

VI

IN the Tojin-san's absence several aggravating accidents had happened in his house. While little Taro, the cook's youngest child, was sitting on the doorstep in the sun, nibbling on a sammari sembei (thunder cake), suddenly from behind an adjacent pine-tree the fox-woman had appeared, and before the frightened child could open its mouth to scream she had pounced upon him, nipped the cake cleanly from his hand and was off.

The child's nurse (who was none other than the fat wench of the morning), who adored her charge, and had already herself suffered at the hands of the mountain witch,