



# The Strongest Boy in the World

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Jessica Souhami alters the ages of the two main characters in her rendering of a Japanese tale first recorded in the 13th Century. Here a strong but skinny boy, Kaito and Hana, a surprisingly strong girl, replace the adult warrior and widow teacher.

Kaito longs to be a famous wrestler and having seen a poster advertising a tournament in Kyoto city, determines to try his luck. On his way to the city, Kaito encounters and teases a girl, coming off second best. She is amused to learn of his ambition and offers to toughen him up. For three weeks, he undergoes a strict regime of energetic and powerful exercises and a diet of body-building rice plus fish and meat stews. Kaito is then dispatched to Kyoto where his puny appearance greatly amuses the huge and famous wrestlers gathered for the tournament.

Next day however, Kaito wipes the smiles off those warriors' faces, overpowering them one by one to become the champion. An impressed Emperor then offers him an opportunity to live at the court but Kaito declines preferring to return to his home. En route though, he stops to deliver his prize to the girl who helped him fulfill his dreams and there receives a welcome lift that reminds him who really holds the power.

It's good to have a female character with such strength of mind and body and at the same time, a recognition of male strength and determination, ensuring that the book should please both girls and boys equally. Souhami's appropriately energetic, bold collage pictures bring out the humour of the tale admirably.

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