

MUSHROOMS

(Kusabira)

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Warrior Priest

Man

Mushrooms

MAN I am a resident of this neighborhood. This year for the first time ever, mushrooms of which I know nothing of their origin have grown up in my house. I pull them up and throw them out, but night after night they grow back once more. No matter how often I pull them up, they grow right back just as they were. I have never heard of anything so strange, and I am most concerned. Nearby lives a warrior priest with powers wondrous to behold. I have decided to ask him to come and do an incantation. I must hurry on my

way. (Setting out.) Truly, it is not the least unusual for mushrooms to grow on withered tree branches or in the mountains, but it is most strange for them to grow right inside a house where people live. Thus I have decided to make my request to this exalted warrior priest, for I am sure that he will set my heart at ease on this matter. Well, here I am already. First I will announce myself. Hello in there! Is anybody home? (He kneels on one knee in front of the WARRIOR PRIEST's door.)

WARRIOR PRIEST Before the windows of the nine senses, close to the foundations of the ten vehicles, praising the purifying flow of Yoga, in the midst of the clear beams of the moon of the three secrets, calling to me so loudly at my door, who are you?

MAN (Standing.) It is I.

WARRIOR PRIEST (Staggering back and falling to

the floor in surprise.) Aaaagh! (Getting to his feet.)
You start up like a bird from underfoot! As it is you,
there was no need to call out. You should have come
right in the door.

MAN I called out at the door for fear that you might
have guests and I would disturb you.

WARRIOR PRIEST That was most thoughtful of
you, but what is it you have come for?

MAN The matter for which I have come about at
this time is of no great import. As mushrooms of
which I know nothing of their origin have grown up in
my house, I have pulled them up and thrown them out
any number of times, but every night they grow back
once more. There seems to be no way for me to get rid
of them. I have never heard of anything so strange. If
you would come and take a look at them and do an
incantation, I would be most grateful indeed.

WARRIOR PRIEST Recently, I have been doing special penance, and have not ventured forth for any purpose anywhere, but since it is for you, I will go and do it.

MAN (Bowing.) I am most grateful indeed. Let us be on our way.

WARRIOR PRIEST As you know the way, you must go first.

MAN If that is the case, I will go first. (Setting out.) Come, come. Let us be on our way.

WARRIOR PRIEST (Following.) With all my heart.

MAN I have done everything in my power, but there is no way that I can get rid of them, and I am most concerned.

WARRIOR PRIEST Tell me, now, are these mushrooms of yours big, or are they small?

MAN Oh, they are very big indeed.

WARRIOR PRIEST In any case, until I see them, I cannot make out what they might be. But, by the way, how is the sick man doing who I did an incantation for some time back?

MAN It is a most wondrous thing. He is getting better and better and will soon be completely well.

WARRIOR PRIEST Of course, there are ways I could have cured him all at once, but they are no good. Growing slowly better is the only way to effect a true cure.

(One MUSHROOM appears.)

MAN It is as you say, indeed. In any case, his case has made me believe increasingly strongly in your powers.

WARRIOR PRIEST That makes me most happy, indeed.

MAN Well, here we are already. First, please come inside.

WARRIOR PRIEST With all my heart. Well, now, where are the mushrooms?

MAN Here is one of them.

WARRIOR PRIEST What is this? I have seen big mushrooms in my time, but this one is as big as a man. And what a surprise! It has things that look like eyes, a nose, arms, and legs on its stem.

MAN And more of the same will soon appear.

WARRIOR PRIEST While I have seen small mushrooms grow before, I have never seen any so frightful and so monstrous as this before.

MAN This seems most inauspicious in every way.

WARRIOR PRIEST No, no! Do not concern yourself. I will say an incantation and make them go away.

MAN I am most grateful, indeed.

WARRIOR PRIEST (Speaking in an exaggerated narrative style.) Know that a warrior priest is, indeed, a warrior priest. Did you hear that?

MAN I did hear you.

WARRIOR PRIEST This headpiece I wear is made of one foot of pure black cloth, wounded round and round, (Raising his left arm.) and on the head, (Bending his elbow to point to his headpiece.) popped in place. Worn in this manner, it is, indeed, a headpiece. Is it not a thing of wonder?

MAN It is a thing of wonder.

WARRIOR PRIEST (Holding his prayer beads out in front of himself.) Square-wrought prayer beads these are not, but plain wood chunks strung on a string. Calling them square-wrought prayer beads, (Grasping his prayer beads in both hands.) all I need do is pray by the rope in the left hand of the Fire God, (Moving to the MUSHROOM's side.) and some wonder will surely appear. (Rubbing his prayer beads together and chanting.) Boron, boron! Boron, boron! Boron, boron! (During his prayer, two more

MUSHROOMS appear.)

