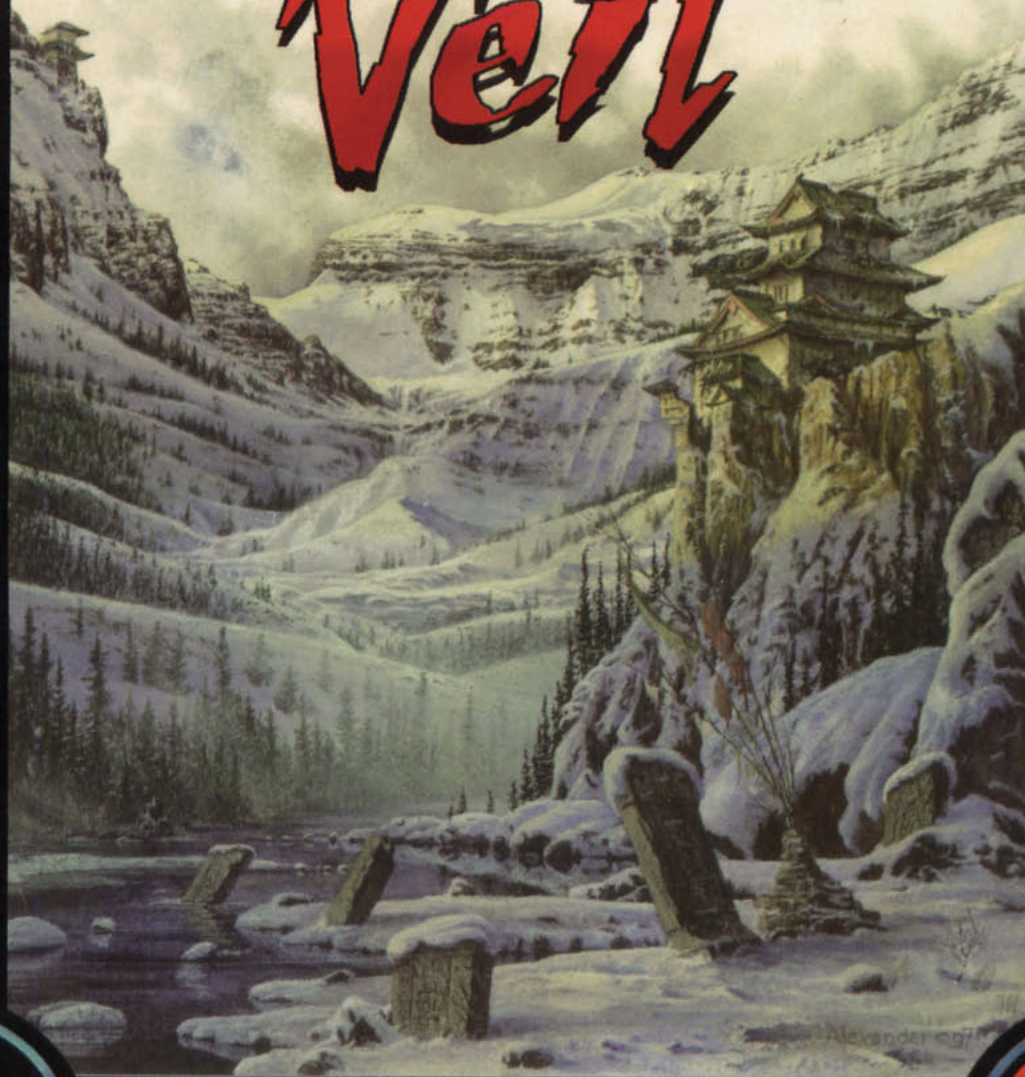


Legend of the Five Rings



Honor's Veil



1-1
Intrigue
Series

Two Adventures of Intrigue and Mystery



Written by Ross Isaacs, Jennifer Mahr, Greg Stolze and John Wick

with art by Rob Alexander, Cris Dornaus and Jennifer Mahr



Legend of the Five Rings

Honor's Veil

The First Episode of the Intrigue Series

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Credits

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"HONOR'S VEIL" BY JENNIFER MAHR & JOHN WICK

"POISON" BY GREG STOLZE

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... is really the pseudonym of a 400 pound, chain-smoking gorilla living in Sweden. He collects orks.

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These adventures were written with the following parameters in mind. Parties comprised of other groups of characters can still use these adventures, but the GM may need to make some slight modifications to adjust the level of challenge appropriately.

- SUGGESTED CHARACTER SCHOOL RANKS: 1-2**
- SUGGESTED NUMBER OF CHARACTERS: 1-3 BUSHI, 1-3 SHUGENJA**
- SUGGESTED CLAN AFFILIATIONS: ANY**
- SUGGESTED REFERENCES: L5R RPG CORE RULEBOOK ONLY**



Introduction

WHAT IS HONOR'S VEIL?

What you hold in your hands is the first of a long line of adventures in the "T" series of "story packs" for the L5R RPG. As you may have guessed by now, "T" stands for "Intrigue." We also plan on doing an "A" (for "Action") series as well as a "S" (for "Shadowlands") series and many others.

We call each chapter of the series an "episode", because they all link up with recurring characters and themes, making each series a long campaign. Game Masters are free to use individual episodes, disregarding the "überplot" of the series, or use each one in succession and watch as the story grows.

We began with the Intrigue series because so many players and GMs have asked us, "How do you run a Magistrate campaign?" Hopefully, this series of adventures will show you exactly how to do that. There is little chance for combat in the two adventures that follow (more in *Murder* than in *Veil*), but there is some. Characters will be better served if they find alternatives to fighting rather than pulling out their katanas at the first opportunity, but sometimes the only way to solve a situation is with steel. Your characters will have to discover when discretion is the better part of valor, and they'll have to learn it the hard way.

Also included in this Episode are rules for the various poisons of Rokugan. We will be providing these rules again (with some expanded examples and doses) in *The Way of the Scorpion*, but since that's so far away, we wanted to whet your appetite with a little taste.

THE THEME OF HONOR'S VEIL

"The price of honor" is a running theme through these two adventures. Samurai are often faced with the decision of doing the "right thing" or the "correct thing," and sometimes the decision is a painful one. When the characters find themselves thrown into these adventures, subtly remind them of this as they slowly discover the horrible truth of the crimes they've stumbled across. All of the "victims" of these stories have paid a price for their honor, either by compromising it, or by holding fast to its principles.

In *Murder at Kyotei Castle*, the characters will discover a samurai avenging her family's brutal murder. The question is: Should they bring her to justice, or has justice been served? Ross presents us with two alternate endings, showing that either decision can be fatal.

In *Honor's Veil*, when the magistrates finally confront the true villain, they know in their hearts that there is no way to bring him to justice. No honest way, that is.

Honor is a tricky thing, and sometimes, there's just no right answer, not even a correct one. That's the theme of this adventure pack. Honor puts a veil over our eyes, forcing us to see the world through shifting shadows, easy answers and preconceived notions. Sometimes, we have to take off that veil to see the world not as it ought to be, but as it is.

And that sight isn't always pretty.

Good luck.

- JW

Murder at Kyotei Castle

BY
**ROSS
A.
ISAACS**





WHERE IS ALL OF THIS?

We initially set *Murder at Kyotei Castle* in area #81 on the map: *Toshi Ranbo Wo Shien Shite Reigisaho* (Violence Behind Courtliness City). However, the beautiful Kintani valley can be set anywhere in Lion territory, as long as it borders Phoenix provinces and is dangerously close to the Crane.

Background

The Kintani Valley, with its fertile farmlands, merchant road and wide river, has long been hotly contested by the families of three clans – the Crane, Phoenix and Lion. In the noble courts and on the battlefield, each fought to control the taxes that would come from dominating the region and reap the increased prestige. Neither could gain the upper hand, and so the three contented themselves with sharing the province. There is a saying among the bushi – he who controls the Kintani controls the northlands of Rokugan. Perhaps that's why the Hantei Emperor divided the region the way he did centuries ago.

Long ago, Tsume Kigura, a simple samurai retainer of the Crane, supported his clan in a tricky political matter. As a reward, the Doji family partitioned a small parcel of land to him in the Kintani Valley. This was a generous gift, for land not only accords respect for a samurai, but provides a steady income and a chance to establish a dynasty. Tsume Kigura built a small stronghold, attracted a body of samurai and remained loyal to the Crane. Near a small, nameless farming village and fertile rice fields, the Tsume family earned a healthy tithe of money and rice. This contented

generations of the Tsume family, until Tsume Retsu.

Tsume Retsu, an aggressive and covetous daimyo, hungered to raise his family's prestige and glory. Retsu preferred the battlefield to the noble courts of Rokugan. Overlooking verdant farmland and commanding a view of the river and merchant road, Kyotei Castle was a strategic prize. It also belonged to Damasu Kojima, a daimyo of the Lion Clan. Twenty years ago, Kojima rode out to meet Retsu's army, the two clashing like waves. When the ravens came to pick over the bodies of the slain, Damasu Kojima was dead and Retsu was victorious. He claimed Kyotei Castle as his own, ordered the execution of the entire Damasu family, and shamed the Damasu samurai to commit *seppuku*. Even after 20 years, the wounds are fresh for the Lion Clan.

Retsu is widely known as a cruel, relentless man. He's aggressive, recently probing the nearby Phoenix lands with samurai patrols. He dominates his family, berating his son for his shortcomings. He cares little for the heimin, collecting taxes in time of drought, flood or pestilence. The only reason Doji Satsume tolerates Retsu is because of his noble birth and his family's history of loyalty.

When Retsu's servants find their lord murdered in his bed, there is little surprise. He'd made many enemies over the years. It is imperative, however, that the murderer be found. The murder of a daimyo is a serious matter, and the Emperor's law must be served. The Lion Clan worries about a stain on their reputation; it's well known that



**TSUME RETSU
(THE VICTIM)**



Ikoma Ujiaki, the clan hot-head, held a grudge against Retsu. The Phoenix Clan worries about the shadow of implication, too; Retsu threatened the lands of Shiba Katsuda. And Doji Satsume, *daimyo* of the Crane, wants not only to avenge a fellow clansman, but to also remove the implication that he had a painful thorn removed from his side.

Synopsis

The adventure begins with the characters visiting Kyotei Castle, either because of their own position in society or as the retainers of an important *daimyo*. The pretext of the visit is the celebration of the Bon Festival. While Retsu is not the most powerful force in the region, he is the most belligerent, and many want to stay on his good side.

After an evening of revelry and freely flowing sake, everyone sleeps off the night's festivities. The next morning, the quiet morning air is pierced by a shriek. Suddenly, the castle explodes in activity. The message quickly goes out – Retsu has been murdered in his bed.

The murder of someone in the samurai caste is cause for alarm and concern, and it demands investigation. Who would dare resort to a base method as murder? As trusted samurai, the PCs are quickly pressed to investigate the crime by various lords.

There are several suspects, for Retsu had few friends and many enemies. Among them are Ikoma Ujiaki, who desired to reclaim the Damasu lands, Shiba Katsuda, who fretted over Retsu's threatening moves, and members of Retsu's own clan. After exploring every avenue, examining the clues, and questioning those involved, the PCs unravel the mystery and destiny has its due.

The identity of the murderer is purposely kept secret, buried deep in the scenario. Players read supplements too, especially when they're warned not to. While being coy might make more work for the gamemaster, it's better than spoiling the mystery early on.

The Investigation

It is time for the Bon Festival. The player characters, along with several notable figures from Rokugani society, enjoy the hospitality of Tsume Retsu at Kyotei Castle. There are several

ways to include them: 1) The PCs, because of some heroic action, could have come to the attention of high society, eagerly invited to various social functions; 2) They could be part of an entourage, accompanying Daidoji Uji or Ikoma Ujiaki; 3) Or they themselves could actually be members of, or retainers to, the Tsume family.

As honored guests at Kyotei Castle, the PCs stay in the guest quarters off the outer courtyard. This is a common practice, to keep potential enemies at arm's length. The rooms are comfortable and clean, pleasantly decorated with a pine and crane scene painted along the ceiling's edge. Each PC receives a personal servant, who discreetly and faultlessly attends to his or her needs.

For the celebration, the outer courtyard has been decorated with colorful lanterns, the banner of the Crane, and flags bearing the Tsume family's mon. Long tables have been laid out for the banquet. To one side stands an elaborate puppet stage, with musicians sitting nearby in the wings.

During the banquet, servants bring trays of sushi, steaming iron pots of *sukiyaki*, piping hot tempura, jars of sake and other delicacies. Retsu makes a generous host and the evening is entertaining. Allow the player characters to engage in hearty conversations and generally have a good time. Retsu sits at the head table, next to his son Takashi, his general Nasu Shizuma, Daidoji Uji, Shiba Katsuda and Ikoma Ujiaki. PCs who have 3 or more Glory are seated in such august company; the rest sit with the other guests.

Towards the end of the evening, Retsu and his son Takashi have an argument. Obviously the latest installment of a long disagreement, but obscure to outsiders, the argument involves something Retsu wants his son to do, but Takashi refuses. Retsu upbraids Takashi, who storms out of the courtyard. Everyone falls momentarily silent, then the party resumes.

As the moon rises in the clear night sky, the party winds down and the guests make their way to their rooms. Back in the guest rooms, the servants lay out comfortable futons and help the PCs undress. Everyone enjoys a restful night's sleep.

The next morning, a hue and cry awakens the PCs. Far off, someone shouts in horror, as though chased by an Oni. Someone angrily barks orders. People run up and down the polished hallways.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- Tsume Retsu**
A Crane *daimyo* with a dangerous agenda
- Tsume Takashi**
Retsu's son and inheritor of his lands
- Nasu Shizuma**
Retsu's general and advisor
- Ikoma Ujiaki**
A visiting Lion ambassador looking for a fight
- Shiba Katsuda**
A visiting Phoenix ambassador looking for peace
- Daidoji Uji**
A Crane with a grim message from Doji Satsume
- Ojuno**
Retsu's small, frail and old maid
- Akiko**
Ochaya (madame) of the Chrysanthemum House
- Kumiko**
Ochaya of the Pine House
- Big Yoji**
Bouncer of the Pine House
- Reika**
Geisha from the Pine House
- Itto**
Ronin and young Reika's *yojimbo*



"WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION?"

Why would the likes of Daidoji Uji ask for the PCs' help? Why would the PCs be appointed special magistrates, when there are other, official magistrates? First, these people are busy and don't have the time to investigate a murder. Second, each of these men are under suspicion. By appointing the PCs as special magistrates, they look like they're trying to solve the murder, while at the same time having some control over the investigation. A magistrate loyal only to the Emerald Champion might go places the daimyos don't want. Finally, family magistrates might be accused of covering up embarrassing evidence, so the PCs have the appropriate distance.

The servants do not show up to bring breakfast or help the PCs dress. Confusion reigns in the courtyard, as horses are quickly saddled and samurai hastily assembled. If the PCs stop a passerby, they learn the grim news – Retsu has been found in his room, stabbed through the heart.

Upon hearing this, the PCs' natural instinct may be to enter the main castle. The gate leading deeper inside is guarded by ten samurai. People are not typically admitted into a castle's inner sanctum without invitation, and the PCs are definitely not invited. If they search for any of the visiting daimyos, they find out that they're at the castle tower. The PCs must content themselves with the news as everyone else gets it. They're not allowed to leave the castle, either.

Visiting Kyotei Castle on their own merits, the PCs are summoned by messenger to the family residence and the site of the murder, accompanied by Daidoji *et al.*

Kyotei Castle Layout

Kyotei Castle commands a strategic position, sitting atop a hill over-looking a merchant road, river and fertile plains. Nearby is the town of Chikuzen, a center of trade which enjoys healthy commerce as well as protection from the castle.

The castle itself is large and impressive, built by one of the great old masters of architecture. It consists of four strongholds – the stables and guest quarters, the barracks, the storehouses and workshops, and the inner tower where the family and close advisors live. Each possesses its own courtyard, protected by a stout gate. A narrow, winding pathway connects the various gates, providing many opportunities to rain arrows, hot oil and stones down upon invaders. The gates are guarded by squads of samurai, and barricaded with heavy beams when closed. Kyotei makes a formidable fortress.

The Tsume family occupies the innermost tower, the most heavily defended section of the castle. Many of the rooms do not have an assigned function – being used for a variety of purposes. Each family member and advisor, however, has his or her own apartment – Retsu, Takashi, Gen. Nasu Shizuma, etc. The topmost floor is where the daimyo holds court. A small, separate building houses the personal staff and kitchen. Another building stores supplies in case of siege. There is a well in the inner courtyard.

In the next courtyard can be found the workshops and warehouses. This is where the Tsume family stores its rice and taxes, as well as where the bowyers, blacksmiths, armorers and others who keep a samurai equipped live and work. It too has its own well.

The next courtyard houses the Tsume family samurai, in a large, two story barracks. Here, bachelor samurai live. A separate kitchen and larder feed the samurai.

The outermost courtyard, where the PCs stay, contains the guest houses and stables. These buildings are the least critical in the event of a siege – if your castle is surrounded, you won't need your horses (except perhaps to eat).

"BEGIN THE INVESTIGATION..."

By mid-morning, a herald seeks out the group, bows and delivers a message to the PC with the highest Glory. One of the other samurai – Ikoma Ujiaki, Daidoji Uji or Shiba Katsuda – summons them to an audience. The gamemaster should select the NPC with whom the PCs are traveling, if they are, or one with whom they have a prior connection (such as previous adventure or clan affiliation). If they have no connection with any of the NPCs, choose the daimyo that impresses them the most. This could cause interesting political intrigue if the PCs end up in service to a rival Clan (e.g., a Scorpion samurai in service to Daidoji Uji, or a Phoenix shugenja working for the Ikoma.)

The messenger leads the group to the second floor of the castle's guest wing, but has no idea why the PCs were sent for. When they arrive at the apartment, a servant admits them into the presence of the daimyo. Seated at the far end of the room, alone except for a scribe, is the daimyo who summoned them. His sword rests in a stand behind him and to the left. The air is still, and heavy with authority.

The daimyo gets directly to the business at hand – Retsu's murder. Directing his remarks to the entire group, he relates the facts and explains the reason they're here. The daimyo tries to impress upon them the gravity of the situation, from his own point of view, then asks them, in a way they cannot refuse, to serve as special Magistrates, investigate the murder and bring the criminal to justice.

The scribe places a folded piece of paper on the floor before the PCs. It is the official orders proclaiming them as special Magistrates and



ROKUGANI FASHION TIP

To keep their kimono closed, everyone in Rokugani uses an obi, or belt sash. Simply put, this is a piece of cloth, often decorated in a variety of patterns, tied around the waist. Rokugani clothing does not have pockets. Pouches, in a variety of styles, from drawstring pouches to Inro boxes, are tied to the obi. At the top, to hide the knot, fashionable people use a *netsuke*: a piece of wood, bone or semi-precious stone carved into a fanciful or beautiful figurine. The cord has an obi bead, used to cinch the pouch closed.

Often, the pouch and obi bead complement each other. For example, an Inro belonging to a Crane samurai might have a crane inlaid in mother-of-pearl with a bright blue obi bead, to show his allegiance. Clearly, an orange obi bead found in the household where blue predominates is a significant clue...

outlining their limited powers, over the daimyo's seal in vermilion ink. Intelligence + Law at a 15 confirms that the arrangement is legal. Before they can question the daimyo, several samurai slide open the door, indicating the meeting's end.

If the PCs take the opportunity to ask a few questions, have them make Awareness + Etiquette rolls (TN 10 to 20, depending on roleplaying) to keep from angering the daimyo. Refer to the appropriate section for each Daimyo, below. Once angered, PCs can expect little help from him later on; suffering three or more failed rolls provokes an attack from his samurai (to protect their lord's honor). The repercussions of such a turn of events is left to the Gamemaster.

This arrangement may present a problem for the PCs later on, because each dignitary is also a prime suspect in Retsu's murder. Make that clear to the PCs by calling for an Intelligence + Courtier or History roll at a 15. If successful, the PCs understand the political dynamics between Retsu and the local daimyo. See "The Daimyos of the Kintani Valley," p. 11.

THE MURDER SITE

The first thing most PCs will want to do is examine Retsu's bedroom and see the body. The family's private residence is in the innermost, and most heavily defended, tower of the castle. One of the Tsume family samurai, a young man, shows the group to the apartment, up three flights of stairs. General Shizuma waits for them.

