VOICE (*TENGU as servant offstage*). My Lady Awoi visits.

MURASAKI. Who?

VOICE. My Lady Awoi visits.

MURASAKI (*whispers*). Who's that?

TONO (*whispers*). You don't know?

AWOI (*offstage, impatient*). The young lady will receive me.

(*MURASAKI and TONO leap into their poses as AWOI enters, also with two ATTENDANTS, both female, both masked. AWOI is an older woman, handsome and magnificently dressed, wearing a half-mask to designate high status. She steps in, looks skeptically at MURASAKI. Silence.*)

AWOI. You are this...Murasaki.

MURASAKI. I am. (*TONO nudges her.*) Your Ladyship.

AWOI. Your courtesy does you credit, young lady. You are pretty. (*Pause.*) I say you are pretty.

MURASAKI. Thank Your Ladyship.

AWOI. I hope you are...patient and...companionable also, as well as hard working when that time comes.

MURASAKI. I hope to be, Your Ladyship.

AWOI. I desire you to know that I bear you no animosity. This is not, after all, your fault.

MURASAKI. I fail to understand Your Ladyship.

AWOI. Mm. Of course you do. Well. I was instructed not to come here, but it is my duty. The duty of one in my place. To uhh. To make you welcome. Into my lord Genji's family.

MURASAKI. Thank Your Ladyship. What is my lady's relation to the lord Genji?

AWOI. Is your question impertinent?

MURASAKI. No, Your Ladyship.

AWOI. I would hope not. But you must be either impertinent or ignorant. Which shall it be?

MURASAKI. If seeking information means ignorance, my lady, then I am ignorant on a regular basis. Your Ladyship.

AWOI (*glares at her a moment*). Did you not hear me announced as the lady Awoi?

MURASAKI. Yes, Your Ladyship.

AWOI. The lady Awoi? Lord Genji's wife?

MURASAKI. I beg your pardon? Wife? (*TONO nudges her.*) Your Ladyship?

AWOI. Yes. Wife.

MURASAKI. With many pardons, Your Ladyship, I am to be married to the lord Genji tomorrow.

AWOI. You surprise me. Has no one talked to you? Perhaps that is why I was discouraged from this visit. I am the wife of Lord Genji. Your ceremony tomorrow, if we may call it so, is a formal process to make legal the introduction of secondary wives into the household.

MURASAKI. I am to be his second wife?

AWOI. His fourth wife, actually. None of the others have called on you? That's unfortunate. They are usually possessed of better manners. Perhaps they were forbidden as well.

MURASAKI. There are two others?

AWOI. I am sorry to be the bearer of this disagreeable news to you. Yes, there are two others, as well as myself. You will have a distinct advantage, however. You are still young. All of us started young, but time has passed. It has passed for our Lord Genji as well, he has developed a taste for younger wives to make his hair feel not so grey. Do you see now?

MURASAKI. Yes. (*TONO nudges.*) Your Ladyship.

AWOI. Hm. I think you are genuinely surprised by this. The shock will wear off. We do not have much choice in these matters. I hope for your sake that the arrangement agrees with you. It does seem to suit some people. Good day, Fourth Wife. (*AWOI and her retinue leave without bowing.*)

TONO. You really didn't know?

MURASAKI. How was I supposed to? Why didn't you tell me?

TONO. I thought you knew. They told me not to mention it, but I thought we were just being polite. She wasn't supposed to come here.

MURASAKI. Who told her not to?

TONO. Lord Genji, I think.

MURASAKI. Lord Genji told her not to?

TONO. I think so.

MURASAKI. "I hope the arrangement agrees with you." It does NOT agree with me. He can look elsewhere for his many spare brides.

TONO. Uh...

MURASAKI. What?

TONO. You said he gave gifts to your parents, right?

MURASAKI. So?

TONO. So really, you belong to him now.

MURASAKI. I do?

TONO (*nods*). It's not so bad. You'll have a nice life. All the gowns and jewels you want. Sweets to eat all day. No work to do.

MURASAKI. Sounds easy, doesn't it.

TONO. Sure does.

MURASAKI. We'll see.

*(They leave.)*

\* \* \* \*

*(Music in the background.)*

*Enter GENJI, dressed with great formality, with YUGIRI, a friend less splendidly dressed.)*