

Brave ^{Little} One Inch

by Jan Fields



Illustrations by Giuliano Aloisi

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In the country of Japan, there once lived a tiny boy no bigger than your thumb. His parents called him Little One Inch. The boy loved to sail on the river, floating in a rice bowl and using chopstick oars. As he sailed, he dreamed great dreams.

At fourteen, Little One Inch asked his parents for permission to leave home. He wished to find adventure, he said. But he promised to make them proud.

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Level N

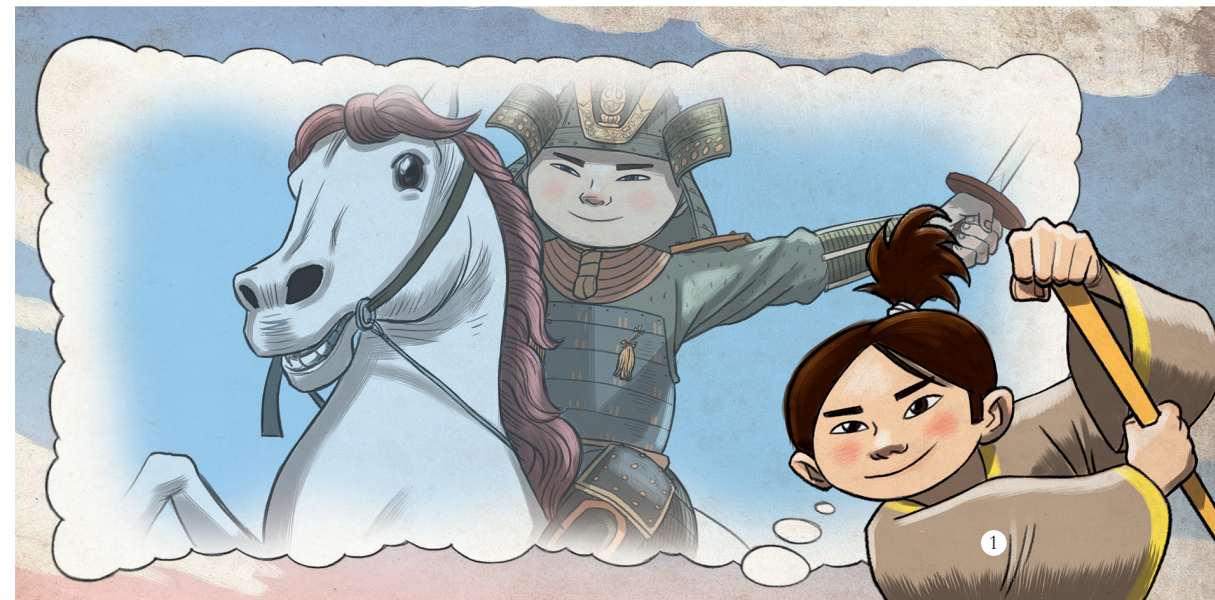
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Little One Inch sailed down the river to the capital city of Kyoto. There, he went to the palace of a rich nobleman.

“I am a soldier for hire,” Little One Inch announced.

The nobleman was amused.

“You are no soldier,” he said. “But I will hire you to assist my daughter, the princess.” This, he did. Soon, the princess and the boy became great friends.



One day, the two were walking in the palace garden. Suddenly, a wild monkey leaped onto the garden wall. It plucked the princess's favorite comb right out of her hair!

“Oh, no,” she cried, her eyes filling with tears.

The boy wished to see her happy again. He asked the gardener to help him gather a bag of plums. One by one, he handed the plums to the monkey. When the monkey's hands were full, Little One Inch held out the juiciest plum of all. The greedy monkey grabbed for the plum and dropped the princess's comb! Little One Inch snatched it and darted behind a thorn bush. The monkey screeched in anger and then left, defeated.



The princess told her father what Little One Inch had done.

“I thank you,” said the nobleman. “You have shown me that heart, brains, and courage are what make a hero, not size.”

Hearing those words, Little One Inch grew to full size. Finally, he looked like the hero he was.



Level N

Literary

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