The floors surrounding Retsu's apartment are nightingale floors, specially designed to creak when anyone walks on them. Ten guards sleep directly outside his door to bar the way. In addition, at the far end of the hall is a hidden sentry post, through which the guard may observe the hall and sound an alarm. No one could get into Retsu's rooms without raising a hue and cry.

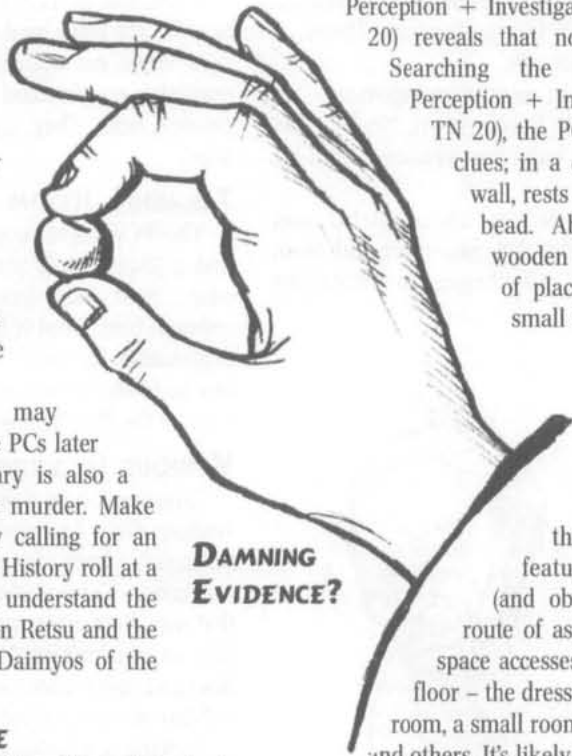
Retsu's bedroom is simple, measuring 12'x12' with scant furniture – an empty sword stand, an

ornate, inlaid chest, and a scroll hanging on the wall. The smell of blood hangs heavily in the room. A servant kneels over a bucket, scrubbing blood from the floor. The tatami mats and futon mattress, now ruined, have been removed. If they ask, Retsu's sword has already been given to his son, Takashi, as new lord of Kyotei Castle.

Directly off the bedroom is Retsu's dressing room, furnished with lacquered chests full of clothes and personal effects. A successful Perception + Investigation skill roll (TN 20) reveals that nothing is missing. Searching the bedroom using Perception + Investigation (again, TN 20), the PCs turn up several clues; in a corner, against the wall, rests a small orange obi bead. Above, one of the wooden ceiling tiles is out of place. This leads to a small cavity between the ceiling and the roof, a gap large enough for a small man to crawl through; indeed, this is a common feature of all castles (and obviously, a popular route of assassins). The crawl space accesses every part of this floor – the dressing room, Takashi's room, a small room, the family shrine and others. It's likely the murderer used this route to avoid the guards posted outside.

Death is handled by the *eta*, the unclean. By the time the PCs are allowed into the crime scene, Retsu's body has been spirited away for cremation. They are not allowed to view the body. Remind players that, unless the characters are Kitsukis (see *Way of the Dragon*), forensics is not an option. There are no autopsies to determine the time of his time of death, no criminology to determine the particulars of the crime. The suggestion that they need to see the body is considered odd and unsavory.

Although they cannot examine the body, the PCs can speak with the servant who found Retsu. If the PCs ask to speak with her, someone runs to fetch her. Throughout the interrogation, have PCs make Awareness + Investigation rolls.



DAMNING EVIDENCE?



GOSSIP HEARD AROUND THE CASTLE

While they're running around the castle, the PCs might hear snatches of conversation, or might ask about the day-to-day operation of the castle. The

PCs might want to interrogate the members of the household – servants, attendants and advisors – the most important being the guards on the battlements. Or an eager witness might volunteer some of the following information:

- Retsu fought often with his son, Takashi. Retsu was a harsh man who demanded much from his son. Takashi was more interested in the finer aspects of samurai life – calligraphy, painting and such. Retsu thought his son was soft and indolent.

- Retsu was planning an attack against nearby Phoenix clan holdings. Only the strong should rule, and he believed Katsuda to be weak. Retsu sent out patrols to probe for weakness in their defenses.

- One of the servants, a young stable boy, claims he regularly saw someone entering the castle late at night. The night of the murder, after everyone went to bed, he saw the same person slip in through the gate. No one can describe the figure, all they saw was a shady, cloaked figure.

Retsu's personal servant, a small, frail, old woman named Ojuno, is brought to them. Looking down at her feet and speaking softly, she recounts what she knows:

- She entered at hour of the Dragon (8 AM) as she always does and found Retsu lying sprawled on the floor in a pool of blood. He was stabbed through the heart. By the time she found him, the body was already cold and stiff.

- Since the death of his wife (during a plague eleven years ago), Retsu slept alone. Occasionally, he has visited the Chrysanthemum House, a geisha house in Chikuzen.

- She confirms the security arrangement – ten guards slept outside Retsu's room, blocking the hallway. There is only one entrance into his apartment.

- After the festivities ended, Retsu met privately with Daidoji Uji. She overheard them yelling, but when she begins to relate the

conversation General Shizuma chastises her. It's obvious, however, that she has something more to say. (Later, the PCs can seek her out and talk to her in private: Daidoji Uji threatened Retsu. He said "If you do not stop this course of action, you will be cast out, your lands seized, or worse. Retsu replied that the role of a bushi is to fight, not talk; "Only death can stay my hand!" he shouted. Uji stormed out of the room, almost knocking her over.)

- She has never seen the obi bead before in her life. The color used by the Tsume family was lapis lazuli, not orange. (She points out several examples, pouches and Inro boxes hanging from people's belts. They are all the same shade of blue.)

TAKASHI'S ROOM

The PCs might search Takashi's room. They find a jeweled hair pin, the kind geisha use to adorn their hair, lying on the floor. If they question him about it later on, at first he has no explanation for this, but if pressed admits that he's had lady visitors in his room on occasion; it's none of the PCs' business.

VARIOUS INTERROGATIONS

Investigation in Rokugan can be challenging. Finding Doji Satsume's tanto sticking out of someone's back is compelling, but hardly conclusive. Unfortunately, clues are often taken that way. How many innocents suffer punishment due to circumstantial evidence? The lords of Rokugan don't care, so long as harmony and stability are maintained.

Lacking conclusive physical evidence, the PCs have to rely on the testimony of various people, in the hope of uncovering incriminating discrepancies. If they care about getting to the bottom of the murder, that is. They may be perfectly happy to convict an innocent, though suspicious, person. No one said justice in Rokugan is fair, and the skillful liar can get away with a lot. In a society that values sincerity over truth, determining who's lying can be very difficult (as well as dangerous). What to do when the lie is discovered can be doubly hard – do the PCs cause a loss of face by challenging the lie?

OJUNO



The Daimyos of the Kintani Valley

Retsu had many powerful enemies among the local daimyos of the Kintani Valley and beyond. The PCs might want to question these personalities, detailed below.

Although everyone is conveniently located at Kyotei Castle for the festival, this isn't the case for long. The day after the murder, the visiting daimyos return home to their own castles. This isn't out of the ordinary – as far as they're concerned they are not involved in the murder. Only the Emperor, or an army, can constrain a feudal lord. Each daimyo assembles his entourage of advisors, samurai and porters into an impressive parade, then leaves. The PCs are powerless to stop them, but can still try. Stopping a daimyo is a sure way to earn his disfavor.

If the PCs want to interrogate the various daimyos, they have to travel to visit each, potentially taking several precious days away from investigation. In the evening, each daimyo sets up a pavilion and rests his troops. It's possible for the PCs to catch up to one of these camps, if they hurry.

IKOMA UJIAKI

The PCs must formally present their written orders making them Special Magistrates to get an audience with Ujiaki. The guards leave the PCs waiting outside the gates, watched over by samurai for several hours; Ujiaki has other, more important business to attend to first, they are told. It is clear Ujiaki holds the PC's office in contempt (even if he gave it to them).

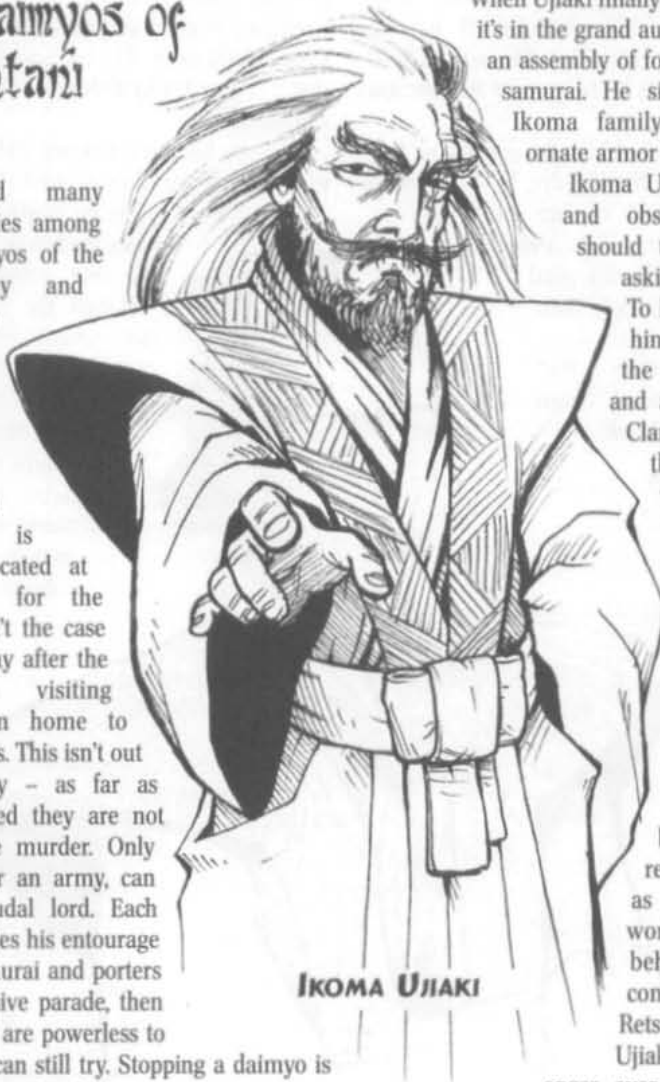
When Ujiaki finally meets with the PCs, it's in the grand audience room, before an assembly of four rows of kneeling samurai. He sits on a dais, the Ikoma family katana and his ornate armor behind him.

Ikoma Ujiaki is hot-headed and obstinate. The PC's should tread lightly when asking him questions. To him, a blow against him is a blow against the entire Lion Clan, and a blow against the Clan is a blow against the Emperor. That is why Ujiaki did not like Retsu. His destruction of the Damasu family, and seizure of their lands, is an affront to the entire Lion Clan. Ujiaki desired revenge, and he argued for a bloodfeud. His request was rebuffed, as Crane negotiators worked furiously behind the scenes to contain the damage Retsu caused.

Ujiaki still burns with anger over Retsu's seizure of Kyotei Castle. The souls of the Damasu family cry out for retribution, he insists; blood can only be paid for with blood. That is his motive against Tsume Retsu.

While he desired revenge, however, Ujiaki wanted to face Retsu on the battlefield, not knife him in the back. He accepted Retsu's invitation because it was politically advantageous to do so, and because he wanted to see as much as he could of the Tsume family's army and defenses; he was planning an attack of his own.

Showing him the orange bead found in Retsu's room makes the blood drain out of his face. The bead is similar to those worn by the Lion Clan, as can be seen by looking around the room; comparing the two, however, shows some subtle



IKOMA UJIAKI



GOSSIP HEARD AROUND THE CASTLE (CONTINUED)

- Retsu arranged a marriage with a Crane girl, to cement Tsume ties to the clan.

Takashi was upset about this, even though the girl was pretty and accomplished. Some wonder if the marriage will go through now.

- The castle ghost killed Retsu.

- Takashi enjoys visiting The Pine House, a local geisha house in the nearby town of Chikuzen.



HANDLING INTERROGATIONS

Throughout the adventure, the PCs will be called upon to make contested Awareness + Investigation rolls against various NPCs.

• **If only one contestant wins**

Either the PC sees through the lie or the NPC gets away with it undetected.

• **If both contestants succeed**

The one who rolled higher wins marginally – the PCs know something's fishy, but doesn't know what.

• **If neither succeeds**

The contest continues – the NPC continues telling his tale, the PCs continue to listen.

differences. He has no explanation for this, other than that it was obviously planted by the murderer to throw suspicion his way. Ujiaki recognizes the bead as being used by the Damasu family.

If the PCs press Ujiaki too far, suggesting that he was involved in the murder, he flies into a rage. In a major loss of face, he throws a tantrum, calling the PCs nefarious slanderers out to vilify his good name. If they obtained their Special Magistrate status from him, he's sure to revoke it. Bad Etiquette rolls by the PC's earn them the enmity of Ujiaki.

SHIBA KATSUDA

The Phoenix clan's castle in the region sits atop a craggy pinnacle that thrusts above the valley floor. A narrow road twisting up to the castle gate. Unlike Ikoma Ujiaki, Shiba Katsuda wants to speak with the PCs; they are welcomed into the castle when they arrive, and taken into Katsuda's presence.

He meets with them attended only by a general and a shugenja.

Shiba Katsuda is a cautious, unflappable man. His family has a reputation for being able warriors, and he has been set to the task of defending the borders of the Phoenix lands in this volatile area. Still, Katsuda values knowledge and contemplation over needless bloodshed.

Recently, Retsu began moving his army close to the border between the two territories. Katsuda worried that Retsu was preparing to attack him, as he attacked the Damasu family twenty years before. His greatest fear, he admits, was that the castle and its library would be burned to the

ground. (Stories among the nobility say that Katsuda possesses an extensive library of scrolls, some as old as the Hantei dynasty. They also say that it is guarded by a terrible Oni, which Katsuda commands.)

Despite his fears, Katsuda did not hire ninjas to murder Retsu. If he wanted Retsu dead, there are ways to do it without resorting to knives. He leaves the implications of that statement hanging, though the shugenja at his side smiles broadly. Katsuda accepted Retsu's invitation to Kyotei Castle to try and convince him to stop his provocative moves. He was prepared to propose an alliance, offering his own daughter to cement the deal.

If the PCs anger Katsuda, by making bad Etiquette skill rolls, he remains calm and exacts no revenge for their slight on his honor. He is a Phoenix, after all.



SHIBA KATSUDA

DAIDOJI UJI

Daidoji Uji is a loyal retainer of Doji Satsume, not a daimyo in his own right. The Crane daimyo sent him to Kyotei Castle to bring a message to Tsume Retsu. To question Uji, the PCs must travel towards Otsan Uchi. His caravan is easy to find, traveling along the Emperor's road. Along the way, Uji can be found either taking a meal in a temporary pavilion or resting at one of the many inns along the road. His attendants take the PCs to see Daidoji Uji with little fuss. As far as Uji is concerned, they are like anyone else requesting an audience – he has nothing to hide and nothing to reveal.

The power of the Crane stems from their political and economic influence, not from battles



won on the battlefield. Retsu's militant actions caused Doji Satsume a loss of face and stirred up trouble in the Imperial court. Great Satsume wanted Tsume's intimidating moves against the Phoenix – an ally of the Crane – stopped. Daidoji's mission was to communicate Satsume's unhappiness with the situation.

Uji believes the way of Bushido is important, but not as important as loyalty to one's clan and lord. A samurai's purpose is to fight, but at the right time. Retsu did not understand this. More than that, he's unwilling to say. All he'll say is that the Crane do not use the tactics Retsu used; more can be achieved at court than on the battlefield. Making a successful Awareness + Investigation roll at TN 20 makes it apparent he's unwilling to discuss Clan business with outsiders or inferiors.

If a PC is a member of the Crane Clan with a Glory of 4 or more, Uji will meet with him alone – if the character requests such an audience. Only then does he reveal more; Uji was instructed to tell Retsu that the Crane Clan would disown him if he continued his threatening moves against the Phoenix; Retsu had become a liability to Doji Satsume. Retsu angrily refused. Daidoji Uji planned to try again the next day, but Retsu was dead. He's not responsible for the murder, because those weren't his instructions.

If the PCs anger Daidoji, by making bad Etiquette rolls, he returns to Otsan Uchi and begins a campaign of slander against the offending characters, characterizing them as people of low character and questionable honor. This can affect future relations with other nobles, at the GM's discretion.

TSUME TAKASHI

Retsu's son, Takashi, is now the lord of Kyotei Castle, and so directly benefits from his father's murder. He is tall and handsome, with keen eyes. Unlike the elder Tsume, Takashi is not a war-monger,

preferring the moves and counter-moves of politics, like any good Crane. Takashi is a busy man with little time for aggravation and little patience for nonsense; he has a holding to manage and taxes to collect. While the PCs stay in Kyotei

Castle, they witness Takashi meeting with local officials, riding out to survey his lands and shaking up the castle staff.

Takashi is not stupid, and knows the repercussions of not answering the PC's questions. If they request an audience, he grants it – an intimate, friendly hunting excursion in the nearby hills. He takes the PCs rabbit hunting, requiring horsemanship and accuracy to succeed (have the PCs make Agility + Horsemanship and Reflexes + Archery). Afterwards, he has arranged for refreshments outdoors.

- Takashi and his father fought often, though he won't discuss the issues.

- The night of the murder, he was alone in his room. His personal servant can attest to that, if necessary (the characters are free to acknowledge that the word of a servant means next to nothing).

- If asked about the scene between himself and his father at the party, Takashi becomes visibly upset. Takashi offered a toast, to the tiger of the Kintani Valley and wished him success in the future. His father insulted him, calling Takashi weak, with a mouth full of sweet words and an empty scabbard.

- An Awareness + Investigation roll contested by



DAIDOJI UJI



BIG YOJI

Profession: Body guard

School Rank: N/A

EARTH 3

WATER 2

Strength 3

FIRE 2

Agility 3

AIR 2

Reflexes 3

VOID 1

Skills: Tetsubo 3,

Defense 2

Weapons: Tetsubo (2k2,
ignore armor)

Armor: None

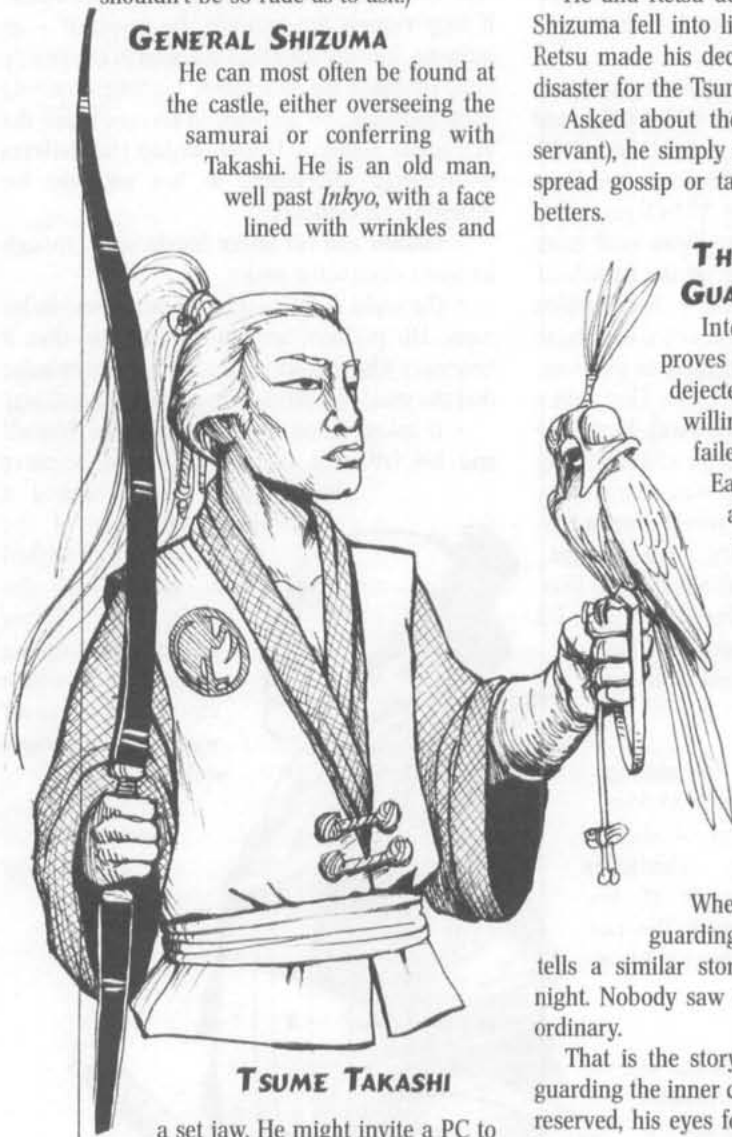
Glory: 0.2

Honor: 1.2

Takashi's Sincerity reveals that he's hiding something – his father's disapproval over Takashi's love for a geisha. (Takashi will not reveal this, and the PCs shouldn't be so rude as to ask.)

