

THE SIGHTSEER at Fukakusa Festival
(Kenbutsu Zaemon -- Fukakusa Matsuri)

--A Monologue--

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Scene One

The one who stands before you now resides in this neighborhood. And my name is Sightseer Zaemon. On this day each year, in Fushimi at Fujinomori, they hold the Kamo Horse Race and the Fukakusa Festival. Every year, I attend, and today, as always, I intend to go and see the sights. But I am not in the habit of sightseeing alone. There is one who lives near here, known as Dillydally Zaemon who accompanies me each year. I will go invite him to come along as always. I must hurry on my way. Truly, I do hope he's at home, but since he seldom ventures forth, I am quite sure he will be there. Well, here I am already. Hello in there! Is Master Dillydally at home? What's that you say? He has gone sightseeing already? Well, I say, what a pity for me. Without Master Dillydally, I will have no one to divert me. As there is no other way, I will be on my way alone. Huh? Who is this who removes his hat upon running into me? You must put it back on. I beg of you, I beg you do. Why, I say, it is Master Lucky Emon. Will you not come and enjoy the festive sights together? What's that? You have no sword? So what if you do not? I also, as you see, having no sword, bear none at my side. Well now, what time do the festivities begin?

What's that you say? Not for some time? So I have come out an hour or two too early.

Scene Two

As I am already here, I'll go see the sights of the Old Kujo Palace. I think I'll begin with the stables. And here I am at the stables. Well, I must say, what wonders they contain. A princess sorrel; a maverick with a white forelock, and a fine black stallion. There is no saying which outshines the other. Well, I must say, what a grand lot of stables. First, here is one with seven stalls. And nextdoor is one with five. The whole lot was built in the spirit of the twelve destinies. Now I will go see the sights of the palace itself. Hah, haaaah! Here is a set of eight applique pictures on a long folding screen. A grotto garden under an autumn moon; a ship returning to a remote inlet; the eventide bell of a distant temple; a flight of geese descending on a broad sandy beach; a night of dreary rain; silent waves lapping the shore as night gives way to dawn. How wonderful they are. And here are some hanging scrolls. What's this? Saint Dharuma by Biku; A bamboo grove by Toba; and a monochrome painting of the Kannon Buddha by the Great Priest Mokkei. A perfect triad. Well, I must say, what a rarity. The tatami mats have Unkei and Korei edgings. And they are laid in one against the other, from over there, all the way to over here. The alcove post is lacquered black, and with its gold and silver inlay, no words suffice to describe it.

Scene Three

What's that you say? The riders are dressed and ready to race? Why, it is that, expressly, that I came out to see. Ha, haaaa. Look how they ride, just look how they ride. I see one rider is in the lead. Who might he be? What? Master Sour Emon of the Plum Orchard? And who might that be just behind him? What's that? Pushy Zaemon of the Bitter Persimmons? Well, I must say, he rides with tightly clenched teeth. I do hope he does not fall off. Oh! Oh, oh! Oh, now, that is what is meant by falling before the word is hardly uttered. Haaaa. How hilarious! (He laughs.) What's that? You say you take exception to my laughter? Huh? You want to punch me for it? It's no skin off your nose. And as I am known throughout the town as a great roughneck, you'd best mind your own business. Well, I say, just look at him. He seems to have thrown his back awry in the fall, for he is limping off into the crowd. Limping, limping. (He laughs.) Well, I must say, how hilarious! (He laughs.) Oh, I say, why has such a crowd gathered over there? What's that? You say they have raised the banners for today's festival? As I am here, I will take in those sights as well. Well, I must say, what a bustling scene. One banner depicts the eternal twin pines and the devoted old couple who are their spirits: this flying streamer bears a crane and a turtle; and

here is a warrior's helmet. Well, I must say, what a great lot of decorations.

Scene Four

And now what is that gang of boys making such a fuss about? Huh? There's to be a Sumo match? I, too, have been fond of Sumo since I was a boy. I will go and have a look. Haaaa. It seems quite impossible to get through the crowd. Now, if I were to get this straw hat torn, my wife would surely scold me. So now, I'll just hold it tight like this. I say, pray let me through. Here, here, let me through, just let me through. Hey, hey, you careless rascal! It is because you tread on my sandal heel that I can make no headway. Ouch! By the three treasures. He ripped the moxa plaster right off the nape of my neck. Well, I must say, how painful, how very painful. But at least I made it all the way inside.

Scene Five

(He sits cross-legged.) Here, here, Referee! You stand too tall. Take a lower stance. And you also go about the business of Sumo in a most shiftless manner. They say that in all, there are forty-eight Sumo falls. And those can be broken down into 88, one hundred, or even two hundred holds. The duck neck hold and the windmill whirl; the back bend and the arm throw; the scissor grapple and the frog grapple. These are some I know. What? You say if I know so much I should join in a bout

myself? You think the likes of me could not win? What's that? You say if I don't stop carping, you will throw a stone at me. If you throw one, I'll just throw one right back. Ouch! Ow, ouch! Ow, ouch! This is the final straw.

Scene Six

Hey, you! You in the persimmon kimono and the persimmon headband! I'll not forget your face! Ei-to, ei-to! Huh? You say you insist we wrestle? I'll never lose to you. Ii-ya, ii-ya. Yatto-na. Ii-ya, ii-ya. Yatto-na. Iiya, iiya. I've got you. Yatto-na. I've got you. Ii-ya, Ii-ya. Down you go! And I win! Come boys, laugh with me, laugh. (He laughs.) What's that? You want another bout? I'll wrestle you a thousand bouts. Ii-ya, ii-ya. Yatto-na. Ii-ya, ii-ya. Ii-ya, ii-ya. Ouch! Ow-ouch, ow-ouch! He really threw me hard. Hey, hey! No one wins at Sumo with a score of one to one. Wrestle me one more bout! I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet. I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet!