

Day and Night

**A One-Round Low-Rank Adventure for Heroes of
Rokugan (Champions of the Emerald Empire)**

by Robert Hobart

A storm strands you in the castle of a minor Crab daimyo. He and his wife seem the very model of fine samurai... until a murder disturbs the night.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Alderac Entertainment Group. Scenario detail copyright 2003 by Alderac Entertainment Group. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of AEG and Organized Play LLC.

GM's Information

THIS TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

This adventure is a Low-Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1 or 2 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 3 through 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table.

All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate. Sometimes, reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly

needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward – or punishment. The following may be considered as guidelines:

- Performing an act of selfless, sacrificial loyalty to one's daimyo or clan: +1 point of Honor.
- Abiding by the tenets of bushido when one could gain an obvious advantage from breaking them: +1 point of Honor.
- Betraying or disobeying your duty, Clan, or family: lose 1-10 points of Honor and Glory, depending on the severity of the failure.
- Crying out in pain when injured: lose one point each of Honor and Glory.
- Using sneaky, underhanded, or treacherous methods when at an Honor rank higher than zero: lose 1-5 points of Honor.
- Using poison: lose 1-10 points of Honor, depending on the circumstances (there is always an Honor loss for using poison).
- Performing a socially acceptable public act of extreme courage and skill: +1 point of Glory.
- Drunk, insulting, or otherwise ill-mannered in public: lose 1-5 points of Glory.
- Made ronin: Glory drops to zero.

Adventure Summary and Background

Bayushi Kyoka was a young courtier-ko, a lovely and talented girl who thought only of serving her clan in the courts of the Empire. Then at Winter Court she met a scarred old Crab daimyo, Hida Seta, a man nearly broken by his time on the Wall. Kyoka fell helplessly in love with this battered warrior, and used her courtier skills to arrange a betrothal to him. The old Crab could not believe his luck, and when spring came he traveled back to his distant home with his fiancée, to marry her in his own castle.

Kyoka was ill, but she concealed it rather than trouble her love. Then she died of her sickness, but she concealed that too. Hida Seta married his bride without ever knowing the truth.

It has been three months since then. The old Crab is happy with his lovely young wife. She does not complain about the grim, remote castle they inhabit, or the lack of courtly refinements and entertainments. She seems almost the perfect wife, affectionate, obedient, and skilled at managing his household. True, she has yet to bear him any children, but Seta is sure that will come soon enough. True, he has often been sick lately, but that's to be expected after his long and difficult life. In the meantime, he is happy... except for that troublesome kappa which has started harassing his lands. Something needs to be done about that...

The old Crab's life is about to be torn apart, however, by the arrival of some unexpected guests... including the PCs.

What is Really Happening: Kyoka's love for Hida Seta was so intense that when she died, her spirit remained here on Ningen-do as a *Yorei* (ghost) rather than going on to the afterlife where it belongs. Unfortunately, Kyoka's violation of the celestial order is not without consequences. She is slowly leaching the life from her love Seta, despite her efforts to assuage her ghostly hunger on the occasional servant. Moreover, her presence has attracted the attention of other supernatural beings, including a *gaki* (hungry ghost) that feeds on both love and death, and a meddlesome kappa, a denizen of Sakkaku, the Realm of Mischief.

The arrival of several unexpected guests, including the PCs in the company of a Falcon Clan ghost-hunter, will bring these supernatural troubles to an abrupt and deadly climax. Kyoka will attempt to assuage her hunger on the guests, while trying to avoid exposure at the hands of the Falcon. At least one, and possibly two, people will die before the PCs can expose and banish her.

Introduction

Your journey through the Crab lands has been a surprisingly safe and pleasant one until today. This morning, as the road took you up into the rugged crags of the Kabi ue no ho ni sa Umi, the Wall Above the Ocean mountains, dark storm clouds came boiling out of the west. By noon a heavy rain was pouring down, drenching you to the skin, and turning the narrow road muddy and treacherous.

It is up to the players why their characters are traveling through Crab lands. Crab PCs are presumably returning home from journeys elsewhere in the Empire, or setting out on new expeditions for their Clan. Ronin

are probably looking for work (the Crab always need ronin to fill out their ranks). Ise Zumi PCs are probably just wandering through. Other PCs are most likely here on business for their daimyo, perhaps to negotiate some problem or difference. For example, the Crane recently settled some disagreements with the Crab, so a Crane PC could be here resolving some residual matters from that. Encourage the PCs to be creative in developing reasons for their presence.

In any case, the PCs have been traveling together for a day or two before hitting the storm. (Traveling in groups is a sensible precaution in Crab lands – one never knows when a creature of Fu Leng might slip through the Wall.) Besides the PCs, one other person is sharing the same road: a Falcon ghost-hunter, (Toritaka) Karino.

(Toritaka) Karino

Karino is a man in his early thirties, with short-cropped hair and a small samurai topknot. His long face is usually set in a rather bored, sleepy expression, and he doesn't get excited easily. He discusses the business of ghost-hunting with a dispassionate, slightly weary air, as something with which fate has burdened him. Smart PCs will notice, however, that not much gets past Karino's heavy-lidded gaze. Karino actually has a rather subtle, dead-pan sense of humor, although he will only exhibit it around PCs who impress him favorably (see below). He is a bit sensitive about his name – "Toritaka" has not yet been officially recognized by the Emperor, although all the Falcon claim it as theirs – but knows better than to provoke a fight with a Major Clan PC about the matter.

What he is doing: Karino will not discuss his business unless the PCs ask, in which case he explains (quite blandly and laconically) that he is tracking a *gaki*, a hungry ghost, which he spotted a few weeks ago. He can explain (to a PC who is polite and seems genuinely interested) that *gaki* often manifest as insects, or provoke odd behavior in the local insect population. A trained ghost-hunter can spot even tiny clues of this sort to track a wandering *gaki*. "This particular *gaki* seems to feed on certain kinds of emotions. Of course, it doesn't care that its feeding can be harmful to its victims." He will not describe the *gaki* more fully, in part because he does not know much more. If the PCs ask what he will do when he finds the ghost, Karino smiles a tight, businesslike smile. "Deal with it," he says. "And then go look for more."

Attitude to the PCs: Karino has no particular prejudices for or against other Clans – they have their

duties, and he has his own. He does, however, show slightly more friendliness toward the Crab Clan, who are the Falcon's closest neighbors and whose battles with the undead spirits of the Shadowlands are not dissimilar to the Falcons' search for ghosts. Karino will also react favorably to any PCs who show respect to the Falcon Clan, who demonstrate shared knowledge (e.g. the **Lore: Yorei** or **Lore: Gaki** skills), who discuss previous encounters with ghosts, or who express an interest in learning more about ghosts. He will react poorly to PCs who mock his family name or his Clan's role, who fail to respect his duty as a ghost-hunter, or who are needlessly insulting or condescending.

It is useful (though not absolutely necessary) from the standpoint of the adventure if at least some of the PCs enjoy the company of "Toritaka" Karino.

Part One: Arrival

The storm has slowed your journey badly. You expected to be out of the mountains and resting at an inn by late afternoon, but instead evening finds you still slogging laboriously along the muddy mountain trail. Rain slashes at you like a thousand icy knife-blows, and the mud cakes on your sandals until every step is a torture.

Ahead of you, the path winds down into a narrow gorge before climbing back up the jagged hills on the far side. The roar of water comes from the gorge, and looking down, you can see that the storm has flooded it. Brown water roars between the rocks, and the bridge is only visible as a churning ferment of waves.

As the PCs look around after realizing the situation, they will spot distant flickering lights to their right, farther up the rugged slopes. Exploring the area, the PCs will discover a side-road, winding up into the hills, which they missed in their single-minded determination to follow the main path. A short distance up that side-road, they will encounter the Kappa (see below).

If the PCs look around for signs or other indications of where they are, they can roll **Simple Perception** (TN 10) to spot a stone post a few dozen yards back up the trail. It is inscribed with the kanji for "Shiro no Gireihei," (which means, "Castle of Honored Guard").

If any PCs ask about the area, or about the name "Shiro Gireihei", they will need either the **Lore: Crab Clan** skill or the advantage Way of the Land (Crab Lands). A Crab Clan character (only) can also use the **History** skill. The roll is **Intelligence** (with skill, if available) at TN 15. Success indicates the PC remembers hearing

about Shiro Gireihei as an old, obscure castle which guards this secondary route through the Wall Above the Ocean mountains. Traditionally, lordship over Shiro Gireihei is given as a reward to old and weary samurai who have served loyally on the Kaiu Wall for many years, but lack the temperament for retirement to a monastery and are not learned enough to teach in the Crab dojos.

The Kappa Shows his Shell

As you climb the side-road up into the rugged hills, your sandals sucking mud from the path, you hear a strange piping sound above the drumming roar of the rain. The sound seems to be almost music, yet never quite acquires a proper rhythm, dancing maddeningly at the edge of a predictable tune.

The PCs will need to roll **Investigation/Perception** or **Music/Perception** at TN 10 to track the annoying sound to its source. If nobody makes the roll, the Kappa will eventually escalate things by bouncing a pebble off the head of one of the PCs (preferably an arrogant or fastidious one).

The Kappa is squatting on a spire of rock, about twenty feet above the trail, and looking down at the PCs with a lopsided grin on his face while he continues to hum and whistle his irritating tune. He resembles a short, squat humanoid with yellow-green skin, a vaguely frog-like snout, and a large turtle-shell on his back. A bowl full of water is perched atop his flat head, and water dribbles out of it as the rain continues to slash down.

Any PC can recognize the Kappa by rolling **Lore: Spirits** or any similar skill (with **Intelligence**) at TN 10. A **Theology/Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will recognize the Kappa as a denizen of Sakkaku, the spirit realm of mischief. A **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will also recognize the Kappa as not being a creature of Fu Leng.

A Conversation with the Kappa

The Kappa will speak with the PCs in a mischievous, irritating manner. It finds the behavior of Kyoka the Yorei to be quite entertaining, not to mention her befuddled husband and the gaki which Kyoka has attracted. The Kappa sees the PCs as an entertaining new addition to the mix, and is more interested in keeping them here than in actually giving them any useful information.

A conversation with the Kappa will thus be a maddening exercise. A few samples follow:

- Greeting: “Welcome to the hollow land, the land of sadness, the land of joy! I am Yotogi (“Watcher”). Did you enjoy my music?”
- Where is this, why is it called the ‘hollow land’? “Hollow like hearts, hollow like the minds of men who see only what they wish to see! Everything is perception, after all. Do you perceive the world, or does the world perceive you?”
- Why is he here? “A game, a play, a tragedy and a comedy! Which will it be, in the end? Do you know? I don’t!”
- Who lives here, who is in the castle, etc. “A man, an empty man in an empty house. A man with many guests. Some he knows about, and some he doesn’t. What a funny game! Does he know about you?”

If the PCs are belligerent (or attempt violence), the kappa will be insulted. “Spurn my wisdom, will you? Let you be cursed, then!” he cries, and hops away through the rocks, quickly vanishing from sight. All PCs who attacked or threatened the kappa will carry a Curse of Rank One Unluck for the remainder of the adventure, or until they convince the Kappa to lift his curse.

Arrival at Shiro Gireihei

Once the PCs have passed the kappa (whether in a friendly or a hostile manner), they will be able to follow the winding trail farther up the hill, switching back a couple of times, and at one point passing beneath a waterfall of runoff, gushing down the mountainside. They will occasionally catch glimpses ahead of them of the same lights they saw before. Finally, they reach the castle:

You pass through a narrow belt of scrub trees and emerge onto a terraced clearing, about halfway up the massive hill, almost a mountain, which looms over the flooded gorge below. Several buildings are scattered around the clearing, and above them bulks a squat, slab-sided castle. You can see lights in the castle and some of the smaller buildings, but at first nobody is visible outdoors. Then, squinting, you make out a single sentry on the castle wall, hunched over against the wind and rain, clutching a naginata.

If the PCs check out the other buildings, they will recognize them as several peasant dwellings (enough for half a dozen families) and what appears to be the entrance to a mine of some sort. There are lights in

some of the peasant huts, but nobody is outside – the weather is too inhospitable.

If the PCs approach the castle, the sentry will spot them, trudge to the front of the battlement, and call down for them to identify themselves. Once the PCs have named themselves, the guard calls for them to wait. After a few minutes, the castle gate creaks open, pushed by a pair of bedraggled servants, and the PCs are admitted.

The servants lead the PCs to guest quarters on the second floor of the castle, then offer them a chance to bathe and change their clothes, promising that “Lord Hida Seta-sama” will see them once they have cleaned up. PCs who pay attention to the servants (unusual but not unheard-of for samurai) may detect, with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 15, a sense of unease and faint fear among them – however, the servants will politely deny that anything is amiss.

While the PCs and Karino are bathing, the following incident will take place:

As you relax for a few minutes in the hot water, letting it soak the chill of travel out of your bones, your reverie is interrupted by a loud buzzing noise. A large swarm of flies buzzes into the room, circling around the bath in a dense cloud, the insects crowded so close together that they seem to form a solid mass. They circle around the room several times and then, abruptly, the buzzing stops. A small rain of dead flies patters on the floor with a soft rattling noise.

Although dead flies are not quite dirty enough to justify an *eta*’s services (except perhaps for the most fastidious), they are still unsettling and disgusting. Karino will grow quite alert after this incident, in contrast to his usual sleepy and laconic attitude, and will admit to anyone who asks that this is an incident characteristic of the presence of *gaki*.

The servants will be horrified and embarrassed by this incident, and sweep away the dead flies while apologizing profusely for the insult to their guests. If the PCs mention the possibility of a ghost (Karino, ever cautious, will keep his mouth shut), the servants look alarmed and insist that nothing of the sort could possibly be responsible. “Perhaps someone left a window unfastened. Our heartiest apologies, samurai-san.” The servants are not exactly lying, but they are not telling the whole truth – incidents like this have been frequent lately.

Part Two: Socializing

When the PCs are cleaned up, they are led to the audience hall on the main floor of the castle. Waiting for them is Hida Seta and his wife Kyoka.

The lord of the castle is a heavy man in late middle age, with shards of gray cutting through his thick dark hair, and ugly scars seaming his neck and arms. He is seated on a chair, rather than kneeling, but you can easily see why he foregoes normal etiquette: his left leg is twisted and withered, sticking out straight in front of him, and a wooden crutch rests to one side. His skin has a gray caste and his breathing is heavy and stentorian, but his eyes are still keen as he takes your measure.

Sitting behind and to one side of him is a very beautiful young woman, her kimono and obi arranged in the style of a married woman. As the aged Crab rises and bows to you, he staggers and nearly falls – the young woman glides to her feet and sets a steady hand on his shoulder.

“Greetings, honored guests, and welcome to Shiro Gireihei, the Castle of Honored Guard,” the Crab rasps in a ragged voice. “I am sorry that I can offer only poor hospitality here – we seldom have guests. I will do what I can—” he breaks off in loud coughing, and his wife helps him ease back down into his chair. Then, after a brief nod from him, she glides forward and speaks in a sweet, perfectly modulated voice:

“Honored guests. My lord and husband Hida Seta-sama bids you welcome. I apologize on his behalf for his poor words, but the ravages of service on the Kaiu Wall make it difficult for him to exhibit proper etiquette. I hope you will be able to forgive him.” She bows again, eyes modestly lowered.

Only the most insensitive of PCs could be rude in the face of such a scene. Seta and his wife will invite the PCs (and Karino) to share their dinner. As they move in to the dining hall, Kyoka carefully supports her limping, faltering husband. Any PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 (or **Courtier/Awareness** or **Seduction/Awareness** at TN 10) can see the loving care which Kyoka lavishes on her husband – this is no mere wife of duty.

The dinner is simple but generous of quantity. Just as the PCs are setting to, a servant hurries in and whispers something to Hida Seta. The old bushi listens, then growls something and gestures. As the servant departs, Seta turns back to the PCs. “My apologies,” he grates.

“It seems some other guests have arrived, victims of the... storm...” he breaks out coughing again. Kyoka holds a silk kerchief to his lips, then smiles pleasantly, making conversation to detract from her husband’s obvious ill health. “So many visitors! We have not been able to entertain such company before. Perhaps this storm is truly a blessing from the Fortunes, to bring some companionship and pleasant conversation into our poor castle.”

The Other Guests

After a few minutes, the second group of guests arrives, bowing and apologizing for their wet and dirty appearance: a caravan of diplomats, craftsmen, and merchants, heading out from Sunda Mizu Mura (Clear Water Village) to the Crane lands. There are a total of seven individuals of samurai rank among them: Yasuki Hatta, his escort Hida Reijitsu, a married pair of Kaiu crafters (Kaiu Hiromi and Kaiu Kenru), a Unicorn diplomat (Ide Sumon), and a young Crane diplomat, Daidoji Mei, with her bodyguard Daidoji Ryoku.

The visitors bow and introduce themselves, apologizing for troubling Hida Seta and explaining that the storm caught them by surprise. Seta waves aside their apologies with a strangled grunt, and Kyoka welcomes the new visitors with the same flawless etiquette she showed earlier. “Please, honored samurai, we are about to enjoy our meal. Join us for dinner now, while the food is fresh and flavorful.”

Yasuki Hatta and the two Cranes are embarrassed at having to sit down to dinner without bathing and changing clothes, but the other Crab guests laugh such considerations aside and sit down cheerfully to dinner, joking and trading stories with Hida Seta. After a few moments Ide Sumon joins their conversation, skillfully adapting to local circumstances in the manner of the Ide.

Yasuki Hatta: a thin, lanky man with a slightly worried expression and a habit of stroking his chin with fingers and thumb. Hatta is a skilled merchant sponsor, and adept at avoiding giving offense to the mores of more conventional samurai (which is why he is traveling in the company of Crane). He is also a connoisseur and collector of fine artwork, and is traveling to Crane lands to view the artworks at Kyuden Doji. He will discuss such matters with anyone who seems to share his interests, especially courtiers and Crane artists.

Hida Reijitsu: this man appears to be a prototypical Hida bushi, large, muscular, and gruff. However, much

of this is a front which he puts on in order to get through life and avoid trouble with his fellow Crab. Beneath the façade, Reijitsu is a poet and dreamer, who longs for the sort of peaceful, artistic life which a Crab can never have. Yasuki Hatta recognized Reijitsu's true nature and arranged for his assignment as bodyguard. Reijitsu will not show his true nature unless someone earns his complete trust, although observant PCs may catch hints of it from his conversation and behavior. He is still a highly competent Crab bushi – otherwise he would never have survived this long.

Kaiu Hiromi: A pretty young engineer who specializes in siege warfare. Hiromi has never been in battle, but studies it with the voracity that other scholars study the Tao. She enjoys demonstrating battles and tactics with origami armies, using cups, plates, and chopsticks to represent terrain features. Her husband, Kenru, indulges her eccentricities, since they often produce genuine insights into battle and victory. PCs who have played the adventure *A Mantis and His Rat* may have shared conversation with Hiromi before, and she will remember them if their previous interactions were positive.

Kaiu Kenru: Hiromi's husband is a quiet, muscular, thick-bodied Kaiu weaponsmith in his early thirties. His head is shaved bald (to avoid sparks in the forge), and his arms are thick tree trunks of muscle. Kenru does not speak unless he has something to say, and seldom strings more than three or four words together. He is already famed throughout the Crab Clan for the quality of his weapons and armor, and prefers to let his work speak for itself.

Ide Sumon: A polite, friendly diplomat of the classic Ide type, able to quickly adapt to any situation and make friends in the unlikeliest places. Sumon wears a Unicorn tassled hat and a neatly-trimmed moustache; his hair has red highlights, legacy of a gaijin ancestor. He has recently completed some secret negotiations with the Crab Clan and is heading for the Imperial capital to report to his superiors. Sumon has spent many years in the courts of Rokugan and will be familiar with any PC who has considerable fame (Glory 4.0 or better) or who has court connections (Imperial family, Ear of the Emperor, allies in the Imperial families, etc). He also remembers Kyoka from her days in the Imperial court. "Ah, Kyoka-chan, it is so good to see you again! When you fell ill during the Winter Court, I feared the worst!" See "Dinner Conversation," below, for more details of this discussion.

Daidoji Mei: A lovely, delicate, and gentle young woman who wears her long undyed hair in a proper maiden's foxtail. Mei is the daughter of Daidoji Konsetsu, a major merchant sponsor. PCs may have met her before in the adventures *Face of Fear* or *Ancestral Dictate*, and she will react to them accordingly. To PCs she does not know, Mei will be polite but restrained, held back by her embarrassment and discomfort over the present situation. She tries to avoid any Clan prejudices, although she tends to be uneasy around Lion and to be friendly toward members of the Imperial Families (except Miya, who remind her painfully of a friend who was lost to the Taint).

Daidoji Ryoku: Mei's bodyguard is a powerful-looking man with quick reflexes and sharp eyes that are constantly on watch. Like many Daidoji, he does not dye his hair, which is worn in a strict samurai topknot. Ryoku is a vassal of Mei's father, and takes his guard duty very seriously. He remains quiet and observant whenever in the presence of Mei, but unbends a bit when she is gone and he feels himself "off-duty."

Dinner Conversation

The presence of several Crab guests telling tales of their Clan seems to revive old Hida Seta, and during dinner he will smile and offer a few brief, halting tales of his own. Ide Sumon quickly gets into the spirit of things, contributing exotic stories of life in the Burning Sands, while the two Crane look pained and embarrassed by this unconventional dinner. (Daidoji Mei is particularly embarrassed at not having had the chance to bathe and change clothes before the meal).

Anyone watching Kyoka during the dinner will note (with a **Simple Awareness** roll, TN 15, or **Ichi Miru/Awareness** at TN 10) that she seems oddly conflicted. On the one hand, she is happy that her husband is enjoying himself, but on the other hand, something about the presence of these guests is making her nervous, perhaps even frightened. If the PC makes TN 25 or more (20 with Ichi Miru), they can tell that Kyoka's anxieties are focused most strongly on Ide Sumon and Karino.

Besides the general conversational topics mentioned above, several specific conversational topics will arise during dinner. The GM should introduce these as appropriate, using the various NPCs:

- **Conditions on the Kaiu Wall.** Hida Seta will ask his fellow Crabs how things are faring on the Wall, and all of the Crab NPCs will contribute to the answer (Crab PCs may as well, if they choose).

The Wall was recently the target of a major assault, apparently targeted at Shiro Kuni, the main command post. Fortunately, the attacks were beaten off, albeit at heavy cost. There are persistent rumors that the attacks were led by some strange new Shadowlands overlord, although no-one has been able to confirm such tales.

- **Hida Seta's past as a bushi.** Hida Reijitsu will remember serving with Hida Seta on the Kaiu Wall several years ago. "I was just a fledgling, new-past my gempukku, and Seta-san was our unit commander. I remember, the 5th tower was besieged, and we all expected to die – but you still defied them, shouted battle-cries to rally us until dawn." He will tell several more tales of this sort. Kaiu Hiromi will contribute an intellectual discussion of some of Hida Seta's battles, showing how Seta's courage and steadfast determination was critical to victory. The old Crab will listen with a smile to such discussions, contributing only an occasional rasping comment. If any PCs ask about how Seta came to be here, or why he left the Wall, or how he wound up in the Imperial court to meet Kyoka, Seta will slowly explain: after his injuries made it "difficult" for him to fulfill his duties, he was sent to last year's Winter Court as a bodyguard for one of the Crab representatives.
- **Kyoka's former life in the court.** This topic will be broached by Ide Sumon, who will fondly remember Kyoka as "one of the brightest young stars who shone in the Winter Court last year" and expresses wonderment at how well she seems to have "adapted" to life in Crab lands. If anyone asks about his earlier reference to Kyoka's illness, she will interrupt. "The illness was exaggerated, I assure you, Ide-sama. I was so busy preparing for my wedding that I hardly had time to appear in the court."
- **Hida Seta's marriage to Kyoka.** Ide Sumon will open this topic if none of the PCs mentions it, explaining what a "surprise" (scandal) it was that "the lovely Bayushi Kyoka should marry into the Crab Clan, when so many others were vying for her hand." Kyoka will smile and blush and say nothing, leaving her husband to haltingly explain: "I was told I would be assigned to Shiro Gireihei when I returned from the court, so I should seek a wife before then. I was fortunate enough to find one." PCs who roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell from Seta's attitude that he is still more than a little stunned at his luck in landing such a fine bride.
- **Hida Seta's health.** If none of the PCs asks about Seta's obvious poor health, Hida Reijitsu will remark that Seta is not looking well. In Crab fashion he will attempt to make a joke out of it. "I hope retirement has not disagreed with you, Seta-san. Would you be happier back on the Wall, with a bracing wind to put color in your cheeks?" Seta grins in response, and makes some self-deprecating remarks, while Kyoka scolds her guest. "My husband may be aging, but after surviving all these horrors you speak of, I am sure he will find retirement a very easy challenge." However, any PC rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell that she is actually worried about Seta. A PC who makes TN 25 or better may suspect that Kyoka also feels some sort of guilt about Seta's condition.
- **The Kappa.** If none of the PCs mention the Kappa, Kaiu Hiromi will ask about it. "It is unusual to see such creatures in these lands. Has it caused you much trouble?" Both Seta and Kyoka will look pained at the mention of the creature, and Kyoka's lovely face will wrinkle in distaste. "I have no idea why that troublesome creature is dwelling here," she snaps. "If only we could be rid of it." Seta nods and tries to change the subject, obviously more interested in keeping his wife happy than in actually dealing with the Kappa. Neither of them will admit to any understanding of why the Kappa is here, or what it means with its cryptic sayings.
- **The Haunting.** Karino the Falcon will remain quiet through most of the dinner, but when a suitable occasion arises (such as during a discussion of the Kappa), he will ask Seta and Kyoka if they have been having any problems with hauntings or ghosts. "Strange visions, sudden insect swarms, that sort of thing. I have been tracking a Gaki for some time, and I have seen signs that it may be here." He will describe the incident in the bath, and asks PCs for confirmation. Both Seta and Kyoka will deny that any such problems have happened, and Kyoka will act offended at Karino's words. "Surely, Karino-kun, you will not accuse us of harboring Shadowlands ghosts just because of a few insects?" PCs who roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell that Kyoka is very upset and angry over this discussion, while Seta is uncertain and confused by the vehemence of her response.

The Gaki Visits

As dinner concludes, Daidoji Mei will excuse herself, apologizing for her haste. “I thank you for this fine dinner, Hida-san, but the dirt of the road weighs heavily on me. With your permission I would bathe and retire.” Seta nods, and Kyoka offers to accompany Mei to the bathing chambers. The two women depart together. Mei’s bodyguard Ryoku remains behind – outside the presence of the ladies, he unwinds a bit and begins conversing with the Crab guests about his own youthful experiences on the Kaiu wall. (Like many Daidoji, he served a year on the Wall before taking up his present duties.)

This casual conversation is interrupted by a feminine shriek from the bathing chambers. Hida Seta staggers to his feet, rasping the name of his wife: “Kyoka-chan!” Ryoku leaps to his feet as well, hand instinctively reaching for his katana even though it is not there, then snarling in frustration and charging bare-handed toward the noise. Karino accompanies him, fumbling for something under his kimono. Hida Reijitsu on the other hand goes seeking his weapons – like most Crab, he has been trained to equip and prepare himself before facing danger. Kaiu Kenru calls after him to fetch his weapons as well, but remains here to protect his wife. The other guests, who are not warriors, remain in the room, looking around anxiously and wondering what is happening.

Allow the PCs to react as they see fit. If they imitate Daidoji Ryoku and rush immediately to the bathing chambers, they will see the following:

The two women, still mostly dressed, are trapped in one corner of the bath chamber. In front of them is a translucent humanoid figure with gray skin, long thin limbs and eyes that glow with a desperate, greedy light. There is something unsettlingly insectile about its movements as it edges closer to the two women, its thin clawed fingers held out in a hungry, almost plaintive way. Its legs fade away into nothingness rather than ending in feet. Trapped by the thing, Kyoka is cowering in the corner, whimpering, while Mei stands bravely in front of her, arms spread protectively.

Anyone who rolls **Lore: Shadowlands**, **Lore: Ghosts**, or any similar skill (with **Intelligence**) at TN 10 can recognize the creature as a Gaki, a “hungry ghost” trying to feed. The ghost cannot be harmed with most material attacks, but it can be repelled by certain magics: the spell *Evil Ward* will drive away the ghost, as will a blow from any of the elemental weapon spells

(*Tetsubo of Earth*, *Yari of Air*, etc). Jade, crystal, or obsidian weapons will also drive away the gaki if they strike it. Spells that specifically target Shadowlands Taint (such as *Jade Strike*) will not affect the gaki, although at the GM’s option it might retreat after being attacked with such a spell.

Daidoji Ryoku will rush forward, trying to place himself between the ghost and Mei. If none of the PCs can do anything to drive the ghost away, Karino the Falcon will pull a paper ward from the sleeve of his kimono, mutters a quick incantation to Emma-O (the Fortune of Death), and attempts to slap the paper onto the ghost’s translucent gray forehead. The creature hisses in surprise and alarm, drawing away from the sacred paper, then seems to go completely transparent and drops through the floor, vanishing. (It will make a similar reaction if one of the PCs manages to drive it away as outlined above.)

Either way, the gaki leaves behind a buzzing cloud of flies which disperses after a few moments.

If the PCs went with Hida Reijitsu to fetch weapons or equipment, they will arrive just in time to see Karino drive away the gaki.

Aftermath

Kyoka and Mei are both clearly near-hysterical with fear after the gaki is driven away. Daidoji Ryoku will comfort Mei for a time, then step outside and wait for her to complete her bathing, assuring her that he will be immediately present should she call for help again. Meanwhile, a panting and gasping Hida Seta will arrive, fumbling about on his crutch and trying not to show his emotions too overtly as he assures himself that his wife is all right. Kyoko clings to him, trembling, and weeps softly.

If any PCs try to get a “read” on Kyoka’s behavior, they can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to realize that her fear is not just of the gaki itself, but of something else as well. A PC who rolls TN 25 or better realizes that part of the fear is associated with Karino.

After this incident, Karino will question Seta and Kyoka carefully about the gaki, inquiring about earlier incidents, how long this has been happening, and so forth. He is clearly convinced that this is the gaki he is looking for, and somewhat irritated that the Crab have not been more forthcoming with him. Kyoka will try to use the situation to put him off, by sobbing, distracting her husband, and generally playing up her role as a frightened wife. Seta, however, will not be distracted

this time – he is a Hida, and knows his duty. He confesses haltingly that there have been “rumors” of some sort of haunting, although at first he had dismissed them as superstitious gossip. “I saw... one or two instances of... strange insect behavior. I had hoped... whatever it was, would move on. I am... very sorry.” He bows insteadily to Daidoji Ryoku, who nods shortly in response.

Karino will also demand to know whether anyone in the castle has died recently. Kyoka will try to take offense at the question, and Karino will have to be insistent before Seta grudgingly acknowledges that two of the older servants have died since he arrived at the castle last spring. “It was natural causes, though,” he rasps. “No violence, nothing like that. They were both elderly.”

Although one of the younger servants has also disappeared, Seta knows nothing of this, and Kyoka will admit nothing. The PCs will have to ask the servants or the villagers to learn of this clue.

Eventually Seta will cut short these questions by insisting that he is tired and his wife has been distressed more than enough. He suggests everyone prepare for bed, and promises to place extra bushi on guard in case the ghost returns. If any of the PCs offer to place *Evil Wards* in the castle, he will agree. (*Evil Wards* will not affect Kyoka – she is not Tainted.)

Part Three: Murders Most Foul

Kyoka needs life-energy to survive and maintain herself in Ningen-do, the realm of mortals. Her attempt to drain some life from Mei was interrupted by the gaki, and now she is looking for another target. She will soon settle on Ide Sumon, whose comments and questions about her life back at court have unnerved her.

At some point during the night, Kyoka will slip out of her quarters on the castle’s top floor, descend to the third floor where the guests are housed, and slip into Sumon’s room, where she drains the life-force from the hapless sleeping Unicorn.

It is highly unlikely that the PCs will be aware of any of this, unless one or more of them are paranoid enough to stay up and patrol the castle. In the latter case, allow them a Contested roll of their **Investigation/Perception** against Kyoka’s **Stealth/Agility** to notice her slipping silently through the castle. Kyoka can walk through

walls and narrow openings at will, so even if the PCs spot her, they will not be able to track her down.

Unless a PC manages to barge into Ide Sumon’s room in the middle of Kyoka’s attack (an unlikely and uncouth deed), there will be no way to interrupt Kyoka from draining his life-force.

Missing at Breakfast

The next morning, it will still be raining, although not as fiercely as the night before – a steady pour rather than a storm. At breakfast, Hida Seta will report that some of his guards have checked the river, which is still in flood. He invites all the PCs and NPCs to remain in the castle as his guests until the water recedes and they can resume their journey. PCs can easily notice that Seta seems a little stronger and more vigorous this morning; if they comment on it, he smiles and remarks that a night’s sleep always does him good. Kyoka smiles happily at his side.

The Crab guests will all be happy to remain in Shiro Gireihei for a few more days. The Crane will be unhappy, but their etiquette is good enough to make this imperceptible to any but the closest observers. Karino, of course, will remark that he is happy to stay, since his quarry is here.

Ide Sumon will not appear for breakfast. Eventually, a frightened-looking servant will hurry in and report to Hida Seta in a whisper. The old Crab looks startled. “What? Dead?! How?”

The Unicorn’s Death

Ide Sumon lies on his futon, tangled in the covers, with an expression of pain and fear etched into his dead features. Hida Seta will allow any high-ranking (Glory 3.0 or better), magistrate, or Crab PCs to investigate the death as they see fit. He will himself summon eta from the village to examine and remove the body. Kyoka will refrain from approaching the room, pleading that she has no desire to see such a horrible sight.

Karino will also insist on investigating the death, although his “investigation” seems to consist mostly of staring around the room with an expression so intense it seems almost vacant.

PCs who look around the room, or examine the body (without touching it!), can gain the following clues:

- There are no perceptible wounds on Sumon’s body, and a **Medicine/Intelligence** roll at TN 10 will deduce that he seems to have died of heart-

failure. This is quite unusual for a man of his age and apparent vigor, but not impossible.

- If any PCs look for signs of poison, there are none. If PCs have an eta go over the body carefully for any signs of something unusual, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to notice very faint markings on the dead Unicorn's face: the marks of thin fingertips pressed against the skin. A roll with **Lore: Ghosts/Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Lore: Shadowlands** at TN 20) will identify this as a possible sign of a ghost feeding upon the living.
- There are no signs of anyone else having been in the room. Sumon's belongings are completely nondescript and uninteresting (although the bundle of letters in his traveling pack might be of interest to a ruthless courtier or Scorpion).
- If a shugenja PC tries to Commune with the spirits in the castle, they will find the spirits very uncooperative. See "Speaking with the Spirits" under Part Four: Investigations for more details.

If one of the PCs is a Falcon, that PC may be able to detect the same clues that Karino is picking up. Have the PC roll Simple Awareness:

- TN 15: the PC senses residual spiritual energy from some sort of ghost or spirit.
- TN 20: the PC senses the spirit's hostile touch on Ide Sumon, and detects that the spirit is not the same as the gaki from last night.
- TN 25: the PC can tell that the spirit which attacked Sumon is that of a woman. The PC also senses intense auras of both love and death associated with the spirit.

Karino makes TN 25, and begins to put together what is really happening. He spends the rest of the morning questioning the servants of the castle to confirm his suspicions. Karino will conduct these investigations on his own, unless one of the other PCs is a Falcon, in which case he invites that PC (or PCs) to help him.

It is up to the PCs what they do for the rest of the morning. Undoubtedly, many of them will begin asking questions, or hunting for the gaki. See Part Four: Investigations for details of what they can learn.

As the investigation continues, Hida Seta will quickly grow tired and begin wheezing and coughing heavily. Kyoka will help him upstairs to his quarters.

The other NPC guests will for the most part try to ignore this awful incident and keep themselves distracted with talk, visits to the castle dojo, and so forth.

Karino Meets his Fate

At some point around midday, Karino will be satisfied that Kyoka is a ghost and the source of the trouble here.

He will seek her out in the upper levels of the castle, where she has been tending to Hida Seta. Through a servant, he sends her a message that he must see her on a matter of great urgency, "concerning the health of your husband."

Unless one or more of the PCs are of the Falcon Clan, it is highly unlikely that any of them will be present for Karino's meeting with Kyoka. He will prefer to investigate alone, overly confident in his abilities as a ghost-hunter.

Karino bluntly informs Kyoka that he knows she is a ghost. "Your place is not here, lady, however much you might wish it to be so. I can give you the rest you need, and then your husband will recover and live out a long life. If you truly care for him, this is the path you must choose." Kyoka stands with head bowed for a moment, weeping, and Karino turns to pull a ward from his traveling pack. At that moment, with a panicked shriek, Kyoka lunges forward and shoves him out an open window. Karino tumbles to his doom, bouncing off the lower stories of the castle and plunging into the river-valley below.

Kyoka continues to scream, at first consumed with horror at what has happened and what she has done, then deliberately as she hurriedly thinks of a way to deflect blame and stay with her beloved Seta. When the guards (and presumably the PCs) arrive, she has a prepared story, which she chokes out between sobs:

"The honorable Falcon came to see my lord, saying he had learned the location of the gaki and would soon be able to dispose of it. I spoke to him in Seta-sama's stead, of course. But just as he was explaining himself, an evil spirit reached in through the window and seized him. It had glowing eyes and skin like a filthy frog, and its fingers were long and webbed, with claws." She will embellish the description in various ways, but makes it clear that the kappa is the culprit. She will also try to blur the distinction between the kappa and the gaki, perhaps implying that they are the same being or are working together.

After this incident, Hida Seta will post guards on several of the windows and insists that none of the guests travel in the castle alone. He will also warn the servants to stay away from windows, and sends word to the peasants in the village to stay indoors.

It is up to the PCs what to do from here. If they take no action, the rain will stop by evening, and by the next morning the river will have fallen enough to allow them to resume travel. Neither Kyoka nor the gaki will take any further action unless the PCs provoke them.

Part Four: Investigations

At some point during the scenario, after either the death of Ide Sumon or of Karino, the PCs will almost certainly begin investigating the situation. The following sections lay out the various avenues of investigation which are open to them:

Hida Seta

The scarred and weary Crab will not be in the mood for visitors after the death of Karino. He closets himself in his private quarters and leaves hospitality in the hands of his wife and servants. Only Crab PCs, or PCs who offer a persuasive case that they need his help to deal with the ghost problem, will be able to see him.

Prior to Karino's death, Seta will be slightly more willing to see visitors, although they will still have to present a good reason to disturb him – his wife will protect him from idle interruptions.

Regardless, Kyoka will want to be present if the PCs are speaking with Seta. If they want to speak with him alone, they will have to convince him of the vital necessity of complete privacy.

- If any PC asks Seta about his wife, whether in her presence or out of it, he will insist that she is a wonderful and honorable woman. Seta will not tolerate any ill to be spoken of Kyoka, and if any PCs make mention of rumors or stories about her, he will become angry and demand that they leave.
- Clever PCs will instead ask about how he came to marry Kyoka, perhaps suggesting that she (or he) might be the target of romantic rivals. Seta will confess that Kyoka sought him out, and may even mention how lucky he felt over her attentions. "As that poor Unicorn said, many men sought her hand. I don't know why she chose to arrange a marriage with me... but I have thanked Benten every day

since." If Kyoka is present, he smiles at her, and she blushes prettily.

- If any of the PCs ask him about Kyoka's illness at Winter Court, he agrees that her health was poor during the last month of the Court. "She was always pale and sickly-looking, although she tried to hide it around me. But she recovered in time for the wedding. Sometimes she still looks a little pale, but compared to me, her health is excellent." He grins self-deprecatingly. If Kyoka is here, she will dimple and explain that she was merely tired by the negotiations and preparations for the wedding.
- If any PCs ask Seta about his own declining health, he will try to shrug it off as merely the price of his duty on the Wall. However, if they speak to him alone, he will confess that he wishes his health could have held out longer, since it will be a tragedy to make Kyoka a widow so soon after their marriage. If any PCs ask about when his condition worsened, he will blame it on the trip to Shiro Gireihei from Winter Court: "The weather was still quite cold and rainy in early spring, and it must have gotten into my bones."
- If any PCs suggest that there might be a connection between his marriage and his health, Seta will angrily deny the idea. However, any PC rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 will detect a flicker of unease in Seta's eyes – now that the PCs have mentioned the idea, he realizes that it makes sense.
- Some PCs may be able to convince Seta to let them examine him or treat his illness. If a PC with **Medicine** or **Herbalism** attempts to diagnose Seta's condition, a skill roll (with the **Intelligence** trait) at TN 15 can determine that he seems to be suffering from some sort of wasting or consumptive disease. A roll with **Advanced Medicine** at the same TN, however, can determine that Seta's symptoms don't match any previously reported disease.
- A PC who examines Seta for signs of ghost attack (like those on Ide Sumon's body) can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to detect very faint markings on Seta's neck similar to those on Sumon's body. Seta will be quite upset if this is pointed out, and unless the PCs can present corroborative evidence, he will have them thrown out of his castle.

The Castle Guards

There are a total of fourteen samurai in the castle, aside from Seta and his bride. All of them are men too old or crippled to continue serving on the Wall – their posting here is a sort of honored retirement, a way for them to continue to serve the Crab without risking their lives any further.

The guards will be reluctant to say anything which might reflect badly on their lord – they like Seta, are happy that he found such a wonderful wife, and don't want to see him lose face or suffer. There is no official karo or guard captain, but the eldest guard, Hida Kohaku, acts as a sort of default commander for the rest, and they will defer to him if they are faced with a question or problem.