GENERAL SHIZUMA

He can most often be found at the castle, either overseeing the samurai or conferring with Takashi. He is an old man, well past *Inkyo*, with a face lined with wrinkles and



TSUME TAKASHI

a set jaw. He might invite a PC to a game of go in the evening.

An ardent follower of Shinsei, he believes there is a time and a place for everything. A strong army should appear weak, the good fighter puts himself beyond the possibility of defeat, and the general who wins without fighting is the superior strategist. This is why General Shizuma disagreed with Retsu's plans to attack the Phoenix – Retsu's army did not meet all the criteria for a successful war. His army was strong, but he didn't have the support of the

Heimin or his own clan. General Shizuma privately feared that the weak-looking Phoenix army was actually much stronger, that their incompetence was a trap.

He and Retsu debated the issue, but General Shizuma fell into line and followed orders once Retsu made his decision. Even though it spelled disaster for the Tsumes, what else could he do?

Asked about the scene with Ojuno (Retsu's servant), he simply states that servants shouldn't spread gossip or talk about the affairs of their betters.

THE PERSONAL GUARDS

Interviewing Retsu's guards proves fruitless. Each of them sits, dejected, in the barracks. No one is willing to speak to them, for they failed to protect their feudal lord.

Each feels nothing but shame and remorse, and know what must be done – *seppuku*; Takashi has granted them permission to preform the ceremony. When asked about the night of the murder, none of the ten samurai can point to anything out of the ordinary. They heard nothing, saw nothing.

THE GATE GUARDS

When the PCs interview the bushi guarding the castle gates, everyone tells a similar story. It was a quiet, star-filled night. Nobody saw or heard anything out of the ordinary.

That is the story told by Mako, the samurai guarding the inner courtyard gate. He is short and reserved, his eyes focused at the distant horizon, his jaw set. He answers questions succinctly. Mako is loyal to the Tsume Clan and to Takashi in particular, and he doesn't believe the PCs have the authority to question him (though he won't say that unless provoked). If the PCs question his loyalty to the Tsume family, the Crane Clan or Takashi, he simply gets up and leaves. Stopping him leads to a fight.

For some months, Takashi has been bribing Mako to let his geisha lover, Reika, slip through the gates late at night and to look the other way.



MAKO

Profession: Bushi
School/Rank: Akodo 3
EARTH 5
WATER 2
FIRE 2
AIR 2
VOID 2
Pertinent Skills
 Kenjutsu 3
 Defense 3
 Archery 4
Armor: Full samurai
TN to be Hit: 20
Damage:
5k2 (+3 to roll)
Glory: 3
Honor: 3.5

Three nights a week, Reika would come disguised as a peasant. He would sneak her inside and she would give him five silvers, which he knew came from Takashi. While Mako appreciates the extra money, his loyalty hasn't been bought – his feelings toward Takashi are genuine. No matter how hard the PCs try, Mako refuses to reveal the truth. Calling him a liar outright initiates an *laijutsu* duel. Nothing can get Mako to reveal what he knows, including death. Although it's possible Reika murdered Retsu, Mako doesn't think the geisha is responsible.

Threatening to report him to his lord, now Takashi, has little effect on him. Some things you have to be willing to die for. Loyalty to one's lord is one of them. Should the PCs later bring up Mako's insincerity and uncooperativeness to Takashi, he simply thanks them for bringing it to his attention and claims he'll deal with it in his own way. In fact, Takashi intends to do no such thing.

THE DRUNKEN SERVANT

The day following the murder, a servant collapsed suddenly, breaking the delicate sake set he carried. If the PCs forget about the event, have them overhear some gossip about it.

If the characters interview the servant, they discover he drank the sake remaining in the bottle taken from Takashi's room. On his way back to the kitchen, he felt dizzy and very sleepy. Then, the world went black. The next thing he knew, he was in his bed and four or five hours had passed.

THE TOWN OF CHIKUZEN

The nearby town of Chikuzen enjoys prosperity from the merchant road and trade along the river, as well as the protection of Kyotei Castle. The farmland produces a bountiful harvest of rice every year, and the local artisans manufacture a variety of goods, so Chikuzen is a wealthy little hamlet. The population numbers almost seven hundred. The buildings are primarily one and two story, wooden with stone foundations. The town is divided into districts – Merchant's Street, the Warehouse District, Geisha Row, Lantern Street, etc. To the north are the ramshackle huts of the *eta*.

Chikuzen is overseen by only one *yoriki*, a samurai named Hotta, who is responsible for settling local disputes, upholding the law and collecting taxes. He oversees a dozen men armed

with stout wooden staves. He's a simple man trying to do a good job. Plain-speaking and well-liked by the residents of Chikuzen, Hotta reports directly to Retsu, though they didn't have much contact. Tsume Retsu was little interested in his peasants, so long as taxes were paid on time. Hotta secretly hopes Takashi is as disinterested as his father.

Rumors

The gamemaster might want to throw out a few red herrings to confound the players. Choose one or more from the list below:

1) A coven of *Uba*, witches, lives in the area, bedeviling local farmers. The farmers complained officially to Retsu. The rumor among the *heimin* goes that Retsu was going to investigate, and the *Uba* magically killed him for it. If the characters look closely as they travel through the area, people have put up charms to ward off evil, as a reaction to the *Ubas'* magic.

2) An evil manifestation of magic was seen making its way towards the castle. The locals put the blame on the Phoenix clan, who had a longstanding disagreement with Retsu. Characters might want to talk to Shiba Katsuda to discuss these allegations. There is no way to prove one way or the other whether or not Retsu was killed by magic.

3) Retsu owed a great deal of money to the Scorpion clan in the form of gambling debts. There is a gambling den in the town and it is run by a Scorpion. Perhaps the Scorpion who held his markers got tired of not being paid, and had him killed. If they interview the Scorpion, he points out that they prefer information and influence – a dead mark is of no use to him. He didn't have Retsu killed.

4) The ninja killed Retsu, on the orders of either the Lion Daimyo, the Phoenix Daimyo or the Crane Daimyo. Retsu was killed because he made waves, he was the nail that stuck out too far and had to be hammered back down. The Lion Clan hated him because Retsu took their land; the Phoenix Clan worried that he would strike them next; and the Crane Clan was embarrassed by Retsu's aggressive, barbaric ways.



Chikuzen Locations

THE GOLDEN PEONY INN

The PCs may decide it is a bad idea to remain at Kyotei Castle during their investigation, or they may wear out their welcome. The Golden Peony Inn is a good place to stay. It's clean, the food is good and the innkeeper keeps to herself. This also makes a good place to talk to a cross-section of Chikuzen's citizens, who visit the Inn's restaurant.

THE GAMBLING PARLOR

This is difficult to find, requiring a guide or a day of asking around town to find it. It's run by Shosuro Aki, a minor Scorpion who sends profits and information to his daimyo.

If the PCs insist on making this an official visit, everyone clams up; they're invited to gamble if they want, but Aki won't give them any information. He'll lie. If, however, the PCs treat this as an unofficial conversation, he admits that Retsu owed him a lot of money. The Scorpion planned to forgive the debt if Retsu gave them information about the inner workings of the Crane. Retsu refused.

The rumor already making the rounds in the underworld is that the Scorpion had Retsu killed for his refusal.

THE TOWN CRIER

Information in Rokugan is spread by town criers, men who wander an area, beating a gong and spreading the news of the day. They are often hired to shout out advertising slogans for local businesses. Shuno (the eldest of the criers) knows all the gossip in town.

THE MARKETPLACE

Here, the merchants of Chikuzen do their business. Because being a merchant is considered a lowly job, most artisans and farmers sell their own goods. The PCs can find practically everything they could want. The merchants are more than happy to talk, if the PCs are willing to spend. Recalcitrant merchants can be swayed by presenting the Special Magistrate orders, or simply intimidating them.

Talking with the local merchants, the PCs discover that the new lord of Kyotei Castle has a geisha lover. It's the talk of the entire town, though none would dare mention it to his face. They also know she is the lover of Itto, a Ronin.

Asking about Itto elicits nothing but praise. He's described as brave, handsome and fierce. No one, however, knows where he comes from or who he once served. If anyone mentions the fall of the Damasu family, someone mentions that Itto sounds like the heroic ronin that always populate folk stories – serving the poor, helping the downtrodden and exacting retribution from evildoers.

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM HOUSE

One of two Geisha houses in Chikuzen, known to be fashionable and expensive, the Chrysanthemum House caters to travelers and rich merchants. It is located on the same street as the Pine House, the only other geisha house in town. The building has a low overhanging roof and latticed windows. A small lantern painted with the establishment's name stands next to the door. Cloth banners flutter above the open windows and door.

The establishment is open in the afternoon and evening. To enter the Chrysanthemum House requires a formal introduction to the *Ochaya*, Akiko. Without anyone to vouch for them, this can prove complicated. Flashing the Daimyo's orders opens the front door quickly, however.

Akiko is 60 years old, has black and grey peppered hair and dresses in the latest fashions. She moved to Chikuzen from Otosan Uchi to open her place. A gossip-monger of the worst sort, she can supply the PCs with information on Chikuzen and its citizens. Akiko tries to get a bit of gossip out of them, too. After paying a bribe or two, she reveals that Tsume Takashi did not visit her house, but that Retsu did.

The next day Akiko seeks them out to report that a ronin by the name of Itto was asking after them.

THE PINE HOUSE

The Pine House is located two doors down from Chrysanthemum House. Indeed, there is little to distinguish the two establishments – both look almost exactly the same, except for the name on the lantern outside. Asking around, the PCs learn that Pine House is considered more exclusive than its rival.

During the daytime, the front door is locked tight and no amount of banging gets a response. Everyone inside is asleep after the revels of the previous night, and no one can be roused to open the door. PCs must come back in the evening.



In the evening, when the PCs knock, a large man named Big Yoji opens the door. He serves as the Pine House's watchman. Even though he's not a bushi, Big Yoji keeps a heavy tetsubo near at hand and will use it if anyone tries any funny stuff. Because he does not recognize the samurai as his door, he tries to send them away. Yoji knows all of Pine House's regular customers. "I do not know you," he growls, "so she doesn't know you."

The official orders appointing them magistrates, however, gets his attention. Big Yoji doesn't want trouble with a daimyo and lets the PCs in once it's clear they're on official business. He shows the PCs to one of the guest rooms, furnished with a low table, cushions, and a pleasing flower arrangement on the table.

The Pine House is run by Kumiko, who also hails from Otsan Uchi. Adhering strictly to tradition, she is not impressed with samurai and shugenja who wave official documents in her face. The PCs have not gone through the formal process of introductions, nor are they here to spend money, so Kumiko is content to let them wait. During that time, no food or drink is brought to them. If a PC, however, sticks his head out into the hall, stops a servant, and orders refreshments, Miss Kumiko presents him with an expensive bill as they leave. The lilting sounds of the samisen, boisterous laughing, and snatches of conversation drift on fragrant air scented with a hint of sandalwood.

After a long period of waiting, Kumiko arrives. She also appears to be in her 60s, heavily made up in

the traditional white pancake make-up, arched eyebrows and bright red lips. She - like her competitor - is elegantly dressed.

Should the PCs become bored and decide to snoop around, they find men enjoying food and entertainment. It doesn't take long for them to be discovered by servants, and Big Yoji and Miss Kumiko frown on such nosiness. After only a few minutes, Big Yoji comes by to admonish them. If an argument breaks out, that brings Kumiko, who wants to quickly and quietly dispose of the annoyance.

She relates all she knows about the Tsume family:

- Tsume Takashi is currently seeing one of her geisha, a girl named Reika. Kumiko is the one that set up the relationship.
- Takashi was here for a party with some of his friends. He was not a customer here, though the host is a old and dear customer (whom she will not name).



Reika served the party. The two must have hit it off, because the next morning

Tsume Takashi asked to be officially introduced to Miss Kumiko. She accepted, and he came later in the week. Every time, he asked to see Reika.

- He sent Reika presents, which Kumiko accepted on Reika's behalf, and had Reika

send back tokens of her affection. Reika pretended she was only

ITTO'S SECRET

A loyal samurai of Damasu Kojima, now dead these twenty years, Itto followed Reika while others committed seppuku to follow their lord into death. He spent years watching over her, making sure she had what she needed, ensuring her safety and waiting to approach her. In the meantime, he took odd jobs, defending local caravans and fighting brigands, but nothing that would take him away from Reika.

When she was old enough, Itto approached her and told her the truth about her ancestry.

Roleplaying Itto:

On the surface, you're likable and sincere. Everyone knows they can come to you for help with a problem, which stands you in good stead with the villagers. But underneath this "Robin Hood" exterior, you are consumed with duty and anger.



ITTO

Clan/Family: Lion/Goskei

Profession: Ronin Bushi

School & Rank: Akodo 5

EARTH 5

WATER 5

FIRE 5

Agility 4

AIR 5

VOID 5

Skills:

Archery 5, Defense 5,
Kenjutsu 5, Hunting 4, Bard
4, History 4, Tea Ceremony 5

Weapons: Katana (5k2)

Armor: None

Glory: 0 (5)

Honor: 3

Wounds

- 0

- 1

- 2

- 3

- 4

Down

Out

Dead

doing her job, but it was obvious she felt something for the young samurai.

• In addition to Tsume Takashi, Reika is frequently visited by a Ronin named Itto. Itto is widely known around Chikuzen (See Itto, below). He would come practically every day. Kumiko frowned on the relationship, because a lowly Ronin could never provide for Reika. Indeed, he wasn't allowed to actually "visit" with Reika. The two would get together during the day, while Reika was out around the town, and chat. Sometimes, they'd go riding together.

• Reika did not come with a clan name. She was purchased years ago and had no family name.

• If the PCs ask to see Reika, Kumiko refuses. Reika is with a customer, she says. If however, they press the matter – either with a bribe or intimidation – Kumiko sends Big Yoji to get her. He returns a few minutes later with a sheepish look on his face – Reika is nowhere to be found.

ITTO

After speaking with the gate guard and the Kumiko, the PCs should begin to piece things together, and may suspect Reika as the murderer. Kumiko, Akiko and various people around Chikuzen mentioned a ronin named Itto who was enamored of Reika.

Itto does odd jobs around town, usually protecting the caravans of local merchant, guarding warehouses, and generally acting as a problem solver. Sometimes, he drives off brigands hiding in the hills. Everyone in the town likes Itto, whom they see as their town's true protector. He has a good reputation. If you have a problem, get in touch with him.

Some wonder why Itto didn't find himself another master, or travel to a bigger city. Some suspect he offended some important person. Others believe he lives with a death mark over his head. Because he was only a minor samurai in the Damasu family, his true identity is unknown.

If asked where he lives, there is an equal chance of the person not knowing, directing them to his shack, or to his favorite bar. The PCs can meet with Itto easily enough – at Golden Peony Inn. He has no reason to hide from them. During the encounter, Itto is cool as a cucumber. He's courteous, even friendly, offering to buy the PCs a jar of sake. The PCs cannot find out, no matter how clever they are, which lord he served, where

he lives now, or where he was raised. He is simply a wave-man, entitled to his privacy.

Asked about Reika, he becomes defensive. It's not illegal to visit a geisha. He likes her, because she doesn't judge him, doesn't care about his fallen status. She makes him laugh. But that old dried up raisin of an Okiya only wants money, and he can't always afford to pay. The two of them struck up a friendship, which also isn't illegal, though tongues do wag.

ITTO'S ATTACK

After the PCs meet with Kumiko at the Pine House, Itto worries about the turn the investigation has taken. The PCs have obviously discovered the link between Reika and Takashi, and Itto wants to throw them off the scent. He knows a lot of people in Chikuzen, including the local unsavory element and several brigands. Explaining that he's collecting an unpaid debt to a moneylender, he assembles a gang of thugs to find and rough up the PCs.

The next time the PCs are on the street at night, the thugs attack them, three or four blocking their way at one end of the street, while others cut them off at the opposite end.

Itto is among the attackers. A successful Perception + Kenjutsu roll (TN 25) reveals that he studied at the Akodo school. Once the battle clearly swings in favor of the PCs, Itto tries to slip away to avoid capture while the thugs scatter to avoid death. The local *yoriki* never show up. If the PCs corner Itto, he fights to the death. If he escapes, however, he makes his way back to his hut and Reika, where the PCs find him at the end of the scenario.

If the PCs aren't on the streets at night, Itto orchestrates a reason, sending the town crier to fetch them. The town crier tells them that someone has some information, but doesn't want to be identified. They are to meet in the warehouse district. A few minutes after they arrive, Itto and the thugs make their move.

ANOTHER MEETING WITH TAKASHI

By this time, the players may suspect Takashi played a part in the murder – accidentally allowing an assassin inside the castle or himself hiring her to murder his father. They might want to meet with Takashi and present their evidence, to get him to fill in the missing details or confess his role. Getting an audience with Takashi shouldn't prove difficult; as soon as he's informed



of their request, he agrees. He can be found practicing calligraphy, enjoying a cup of tea, practicing with the boken or some similar activity. Luckily, there is no one close enough to hear their accusations.

Once they lay out what they know, Takashi acquiesces and tells them about his relationship with Reika. He fell in love with her on their first meeting. His father did not approve of their relationship. During the festival, they argued about Takashi going away. Retsu decided to send Takashi to Otosan Uchi. Takashi refused and stormed off. Reika was in his room that night.

He assumes Reika was an assassin sent to murder his father. She'd never given any hint of what she planned. He can only point to his father's obvious enemies as the perpetrators. Ruled by his heart, even at this point, Takashi makes the incredible request that the PCs not pursue Reika.

If the PCs do not want to see Takashi, before the final confrontation he seeks them out. He wants to get everything out in the open, so there is nothing to disgrace him or his family. He figured out on his own what happened – the drugged wine, the obi bead, etc. – and is no longer willing to protect her. If the PCs ask him where Itto lives, Takashi tells them the location.

The Resolution

Since the fall of the Damasu family, Itto has made his home in a peasant's hut in a secluded grove. Near a shrine dedicated to Osano-Wo, the hut enjoys privacy and tranquility; perhaps it was once a hermit's hovel. The hut is set off the main path to the shrine, behind a stand of trees. Simply constructed out of grass and wood, with a rough-hewn wooden door, it is the picture of rustic tranquility.





Reika spends her days here, waiting for Itto to tie up unfinished business before they flee south. She busies herself with simple chores, practices with a boken and sings songs to lighten her heart. If the PCs take longer than four days to find Reika, she and Itto have already fled. The hut is empty, though showing signs of recent occupation. They will have to search the countryside for them.

Otherwise, she is inside the hut fixing a snack. She welcomes the PCs inside with poise and courtesy. The hut is as simple inside as it is outside. A tiny fire crackles in a central fire pit under a hole in the roof; small fish fry on skewers next to an iron teapot. Reika sits in front of the fire, looking modest and beautiful. Demurely, she offers them tea and fish.

Off to the side, neatly folded, is a futon. Hidden within the folds is a katana, the Damasu ancestral blade. Next to that is a small traveling bundle. Along the back wall stands a shrine to Reika's parents – their wooden funereal tablets, burning incense and a bowl of oranges.

If the PCs accept her offer, Reika performs a tea ceremony for them.

Reika knows why the PCs are here. "Are you going to kill me here?" she asks quietly. This is indeed what is expected of the PCs, for death is the only punishment for the murder of one of the samurai caste. But before she dies, Reika wants to tell her story. For there to be a reckoning, she must confess.

