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A Tale of Two Tanukis



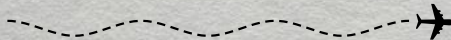




In the heart of Maple Land, on an eastern hill,  
Lived Tanuki Keely, waiting for her matching tail still.  
She longed for the seaweed breeze, that cool, salty air,  
Of the western shore, where she could wander everywhere.



She longed and longed until longing was no more,  
And leapt, tail-first, for the home her heart called for.  
With her rabbit named Chai, soft and round as a bun,  
Keely hopped on the plane, chasing the setting sun.



[Meanwhile, Tanuki Tsugu moved from the  
Land of the Tanukis to Maple Land. But,  
we'll get back to him later.]

She tumbled through ivy, she tripped while skiing,  
Yet still she searched with all of her being  
For that blasted matching tail she had sought for,  
Until at last she began a new life's chore.





One late winter's day, near the streets by the bay,  
A traveler named Tsugu wandered that way.  
A tanuki from Japan, with an adventurous soul,  
They shared baby octopi and sushi rolls.



Then raindrops fell, and the tanukis drove to the lagoon,  
Where the coastal road is enchanted by a castle. And soon  
The rain will surely stop, and they can become friends.  
Yet, it kept pouring, and poor Keely was at wits' end.

On the Isle of Van, where the tanukis came to meet,  
The weather is mild, with storming rain seldom to greet.  
True to this, the rain did end, but sleet began to flow,  
And soon a layer of snow covered all below.



When they reached the lagoon, the snow powdered the ground,

That didn't stop them from wandering around.

They made their way across slippery patches of ice,  
Between the lagoon and the ocean—their new paradise.

Along the path, they found driftwood carved with care,

Crows and other creatures posed as if in the air.

Keely pointed at each one with a joyful cheer,  
But Tsugu's photo captured her more than the art so dear.

To Keely's delight, Tsugu gave her the photo,  
And a spark in her heart began to gently grow.

Chai gave his nod, approving the friend,  
Though soon Tsugu had to leave, their time at an end.





When they met again, Tsugu had news to share,  
He wanted more than friendship, for they're a fated pair.  
Keely hesitated, enjoying her free, blissful days,  
But even apart, the distance showed her heart's true way.

Reunited at last, they wandered the shore,  
Laughing till the moon said, "No more, no more!"  
But Tsugu had plans and asked her with glee,  
"Join me in Japan, come adventure with me!"

Keely blinked twice, then she nodded her head,  
With Chai by her side, she bravely said:  
"If home is in Japan, then that's where I'll be,  
For my home is with you, and you're home to me."





They packed up their laptops, their blankets, their books,  
Their coats, their mittens, their pens, and their chopsticks.  
They flew through the clouds, across an ocean so blue,  
To the Land of Tanukis, where they could wander true.

One spring morning, beneath Ito's cherry-blossom skies,  
Tsugu turned to Keely with a little twinkle in his eyes.

"Will you marry me?" he asked to her delight,



Her tail went POOF! —

"Of course!" she laughed and smiled bright.

And oh, what a wedding! At Kashima Jingu,  
Where all the animals gathered, even the foxes too.  
With friends and family all around and Chai in a bow,  
They marveled at the gardens where soft breezes blow.





But this tale isn't over – oh no, not quite yet,  
For there's something that no one should ever forget:

When one wedding's lovely, as lovely as new...

What's better than one?

Why, surely – two!



Soon they'll return to that faraway shore,  
To the heart of Maple Land, where adventures soar.  
With family and friends who couldn't be in Japan,  
They'll celebrate once more — Keely, Tsugu, and Chai,  
hand in hand.



Hey, about that.. I'd love to join, but I have an eye appointment. Youse all have fun without me!



Soon they'll return to that faraway shore,  
To the heart of Maple Land, where adventures soar.  
With family and friends who couldn't be in Japan,  
They'll celebrate once more — Keely, Tsugu, and ~~Chai~~,  
hand in hand.



And they all lived happily ever after.





Special thank you to Emerson who sends his regards from  
an undisclosed beach off the coast of Vancouver Island.