If the PCs seem sympathetic, and especially if they are fellow Crab, Kohaku will share the following information:

- Hida Seta was fairly healthy, although worn down with wounds and long service, when he arrived in the spring. Since then, however, he has gone downhill rapidly, and the guards fear he will become one of their shortest-reigning lords.
- The guards are a little suspicious of Kyoka, because she seems like “too much of a good thing.” They especially dislike that she used to be a Scorpion. However, they all grudgingly admit that she has been nothing but a fine and admirable wife for Seta-sama.
- If any PCs ask whether Kyoka has ever done anything suspicious, or mention rumors of Kyoka walking about at night, Kohaku will reluctantly admit that some of the guards have reported running into her once or twice at odd hours of the night. “She said she had trouble sleeping. Well, not our place to question that.”
- If the PCs ask about deaths or disappearances, the guards can report that two of the older servants have died since last spring, and one young boy has “run off. Fortunes know where.” The guards have no particular information on these incidents, and suggest speaking to major-domo Chihei for more details.
- If the PCs ask about ghosts, three of the guards will be able to report spotting a “strange dark figure” wandering the battlements or slipping through the village. This phantom has only been

seen in the last few weeks. Most of the guards blame it on the mischievous kappa.

- If the PCs ask about the kappa, the guards grow heated and irritable. The kappa has frequently harassed them with pranks, inane songs, and riddling comments. They would love to be rid of it, but none of them have been able to do more than be made to look foolish by the obnoxious creature.

The Servants

Three families of servants, totaling twenty-three individuals of various ages, live inside the castle itself. These people strive to be invisible, and the PCs will need to deliberately track them down and question them in order to get any information from them. Most of the servants will direct questions to the major-domo, an elderly man named Chihei.

Chihei will be polite and respectful, but will do his best not to say anything harmful or embarrassing to his lord and lady. Like most of the servants and villagers, he likes Hida Seta, feels sorry for the old warrior, and wants him to be happy for as long as possible. He will readily share the following information:

- The previous lords of Shiro Gireihei were all honorable men of the Crab Clan, most of them with serious injuries and debilities. Some of them were friendly, some were distant, some were harsh, but all were honorable warriors of the Crab. The last one, Hida Kasei, died last summer of his old injuries.
- Hida Seta was announced as their new lord last autumn. They were told to expect him in the spring, after he visited the Imperial Winter Court.
- Kyoka has been a good wife to Seta-sama, and treats the servants well, albeit distantly. “As is proper for a fine court lady such as herself,” Chihei says virtuously.
- Chihei will not admit to any problems with ghosts or insects until after the incident with the *gaki* in the bath. Then he will admit that there have been many problems with strange swarms of insects or sudden appearances of dead flies.
- If the PCs ask about deaths in the castle, Chihei will admit that two of the older servants, Gobei and Ritsuko, have died in the last few months (since Hida Seta and his wife arrived from Winter Court). Chihei will echo Seta's line that there was nothing suspicious about the deaths, but he does not

completely believe this (**Simple Awareness** at TN 15 to detect this). He will not admit anything about the deaths unless the PCs earn his trust (see below).

If the PCs can convince Chihei that they have the best interests of Hida Seta and Shiro Gireihei at heart, he may be willing to tell them more. Crab PCs and those with close connections to heimin will have an advantage here. PCs who are notably hostile to Crab, or who have reputations of being cruel to commoners, will not get any further cooperation.

- Chihei may, if the PCs are sympathetic, confess that in recent days a few of the servants have seen the gaki in person – they always fled immediately, of course. They wanted to report this to Seta, but were reluctant to trouble him – lady Kyoka told them his health was fragile and he should not suffer any sort of shock.
- If the PCs press Chihei as to where the ghost and insect manifestations have taken place, he may reluctantly confess that most of them have been in the residential quarters on the top floor of the castle – particularly the chambers of lady Kyoka.
- There is gossip among some of the servants about lady Kyoka, but Chihei will be extremely reluctant to admit this, even if the PCs have already heard about it from the villagers (see below). If he is skillfully cajoled or browbeaten, he reluctantly confesses to the gossip, while warning that it is “merely idle chatter by some of the youngsters, not to be trusted.” Apparently, some of the younger servants believe that lady Kyoka never sleeps, and report finding her wandering the halls at all hours of the night.
- If the PCs press him about the two deaths, Chihei will reluctantly admit that there was something odd about them: both servants died with expressions of fear on their faces.
- If the PCs ask about disappearances, Chihei will mention that a servant boy vanished last month. He was a foolish young fellow, not yet fifteen, and it was thought that he had probably run off in some foolish hope of becoming an ashigaru and winning glory for himself. If the PCs ask whether there was any connection to Kyoka, Chihei looks puzzled but admits that the boy was one of those who reported seeing her wandering around at night.

The Village Residents

The PCs may decide to snoop around in the village attached to Shiro Gireihei, either as part of an investigation into the murders or simply to satisfy their own curiosity. Some particularly snoop PC may even decide to ask around before they first enter the castle.

There are a total of eight families in the village (one of eta, the rest peasants). The men from three of the families, including the headman, work in the small iron mine which burrows into the mountain. The other four families till the small fields, raise livestock, and perform the various other tasks which keep the village and the castle functional.

The headman, Funari, is a thickly-muscled peasant in his late thirties, ox-strong and with skin pale and rough from years of work below the ground, clawing iron ore from the mountain. He will do his best to be cooperative, but will not simper or cower – this is a Crab peasant, accustomed to thinking of himself as a junior partner in the Clan’s struggle against the Shadowlands. He and the other peasants can share the following information:

- **Hida Seta.** He is a good man, but worn down by years of duty on the Wall. The men who are sent to rule over Shiro Gireihei are often like that. Now he is sick, and probably will die within a few years. That is also not unexpected, however sad it may be. Few of the men sent to this castle are young or healthy.
- **Hida Kyoka.** The lord’s beautiful young wife is most unusual. He is said to have married her at the end of last Winter Court, just before he was assigned to Shiro Gireihei. Rumor has it that she was a courtier from some other mighty Clan, and married lord Seta-sama for love. Remarkable, if true. It is good that he has such a fine wife to care for him in his last years.
- If some of the PCs have close connections to heimin (ronin, Tortoise Clan, a suitable skill or Advantage), the peasants may mention that some of the palace servants have spread odd tales about Kyoka-sama. They say she never sleeps, and walks the corridors of the castle late at night. They also say that swarms of flies keep appearing in her quarters, no matter how often they are cleansed.
- **The gaki manifestations.** Many of the villagers have noticed odd insect behavior

(mysterious swarms, sudden piles of dead flies, and so forth) in recent weeks. A few of them have glimpsed a strange figure in the night, skulking through the village or along the castle walls, although none of them dared to look closely enough to identify it as a ghost. Some of them think it is just the kappa playing tricks on them.

- **The kappa.** It arrived last spring, soon after lord Seta-sama returned with his bride. Many of the peasants saw it as a bad omen, a sign that lord Seta-sama would not long be with them. Sure enough, he fell ill soon after.
- The kappa has not actually harmed anyone, but has caused much disruption with its tricks and harassment. When it isn't causing trouble, it can usually be found down by the river, where some of the peasants have seen it catching fish.
- **Deaths or disappearances.** If the PCs ask about deaths or other problems in the castle, they can learn that two of the older servants have died since last spring. They were supposedly natural deaths, although it is unusual for two to die so closely together. They can also learn that one of the younger servants disappeared last month: "probably ran off with a head full of adventure stories about ashigaru and samurai."

Communing with the Spirits

Kyoka has subverted most of the spirits in the castle. In general, any spirit which the PCs summon will be thoroughly uncooperative, complaining, and provides little or no information. Air spirits will be especially uncooperative, and may harass the PCs, messing up their hair or blowing scrolls out of the hands of shugenja.

In order to find a cooperative spirit, a shugenja will have to cast *Commune* with at least three Raises. A cooperative spirit will confess (or show) that the "sad spirit" that lives in the castle has distracted most of the other spirits.

A cooperative spirit can show the PCs what actually happened to both Ide Sumon and Karino. It can also reveal that Kyoka was responsible for the deaths of the two older servants, and that the younger servant who "disappeared" was actually slain by Kyoka as well, his body dumped out of the castle into the river.

Karino's Body

If the PCs go in search of Karino's body, they will have to descend a steep, rugged, rain-soaked cliff halfway down to the river that churns and roars in the valley far below. This will require either climbing down physically or flying down with magic.