THE FULL STORY

Two decades before, Tsume Retsu defeated the Damasu family in battle and seized their castle as his own. Her father and brothers died on the battlefield. Their wives killed themselves rather than be captured. Of the surviving samurai who served her father, Damasu Kojima, most committed seppuku. Only the Damasu family's children survived – two boys and a little girl. Retsu had the boys killed, to prevent their growing up to avenge their father's death. Retsu sold the daughter into slavery, thinking she would be taken far away. Instead, the young girl ended up employed at the Pine House.

But not all of Damasu's samurai died. A few became *ronin*, among them a young samurai named Itto. He followed Reika and watched over her from a distance. When she was old enough, he began to visit her. The *ochaya* of Pine House did not approve of the poor wave-man, but Itto and

Reika became friends. During their visits, Itto taught Reika about her heritage. She learned of her noble birth, of the Damasu family history, and the destruction of her family by Tsume Retsu. Thus Itto planted the seeds of vengeance.

The Pine House is the most popular geisha house in the province, and Tsume Takashi visited here frequently. Reika got close to the young Tsume, playing sweetly, telling stirring stories and serving him well. As happens in Rokugan, Takashi fell in love with Reika. He sent her gifts and she sent tokens as a sign that she favored him. She encouraged his romantic feelings, until she became a trusted member of his entourage. All the while, she and Itto plotted their revenge.

The night of the murder, Reika approached the servant's gate of Kyotei Castle. She'd done this many times, and the guard, Mako, let her in; he was well paid to turn a blind eye. She slipped a potion into Takashi's sake and when he was sleeping deeply, she snuck out. Itto had given her a detailed description of the castle's layout. To slip past the nightingale floors and the guards at Retsu's door, she crawled through the space between the roof and dropped ceiling.

Once inside Retsu's bedroom, she awakened him. He knew her only as Takashi's lover. In hushed tones, Reika revealed her true identity. Then she stabbed him through the heart. He grabbed her, tearing off her Inro box, then died. She picked up the netsuke and box, but left the bead. Then she left the way she came and ran straight for Itto's hut.

FINAL CONFLICT

The tale is told, and now destiny must have its due. If the PCs move to cut her down for her crimes, Reika becomes furious. Jumping up, she draws her hidden katana to hold off the PCs. She mocks them and says "I'm not Hinin, to be killed like a fly. I'm samurai. And you're fools!" She doesn't intend to die without a fight.

If the PCs instead plan to bring her back to Kyotei Castle to stand trial, Reika becomes furious. Jumping up, she draws her katana hidden nearby. She laughs and says "I'm not samurai. I'm hinin. And you're fools!" She does not intend to go back.

If Itto is alive, in either event, he arrives just in time to fight by her side.

A third option: Moved by her story and sympathizing with her actions, the PCs allow Reika to escape. Officially, the mystery remains



unsolved. The daimyos accept that answer, though are not happy about it. Takashi never mentions the matter to anyone. Reika leaves with Itto (if he's still alive), fleeing far south. And the PCs must live with their decision, worrying that some day someone may find out.

This is the irony of the story, Reika acts according to her bushi heritage, but lives under hinin law.

TSUME TAKASHI

As the sole son of Retsu, he stands to inherit his father's lands. Takashi is more interested in the finer pastimes of nobility than with his father's austerity and traditionalism. He prefers the thrust and parry of politics to that of the battlefield. But do not mistake his attitude for weakness; Retsu demanded much of his son, and sent Takashi to the Kakita School. His one mistake was falling in love with a Geisha.

Roleplaying Takashi: Play him as self-assured, very aware of his position in society and his responsibilities. He's upset at the death of his father, but not too upset. Takashi is a capable leader, and acquits himself well despite his personal loss.

Clan/Family: Crane/Tsume

Profession: Samurai; head of the Tsume family

School & Rank: Kakita 3

Earth 2

Water 2

Fire 3

Air 3

Void 3

Skills: Kenjutsu 4, Defense 4, Courtier 4, Bard 3, Archery 1, Etiquette 3, Sincerity 3, Iaijutsu 3

Weapons: Katana, Wakizashi

Glory: 6

Honor: 3

DAMASU REIKA

The last surviving member of the Damasu family, Reika is bent on revenge. She leads a dual life. By night, she serves her customers, pouring tea, serving food and making polite conversation. By day, she visits Itto's hut to learn Bushido and Kenjutsu. She does not love Takashi, only using him to get close to his father, to exact her revenge.

Roleplaying Reika: She's resigned to her fate. Destiny demanded that Retsu pay for his crimes against her family. She sees herself as an instrument for divine retribution. That doesn't mean she cares nothing for her own life. If she

can convince the characters to let her live, through her feminine wiles or an appeal to their sense of justice, she'll do it.

Clan/Family: Lion/Damasu

Profession: Geisha

School Rank: N/A

Earth 2

Water 2

Fire 3

Air 3

Awareness 4

Void 3

Skills: Bard 5, Dance 4, Etiquette 4, Music (Samisen) 4, Poetry 4, Tea Ceremony 3, Knife 2, Kenjutsu 2, Seduction 5, Stealth 5

Glory: N/A

Honor: 2

Gamemaster Notes

GEISHA

Geisha are the epitome of femininity in Rokugani society, the physical embodiment of beauty, poise and culture. They spend decades in rigorous training in dance, singing, etiquette and playing the samisen. Their job is to entertain wealthy patrons, often bushi, offering them a fragrant fantasy. A weary samurai can have his needs expertly tended to, as a geisha serves him dinner, pours him sake, tells him entertaining stories, sings him beautiful songs and listens to his problems. Geishas strive to be the perfect companion, not prostitutes. If a geisha sleeps with a patron, it is her decision – not part of her fee. Geisha are, however, still only entertainers and thus hinin. Men look up to them for providing an invaluable service, while women look to them for the latest fashions.

The typical geisha house consists of several private rooms and apartments for the geisha. The manager is called an *okasan*, who acts, for all intents and purposes, as a western "madam": she orders food and arranges entertainment for her guests, and her customers usually have a business relationship with her. *Okasan* generally do not take new customers without a formal introduction.

In Rokugan, unfortunately, it is common for poor peasants to sell unwanted daughters into indentured servitude. The family receives much needed money and has one less mouth to feed, and for the girl it's better than infanticide.



Merchants travel the land buying young girls and selling them to castles as servants or to okasan as future geisha. Occasionally, farmers approach the castle or okasan directly. The young girls move into dorm-like facilities called *okiya*. Every *okiya* has a manager, who reports to the okasan and acts like a den mother – setting up lessons, seeing to their well-being and taking care of the girl's personal affairs. An apprentice geisha's life is hard, filled with long hours, rigorous training, and the occasional beating. For the okasan, a geisha is an investment. She expects to earn a great deal of money from her customers. A geisha's life is carefully managed, with care not unlike a Unicorn samurai tending his stable of horses.

The geisha will live out her life in the *okiya* unless a wealthy patron agrees to assume responsibility for her. Courting a geisha is a rigorous process. After many visits, small presents are exchanged; his gifts are expected to be expensive; the geisha shows her affections by sending a fingernail clipping or a lock of hair. Geisha often string along several suitors at the same time, so the Yasuki sell fingernails and hair for just this purpose. After months of professing his love, the geisha might allow her lover to stay the night. After years, the patron invites his geisha to move into his household. This is an open arrangement, similar to keeping a concubine, and the samurai's wife is expected to go along with it.

When Reika murders Retsu, she and Tsume Takashi are well on their way to this kind of arrangement.

JUSTICE AND RETRIBUTION

Justice in Rokugan is different from what it is in our day and age. The Emperor establishes the laws, and the bushi must enforce them. Punishments tend to be harsh, to prevent others from committing a similar crime. The farmer who is beheaded for touching a samurai's sword serves as an example to other Heimin. The daimyo and samurai are responsible for meting out justice. There are no rules of evidence, no reasonable doubt.

What does this mean to the adventure? The determination of guilt or innocence rests solely with the player characters. All that matters is their perceptions. Innocent peasants are convicted all the time, because a samurai says they're guilty. Truth is not part of the equation. They may even knowingly punish an innocent, because it's politically expedient (or they can't be bothered to

find the real murderer). Once a player character feels he has enough evidence to satisfy his own sense of justice he is free to mete out punishment. If a player character believes the stable boy is guilty of the murder because he has an evil look about him, then that's that. Gamemasters are forewarned.

The law applies differently to the various castes. For the samurai, there are courts, magistrates and appeals. The rules of evidence are higher. If the PCs accuse Ikoma Ujiaki of killing Retusko, they had better have good evidence, and he can appeal to Akodo Toturi or the emperor. The PCs might even be dissuaded from making the accusation, for political reasons.

But if the criminal is Heimin or Hinin, the PCs can kill them outright, citing their guilt. It's very rare anyone will second guess their actions. What's one more dead farmer or hinin? Peasants do their best to avoid or please the bushi, lest they pay for it with their lives.

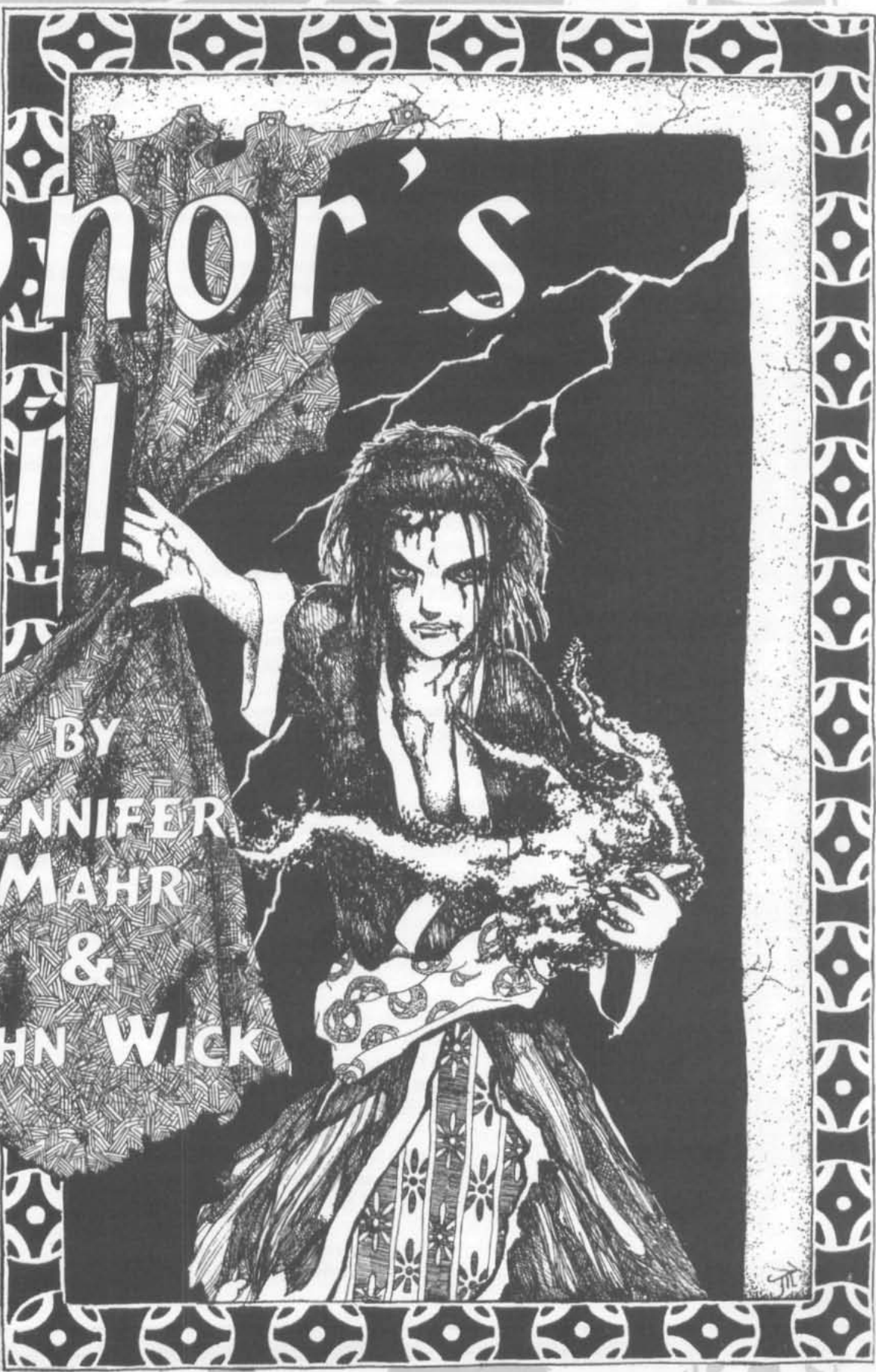
What makes the story of Reika such a tragedy is that, although of noble birth, she is a geisha, a hinin. On the one hand, she has no legal rights or recourse. On the other, she should. The PCs are boxed in. If they kill her as a hinin, others may criticize them – after all, Reika was samurai. If they bring her back for trial, others may complain – she's a lowly geisha, no matter her noble birth. If they admire and respect Reika for exacting retribution and let her go, they're guilty of shirking their responsibility; if anyone should find out, they'd be in big trouble themselves. No matter what the PCs do, there is no clearly "right" answer.

The players, however, can take solace in the knowledge that they participated in one of Rokugan's greatest romantic tragedies – The Murder at Kyotei Castle.



Honor's Veil

BY
JENNIFER
MAHR
&
JOHN WICK





LINKING HONOR'S VEIL WITH KYOTEI CASTLE

There are many ways to link (or turn *Honor's Veil* into a direct sequel to *Murder at Kyotei Castle* (and vice versa).

Both adventures occur in areas very close to (or directly within) Lion territory. If the characters are magistrates, they may be working their way through Akodo lands (collecting taxes and what-not), and as they stay at the respective castles, the events unfold. Or the characters may impress a Lion daimyo to such a degree in one adventure that he decides to call upon their services in the next. This particular option works best if you play *Kyotei Castle* first, of course.

Another tack to take may be to directly link characters from one adventure to another. If Reika escapes their clutches in *Kyotei Castle*, they may follow her flight, running smack dab into the events in *Honor's Veil*. Alternatively, perhaps Asano Takashi is going to visit his Uncle Ino and events unfold from there.

The rain outside dripped between the loose planks that made up the rag-tag roof of the tiny shrine. Lightning flashed through the tears of the fabric that barely kept out the chilly wind and rain.

Hachi was on his knees in the mud, his hands and eyes shut tight in prayer. His family sword was at his side, half covered in the thick mud. As the rain fell on his face, washing away his tears, he tried to keep his mind away from the thoughts bubbling in his brain.

He thought of her in the shallow grave they would dig for her. Her beautiful, beautiful face would be ruined. Her tender skin would be bloated with blood.

And her sweet lips ...

He heard the thin cloth behind him suddenly swept away and felt the rain on his back. He turned, just as lightning flashed, half-blinding his eyes.

And there she stood, covered in mud and blood, her clothes tattered and her eyes wild like the eyes of a Crab berserk. He could smell sulfur and saw magical fire smoldering in her left hand.

"You killed me, Hachi," she said as lightning flashed behind her again. "And now, I'm going to kill you."

He screamed just as his hand reached for his family's sword and the eldrich fire flew from her fingertips ...

Honor's Veil is an adventure designed for three to five players. It can be completed in one or two sittings, although it can be drawn out further. Little or no combat is required to successfully complete the adventure, but it does demand heavy role-playing and problem solving from the players. It begins with the characters investigating the disappearance of a Crane and Scorpion samurai, and ends with a brutal lesson in the nature of honor. The adventure is presented in a non-linear format which allows the players to wander around the setting without being forced the narrative by the GM.

Part One introduces you to the background of the adventure. Pay close attention to the details, for they are important to the solution of the adventure. Not only are the details themselves important, but the way you present them to the players is equally important. Part Two introduces you to the setting of the adventure. It provides you with the maps of the pertinent areas and with the

clues the characters will find. It also provides you with the Traits of the NPCs involved in the story. It also tells you how to present the settings and clues to the players so they will be able to put them together to solve the puzzle. Finally, a collection of player hand-outs are at the end of the adventure.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Matsu Ino

A Lion lord with a dark secret that must be hidden at all costs

Shosuro Kujiko

A Scorpion shugenja who has fallen in love with a Crane samurai

Kakita Hachi

A Crane samurai who must kill his Scorpion lover

Kakita Hojin

An accomplice to Lion fratricide

Ikoma Katsu

An honorable *yoriki* and possible ally

Sakkuan

The village headman who is convinced he's seen a ghost

Matsu Kuno

An old general who knows a bit too much, but suspects nothing

Yojiro, Habu, Hoichi

A Scorpion magistrate and his two *yoriki* looking for the truth

Dogan

A monk who is hiding more than he knows

Norii & Tujii

Two grave diggers who think they've seen a ghost

Background

The story begins ten years ago. A young, ambitious Lion samurai made a deal that sold out his family and his honor. Now, ten years later, a beautiful and cunning Scorpion shugenja has discovered his secret and has paid the ultimate price for her discovery.

Matsu Ino was the younger brother of Matsu Chonoku. Chonoku was a brilliant general and a man of honor. Ino, on the other hand, was not. He had known all his life that he would always be living in Chonoku's shadow, and ten years ago, he decided to do something about it.



He made a deal with a Crane daimyo – Kakita Hojin – to betray his brother. Hojin agreed and the two made plans to do away with the Lion. Hojin made hostile gestures toward Lion territory that was under Chonoku's jurisdiction. Chonoku prepared for war. He sent his most trusted lieutenant to scout out the land. Of course, his most trusted lieutenant was Ino. Ino made certain the information Chonoku had was completely erroneous, and Chonoku marched his army into certain defeat. After Chonoku's death, his lands passed on to his brother. As per their agreement, Ino faced the Crane in single combat. Fortunately for them, the duel was non-lethal, and Ino saved a vast majority of the land his brother lost, thus saving his family's honor as well as land.

For ten years, Ino has been the lord of the land. His court is one of the wealthiest in the Lion provinces (thanks to cooperation with his neighboring Cranes) and all attest to their lord's generosity and charity.

Ten years pass ...

A young and beautiful Scorpion shugenja arrived in Chonoku's court last summer. Her name was Shosuro Kujiko and when she arrived, she caused quite a stir in the Lion's court. All the eligible samurai wished to court her, but the samurai who won her favor was a Crane: Kakita Hachi. Their romance was regarded by the court with quiet fascination. Every day, the courtiers looked forward to Hachi's poems of adoration, and it trying to find Kujiko's name hidden somewhere in the poem became a daily exercise for the court. Unfortunately



for both lovers, Kujiko's nature would soon bring their affair to a bloody and tragic end.

In addition to gaining the favors of a handsome Crane samurai, Kujiko was also looking for a way for the Scorpion Clan to gain political leverage on Ino when she stumbled on old strategy plans for the famous battle where Ino's brother had been killed. Although Kujiko was a shugenja and not a samurai, she was also very versed in the tactics and strategy chapters of *The Tao of Shinsei* and recognized fundamental discrepancies between the published account of the battle and Chonoku's battle plans. Needing more evidence to confirm her suspicions, she turned to a samurai she felt she could trust: Hachi.

Hachi confirmed her suspicions, and then sent correspondence to his lord

Hojin to inform him of the information they had uncovered. Hojin was suddenly in a panic and sent swift orders to Hachi to silence the shugenja at once. He was to kill her, hide the body, then create the illusion that they had run away together.

Reluctantly, Hachi snuck into her chambers, stole a vial of poison from her secret cache and poisoned her tea for their meeting that evening. After drinking the tea, a moment of realization flashed in Kujiko's eyes and Hachi saw that she knew what he had done. The poison's effect was almost immediate, and before he could

GM Aids

Don't forget: at the back of this adventure pack are six pages of things that will help you run both this adventure and *Kyotei Castle*.

Page 43–44 have headshots and brief descriptions of the major NPCs in both adventures, suitable to be shown to the players as memory aids: "You walk into the throne room and see *this* guy."

Pages 45–48 are maps of Kyotei Castle, the Kintani valley near it, and also Suboten Castle (where *Honor's Veil* takes place) and its immediate surroundings.



