



The Tale of Maneki-Neko

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In the ancient city of Tokyo, a penniless monk tended to his temple, watching it crumble under the weight of time. Though small, the temple carried a quiet power as ancient as the wind. The priest who cared for it was a kind but poor man, and his days were spent in solitude, praying for the well-being of the villagers.

One day, he encountered a feline wanderer on the road surrounding the temple. Moved by compassion, he welcomed the cat into his humble abode, offering it a refuge from the world outside. From that moment, the cat became a loyal companion to the monk, sharing in his daily rituals.

One exceptionally cold day, as the wind howled through the trees, the priest sat outside, shivering with worry. The temple was falling into disrepair, and the priest feared it would soon fade into nothingness. He told his feline companion that he would probably need to find alternative lodgings soon. However, the cat remained loyal, sitting at the temple gates. Meanwhile, nearby, the Daimyo (the Lord) of the Omi province, Li Naotaka, ventured forth on a falcon hunt with his trusted Samurai. But as fate would have it, the skies darkened, and a sudden downpour commenced. Naotaka was separated from his companions. Seeking shelter from the tempest, he stumbled upon the monk's temple. And there, at the entrance, stood the cat, beckoning him inside. Naotaka followed the feline guide, unaware of the danger that loomed. Just as he entered the temple, a bolt of lightning struck the very spot where he had been standing moments before. The cat had saved Naotaka's life! Overwhelmed with thankfulness, Naotaka sought to honour the monk and the cat. After learning of the temple's disrepair, he took the temple under his patronage.

The temple began to flourish, and the priest's life, once quiet and solitary, became filled with prosperity.

Hearing of the miraculous changes, the villagers began to believe that the cat was no mere creature but a spirit of fortune, a magical being who could summon wealth and good luck with a simple wave of its paw.

They began placing small statues of the beckoning cat at their doorsteps and shops, hoping to attract prosperity and fortune for themselves.

The cat's magic spread far and wide, and good fortune seemed to follow wherever its paw was raised.

And so, the Maneki-neko continues to wave, its paw lifted in a silent call to the world: "Fortune and joy await those who believe in magic."



The temple is now known as the Gotoku-ji Temple.