Climbing will require two successful rolls with either **Athletics/Agility** (TN 15) or **Mountaineering/Agility** (TN 10). PCs who use safety ropes and other sensible measures to protect themselves get a Free Raise on their rolls. PCs who fail a roll must make a **Simple Reflexes** roll at TN 10 to catch something before they fall. A plunge into the canyon will inflict 6k6 wounds and at least one broken limb, leaving the PC (if alive) to be rescued by someone else.

Karino's body is wedged into the jagged rocks just above the frothing waters of the river. The PCs will need *eta* to examine him closely (unless they want to take the Honor loss from touching him themselves), but they can look him over without touching him. A **Simple Perception** roll at TN 10 will notice the crumpled, water-logged paper ward clutched in one hand. The roll also notes that Karino's traveling pack is not on his body – it is back in his room.

Karino's Equipment

After Karino dies, his room will be guarded by a Hida bushi, safeguarding his belongings until they can be sent back to the Falcon Clan. If any PCs are themselves of the Falcon Clan, they will be freely admitted to the room. Otherwise, the PCs will have to convince the guard to let them in. Possible approaches which might work include:

- An Emerald Magistrate or Imperial PC can invoke higher authority to overawe the guard.
- Arguing or tricking the guard into letting them in, for example by invoking the need to destroy the *gaki*, to protect Lord Hida Seta, and so forth. Crab PCs will have an advantage here, while Cranes and Scorpions will be treated with automatic suspicion. The GM must adjudicate whether any argument or trick can succeed, and if so, what social skill roll is needed to convince the guard.
- Sneaking inside. Karino's room, along with those of the other guests, is on the third floor. There is only a single hallway, so the guard cannot be evaded even by the sneakiest Scorpion. However, an athletic PC might be able to climb along the

outside wall of the castle (suggested: two **Athletics/Agility** rolls at TN 15, with a possible fatal fall as the penalty) to the appropriate window. A shugenja with Air or Fire magic could fly to the window as well.

- Bribing the guard. A PC who speaks with the guard for any length of time can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 to detect that he might be amenable to a bribe. Doing this invokes an automatic Honor loss (at least 1 point, more if the PC is of high Honor), and it will take at least 4 koku to convince the guard to forsake his duty.
- Getting permission from Hida Seta. His wife will find reasons to object, of course, so the PCs will have to make their request carefully.

Once the PCs have access to Karino's room, they will be able to look through his traveling pack. Inside is his notebook, a writing kit, and sixteen paper wards inscribed with charms against ghosts.

The Notebook: this contains Karino's records of his hunts (mostly successful) for various ghosts. The current hunt is for a gaki (hungry ghost) which feeds on the emotions associated with love, sadness, and death.

The last entry is from last night, after the encounter with the gaki in the bath. After describing the incident, Karino expresses puzzlement. "There is something here I am missing, something beyond the simple hunger of a gaki. Perhaps there are some clues to be found in the words of that foolish kappa."

The Wards: these are enchanted to dispel the essence of a ghost back to its home in the spirit world. Their purpose, use, and function can be divined by any PC rolling **Lore: Shugenja** or **Lore: Ghosts** (with **Intelligence**) at TN 10, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15. PCs who witnessed Karino using the wards against the gaki can remember the brief incantation he muttered by rolling **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15. Otherwise, they can gain a hint with a **Calligraphy/Perception**, **Cipher/Perception**, or **Theology/Perception** roll at TN 10, which will notice the name of Emma-O, the Fortune of Death, worked into the mystical inscriptions on the wards.

Falcon PCs get a Free Raise on all rolls to understand and use the wards.

To use the wards, a PC must speak a short invocation to Emma-O, invoking his favor, and then place the ward on the forehead of the ghost (or possessed person) to be

cleansed. Against an unwilling target, this will require a To Hit roll using **Jiu-jutsu/Agility** (or **Simple Agility** with a +5 TN penalty). Once attached, the ward will inflict 2k2 wounds per round for three rounds. The ghost cannot remove the ward – it is unable to touch it. A ghost whose Wounds are reduced to zero is dispelled from the Realm of Mortals.

The wards can also be activated and placed on a wall or over an opening to seal it against ghosts. PCs can use this method to trap or "herd" the gaki (or for that matter, Kyoka).

Each ward can only be used once. After that, its power is gone and it is merely a piece of paper.

The Gaki

Some PCs may decide to seek out the gaki, whether to destroy it or to question it. This will be difficult. The gaki can turn itself insubstantial, and is normally invisible except when it seeks out prey. It can also slip through walls and otherwise evade physical pursuit.

A PC who has the ability to commune with ghosts or ancestral spirits (a Sodan-Senzo, or an Ise Zumi with the Cloud tattoo, or someone with an appropriate Inner Gift) may be able to spot the gaki as it drifts through the castle, or even invoke its presence. The gaki can also be spotted by looking through a piece of crystal (or a very thin piece of jade). Finally, a Falcon PC can spot the gaki simply by rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 20.

Clever PCs may be able to track down the gaki in other ways. For example, by placing several *Evil Wards* or Yogo family wards around the castle to herd it into one place. Also, if any of the PCs suffer from True Love or Lost Love, the gaki may decide to try and feed on their emotions, causing it to seek them out.

The gaki does not normally physically attack (it feeds on the emotion of love, especially when that love is weighted down by sadness and death). If the PCs harm it, it will claw at them with its long nails, inflicting damage as listed under its stats – however, it will always prefer to avoid conflict, and tries to flee rather than fight whenever possible.

If the PCs negotiate with the gaki, or threaten it to gain information, it will speak to them in a thin, hissing voice. It explains that it has been drawn here by "the lady Yorei," and that it needs to feed on the emotions she represents: "Love, sadness, death, all intertwined... I hunger for it."

The gaki is a creature of simple and crude desires – it seeks only to feed, and regards any conversation or confrontation with the PCs as a way of getting to that goal. If the discussion drags on too long, or if the PCs demand that the gaki leave the area, it will grow frustrated and finally attack them, hissing in fury. Given the chance, it will try to break away and resume its hunt for the emotions it needs.

PCs who try to destroy the gaki will need either the *Evil Ward* spell, an Elemental Weapon spell (*Tetsubo of Earth*, etc), a jade, crystal, or obsidian weapon, or some of Karino's ghost wards.

The Kappa

Some PCs may decide to seek out the kappa for further conversation (especially if they read Karino's journal). The kappa can be easily located by anyone who goes looking for it – it will pop up on a nearby rock, just out of reach, and begin taunting and harassing the PCs. "Pilgrims, come in search of wisdom? Why not search in the nightsoil cart? Either way, you'll find the same thing!"

The kappa never answers a question directly, and never offers a clear statement when it can present something confusing instead. It is a mischievous creature and has no desire to help the PCs or to resolve the situation – it is having far too much fun watching things.

If a PC threatens the kappa, or attacks it, it will deliver itself of another Curse – this one a permanent Rank of Unluck for the unfortunate PC(s). If that does not stop the PCs, the kappa will flee away across the rocks, leaping wildly between the steep, rain-slick boulders, and drops a *Mists of Illusion* behind itself of a safe path, attempting to lure the troublesome PCs into a fatal fall. Only if the Kappa is trapped will it fight, and once a fight has begun, it will be to the death.

Any PC with the skill **Lore: Spirits** (or any other skill which the GM judges applicable, such as **Lore: Kami**, or possibly **Astrology** or **Theology**) can make a roll (with the **Intelligence** trait) at TN 10 to remember that a Kappa's weak point is the bowl of water on its head – if the water is spilled, the Kappa will become weak and lethargic. If the PCs manage to maneuver or trick the Kappa into spilling its water, it will be more amenable to questions, and may even be convinced to lift its curse.

Besides knocking out the water physically, the best way to get the Kappa to spill his water is to trick him into

doing it himself – for example, by bowing to him politely and hoping that he bows back.

If a PC questions the kappa persistently but politely, it will eventually grow impatient and bored. "Baaah! Always the same questions, over and over again! Let's do something fun!" It leaps up and springs away down the rocks toward the river. "A chase, a chase! If you catch me, I will answer all your silly questions!"

Catching the Kappa will require beating it on a **Contested Reflexes** roll with at least two Raises. Each failed roll while result in much humiliation as the Kappa dodges the PCs' grasping hands, watches them slip and scramble for holds on the wet rocks, dunks them into the river, and so forth. If a PC rolls less than 10 on a failed attempt, they fall painfully onto some jagged rocks and take 2k2 damage. If the PC fumbles (fails a roll with three 1's), that unfortunate suffers a deadly tumble into the river, taking 5k5 damage.