THE DAIMYO'S KARO

One of the duties of the daimyo's *karo* (chief assistant) is to handle day-to-day affairs, such as the disappearance of two of the court's ambassadors. Both daimyos are much too busy to be concerned with such trivial affairs. The characters will probably never speak to Kakita Hojin or Matsu Ino, but will speak instead to their *karos*, who – incidentally – are just as busy as their respective daimyos.

explain, she had fallen face-down onto the paneled floor.

Hachi waited until the moon had crawled behind a cloud, then he carried the lifeless body of his lover out to two gravediggers – Norii and Tujii – and paid them quite handsomely to dispose of the Scorpion's body quickly and quietly.

It doesn't take a good deal of intelligence to dig a grave, and Norii and Tujii fit the qualifications perfectly. They carried the girl out to a secluded cave and started digging a nice deep grave.

They were thirty minutes into the work when the body they were supposed to be burying sat up.

Hachi may have been a brilliant swordsman, but he knew next to nothing about poisons. The toxin he choose only paralyzes the victim, making them appear dead, but not actually killing them.

The two grave diggers watched as the shugenja they believed to be a corpse began weaving a fire spell to blast the two into the next world, and at the last possible moment, Norii swung his pick and caught the shugenja in the head, sending her to the ground with a crushing blow to the skull. Norii and Tojii took off at full gallop, leaving behind their tools and what they believed to be a twice dead ghost.

They were wrong on both counts.

Later that night, after Kujiko wandered through town drenched in her own blood calling out, "Why did you kill me?", she

arrived in the secret and forgotten temple where she and Hachi used to meet. She confronted her lover there and unleashed a rain of fire on the samurai just as he cleaved her with his family's sword.

This time, Kujiko was dead for good.

Bloodied, burned and near insanity, the poor Crane samurai dragged his lover's body to the nearby river, tied her to his family armor and threw her into the murky depths. Then, he shaved his head, called himself "Kuji" and disappeared into the local monastery. He has been there ever since. The monks don't ask any questions and "Kuji" tells them no lies.

The morning after the whole incident, word began to spread about the two lovers' disappearance. While it could not be proved, rumor had it that they ran away together. There were love letters found in Kujiko's room, but there was also a single drop of blood found on Hachi's window sill.

What really happened?

That's what the Scorpion want to know.

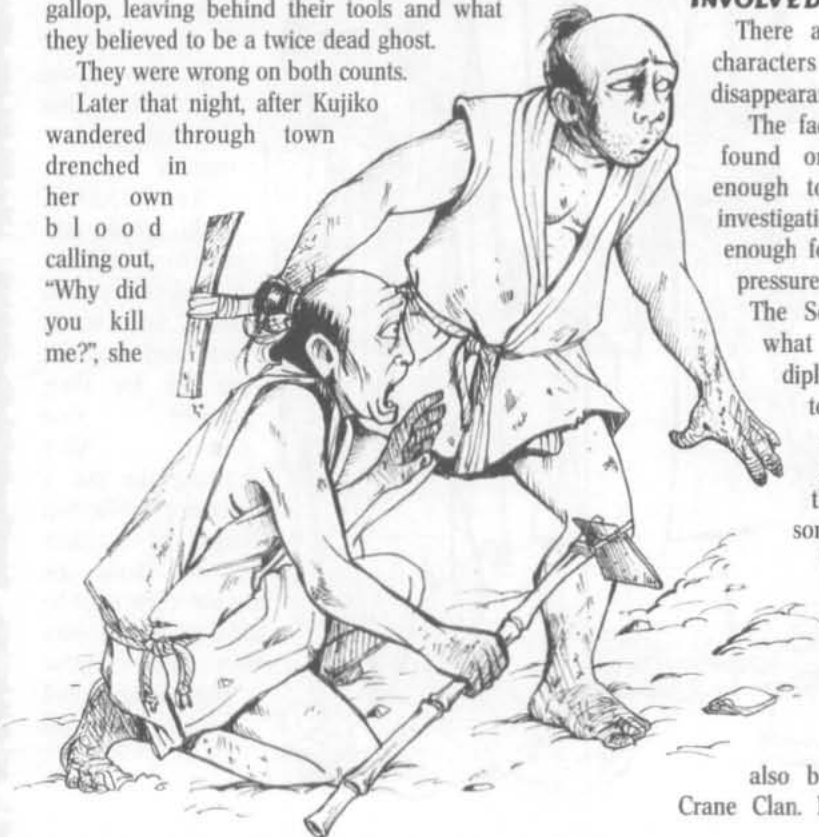
HOW TO GET THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED

There are many ways to get characters involved in the disappearance of Kujiko and Hachi.

The fact that there was blood found on Hachi's window is enough to invoke a magistrate investigation. However, if that's not enough for your players, political pressure can be just as effective.

The Scorpion want to know what happened to their diplomat, and they're willing to call in some favors to find out. Her last correspondence revealed that she was working on something real juicy, so her bosses want to know if she got a little too close and someone was forced to keep her from getting closer.

The characters can also be called upon by the Crane Clan. Hachi was supposed to



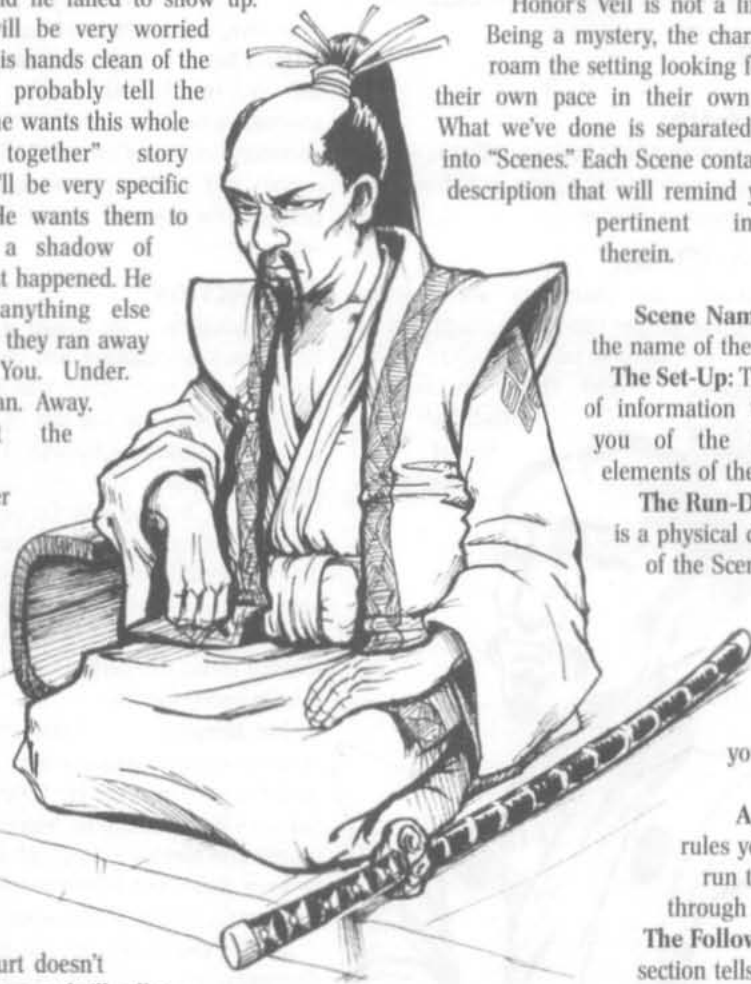


report back to Crane territory (to keep him out of sight), and he failed to show up. Kakita Hojin will be very worried about keeping his hands clean of the affair, so he'll probably tell the characters that he wants this whole "run away together" story investigated. He'll be very specific about it, too. He wants them to prove beyond a shadow of doubt that's what happened. He doesn't want anything else proved, just that they ran away together. Do. You. Under. Stand? They. Ran. Away. Together. Get the picture?

On the other hand, Matsu Ino may also be used as an impetus to get the characters involved.

He has to make sure that his court doesn't fall under suspicion, so he'll call in a few investigators to find out what happened. Of course, he'd have the whole thing covered up himself if he knew what the characters' investigations may lead to ...

If the characters are Scorpions, they will probably be given the low-down on the situation. Kujiko was working on a lead and disappeared. The Scorpions don't know what kind of lead, but they do know it involved Matsu Ino. The Scorpion Clan may even hire ronin to investigate the court. After all, when Lions see Scorpions, they smell trouble. When they see ronin, all they smell is unwashed trash. Sometimes the best way to hide in plain sight is to send someone else to do the job.



RUNNING HONOR'S VEIL

Honor's Veil is not a linear story. Being a mystery, the characters will roam the setting looking for clues at their own pace in their own direction. What we've done is separated the story into "Scenes." Each Scene contains a brief description that will remind you of the pertinent information therein.

Scene Name: This is the name of the Scene.

The Set-Up: This is a list of information to remind you of the important elements of the Scene.

The Run-Down: This is a physical description of the Scene you can use to bring the Scene to life for your players.

The Action: The rules you need to run the players through the Scene.

The Follow-Up: This section tells you what consequences the characters' actions may have later in the story.

CHARACTER TRAITS

We've provided many of the statistics for the NPCs to appear in the side-bars. When a character shows up in an Scene for the first time, we've tried to include his traits in a nearby side-bar. All NPC traits are listed again at the end of this story.

AN ASSUMPTION

We are assuming that your characters are playing magistrates of one kind or another. If your characters are ronin, Scorpion spies, or some other folks, you're going to have to improvise a bit. We'll provide you with information in the side bars to give you suggestions how to get a Scene's vital information if your characters are not magistrates.

MATSU INO

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

FIRE: 2

Agility: 3

Air: 2

Reflexes: 3

VOID: 3

Skills: Archery 3, Defense 3, Kenjutsu 3, Battle 4, Bard 1, History 1, Hunting 3

Honor: 1.9

Glory: 5.6

School & Rank:

Akodo 3

Notes:

Ino is not concerned about what happened to the courtiers, he just wants to make sure the incident doesn't bring shame to his house. In other words, the characters would find a large Lion reward in their pockets if the answer to the mystery was the "run away together" story.



Prelude: Matsu Ino's Home

KATSU, THE YORIKI

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

Strength: 2

FIRE: 3

AIR: 3

VOID: 2

Skills: Archery 2, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Battle 1, Bard 2, History 2, Sincerity 2

Honor: 3.5

Glory: 4.5

School & Rank:

Akodo 3

Notes:

(Advantages): Bente's Blessing, Clear Thinker

(Disadvantages): Dark Secret [Doubts his lord's integrity]

Katsu is a young, ambitious samurai who doesn't always believe in his lord, but is smart enough to keep his doubts to himself. If the characters are honest with him and treat him fairly, he is their inside line to the goings on in Ino's home. He is one of Ino's most trusted yoriki. Ino trusts him because of his high devotion to bushido, but Katsu would turn on Ino in a moment if he knew (beyond a shadow of doubt) that Ino's heart was as black as it truly is.

THE SET-UP

A meeting with Matsu Ino's karo Ikoma Katsu.

A meeting with Matsu Kuno, an old general who remembers an old battle.

THE RUN-DOWN

We assume the characters are playing magistrates. The proper thing for a magistrate to do is to inform the lord of the land they are in his jurisdiction. The longer they delay their



introductions, the more angry and less helpful Ino will be. However, the longer they investigate on their own, the less Ino and his men can interfere.

Ino's home is wide, spacious and simple. It is the archetypal Lion home. There is little adornment outside of shrines to family and Clan ancestors. Ino is not an artful fellow (as his Skills reveal), and he is not interested in spending his resources on importing artists to "clutter his home with claptrap."

THE ACTION

One samurai at the dinner is old Matsu Kuno. He is Ino's grandfather and Ino does not dare upset the old man. Kuno tells good stories and tonight, he tells the sad tale of the death of his grandson, Chonoku. Chonoku charged into battle against the Cranes who were threatening to take Matsu land, but the wily Cranes must have had spies, for they were ready for him. Only the diplomatic skills of his second born son, Ino, were able to save his lands. Kuno tells the story well, and cries when he tells of Chonoku's death. It's a moving scene, and perhaps, it makes the samurai a little uncomfortable.

Ino impresses the characters (those with an Awareness high enough to brag about) as a bitter, cold, but gracious man. He believes in hospitality, but does not go far to be hospitable. He tells the magistrates there is not enough room in his home to keep them, but recommends they spend the night in the village with the headman Sakkuan.

If the characters choose to bring up the disappearance of the two ambassadors, they will find that he is also very curious what happened to them. He is honestly unaware of their romantic liaison (Lions don't pay attention to such nonsense). He will tell the characters that he is more than willing to help them, but character with a high Awareness will be able to tell that he's really only trying to keep shame from falling on his own household. He wants the matter cleaned up and he wants it done quickly.

The quicker and cleaner, the better.

THE FOLLOW-UP

Depending on their performance, Ino will summon a few yoriki to keep tabs on the characters. At the very least, he will send a single yoriki - Katsu - to make certain they don't get themselves into any trouble. He explains the yoriki as an "escort" to show them around and

serve their needs. He would never dare offend magistrates by insinuating they might cause trouble in his jurisdiction.

Scene One: Kujiko's Room

THE SET-UP

A bed mat, a bureau, a writing desk

There are two entrances into the room: a door and a window

A bundle of love letters and poems from Hachi

A "we're running away together" letter by Hachi, disguised to appear to be in Kujiko's hand

A secret caché of poisons that can be found with a Perception roll of 20

A half-filled bottle of paralyzing poison

THE RUN-DOWN

There isn't much in Kujiko's room, but everything here is expensive. There is a bed mat, a bureau and a writing desk. Everything is in order. Her bed has been made, the drawers of her bureau are shut and the desk is clean of dust. In other words, everything has been tidied up after her disappearance. On the desk is a pen set (brush and ink) of exquisite make.

THE ACTION

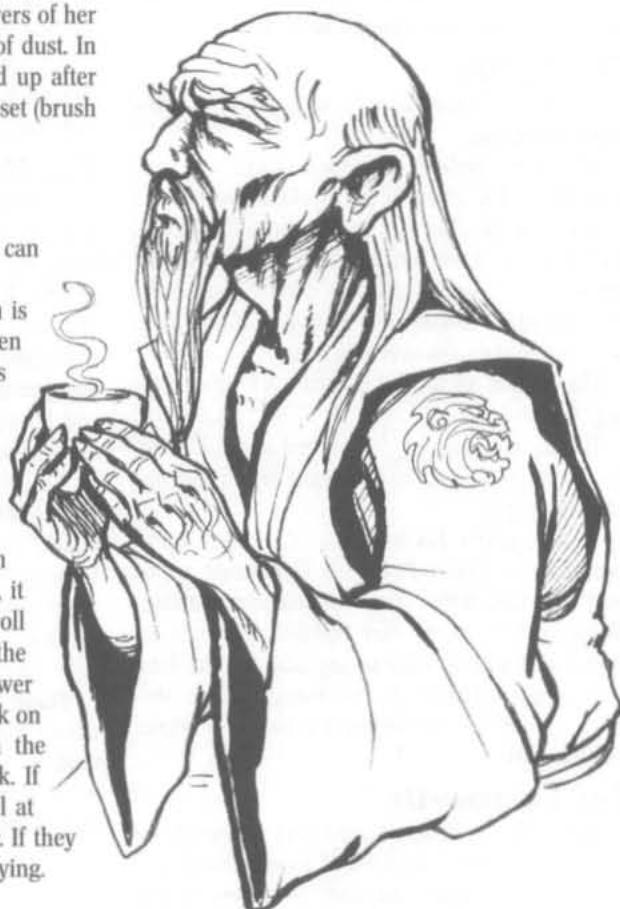
Here are the things the characters can find out in Kujiko's room.

Within the top drawer of the bureau is a bundle of love letters and poems written by Hachi to Kujiko. The ink the letters were written with is dark brown, almost black. There is an unopened envelope under Kujiko's pillow; if the characters open it, they will find a good-bye letter, written in what appears to be Kujiko's hand. It is an excellent forgery. To identify it as such, it takes a Simple Perception + Forgery roll at a 25. If the characters ask what color the ink is, tell them its dark brown and lower the TN of the Forgery check by 5 (the ink on her bureau is black). Don't tell them the difference in inks: wait for them to ask. If they don't ask, ask for a Perception roll at 30 from anyone who handled the letter. If they fail, they lose a clue. Thank you for playing.

There is a secret drawer located on the bottom of the bureau that requires a Simple Perception roll of 20 to find. Within the drawer are small bottles of poison, all of which have been unopened, save one. This bottle of poison is half-empty. Those with the Poison Skill will be able to identify the poison with a Simple Perception + Poison roll of 10. Unskilled characters do not have a chance. It is a poison brewed from the *hariju* root, used to paralyze its target, not kill. Another Perception roll at 10 will indicate the poison was used recently (it was opened and hasn't evaporated yet), perhaps within the last ten days.

THE FOLLOW-UP

As of yet, the characters do not have enough evidence to know exactly what happened, and any evidence of foul play (the bottle of poison) is entirely circumstantial. They may have figured out the "good-bye" letter is a forgery (they've certainly got enough clues), which would lead them to Hachi's room ...



WHAT DOES KATSU KNOW?

Katsu may be technically a yoriki, but he is, for all intents and purposes, a *karo*. Ino is too suspicious of anyone to have a *karo*, or even a magistrate, so he keeps many yoriki, Katsu being the one with the highest rank. All the other yoriki know they report to Katsu, even if he is technically their equal.

Katsu knows of Kujiko and Hachi's affair. For a time, he was even a little jealous. He spent a season or two trying to win the alluring Scorpion's favor before he gave in to his Crane romantic rival. No one knew of his courtship of the Scorpion, so he lost no face in the contest. He also knows they used to meet in an old shrine to Bente that Ino has forbidden any to enter since his rise to power. Katsu does an excellent imitation of his lord when he says: "The worship of such weak emotions is not the stuff of bushido!"

He also knows that the history of the battle in which Ino's brother was killed does not exactly match up with Chonoku's battle plans. He figures Chonoku changed his mind at the last moment and met with dismal failure. He also knows that it was Ino's brilliant diplomacy that brought the truce between his lord's family and the bordering Cranes. Only if the characters mention his use of "brilliant diplomacy" does Katsu notice how the phrase doesn't exactly fit on his lord's list of virtues.



COMMUNE

Shugenja may wish to use Commune to discover relevant facts about the body and how and when it was disposed. Depending on the roll and the Element, here's what they'll find out.

The Fire and Air elements can say nothing about the event.

Earth

The Earth elements can say very little.

TN 5: Nothing

TN 10: Man was here
TN 15: Man dragged woman

TN 20+: Man threw woman in water

Water

The Water elements know a bit more.

TN 5: She was dead when she was thrown in.

TN 10: She was familiar to us. Came to speak to us often.

TN 15: She came here with a man. They sang together.

TN 20: The man threw her in with tears in his eyes.

Scene Two: Hachi's Room

THE SET-UP

A bed mat, a writing desk and a bureau

There is a blood drop on his windowsill and a burn mark under his bed mat

There are two entrances into the room: a door and a window

The ink that was used to write the "good-bye" letter is in his writing desk

His armor rack and sword rack are empty

His traveling papers are in a belt pouch in his bureau

THE RUN-DOWN

Hachi's room is nearly identical to Kujiko's, but not as extravagant. Hachi is rather humble for a Crane. His bed mat, bureau and writing desk are rather plain. Again, it looks as if the cleaning crew has been through the room since the two courtiers' disappearance. Everything looks still here, as if it has never been touched.

THE ACTION

There are many clues to discover in Hachi's room, including:

There is indeed a blood stain on his windowsill. The cleaners are afraid to touch it.

Also, the ink that was used to write the "good-bye" letter is in his writing desk. It is black ink, but when it dries, it fades to a dark brown-black. The characters will need to write with it and let it dry overnight to discover this fact.

His armor rack and sword rack are both empty.

He has a bundle of clothes tied and folded in the corner of the room. Within a pouch are his traveling papers.

Finally, under his bed mat, there is a burn mark from Kujiko's Fire spell. Commune spells used on the stain reveal absolutely nothing. Whatever fire spirits that remain are loyal to Kujiko and will be rude to any who inquire into their origin. However, by using Sense, the shugenja will be able to tell that the fire's origin was magical.