MAN I say, I say! More have appeared here, too.

WARRIOR PRIEST Indeed, more have appeared.

MAN Now there are more than ever before.

WARRIOR PRIEST Oh, it is only natural that so many appear. Did you not say that no matter how many you pulled up and threw out, more would always appear? It is because my powers are taking effect that they are coming out now from the very depths of the earth. Those that appeared before were pine mushrooms and chinquapin mushrooms. I am sure that there are not many more left to appear. But in any case, I will pray out all there are, to make sure there are no more, so you pray with all your heart and soul, too.

MAN With all my heart.

WARRIOR PRIEST Now I will pray to the three sacred mountains with all my heart and soul. (Rubbing his prayer beads together.) Boron, boron! Boron, boron! Boron, boron! (As he prays, more and more MUSHROOMS appear.)

MAN I say, I say! They are appearing all over now.

WARRIOR PRIEST There are truly a lot of them. There are princess, boar's mouth, and fragrant shimeji mushrooms. But it is always the case that when something is about to be obliterated, all of its manifestations appear at once. For occasions such as this, there is a special secret sign know as the Sign of the Eggplant. I will invoke the Sign of the Eggplant, and pray one more time. (He makes incantational gestures, drawing a huge X in the air, and then bringing both hands together in front of his mouth and

blowing in the direction of the MUSHROOMS, while spreading his arms out to both sides and stepping backward.) I have inherited all manner of powers from the great Bodhisattva En-no-Gyoja, among which is the wondrous Sign of the Eggplant. I will now invoke the Sign of the Eggplant and pray. Boron, boron! Boron, boron! Boron, boron! (More MUSHROOMS appear.)

MAN I say, I say! Please wait just a minute! From the beginning, every time you pray, they only increase in number. Please pray in such a way that they will go away.

WARRIOR PRIEST There certainly are a lot of mushrooms here. I will pray in such a way that they will go away. You also pray with all your heart.

MAN What an unpleasant situation this is!

WARRIOR PRIEST (He whirls his prayer beads around in front of his body like a windmill, and then brings both hands together in front of his mouth and blows in the direction of one of the MUSHROOMS, spreading his arms out to both side and stepping backward.) No matter how deep the evil in the heart of these mushrooms may be, all I need do is do my most secret incantation and pray, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, (Moving to one of the MUSHROOMS.) and then, H, I, J, K, L, M, N. (Rubbing his prayer beads together and chanting.) Boron, boron! Boron, boron! Boron, boron! (During this prayer, a gigantic DEMON MUSHROOM appears with a half-folded umbrella over his head, and stands apart from the others.) Agh, a truly poisonous-looking, half-open mushroom has appeared. When it opens up all the way, it will certainly be a huge one. Just what am I to do?

MAN Ah, ah! Up until this moment, I always thought you were a veritable living Fire God. Oh, I

must say, you are far different than what I thought. Now my house is completely full of mushrooms. And just look at them, they are ganging up against me. If only I had not asked you to come, this would have not happened. Just what am I to do now?

WARRIOR PRIEST I have tried each and every power that I attained during my long years of aesthetic training, and I have tried all sorts of prayers, but since they have increased and spread as they have, there is no way that my incantations can reach all of them.

MAN You must not become so weak of heart. Pluck up your heart and pray a little more!

WARRIOR PRIEST I never ever thought there would be so many of them.

MAN But what am I to do now?

WARRIOR PRIEST Well, then, I will try and pray again. Exorcising all evil and calamities, I pray to satisfy your request. Boron, boron! Boron, boron! Boron, boron!

(During the prayer, the DEMON MUSHROOM sneaks quietly in among the other MUSHROOMS. Then he suddenly opens his umbrella, throws it to the floor, and begins chasing the WARRIOR PRIEST and the MAN off.)

DEMON MUSHROOM Catch and gnaw! Catch and gnaw!

WARRIOR PRIEST & MAN Oh, forgive us, please forgive us!

DEMON MUSHROOM Catch and gnaw! Catch and gnaw!

WARRIOR PRIEST & MAN Oh, forgive us, please
forgive us!

DEMON MUSHROOM Catch and gnaw! Catch and
gnaw!

(The other MUSHROOMS follow the DEMON
MUSHROOM off, yipping and skipping as they go.
The last one in line is a tiny PRINCESS
MUSHROOM.)