If a PC manages to catch the Kappa, it will grouse and pout, irritated at having lost. If the PCs are polite and complimentary, the Kappa will answer their questions fully. If the PCs are rude or boasting, the Kappa will still answer their questions, but it will also bestow its Curse (a Rank of Unluck) on each of them.

What the Kappa knows:

- There are two ghosts in the castle. One is hungry, the other clings to something it should not have, "but both of them must feed upon the living."
- The lord of the castle is dying because a ghost is feeding on him. "It wishes no harm upon him, but wishes are like dreams – they are not real."
- The Kappa will never volunteer the identity of the two ghosts, but if the PCs ask whether Kyoka is one of them, it will grin and thump its heels against the rocks. "Clever fellows! Smarter than you look!"
- If any PCs accuse the Kappa of murdering Karino, or of direct involvement with the ghosts, it snorts and blows out its cheeks in vexation. "My hungers are more easily sated than that. I am here to watch and enjoy, not to *do*. Why would I take the man? You should ask the ghost why it killed him, not me!"
- If the PCs suggest the Kappa is troubling the local population, or ask it to leave, it will act offended. "I cause much, much less trouble than those

ghosts. They are such fun to watch! So long as they are here, I will watch them. I hate to be bored!”

Part Five: Confrontation

If and when the PCs realize that Kyoka is a ghost, they will have to do something about it. There are two possible approaches to the problem:

Try to unmask Kyoka directly. This can be done most easily by placing one of Karino’s wards on her forehead, which will leave her helpless and agonized, pleading for her husband to remove the “accursed thing.”

Physical attacks and most types of magical spells will not hurt Kyoka, although attacking her in this way may force her to reveal her nature (if she isn’t hurt by a massive sword-strike, it is obvious that something is wrong). Crystal or obsidian weapons will harm her, if the PCs have somehow come into possession of such devices. The Elemental Weapon spells (*Tetsubo of Earth*, *Yari of Air*, *Bo of Water*, *Katana of Fire*) will also harm her. Jade will not affect her at all, since she is not Tainted.

Any physical attack on Kyoka will of course draw a violent response from Hida Seta and any available castle guards. The PCs had best be able to speak swiftly and convincingly, or risk being arrested, dueled, or at the very least thrown out of the castle.

Confront Kyoka with knowledge of what she is. Under these circumstances the PCs will presumably be trying to convince her to give up this unnatural existence and travel on to her proper place in the afterlife. This will be a role-playing challenge – the PCs can help their cause with skill rolls, but they must role-play well to have a chance at this. Kyoka will try to bluff, stall, distract, and generally use every tool she can to turn aside the PC’s questions and accusations. If possible, she will try to drag Seta into the discussion, proclaiming that “these mad samurai” are saying terrible things about her, want to separate her from her beloved husband, and so forth.

The PCs’ strongest argument will be to point out that Kyoka’s presence is harming her husband Seta. Kyoka really knows this already, but is hiding from the knowledge – if others point it out to her, she will be forced to face up to it. Accusing her of murder will also have some impact, particularly if the PCs emphasize the innocence of her victims.

Kyoka Stays?

If the PCs are unable to expose Kyoka and cannot convince her to leave, she will maintain her façade. The PCs can try to convince Hida Seta of the truth, but without a confession from Kyoka he is extremely unlikely to turn against his beloved wife (and very likely to throw the PCs out of his castle).

Barring that, the PCs and the remaining NPCs will be able to leave the castle the next morning, when the river waters have receded below the level of the bridge.

Kyoka Departs

If the PCs succeed in convincing Kyoka that she does not belong in this world, she collapses in tears. “All I wanted was to stay with my Seta-sama,” she wails. Hida Seta, if he is present, looks bewildered by the entire scene, and clumsily tries to comfort his wife. She pulls herself slowly away from him, whispers a heartfelt “Sayonara,” and then fades away, departing for the afterlife.

If the PCs convince Kyoka to leave while she is away from Seta, she asks them for one last chance to say goodbye to her husband. If they refuse her, she flies into a rage, her face distorting into a horrible gorgon’s mask, and must be defeated in combat (which could be quite difficult if the PCs do not have Karino’s wards.) If the PCs agree, Kyoka says a private farewell to her husband, and then departs as above.

If the PCs expose Kyoka with an attack (whether it be a physical attack or a magical one), her reaction will vary depending on whether she is in the presence of her husband. If Seta sees the truth, Kyoka will collapse in tears as above. If Seta is not present, Kyoka will attack the PCs, hoping to destroy them and preserve her masquerade.

If Kyoka is destroyed (regardless of whether the PCs use Karino’s wards or their own magical resources), she collapses like a punctured balloon, wailing horribly, before fading from sight.

Either way, the PCs have restored things to their proper order. Without Kyoka’s presence to attract it, the *gaki* will soon leave, and the *Kappa* will depart when this amusing show is over. Harmony has been restored to Shiro Gireihei... although Hida Seta may not be exactly thankful for it.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	1 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
Exposing Kyoka as a ghost:	1 XP
Kyoka was exposed, and PC is a shugenja, or is from the Crab or Falcon Clans:	+1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	4 XP

Honor

Falcon PCs get +1 Honor for avenging (Toritaka) Karino's death.

Unicorn PCs get +1 Honor for avenging Ide Sumon's death.

Glory

Falcon PCs get +1 Glory for each ghost eliminated (Kyoka and the gaki).

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who severely angered the Kappa may have been cursed by it. This curse takes the form of a permanent Rank of Unluck. It can only be removed by a being more powerful than the kami – a major spirit or Fortune.

Appendix or DM Aid

Hida Seta, smitten Daimyo

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 1 Awareness 2
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 1 Perception 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 5 (15 in heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 2.8/5.6

Skills: Athletics 4, Bard 2, Battle 5, Courtier 1, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (archery) 2, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Oratory 3, Sincerity 2, Tsubojutsu 3, Wrestling 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Gentry, Social Position (lord of Shiro Gireihei)/Haunted (by wife Kyoka), Lamé, Permanent Wound, True Love (wife Kyoka).

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor (never worn), daisho set, tetsubo (kept on wall in quarters).

Typical Hida bushi

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Iaijutsu 1, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 4, Yarijutsu 3, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Brash.

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo, yari, bow with 20 arrows.

Karino, Falcon ghost-hunter

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 3 Awareness 5
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Falcon bushi 2

Rank One: *The Falcon's Eyes.* Add School Rank to total of any Awareness roll. Can substitute Awareness for any roll involving Perception.

Rank Two: *The Falcon's Wings.* Gains two attacks per round, in imitation of the instinctive strikes of the predator.

Honor/Glory: 2.2/0.8

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 4, Etiquette 3, Falconry 3, Hunting 5, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Gaki) 5, Lore (Spirits) 3, Lore (Yorei) 5, Meditation 4, Research 4, Sincerity 2, Yarijutsu 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Eyes of the Eagle falcon ability (cannot be surprised, will notice anything moving in field of vision, cannot be blinded)/Antisocial, Social Disadvantage (Minor Clan)

Equipment: Kimono, daisho, naginata, traveling pack, personal journal, writing kit, sheaf of ghost wards.

Kappa, mischievous denizen of Sakkaku

FIRE 1	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 3 Perception 4

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 2k1

Damage: 3k2

Carapace Armor: 8

Wounds: 10: +5; 25: Dead.

Spells: Can create *Mists of Illusion* as though it were a Rank One shugenja with Air affinity.

Special Abilities: If the Kappa's bowl of water is spilled, all its Rings drop to 1 (except for Water which drops to 2), its attack becomes 1k1 and its damage likewise 1k1, and its TN to be hit becomes 5.

This lasts until the Kappa can hide somewhere and refill its bowl.

Gaki

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Strength 3

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k2

Damage: 2k2

Wounds: 30: Destroyed

Special Abilities: The gaki can turn incorporeal in order to move through walls or floors (this takes a single action). It can only be harmed by jade, crystal, or obsidian weapons, by Karino's wards, or by certain kinds of magic (*Jade Strike* will not affect it, but *Evil Ward* will, as will the Elemental Weapon spells).

Kyoka the Yorei, love-struck ghost

FIRE 3	AIR 3
	Awareness 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 2k2

Skills: Acting 5, Courtier 5, Etiquette 6, Sincerity 6, Stealth 5.

Wounds: 50: Destroyed.

Special Abilities: Kyoka can only be harmed by crystal or obsidian weapons – as a Yorei, she is immune to jade. Jade magic will not harm her either, nor will *Evil Ward*. Other combat magic, including the Elemental Weapon spells, will affect her, as will Karino's wards.