THE FOLLOW-UP

Again, the evidence located here is enough to get the characters suspicious of a unanimous and willful retreat. After searching the rooms of the

house, Katsu receives word that Sakkuan - the village headman - has respectfully requested that he come to dinner tonight in his house. Katsu smiles and laughs and explains that the reason he is receiving such hospitality is that Sakkuan is convinced he saw a ghost two weeks ago and he wants to butter the yoriki up to get him to investigate. He invites the characters to come along. If they agree, he sends the messenger with word that the characters will be joining them tonight for dinner. If not, he understands and wishes them luck and tells them he will meet them in the morning to continue their investigation.

Scene Three: The Village

THE SET-UP

Everyone's convinced the village is haunted.

The headman's name is Sakkuan.

Sakkuan offers the characters great hospitality and politely urges them to investigate the ghost.

The ghost was covered in blood and mumbled, "You've killed me" over and over again as she wandered to the south.

THE RUN-DOWN

The village just outside of Ino's castle is small and inauspicious. There are only forty people living in the village, all of whom serve the needs of the lord of the manor. There are three blacksmiths, seven carpenters, two sake brewers, and many farmers. The village inn caters to those wandering through the territory. It is small, quiet and hospitable. There is no tea house, and it is conspicuous by its absence.

The village headman - Sakkuan - lives in the largest building in the village. His home has two rooms: a reception room and a sleeping room. Visitors meet with him in the reception room. They also sleep there. He and his family (he is a widower with two boys and a girl) sleep in the other room.

There is a single road that runs through the village from the west to the east. It is an Imperial road, so it is kept up well. The villagers know better than to call Katsu the magistrate, but that doesn't stop them from treating him like one.



THE ACTION

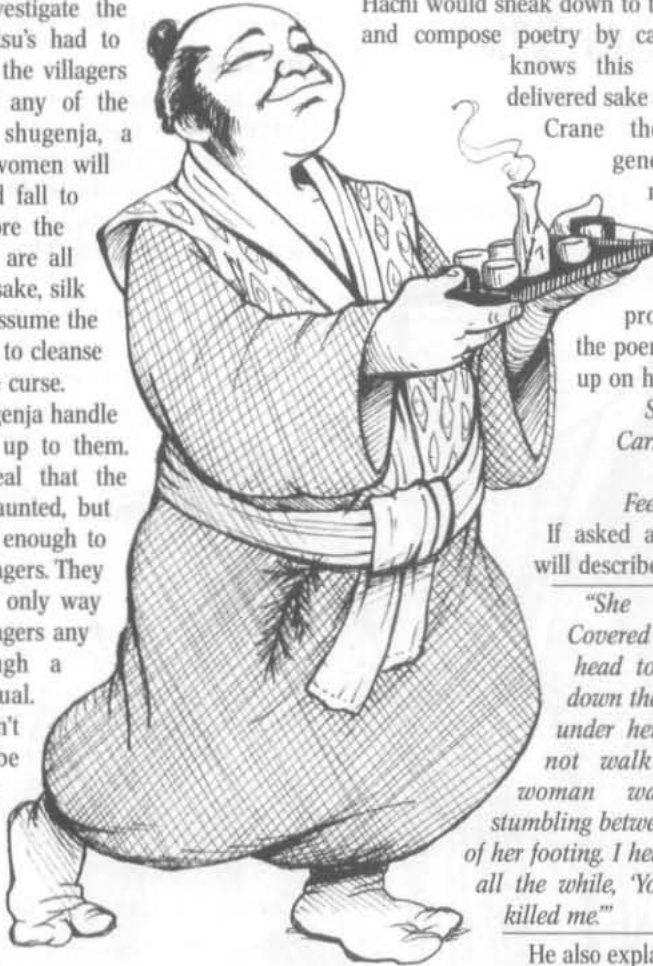
Everyone in the village looks spooked. Villagers are walking around looking like they haven't had a good night sleep for weeks. The fact is, they haven't. All of them are convinced they saw a ghost two weeks ago, and they're all looking to Katsu to do something about it.

Ino is too cheap to hire a shugenja to investigate the problem, so Katsu's had to try and comfort the villagers on his own. If any of the characters are shugenja, a small group of women will run forward and fall to their knees before the characters. They are all bearing gifts of sake, silk and food. They assume the shugenja is here to cleanse the village of the curse.

How the shugenja handle the situation is up to them. Spells will reveal that the village is not haunted, but that will not be enough to convince the villagers. They want proof. The only way to bring the villagers any peace is through a purification ritual. The ritual doesn't even have to be real.

The peasants don't know any difference. If the characters don't get the hint, Katsu will clue them in. In fact, he'd probably consider it a favor. Calming Ino's peasants down will make his job much easier, and refusing to do so can be considered an insult to Katsu's honor . . .

Once they've dealt with (or disregarded) the frightened peasants, they are invited to have dinner in Sakkuan's home. The dinner is plain, but the sake will make the characters sit up and take notice. Sakkuan is very proud of his sake brewing skills. He may be the finest sake brewer in the entire Lion territories. Ino exports it to Akodo and Matsu palace for a pretty profit.



Perceptive characters (TN 20) may overhear Sakkuan whispering to Katsu that someone has been dipping into his sake bins lately.

During dinner, if Sakkuan is asked about the courtiers, he will reply that he knows the Crane was often seen down at the forgotten shrine to Bente. Ino had forbidden worship of Bente at that shrine (he felt it glorified decadence), but Hachi would sneak down to the shrine after dark and compose poetry by candlelight. Sakkuan knows this because he often delivered sake and rice balls to the Crane there. "He was a generous and kind man," Sakkuan will say. "Even wrote me a poem once!" Sakkuan proudly shows them the poem, which he has put up on his wall.

*Sakkuan at night
Carrying rice balls and
wine*

Feeds forbidden art

If asked about the ghost, he will describe her quite vividly.

*"She was terrible!
Covered in blood from
head to toe, she walked
down the street, mumbling
under her breath. She did
not walk like a mortal
woman walks. She was
stumbling between worlds, unsure
of her footing. I heard her mumbling
all the while, 'You killed me, you
killed me.'"*

He also explains that he has only seen her once, but other villagers have seen her multiple times.

THE FOLLOW-UP

After dinner, Katsu will explain that he's interrogated all the villagers who had seen the ghost, and he believes that she made a single appearance.

Katsu's attitude toward the characters depends on their handling of the villagers. If they are curt and ill-tempered, he will be distant and reluctant to aid them. If they discipline any for their behavior, Katsu will take that as an insult (they



THREE LITTLE SCORPIONS

Honor's Veil contains little, if any, chance for conflict. It's fairly obvious that if the characters decide to get out of line, a swarm of Lions will descend upon them. However, if your characters are looking for a little action, here's a way to accommodate them.

The Scorpion Clan is very concerned about losing Kujiko. So concerned, in fact, that they send a magistrate to investigate the disappearance. The magistrate's name is Bayushi Yojiro (his Traits and Skills can be found on page 34). He has two yojimbo with him (whose Traits and Skills can also be found below) and he's looking for answers regarding the disappearance of his cousin, Kujiko.

Just having Scorpions show up should be enough to make the characters nervous. On top of that, Yojiro will keep his own motives close to his chest, making it appear as if he's up to something sinister when actually, he's only looking for what happened to his cousin.

are telling him he isn't doing his job, or they're doing his job for him) and may even challenge one of them to a duel.

From this scene, the characters have few options. They can wander around, looking for any sign of the courtiers (in which case, refer to the map of the area at the end of this adventure), or they can go directly to the shrine of Benten.

Scene Four: The Shrine

THE SET-UP

Kujiko's body is at the bottom of the river, tied to Hachi's armor.

Signs of Hachi's late night sake drinking and haiku writing.



Two frightened (and drunk) grave diggers, hiding from a ghost, surrounded by empty sake bottles.

THE RUN-DOWN

The temple is about the size of a bus stop, overgrown with weeds, with a beautiful view of the river that rushes by. The once red paint of the shrine has faded to a dull pink. There is what appears to be a large sack under the shrine.

THE ACTION

Two grave diggers - Norii and Tojii - are sleeping off their night's worth of sake sipping. They are completely drunk, hung over and terrified that the ghost of Kujiko is out to get them. Of course, they won't mention the Scorpion shugenja, they'll just say they saw the ghost and ran here for safety.

Characters will notice the empty sake bottles strewn all about the site. These two have been sneaking into Sakkuan's sake bins and stealing bottles. They'll admit to the crime and beg to be locked up. That way, they'll be safe from the ghost.

Characters will want to interrogate the two. If you've played it up enough, they may already have the impression that this would be stepping on Katsu's toes a bit.

They should allow him the first shot at the prisoners. If they persist, he will step aside, but he will not help them any further in their investigation.

Norii and Torii know that if they confess to killing Kujiko, they're in deep water and are likely to be made an example of, probably at some length.

However, they also know that the samurai can do just about anything they like to them to get to the truth (they are *eta*, after all). Torturing the grave diggers is a dishonorable act and will cause any participants a loss of 2 Honor Points. Particularly nasty efforts will bring a penalty of 3 Honor Points.

Also located in this scene is Kujiko's body. It is deep in the river and cannot be found by a Perception check. It must be actively looked for by the characters. See the Follow-Up below if the characters do not find the body in this Scene.

Her body has been at the bottom of the river for two weeks. The cold of the water has preserved her a bit, but the fishes have had their way with her. What is left of her is bloated and blue. She still wears her Scorpion kimono and mon, indicating she was from the Shosuro family (Intelligence + Courtier TN 10). She is tied to a set of Crane samurai armor. The mon indicates it belonged to a member of the Kakita family (also Intelligence + Courtier TN 10).

While it is dishonorable for them to even touch the body, they can have the two *eta* present inspect it for them. If they do, they will find that her kimono has a secret pocket. Within the pocket are fragments of what appears to be wax.

THE FOLLOW-UP

If the characters do not find the body, she will show up later with Scorpion magistrates investigating her disappearance.

If the characters allow Katsu a chance to interrogate the grave diggers (or if they volunteer to assist), they will confess that they were hired to bury the girl in a cave. They followed the orders of a superior, and when the body sat up, they panicked and ran. Technically, they've done nothing wrong. *Eta* aren't supposed to ask questions of their superiors. Those that do get their heads whacked off.

If the characters discover the location of the cave, they will probably want to go and take a peek there.

Scene Five: The Cave

THE SET-UP:

- A half-dug hole in the ground.
- A bloody shovel.

- A trail of blood.
- A ripped piece of fabric from a Scorpion kimono.
- An abandoned lantern.
- An old strategy map.

THE RUN-DOWN

The cave is dark, dank and foul smelling. It is very deep and will require lanterns to navigate. The hole the grave diggers are looking for is fifty paces from the mouth.

THE ACTION

There isn't a lot of action in this scene, just locating the half-dug grave, finding drops of blood leading away from it and the blood-tipped shovel. Strands of long, black blood-matted hair are on the shovel tip, and there's also an abandoned lantern.

It takes a Perception roll (TN 15) to find the piece of torn fabric from Kujiko's kimono. The color and pattern is unique. The dye is very expensive, and used almost exclusively by the Scorpion Clan (Intelligence + Courtier TN 15).

Shugenja may try using Commune (again) to see who was the last person who used the shovel.

Air

The Air spirits of the area didn't see anything (it was too dark).

Earth

The Earth spirits within the shovel say, "None remarkable."

Fire

There is the slight trace of a fire spirit in the lantern. It's not very friendly and will respond better if it is lit up again. It can tell the characters that it saw two dullards run out of the cave, and that was all.

Water

There are no water spirits in this area.

Remind any shugenja that using Commune on the blood is considered *maho*, and is strictly forbidden.

Also located in the cave (Perception roll TN 15) is a small silk package. Folded up with the package is an old strategy map. Characters with History, Battle or Lore: Lion will have a chance (Intelligence + Skill at TN 15) of recognizing it as a map of the Battle of Kotanu Plains. It was at this battle that Ino's older brother was killed. Those who use a Raise when they make the identification roll will also discover that Ino's brother's tactics at the battle do not match with

THREE LITTLE SCORPIONS (CONTINUED)

Kojiro is a unique Scorpion. He wears no mask, only a high collar that conceals his features when its convenient. He's got an unusually high Honor for a Scorpion (3) and his interests lie in getting to the truth rather than getting revenge.

However, once Kojiro discovers the truth, he will also recognize that there is next to nothing that anyone can do to avenge her death.

Publicly, that is.

Note: Kojiro will return in future adventures. While his cronies can be considered cannon fodder for the character's blood lust, Kojiro is smart enough to stay clear of any protagonists that may be looking for Scorpion blood.





BAYUSHI YOJIRO

EARTH: 2

WATER: 2

Strength: 3

FIRE: 5

Agility 4

AIR: 4

VOID: 3

Skills: Archery 1, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Poison 2, Sincerity 4, Stealth 3

Honor: 3.5

Glory: 4.5

School & Rank:
Bayushi 3

Notes:

(Advantages): Allies (Lion Clan), Benten's Blessing, Quick, Read Lips, Voice

(Disadvantages): Reputation (Honest), Soft-Hearted, 3 Point Unluck

Yojiro is unique in the Scorpion Clan: he has a conscience. Early after his graduation, he was sent away to Lion territory to be a representative of his Clan (and to keep away from Scorpion lands). He has learned *bushido* from the Lions, and values his connections in the Akodo family. He will do much to protect the honor of the Lions, but his duty to his family and to his cousin, Kujiko, comes first.

his plans here. The map is in a package that bears the seal of the Scorpion and is signed by Chonoku (Ino's brother). The wax the seal was made from matches the peculiar fragments located in Kujiko's secret pocket (remember **The Shrine?**).

A Simple Perception roll will indicate the map has a slight odor, like that of honey. Anyone with the Stealth or Investigation Skill can make an Intelligence + Skill roll (TN 25) to know what that means. If the map (written on parchment paper) is held up to the sun, the "invisible" *Gutaman* (disappearing) ink that Kujiko wrote her message in will be made visible.

The message reads: "Ino is the creature we suspected."

THE FOLLOW-UP

The characters can gain a great deal of information in this scene. It certainly cements the guilt of the two grave diggers, and once that's done, Ino will request that they look no further. Obviously, the two killed Kujiko (one fewer troublesome Scorpion as far as he's concerned) and that's enough evidence to convince him they killed Hachi as well. The investigation is over, and the characters are welcome to go home with a small (3 koku) reward for their troubles.

If the characters show Ino the map, he will command them to turn it over immediately. It is, after all, confidential information. If they show it to Katsu, he will be more than happy to take a long look at it.

Scene Six: The Monastery

THE SET-UP:

A small monastery.

A burned Crane.

THE RUN-DOWN:

The monastery on the edge of the village is the home for ten Shintao monks. It is a larger building than the home of the headman. Three torii arch over the path that leads to the monastery, each one purifying the soul of the one who passes under them (one for each of the Great Sins). A young, bald and handsome monk named Dogan is in charge here. Just recently (two weeks ago), he accepted a young man who called himself "Kuji" into their ranks. The man donated a great sum of money to the monastery to gain

acceptance. Dogan will be very reluctant to give out that information. He will only do so if he is told that the man may be guilty of murder.

THE ACTION

What the characters get out of this scene depends greatly on the way they handle Dogan. Dogan is very protective of his monastery and its inhabitants. He recognizes the authority of the magistrates, but does not submit to it quietly. He informs them that he suspects many of his flock to be criminals, but he does not judge them, any more than he judges samurai who are all too willing to throw their weight around. Dogan is also very capable of handling himself. His father was Lion samurai who saw a bit too much battle and suffering, and taught his son not to turn a blind eye to the plight of Rokugan's lower class.

If the characters treat him with the respect he thinks he deserves, he will return their respect. If they throw their weight around, he will be more than happy to teach the samurai a lesson in *jiujutsu*. Also, he knows how Ino feels about strangers asking questions in his territory. He will threaten the characters with Ino's wrath if his own is not enough to convince them. The monastery is not so far from the village, and if the characters are making a scene, there will surely be some villagers watching over their shoulders. News spreads fast in a small country town.

If the characters are able to convince Dogan with their sincerity (Skilled or genuine), he will confess there is a new monk in the order who calls himself Kuji. He suffers from terrible burns on his face, and is currently in the hands of the monastery's healer.

The characters will no doubt demand to see "Kuji." Again, Dogan is very protective of his brothers, and he will refuse. "The man is dying," he will tell them. "Let him die in peace." Once again, the characters will be forced to convince Dogan to let them by. Let them roleplay it out. If they convince you, let them through the door. If they don't, well, they'll have to come up with another alternative.

The skeleton key to this whole problem is Katsu. The yoriki is a man Dogan trusts and admires, and with him on their side, Dogan will only make a nominal resistance to their entering and interrogating the burned monk.

"Kuji" is in bed, wrapped in bandages. Interrogating him will be difficult. His lips have been burned away and his tongue is burned and

swollen. He can make small sounds, but it causes him great pain to do so. If the characters tell him why they are there, he will begin to cry. He will admit his guilt and tell them his story the best he can. You can use Katsu to fill in the blanks, if you like.

He will tell them of his lord's command to kill the Scorpion shugenja and of Ino's betrayal of his brother. When the confession is done, he will beg their forgiveness. Whether they give it to him or not is up to them.

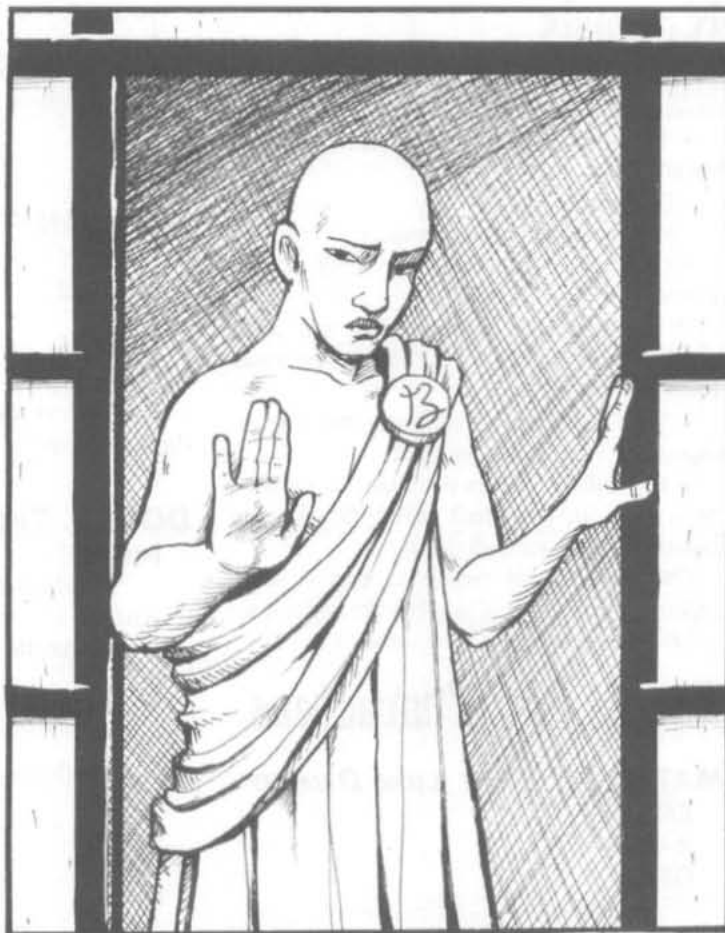
THE FOLLOW-UP

After everything is over, Dogan will explain that the man is beyond hope. He will die tonight or tomorrow. "Even the Fortunes cannot save him," he will tell them. "He has no will to live." He hopes they will allow him to remain in the monastery, to live out his last hours in peace. He may try to stop them if they try to take him. Dogan was a Lion, after all, and the Crane's story touched him. If the characters explain they need Dogan to prove Ino's guilt (which they do), he will nod sadly and accept that.

Conclusion and Afterward

This Scene only occurs if the characters bring Hachi before Ino's court to confess his crime. With that confession, they have evidence to prove Ino's guilt in a ten year old murder. Remember, all that matters in court is a man's testimony. When a man admits his own guilt, any other evidence he brings to the court has greater weight. The old strategy map gives Hachi's confession more even weight.

Unfortunately, it's not enough. Ino's rank keeps him safe from such accusations. The characters



can't touch him, and he knows it. He dismisses their silly claim and throws them out of his court.

