

Lies, Lies, Lies

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

by Robert Hobart

Love is the scourge of the loyal samurai, and none know this better than the Scorpion. The consequences of a forbidden affair may change the face of southern Rokugan.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. 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.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

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.

GM's Information

THIS TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

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 or higher characters in mind and cannot anticipate what these characters may bring to the table.

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."

Adventure Background

The samurai of the Scorpion Clan are the masters of secrets, of manipulation and lies. But sometimes even they fall victim to their own hearts. Such is the case for Soshi Kyosaku, a clever and relentless young man who has been assigned the task of sabotaging a marriage between the Crane and the minor clan known as the Sparrow. The Sparrow, as part of the Three-Man Alliance with the Fox and Wasp, inflicted a humiliating defeat on a Scorpion general several years ago, and the Scorpion are not about to let this minor clan cement a closer tie with their long-alienated cousins in the Crane.

But Kyosaku has encountered a strange and terrible problem: he is in love with Kakita Ayami, the lovely young Crane maiden who is expected to marry the Sparrow. Kyosaku had first made her acquaintance in the Scorpion city of Ryoko Owari, and was sent to her home at Shiro Muzai with the assignment of seducing and compromising her. Instead he has become smitten with her beauty, purity, and innocence. Kyosaku's

passion has proven too strong for his sense of duty and loyalty, and the two have become lovers, forgetting their Clan duties in the heat of their infatuation. Now, as the wedding approaches, the consequences of that infatuation will be felt... and the Player Characters, through sheer chance, will find themselves in the midst of this.

The core incidents in this adventure are complex, with many events happening simultaneously, perhaps with some PCs witnessing different things from different locations. The GM should read the adventure carefully, and if possible play-test it, to ensure that it runs smoothly.

It is intended that this scenario should present many of the PCs with some of the fundamental loyalty clashes of Rokugan: Clan or friends? Loyalty or honesty? Both Scorpion and Crane PCs will find themselves asked to deceive (perhaps even betray) others, including their fellow PCs, in the name of Clan duty. Mantis Clan PCs will be expected to support their own Clan's attempt to discredit the Crane. And PCs from other Clans, Great or Minor, will find themselves in quandaries of their own: do they support the Scorpion, the Crane, the Mantis, or the "higher duty" of truth and honesty? What is a samurai's true duty? Such questions have plagued the Empire since it's founding; now it is time for the PCs to think about them.

Of course, truly stolid and unimaginative PCs may simply ignore all the intrigue around them and depart the wedding (or non-wedding, depending on who triumphed) none the wiser. But if they're that sort of player, what are they doing in Living Rokugan?

Introduction

The PCs start this scenario in Shimomura, the southernmost major village in Scorpion lands, in the month of Shiba, the Month of the Rooster (August) in common usage. The players are free to develop their own reasons for why their PCs might be in the area – perhaps they are returning from other duties, visiting friends or relatives, performing a pilgrimage, or whatever seems suitable. What matters is that here the PCs encounter Kakita Mujitsu, a friendly young Crane poet.

Kakita Mujitsu is a charming and courteous young man who has led a sheltered life in the Kakita Academy. In fact, this has been his first chance to travel far, and he is eager to learn more about the Empire and to meet samurai from other Clans. Mujitsu is quite free of any of the usual Clan prejudices, and will even speak freely

with ronin, regarding them as a fascinating source of information on the "other Rokugan" which cannot be seen from a castle's walls. PCs may suspect (with some justification) that Mujitsu is mining them for inspiration for future poems, but he is so polite and charming about it that even the harshest of Lion and Crab or most suspicious of Scorpion will be hard-pressed to take offense. If any of the PCs should be genuinely insulted by Mujitsu's words or behavior, he is stricken with guilt at his dishonorable behavior, and offers a heartfelt and moving apology.

The purpose of this encounter (which can go on for as long as the GM thinks appropriate) is for the PCs to become friends with Kakita Mujitsu – or at least for him to come to regard them as friends. He explains that he is traveling south to Crane lands, and asks the PCs to share his road and his company if they have the time (none of them have pressing assignments). Assuming they agree, Mujitsu will make the journey a pleasant one, paying their way at the best inns and teahouses as they journey south through Fox lands and into those of the Crane. His travel papers cover anyone with him as well, and he promises to secure return papers for those PCs who may need them.

Finally, one evening as they are sharing dinner at an inn, Mujitsu mentions that he is en route to a wedding at Shiro Muzai (Castle of Innocence), the domain of a mid-ranking Crane daimyo, and offers to invite the PCs along as his friends. "It is a marriage between two old enemies, the Crane and their long-estranged cousins the Sparrow. Perhaps our own example can present the guests there with proof that all the Clans can live together in harmony," he offers with an innocent smile.

If the PCs decline, of course, the adventure is at an end. Mujitsu will bid them farewell with the sincere hope that they may meet again. Presumably all but the most implacable Crane-haters will agree to accompany Mujitsu – otherwise there will be no adventure!

If the PCs ask for more information about the wedding, Mujitsu can explain the following:

- The castle's lord, Kakita Enryo, is marrying his daughter Ayami to Suzume Oaku, heir to Suzume Akebono, a daimyo of the neighboring Sparrow Clan.
- PCs who roll **Intelligence+History** at TN 15 can recall that the Sparrow separated from the Crane after the Crane-Crab War seven centuries ago, and are said to practice a doctrine of extreme poverty and simplicity. (Any Sparrow PCs will know this themselves, of course.)

