

Grade 3: Unit 2, Week 1 Putting on a Performance

Read Aloud: **Uwabami**

A Japanese Tale retold by Cathy Spagnoli

Wonderful Words: *rehearse, courage, greedily, clever, amble*

Mukashi (mũ kā' shē) means “long ago.”

Tanokyu (tā nō' kyū)

Na-ku is a word that sounds like a person sobbing. Sound words like this are often used in storytelling. You'll see others in this story.

Uwabami (ü wä' bā mē) means “monster.”

Tosa (tō' sä) means “so they say.”

Uwabami

Long ago, *mukashi, mukashi*, in Japan there lived Tanokyu, a fine actor. One day, he started to rehearse a play. Suddenly, a stranger came with a letter for him. Tanokyu stopped to read it and started to sob, *na-ku, na-ku, na-ku*.

“TANOKYU,” shouted the director. “THIS IS A COMEDY! STOP CRYING! AND WHAT ARE YOU READING?”

“Please forgive me,” Tanokyu begged. “It is a letter from my mother, who is very sick. She may die soon. So she wrote to say good-bye to me.”

A sad silence circled the stage. “Go now and visit her at once,” said the director softly. “Perhaps you can use your acting to help her.”

“Thank you so much, sir,” beamed Tanokyu. He packed up his makeup and costumes, then quickly left. Up and over mountains he walked and walked, *yot-su, yot-su, yot-su*. Finally, he neared his hometown. Only one mountain remained to climb. In front of it was a small tea shop. Tanokyu felt thirsty and sat down to drink. When Tanokyu finished, the shop owner asked him fearfully, “Are you crossing that mountain NOW?”

“Yes,” he replied. “I must get home.”

“You’ll go alone, in the dark?” she whispered. “Aren’t you afraid of the Uwabami?”

“The what?” asked Tanokyu.

“THE UWABAMI!”

“The who?”

“THE UWABAMI! It’s a horrid snake that lives on the mountain,” she cried. “He is terribly tricky and very mean. He changes his shape to catch people.”

Tanokyu was not known for his courage. But he did love his mother. So he went on alone, in the dark. And each time he saw a strange shadow, he thought, “Is THAT the Uwabami?” Each time he heard a strange noise, he wondered, “Is THAT the Uwabami?”

Tanokyu’s heart beat faster and faster, *do-ki, do-ki*. Then suddenly, an old man walked beside him.

“Ah, I’m glad to see you,” sighed Tanokyu. “It is good to have human company in this scary place.”

Yet, after a while, he noticed that the old man never talked. He just stared and stared greedily at Tanokyu, and he often licked his lips in hunger.

“Ohhh, nooo,” thought Tanokyu. “Maybe that IS the Uwabami!” Just then the old man roared, “YES, I AM THE UWABAMI AND I’M GOING TO EAT YOU!”

Now, Tanokyu was not brave, but he was clever. In a minute, he thought of a plan. He remembered the old tales he’d heard about clever foxes—foxes who changed their shapes to trick and fool humans.

“No, you can’t eat me,” said Tanokyu. “I’m a fox!”

“Ugh, I hate fox meat,” groaned the Uwabami. “But are you truly a fox? Prove it! Change yourself!”

So Tanokyu ran behind a tree. He slapped on makeup, slipped into a costume, and all at once . . . a mighty warrior appeared, sword held high.

“Hmmm,” nodded the Uwabami. “Now show me a different shape.” Tanokyu disappeared again behind the tree. He tried more makeup magic, and a gentle grandfather ambled out, *yu-ru, yu-ru, yu-ru*.

“One more change and I’ll believe you,” growled the Uwabami. Tanokyu used the rest of his makeup and his last costume. In seconds, a boy playing ball winked at the Uwabami.

“You ARE a fox,” agreed the Uwabami. “I’ll not eat you.” With a hidden grin, Tanokyu changed back to his own clothes. Then the two walked on together.

“Let’s tell each other what we are most afraid of,” Tanokyu suggested. “I’ll start. I am so, so, so scared of gold.”

“And I am terrified of hot persimmon juice,” said the Uwabami.

Soon the sun blinked her eyes open. The darkness disappeared. And all of a sudden, Tanokyu saw his village ahead. So he bid good-bye to the Uwabami and raced home.

“My son, my son, you have come,” rejoiced his mother. Tanokyu took fine care of her. She grew stronger and stronger every day. Time passed, and finally he had to go back to the theater. Yet before he left, he wanted to help the villagers, for they lived in constant terror of the Uwabami.

“Tonight, we’ll chase away that Uwabami forever,” he told them. “Heat up big pots of persimmon juice.” Fires soon blazed, juice soon bubbled. Later, loaded with buckets, everyone marched to the Uwabami’s cave. They threw the juice around it and deep inside it. Then they ran back to hide in their homes.

“AHHHHH,” came a roar as the Uwabami smelled the juice. His body twisted and curled in fear. Horrid shapes swirled in the air as he changed into his fiercest form. Soon a huge, hideous serpent raged from the cave.

“That Tanokyu has told my *sssecret*,” hissed the Uwabami. “Now I *mussst* leave the village forever. But before I go, I’ll *ssscare* him to death.”

From his cave, he gathered gold, much gold. He slithered, *zu-ru, zu-ru, zu-ru*, onto Tanokyu’s roof. With his eyes flashing, he poured the shiny coins down the chimney, chanting, “DIE QUICKLY, TANOKYU!”

“OH, NO! GOLD! HELP ME! SAVE ME!” cried Tanokyu. His voice screamed in horror, but his eyes laughed. The Uwabami soon left, pleased with his trick. Tanokyu counted all the gold, pleased with HIS trick.

In the morning, he gave gold to his mother and to his friends, keeping a little for himself. With a wave good-bye, he hiked over the now peaceful mountain. Back on the stage he loved, his skill grew and grew. And thus he lived happily for a long, long time.

Tosa.

rehearse

Define: To **rehearse** is to practice for a performance

Example: The actors **rehearse** many times before the play opens.

Ask: How many times do you think actors should **rehearse** their character's role before they perform?

courage

Define: **Courage** is when a person faces danger even if he or she is afraid.

Example: Charles showed **courage** by standing up to the bully.

Ask: When might you show **courage**?

greed

Define: **Greed** describes wanting something more than what you need.

Example: The cat looked **greedily** at the dog's bowl.

Ask: Do you eat your snack **greedily** or do you sometimes share?

clever

Define: When someone is **clever**, he or she is a good or fast thinker.

Example: The **clever** child figured out how to use the computer.

Ask: Does math require you to be **clever**?

amble

Define: **Amble** is to walk at a slow pace.

Example: The ocean breeze cooled us off as we **ambled** along the boardwalk.

Ask: Would you **amble** if you are in a hurry or if you have time to spend?