That night, the characters are approached by a cloaked figure wearing a mask. Anyone making a successful Awareness or Perception roll (TN 15) will recognize the figure as Kojiro. He introduces himself as "a friend," and tells them not to worry about Ino. "Everything has been taken care of."

The figure also tells them that certain parties are grateful for their work, and he hopes their paths cross again in the future. The cloaked figure leaves behind a sack full of koku (a total of 5 for each character) and disappears into the night.

Anyone with the Courtier Skill learns that both Kakita Hojin and Matsu Ino died about a month after the characters' stay in Ino's castle. Someone made certain that a young *yoriki* named Katsu inherited the province.

TWO SCORPION THUGS

(SHOSURO REIJI & BAYUSHI CHUYO)

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

FIRE: 3

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

Skills: Archery 3, Courtier 3, Defense 4, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Poison 1, Sincerity 2

Honor: 1

Glory: 2

School & Rank: Bayushi 2

Notes:

(Advantages): Quick, Strength of the Earth (4)

These two Scorpions are just itching for a fight. One of their own has disappeared and they are *convinced* that the characters are involved.

However, Yojiro (a guy who smells more like a Lion than a Scorpion) is in charge, and he's got them on a very short leash. Reiji and Chuyo will probably sneak off during the night to ambush the characters, leaving Yojiro alone to explain his "obvious" assassination attempt.



Rewards

For each of the following, give the characters an Experience Point:

- Discovering the truth about Kujiko and Hachi's affair.
- Discovering Kujiko's body.
- Finding Hachi in the monastery.
- Confronting Ino, despite the result of their actions.

If the characters buy the "we ran away together" story, they get ONE Experience Point. That's it, nothing else.

If they lose Katsu's confidence, they lose an Experience Point from their total.

If they kill anyone on the Dramatis Personæ list (except *eta*, they don't count), they lose an Experience Point for each death.

Characters should receive at least a single Experience Point, even if they buy the bogus story and kill everybody they come across.

Important Characters

MATSU INO, THE LION DAIMYO

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

FIRE: 2

Agility: 3

AIR: 2

Reflexes: 3

VOID: 3

Skills:

Archery 3, Defense 3, Kenjutsu 3, Battle 4, Bard 1, History 1, Hunting 3

Honor: 1.3

Glory: 5.6

School & Rank: Akodo 3

IKOMA KATSU, THE YORIKI

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

Strength: 2

FIRE: 3

AIR: 3

VOID: 2

Skills: Archery 2, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Battle 1, Bard 2, History 2, Sincerity 2

Honor: 3.5

Glory: 4.5

School & Rank: Akodo 3

Notes:

(Advantages): Bente's Blessing, Clear Thinker

(Disadvantages): Dark Secret [Doubts his lord's integrity]

SAKKUAN, THE HEADMAN

EARTH: 2

WATER: 2

FIRE: 2

AIR: 2

VOID: 1

Skills: Craft (Sake Brewing) 5, Etiquette 2, History (Village) 4

DOGAN, THE MONK

EARTH: 3

Willpower: 4

WATER: 3

Strength: 4

FIRE: 3

Agility: 4

AIR: 3

Reflexes: 5

VOID: 5

Honor: 4.5

Glory: 0

Skills:

Archery 3, Defense 4, Kenjutsu 4, Battle 3, Bard 3, History 3, Tea Ceremony 4, Meditation 4, Shintao 3, Religion 4, Lore (Lion Battles) 3



BY
GREG
STOLZE

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AND NOW, A WORD FROM OUR DEVELOPER

We meant to hold off the poison rules until we got to *Way of the Scorpion*, but there's been overwhelming demand for them on the net and in the mailbox.

Apparently, we have some impatient Scorpions out there. Never let it be said we don't try to please you guys.

Anyway, here are the poison rules we've been holding on to. We decided to put them in our first *Intrigue Storypack* so the GM would be the only one (at least the first one) to see them, give them a once over and fix them to his own taste.

They will pop up again in *The Way of the Scorpion*, and we've even saved the really juicy recipes 'til then.

Hope this little morsel tides you over.

-JW

In Rokugan, poisoning is little like adultery; though officially deplored, more of it goes on than you might think.

The two main users of poison are the Scorpion clan and the mysterious ninja (if, in fact, the ninja exist). Both have their secret recipes and toxins, which will be covered in more depth in *The Way of the Scorpion* and *The Way of Shadow*. Poisoning is also a bit like cooking. If you're average, you work off a recipe. If you're good, you can make it up on your own. Accordingly, some old favorites have been listed. All a poisoner has to do is roll under the TN to produce one dose of the poison in question.

It takes one full day to brew up a poison (or about ten hours total, if you spread it out across a couple days).

However, rules are also included for making up your own poisons. If you want to brew your own, all you have to do is go through five simple steps.

1) Decide if this is a weapon poison (something you smear on a sword or a shuriken to cause extra damage) or an ingested poison (which must be eaten, touched or inhaled to have an effect). Once you've done that, go to the section labeled "Weapon Poisons" or to "Non-Weapon Poisons".

2) Pick special effects you want your poison to have, if any. Every special effect you pick increases the difficulty of the poison by a stated amount. You can have as many special effects as you want, provided they don't contradict each other.

3) Pick the side effects of your poison, if any. Like special effects, different side effects have different costs.

4) Pick the main effect of your poison, if any. Again, different effects have different costs.

5) Add up the TN. (Note: it is possible to have TN 0 poisons. They'll never kill anyone, but they're reliable.) Tell your GM, who will roll your Intelligence+Poison. Your GM will write down if you were successful or not. (It's a harrowing fact of the poisoner's existence that there's only one way to know if a poison worked, and that's to use it.) Each attempt produces one dose. (You can try to make bigger batches as a special effect, but it increases the difficulty.)

As a bonus, you get to name any poison you come up with. Why bother with "Night Milk"

when you can give someone a dose of "Fu Leng's Fiery Blood-Wrath #9"?

Characters cannot brew poisons unless they have the Poison Skill. Remember, Poison is a Low Skill, and dishonorable... if you're caught.

Recipe Poisons

The five poisons listed here are old favorites in Rokugan. Accordingly, any time someone tries to identify one of these, the TN is lowered by 5. Also, attempts to treat identified poisons from this list are easier; their TN is decreased by 5 as well.

Each poison listed here has a name, a TN (which is how difficult it is for this poison to be brewed by a skilled poisoner) and a price. Note that finding someone to sell you poison is difficult - usually a TN 25 against Investigation. You also might notice that the prices are astoundingly high. (1 koku = 5 bu = 40 bushels of rice). Therefore, the dose of Fire Biter you use to get an edge in your next *laijutsu* duel is about as costly as feeding 3 men for a year.

NIGHT MILK

TN 15

Price: 4 koku/dose

This weapon poison is a watery white liquid that smells like spoiling onions. When painted on a weapon it leaves a white film or crust that is clearly visible. Being struck with a weapon that is coated with Night Milk is incredibly painful - it causes a deep, bruising agony that expands out from the wound. In fact, some who have been hit with it say that they actually felt like they'd grown more flesh in order to hold all the pain - sort of like how people will sometimes feel "phantom" pain or itching in a missing limb.

After the first damaging strike from a weapon poisoned with Night Milk, an extra four damage dice are rolled and dropped. After that, the poison has no further effect.

FIRE BITER

TN 10

Price: 3 koku/dose

Another weapon poison, Fire Biter looks like crumbly red clay. When rubbed against a weapon it leaves an odorless, invisible residue. It causes an unpleasant burning against naked skin when applied, so many wear gloves when applying it. Someone struck by the envenomed weapon will immediately feel a burning sensation in the



wound, which will swell up and turn a bright red. This redness will spread out like webs along the blood vessels going from the injury as the poison is carried further into the body.

After the first damaging strike from the weapon with Fire Biter, one extra damage die is rolled (but not kept), and the person struck is immediately afflicted with severe tremors for at least an hour. It is still possible to act through these shakes, but the Agility trait is lowered by -2 (minimum of one) for the duration of the poison. The dose of poison is used up after one strike.

DRIPPING POISON

TN 20

Price: 10 koku/dose

This odorless, greenish fluid is undetectable when dripped into food or drink, and there is no known treatment. When ingested, it has no effect for 1-5 hours, but after that a searing pain begins in the throat, lips and stomach and spreads slowly outward, getting steadily more intense. The victim begins to feel weak, and breathing becomes difficult and strained.

When the poison takes effect, the victim immediately takes 1 die of Wounds, which do not return until the poison has run its course. The victim is also at -1 Strength during that time. Finally, every hour the victim must roll Stamina against the Breathless number (explained on p. 42). If the victim beats the roll, he takes no damage. If he doesn't, he takes an additional die of Wounds.

If the poison was purchased, it will have a Breathless number of 10-15. If it was brewed, have the poisoner choose a TN and roll Intelligence + Poison to find the Breathless number (see *Side Effects*, p. 42). If he succeeds, the TN he chose is the Breathless Number.

HOT MADNESS

TN 10

Price: 3 koku/dose

This powder looks like salt and has neither taste nor color. It dissolves easily in water and is undetectable. It does not kill, but a day after it is eaten, the victim will come down with a severe fever and feel a sense of intense, crushing fear until the poison leaves his system.

This poison has a 24 hour delay before it takes effect. While in effect, the victim cannot spend Void points and is at -1 Intelligence. However, it causes no damage.

WISH YOU DEAD

TN 25

Price: 20 koku/dose

This tarry black slime smells, oddly enough, of ripe persimmons. It is a powerful contact poison. As soon as it is touched with bare flesh, it immediately causes a heavy, throbbing pain to spread from the touched area. This pain quickly spreads to the head and guts, causing agony and vomiting. It has been known, on rare occasions, to kill instantly by stopping the heart. This usually causes death within four minutes.

The victim of Wish You Dead immediately loses 1 die of Wounds and is afflicted with vomiting. Any time the character tries to take an action, there's a 1 in 10 chance that he will throw up instead of doing his action. Furthermore, the victim must make a Stamina check (TN 10) every 10 minutes or take an additional die of Wounds.

Weapon Poisons

SPECIAL EFFECTS

5 TN

The poison can clearly be seen and smelled on the weapon.

+5 TN

Poison cannot be seen or smelled on the weapon. (Someone examining the weapon might still detect it - TN 15 against Investigation or Poison skills.)

+5 TN

Virulence; roll and keep an extra die of damage against members of one particular noble family of Rokugan. The family must be named when crafting the poison.

+5 TN

Produce one extra dose. For every extra dose you make, add another 5 to the TN. (The more you make, the easier it is to get the proportions wrong and the harder it is to keep out contaminants.)

+5 TN

Rushed production. Instead of a full day, it only takes you a half a day to make up a batch of venom. For an additional +5 TN, you can cut this down to three hours.

+15 TN

The poison is completely undetectable, except possibly by powerful magic. This means that the poison cannot be detected by examining the

DURATIONS

The length of time that a poison afflicts a character tends to vary inversely with its virulence: the really nasty ones, assuming the victim survives, tend to wear off relatively quickly, while the milder ones hang around for a longer time.

Poisons that cause Wounds don't have a duration associated with them. The target just takes Wounds, and then has to deal with healing them as usual.

Main effects that do not simply cause Wounds can be assumed to last for 24 hours, unless stated otherwise.

Most side effects - those that cause a temporary loss of Traits - wear off in a day, unless the poisoner Raises the TN and brews up a "lingering poison" (see p. 40).

Side effects that do not cause a Trait penalty can last for up to a week - or more, if it's a lingering poison.

At the GM's discretion, characters with a high Stamina or appropriate Advantages (i.e. Strength of the Earth) can be given reduced recovery times.



GOING INTO THE POISON BUSINESS

Anyone with the Poison skill may think he or she is sitting on a potential gold mine – which is true, kind of...

The profit margin for poison is certainly high – incredibly high. However, this is offset by the hazards of the job.

#1 – Imperial investigation. Anyone caught selling or possessing poison can be executed. Anyone who is *accused* of selling poison and who is found with components for known poisons in his possession will *probably* be executed. In addition to being killed, the poisoner brings a deep and severe shame upon his family. For many in Rokugan, that's a fate worse than death.

#2 – Blackmail. You'd think the Scorpion clan would get jealous of anyone who moved in on their territory, but they're generally delighted. They'll waste little time before getting solid evidence that the poisoner is in business, and then use it to lever the poor poisoner into doing anything they want (usually with the threat of hazard #1).

corpse. (This does not, of course, mean that the person dosed doesn't notice side effects or the main effect.)

SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects cannot be doubled; you can't pick "Fever" twice and give the victim -2 to Intelligence. Furthermore, for weapon poisons, the duration of side effects is only about an hour.

The side effect table is listed under "Side Effects" in the "Non-Weapon Poisons" section (p. 41).

0 TN

No side effects.

+5 TN

Pick one side effect if in a good lab, or roll one randomly. The side effect doesn't activate for 1-5 hours.

+10 TN

Pick one side effect if in a good lab, or roll one randomly. The victim feels these effects immediately.

MAIN EFFECT

You can't have more than one main effect.

0 TN

Roll and drop an additional die when doing damage with the poisoned weapon. For every die past the first one that you want to roll and drop, add +5 to the TN. This only happens the first time you hit someone with the weapon; after that, the poison is washed off.

+5 TN

Roll and keep an additional die when doing damage with the poisoned weapon. For every die past the first one that you want to roll and keep, add +10 to the TN. This only happens the first time you hit someone with the weapon; after that, the poison is washed off.

+10 TN

Instead of doing additional damage, you inject one dose of an ingested poison! If you build an ingestive poison normally, and add 10 to the difficulty, you can deliver it with a weapon. No other weapon costs apply. The dose is used the first time the weapon strikes; after that, the poison is washed off. (Note to number crunchers out there; yes, you're right, numerically this is exactly the same as building a non-weapon contact poison and putting it on a weapon.)

Non-Weapon Poisons

SPECIAL EFFECTS

You can have as many Special Effects as you want – provided they're not contradictory (such as "24 hour delay before effect" and "immediate effect").

0 TN

Poison is delayed by 1-5 hours before taking effect. It has a distinctive odor, taste and appearance. It must be swallowed. A good Investigator or Poisoner might be able to figure out what it was and how to counteract it.

+1 TN

It's a lingering poison. In most poisons, the side effects last for 24 hours, minus an Earth roll from the victim. For every additional hour you want the effects to last, add 1 to the TN. So, if you want the victim to suffer for 30 hours (less their Earth roll) add 6 to the TN.

+5 TN

Poison takes effect immediately. (This cost is decreased to 0 for airborne poisons.)

+5 TN

There is a 24 hour delay before the poison takes effect.

+10 TN

Poison is undetectable before ingestion. (This cost is increased to +20 if the poison is airborne.)

+5 TN

There is no non-magical treatment for this poison.

+5 TN

Produce one extra dose. For every extra dose you make, add another 5 to the TN. (The more you make, the easier it is to get the proportions wrong and the harder it is to keep out contaminants.)

+5 TN

Rushed production. Instead of a full day, it only takes you a half a day to make up a batch of venom. For an additional +5 TN, you can cut this down to three hours.

+10 TN

Contact poison. This venom does not need to be tasted or put in a wound; simply touching it with bare flesh is enough to get it into the victim. Contact poisons can be used as weapon poisons as well. (They are the only ingested poisons that can double as weapon poisons.)

+10 TN

Airborne poison. This venom is a smoke or a fine dust which enters the victim when inhaled. (A poison cannot be airborne and a contact poison.)

SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects cannot be doubled; you can't pick "Fever" twice and give the victim -2 to Intelligence. Side effects generally take effect 1-5 hours after ingestion (unless a special effect has been used). When the side effects kick in, the victim rolls Earth and deducts the total from 24 (unless the special "lingering" effect has been used - see above). The result is the number of hours that the side effects torment the victim.

A side effect that reduces a stat to 0 or below is not enough to kill a character; the character simply has 0 in that trait until the poison wears off. The only side effect that can possibly kill someone is intense pain - and then, only if the character already had a lot of Wounds (obviously).

0 TN

Roll one random side-effect.

+5 TN

No side effects.

+5 TN

Poison has one side effect of your choice.

ROLL SIDE-EFFECT

1 Fever. (-1 to Intelligence)

2 Dimmed, blurry vision. (-1 to Perception for sight checks)

3 Intense pain. (Take 1 die of wound points. These don't return until the poison wears off.)

4 Vomiting. (If the character attempts any action, roll a die. On a 1, the character throws up instead of taking the action.)

5 Panic and fear. (Character cannot spend Void points until the poison wears off.)

6 Hallucinations. (-2 to Awareness)

7 Headache. (-1 to Reflexes)

8 Weakness. (-1 to Strength)



GOING INTO THE POISON BUSINESS

(CONTINUED)

#3 - The competition is murder. The main sellers of poison in Rokugan are (depending on who you ask) the mysterious ninja, or the even more mysterious Kolat. No one's sure if either really exist; but horning in on their business is probably an excellent way to find out. And remember, they've got a *lot* more experience in the assassination game than your character does.

In other words, if you want to go into the poison business (other than selling a dose here or there to your buddies) go ahead. Make loads of dough. But you might want to spend a large part of it on a bodyguard or two.



9 Tremors. (-1 to Agility)

10 Numbness in fingers and toes. (-1 to all physical actions)

MAIN EFFECTS

You cannot have more than one Main Effect.

5 TN

1 die of Wounds

+5 TN

Coma. Roll Intelligence+Poison+2 and keep dice equal to your Intelligence. The victim rolls Stamina, deducts the result from your roll, and is in a coma for that many days. If the victim fails the roll, he stays in a coma until awakened by medicine or magic. If he's in a coma for a week or more, he's at -1 Fire and Earth for a week after he wakes up.

+10 TN

Seize the Heart. This poison delivers an additional die of Wounds.

+10 TN

Strike at the Heart. When the poison kicks in, the victim rolls Stamina against a TN of 10. If he fails, he takes an additional die of Wounds. You can increase the TN he has to beat by 5 for every 10 you Raise the TN to brew the poison; so if you want the victim to beat TN 15, it adds 20 to your TN to brew the venom.

+15 TN

Strike at the Wind. Roll Intelligence+Poison and keep dice equal to your Intelligence. We'll call the result "the Breathless number," because poisons of this type kill by paralyzing the lungs. Every hour that the poison is working on him, the victim rolls Stamina. If he beats the Breathless number, nothing changes. If he rolls lower, he takes an additional die of Wounds.

Identification

People with the skills Poison Lore, Investigation, Medicine and Herbalism can look at a poisoned individual and make an educated guess about what's making him sick (or, in extreme cases, what made him dead). The TN for identifying a poison is equal to the TN for making the poison.

Members of the Scorpion clan get a +5 when trying to identify a poison that was brewed by another Scorpion. Ninja, if there were such a thing, would get a similar bonus to identifying ninja poisons.

Treatment

Poisons can be treated by the skills Medicine, Poison Lore and Herbalism. Furthermore, people with the Poison skill can also treat toxins (it's a handy knack to have around the venom lab, believe me).

- The TN to identify a poison is equal to the TN of the poison +5.

- If the poison has been identified, the TN of curing it is equal to the TN of making the poison -5.

If the treatment is successful, the poison has no further effect; however, any effects that have already happened continue to plague the victim until the poison runs its course. For example, if a poison had the main effect "Strike at the Wind" and the side effects of "Fever" and "Intense Pain" the victim would be at -1 Intelligence, and would have taken some Wounds both from the pain and from the Breathless number. If the poison is successfully treated, the Wounds and Intelligence don't bounce back to normal until the poison wears off; but the victim doesn't have to keep rolling against the Breathless number every hour.

The exceptions to this are those poisons that put the victim into a coma. If these are beaten by a skill, the victim immediately wakes up.

Common treatments for poisons include (but are not limited to) emesis, frantic activity (to sweat the poison out), and ingestion of ground charcoal.





TSUME RETSU
DAIMYO OF THE
TSUME FAMILY



TSUME TAKASHI
SON AND HEIR OF
TSUME RETSU



OJUNO
TSUME RETSU'S
PERSONAL SERVANT



ITTO
A RONIN WHO'S
POPULAR WITH THE
TOWNSFOLK



IKOMA UJIAKI
LION CLAN
AMBASSADOR



SHIBA KATSUDA
PHOENIX CLAN
AMBASSADOR



DAIDOJI UJI
CRANE CLAN AMBASSADOR



REIKA
A GEISHA AT THE
PINE HOUSE

Dramatis Personae - Kyotei Castle



KAKITA HACHI
A MISSING CRANE
SAMURAI



SHOSURO KUJIKO
A MISSING SCORPION
SHUGENJA



MATSU INO
A LION NOBLE



IKOMA KATSU
MATSU INO'S YORIKI
AND RIGHT-HAND MAN



MATSU KUNO
GRANDFATHER OF
MATSU INO AND INO'S
DEAD BROTHER
CHONOKU



SAKKUAN
THE VILLAGE HEADMAN



NORII
A DIM ETA
GRAVEDIGGER



TUJI
ANOTHER DIM ETA
GRAVEDIGGER

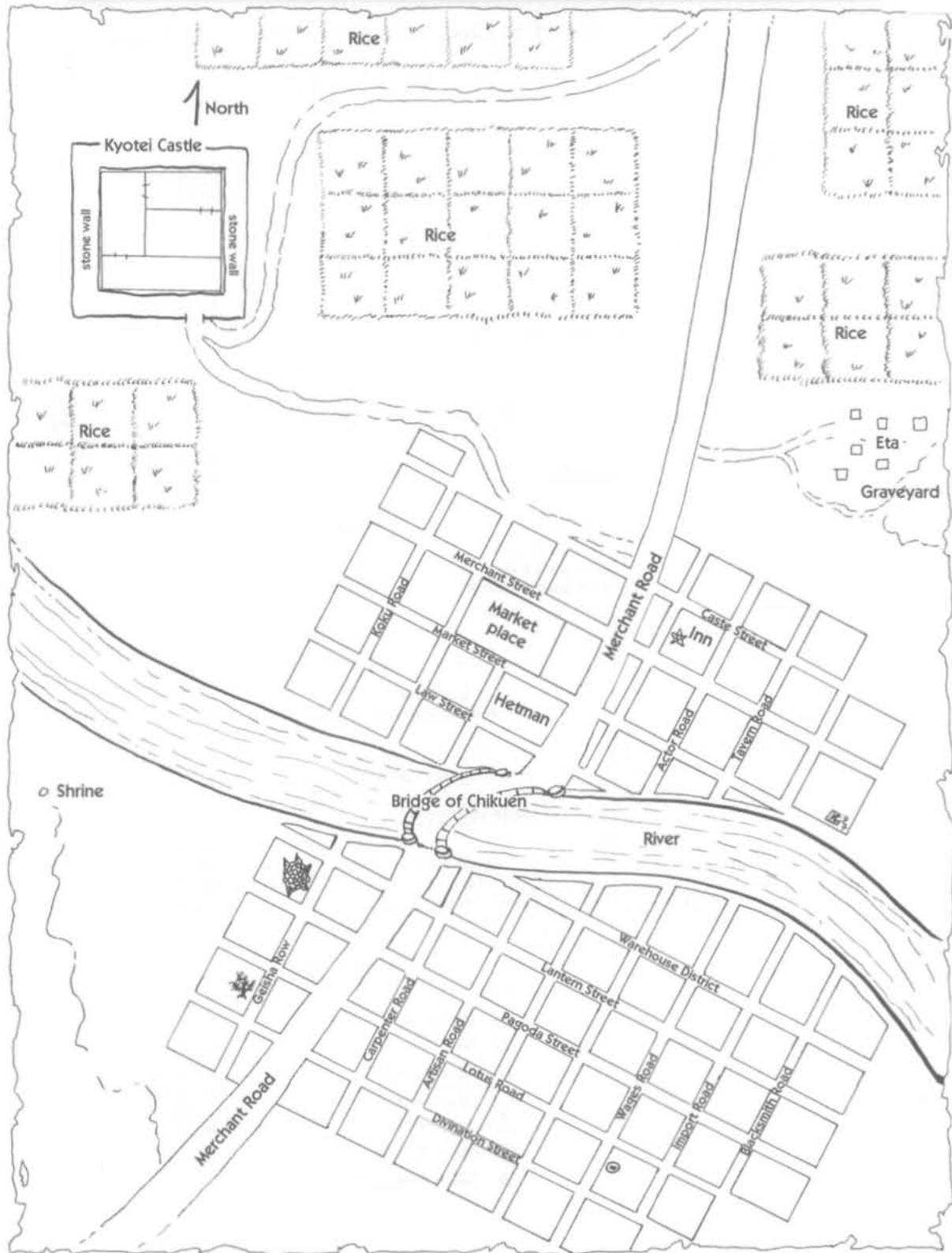


BAYUSHI YOJIRO
A SCORPION
MAGISTRATE LOOKING
FOR HIS COUSIN KUJIKO

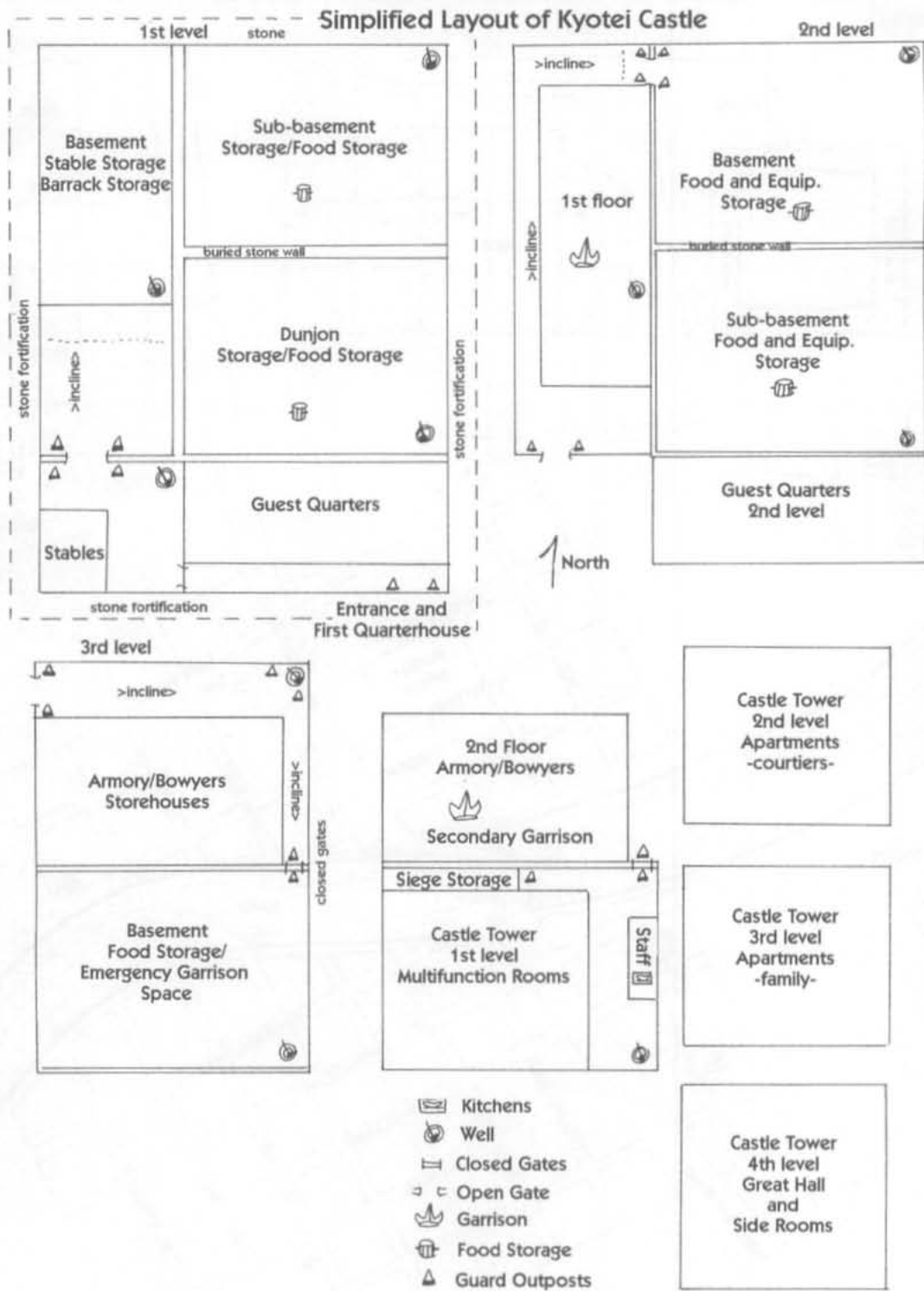


DOGAN
HEAD OF THE LOCAL
MONASTERY

Dramatis Personae - Honor's Veil



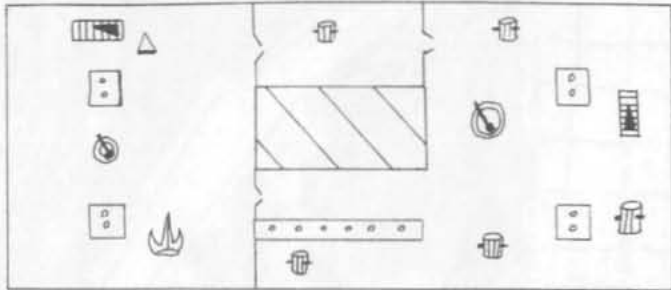
Kintani Valley - Kyotei Castle





Environs of Suboten Castle

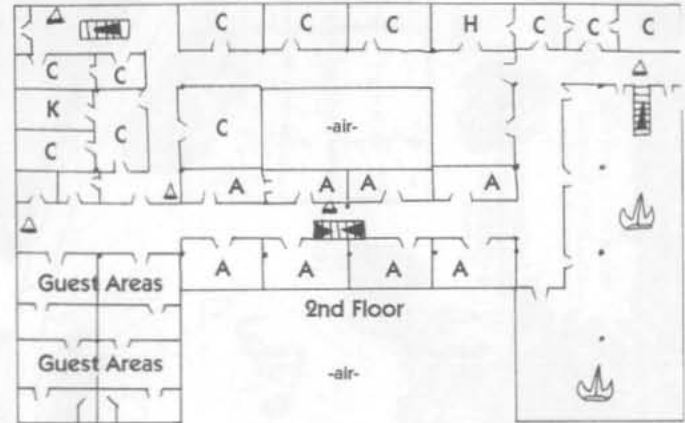
Simplified Layout of Duboten Castle



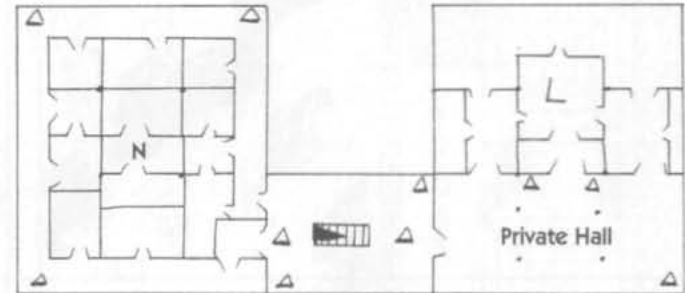
Basement



1st Floor



2nd Floor



3rd Floor

Room Notes
 H=Hachi's Room
 K=Kujiko's Room
 C=Courtier Rooms
 A=Ambassador Rooms
 N=Noble Family Rooms
 L=Lord's Chambers

North

- Kitchens
- Guard Outposts
- Well
- Door
- Pillars
- Food Storage
- Solid Earthworks
- Garrison
- Stairs
- Feet Meas

"Murder at Kyotei Castle"

**START AT THE SCROLL TO THE RIGHT
AND FOLLOW THE ARROWS THROUGH
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STORY.**

KYOTEI CASTLE (P. 7)

The characters are visiting Kyotei Castle during the Bon Festival. During dinner, Tsume Retsu and his son Tsume Takashi have an argument. During the night, there is a hue and cry: Retsu has been murdered.
NPCs: Tsume Retsu, Tsume Takashi; Ikoma Ujiaki, Shiba Katsuda, and Daidoji Uji.

THE MURDER SITE (PP. 8-9)

The characters are summoned to an audience with the new daimyo, Tsume Takashi. He commissions them as special magistrates to investigate the murder.

A servant is cleaning up the murder site. Perceptive characters notice that there is a non-Crane obi bead in a corner, and that a ceiling tile has been disturbed.

NPCs: General Shizuma

OJUNO (P. 10)

(If they ask to speak to the servant who discovered the body) Retsu was dead when she entered the room this morning. Retsu is a widower who slept alone. He occasionally visited the *geisha* at the Chrysanthemum House.

Ten guards sleep outside Retsu's room.

Tsume Retsu met in private with Daidoji Uji the previous night.

NPCs: Ojuno, General Shizuma

INTERVIEWS WITH KYOTEI DENIZENS (P. 13)

Tsume Takashi: invites the characters rabbit hunting. Takashi will disclose that he and his father fought frequently, and that he was in his room on the night of the murder.

General Shizuma: wasn't impressed with Retsu's plan to attack the Phoenix, which didn't have popular support.

The Guards: the ones outside the room didn't hear or see anything. One of the ones at the gate knows something, but isn't telling.

NPCs: The characters interviewed.

INTERVIEWS WITH THE VISITING NOBLES (PP. 11-12)

Ikoma Ujiaki: has little time to spare for the PCs. Hated Retsu, who had destroyed a minor Lion family 20 years ago, but wanted to face him in battle. Was scouting the Tsume family's troops and defenses. Very touchy.

Shiba Katsuda: welcomes the PCs. Was trying to convince Retsu to move his troops away from the Phoenix border, and was attempting to arrange a marriage between Takashi and Katsuda's daughter.

Daidoji Uji: indifferent to the PCs. Was communicating the Crane Clan's unhappiness with Retsu's moves toward Phoenix lands, since the Crane and Phoenix are allied.

NPCs: The nobles interviewed.

THE TOWN OF CHIKUZEN (PP. 15-17)

The Golden Peony Inn is a good place to stay for characters who don't want to stay in Kyotei Castle.

There's a gambling parlor, to which Retsu owed a lot of money.

The town crier knows most of the town's gossip.

There's a marketplace, where the hot gossip is that Takashi has a *geisha* lover, who is also seeing the *ronin* Itto. Everybody loves Itto.

The Chrysanthemum House was indeed visited by Retsu, but Takashi frequents the Pine House, two doors down.

NPCs: Shosuro Aki, Akiko

THE PINE HOUSE (PP. 16-18)

Takashi is seeing a *geisha* named Reika, who works here.

Reika is also seeing the *ronin* Itto, somewhat illicitly.

The *ochaya*, Kumiko, considers Takashi a much better catch for Reika than Itto is.

If the PCs ask to see Reika, she can't be found.

NPCs: Kumiko, Big Yoji

ITTO (P. 18)

Everybody in town likes Itto, who does bodyguard and general guard work, and gets problems solved for the *heimin* townsfolk.

Itto can be found at the Golden Peony Inn, where he spends his off hours. He won't disclose any useful information, but is touchy about his relationship with Reika.

After the PCs visit the Pine House, Itto rounds up a gang of thugs and attacks the characters at night, incognito. If things go poorly, he'll try to escape if possible.

NPCs: Itto

ANOTHER INTERVIEW WITH TAKASHI (P. 18)

(If they question him again)

Takashi admits that he's been seeing Reika. He's in love with her, even though he assumes at this point that she was an assassin sent to kill his father. He doesn't want the PCs to pursue her.

NPCs: Tsume Takashi

RESOLUTION: A SHRINE TO OSANO-WO (PP. 19-20)

Reika is at the shrine. She and Itto are the sole remnants of the Damasu family, destroyed by Tsume Retsu twenty years ago.

Reika is samurai by birth, but *hinin* by trade; how will the players deal with her?

Itto, if alive, arrives just as all hell is breaking loose.

NPCs: (Damasu) Reika, (Damasu) Itto

How To Use This Screen

These flowcharts can help you steer through the complications of the two mystery adventures in this pack. The solid arrows show the general course of events, while dotted arrows show scenes that may or may not happen depending on the players' actions.

We recommend that you use these flowcharts in conjunction with the portrait gallery on pp. 43-44. When the players meet an NPC, show them the appropriate portrait so that they can more easily keep track of the cast of characters.

"Honor's Veil"

**START AT THE SCROLL TO THE RIGHT
AND FOLLOW THE ARROWS THROUGH
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STORY.**

PRELUDE: MATSU INO'S HOME (P. 28)

The PCs have dinner at Matsu Ino's home. Present are Ino, his *karo* Ikoma Katsu, and his grandfather Matsu Kuno.

Kuno tells a story about his dead grandson, Chonoku.

Ino recommends that the characters spend the night in town with the headman Sakkuan.

NPCs: Matsu Ino, Ikoma Katsu, Matsu Kuno.

SCENE ONE: KUJIKO'S ROOM (P. 29)

Kujiko's room is sparsely but expensively furnished.

Concealed around the room are:

- in the desk: love letters from Hachi
- under the pillow: a sealed envelope
- in a secret drawer under the bureau: bottles of poison

NPCs: None.

SCENE TWO: HACHI'S ROOM (P. 30)

Hachi's room is rather Spartan.

There is a bloodstain on the windowsill.

The ink on his desk matches the letter under Kujiko's pillow.

The armor stand and sword rack are both empty.

There's a magical burn mark under his bed mat.

Hachi's traveling papers are in a bundle of clothes in one corner.

NPCs: None.

SCENE THREE: THE VILLAGE (P. 30)

The headman, Sakkuan, offers the characters great hospitality and politely urges them to investigate the ghost.

The ghost was covered in blood and mumbled, "You've killed me" over and over again as she wandered to the south.

NPCs: Sakkuan, Ikoma Katsu.

SCENE FOUR: THE SHRINE (P. 32)

The gravediggers, Norii and Tujii, are here. They're drunk and frightened of the ghost.

Kujiko's body is at the bottom of the river, tied to Hachi's armor.

The gravediggers, if asked, will give details on everything they know: they were hired to bury a body, which sat up, at which point they fled. They can give directions to the cave in which they were burying the body.

NPCs: Norii & Tujii, possibly Ikoma Katsu.

SCENE FIVE: THE CAVE (P. 33)

There's a lot of physical evidence here, very little of which is admissible under Rokugani law.

The grave that Norii and Tujii were digging is here, as is their shovel. The shovel has blood and hair on it.

There's a piece of Kujiko's kimono here. There's also the silk package she was carrying, which has a damning strategy map from the battle at which Ino's brother was killed. The map has a message on it in invisible ink.

NPCs: None, unless the PCs bring them along.

SCENE SIX: THE MONASTERY (P. 34)

The monastery recently accepted a new monk, who called himself "Kuji." The new monk (Hachi) is severely burned and dying; the head monk, Dogan, will not allow the characters to see "Kuji" or admit that he's present unless the PCs are very persuasive, or convince Ikoma Katsu to speak on their behalf.

If the characters do get to see Hachi, he'll tell the whole story and admit his part in things.

NPCs: Dogan; possibly Ikoma Katsu; possibly Hachi/"Kuji".

CONCLUSION AND AFTERWARD (P. 35)

(Only if the PCs bring Hachi back to Ino's home to confess)

Hachi testifies about his part in killing his lover Kujiko, and implicates Ino in Chonoku's death. Ino is of high enough rank to ignore the accusation, but dies mysteriously a month afterward thanks to vengeful Scorpions.

Honor's Veil

*"Truth is not in the eyes that see,
but in the tongue that tells ..."*

– Rokugan proverb

Honor's Veil is the first episode in a series of "Story Packs" for the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*. The "I" series presents Game Masters and players with stories of intrigue, espionage and mystery, where a samurai's wits can be more valuable than his skill with a sword. Within are two adventures:

- **Murder at Kyotei Castle:** A reckless Crane daimyo meets his death at the end of a wakizashi and a group of magistrates is thrown into a murder investigation that no one wants solved.
- **Honor's Veil:** With the disappearance of two ambassadors, and the appearance of a bloody ghost, a dangerous secret may be revealed. But are you willing to pay the price to uncover the truth?
- **Also Included:** *Fully illustrated and annotated maps, Traits and Skills for NPC's, Game Master Screen, GM advice for Honor rules and the much demanded rules for poisons!*



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