- Kakita Enryo is a fairly high-ranking daimyo in the Kakita family, and a distant relative to Mujitsu himself, which is part of the reason he has been honored with an invitation to the wedding. He describes Enryo as a “noble, honorable man” and a credit to the Crane Clan.
- Mujitsu has met Enryo’s daughter, Kakita Ayami, three times, and is positively eloquent as he describes her beauty, charm, and talent. He can’t help wondering if she will be happy with the austere Sparrow, although he is sure she will be happy to fulfill her duties to her Clan. And hopefully it will take her mind off her recent tragedies.
- If the PCs press him about these “recent tragedies,” Mujitsu will reluctantly explain that Ayami’s older sister Seka was murdered several months ago, while visiting the Scorpion city of Ryoko Owari. “Apparently a Maho cult was involved,” he shudders. “I saw Ayami at her sister’s funeral, and she was quite shaken by it all. I do hope she has recovered by now – it is too awful to think of such a bright spirit doused for long.”
- If any PCs ask why the Crane would be marrying one of their daughters into a Clan with whom their relations have traditionally been sour, Mujitsu has no idea (he is a true innocent). He supposes they wish to mend relations with their neighbors. “Peace and honor have always been the way of our Clan,” he observes virtuously.
- Any PC who rolls **Intelligence+History** at TN 10 will recall the war between the Scorpion and the Three-Man Alliance four years ago, in which the combined forces of the Sparrow, Fox, and Wasp defeated a Scorpion army.

Arrival at Shiro Muzai

Assuming the PCs accept Mujitsu’s invitation, the trip to Shiro Muzai takes one more day.

It is late afternoon when you arrive at the lands of Shiro Muzai. The castle is small but beautiful, a four-story edifice of wood and stone which perches on the slope of a wooded hill, lush green trees a pleasant contrast to the castle’s smooth pearly stone. Pennants in the colors (???) of the Crane and Sparrow flutter above the walls. A large and prosperous village, almost a city, thrives in the valley below the castle, and peasants line the streets and bow in rippling waves as each party of guests rides up to the castle gates. You can see that quite a few other samurai are here, and spot the colors of the Scorpion and Crab among those entering the castle.

Shiro Muzai is in a festive mood, and so are the villagers around it – the PCs may see peasants engaged in simple dances, contests of strength, and so forth. The two Crane bushi who wait at the gates are friendly and courteous, and readily admit the PCs as “friends of the noble Kakita Mujitsu.”

The PCs are granted a brief, formal audience with the daimyo, Kakita Enryo. He asks for their names, then thanks them for attending his family’s wedding. He explains that they will be given quarters in the village inn, and offers his apologies for such a lowly accommodation – “Shiro Muzai is not large, as you see, and there is room in the castle only for the groom’s party.” He concludes by inviting the PCs to return that evening for a performance by the famed Noh troupe, Kyozeu (“Pretense”), which will be held in the castle garden. With that, the PCs are dismissed – Enryo is a busy man, and has no time to chat with strangers.

If the PCs ask about the Kyozeu Theatre Troupe, they can roll **Intelligence+Courtier** at TN 15 (or **Lore: Shosuro** or **Kakita Family** at TN 10) to know that the Kyozeu Troupe is one of the most admired Noh troupes in the Empire, and recruits the very best actors from both the Kakita and Shosuro schools.

The Inn of the Smiling Tiger

The inn where the PCs are assigned is a large, well-apportioned place with a sign showing a dancing tiger (in a kimono). The innkeeper, a small, thin fellow of older years, with sunken cheeks and lively, sparkling eyes, welcomes the PCs to his humble establishment. “As guests of Lord Kakita Enryo-sama there will, of course, be no charge for your visit,” he announces, ushering the PCs inside and offering a cabinet for them to leave their weapons.

The PCs will have time to settle themselves, bathe, eat, and make the acquaintance of the other guests staying at the inn, most of whom will be in the common room. The PCs can learn that the Kyozeu Troupe is also staying at the inn, but are presently at the castle preparing for their performance.

Besides Kakita Mujitsu and the absent actors, the guests at the inn include the following individuals:

Soshi Kyosaku: Kyosaku is the Scorpion emissary to Shiro Muzai, but has been temporarily relocated to the inn in order to make room in the castle for higher-ranking guests (primarily the family of the Sparrow groom). A flawless Scorpion (at least on the outside), he shows no sign of distress at this inconvenience, and

speaks pleasantly with all the PCs. However, anyone rolling Simple Awareness (+Ichi Miru, if available) at TN 20 can tell that something under the surface is deeply troubling Kyosaku.

Bayushi Tenkawa: another Scorpion courtier, here to attend the wedding. Tenkawa puts on the air of a quiet, gentle man who is troubled by the sordid maneuverings of Rokugani politics. This is a front: he is actually a Scorpion agent of supreme skill and ruthlessness, and suspects (correctly) that his clan mate Kyosaku may be faltering in his duties.

Asahina Tojio: a Crane courtier and shugenja, this man is handsome and stylish, but rather superficial and arrogant, an example of the negative side of the Crane just as Mujitsu is an example of the positive. He is notorious in the courts of Rokugan as a womanizer (something PCs will know if they roll Intelligence+Courtier at TN 15) and will make subtle passes at any attractive female PCs.

Doji Okiku: another Crane courtier, skilled in rhetorical maneuver but vain of temperament, Okiku is a beautiful woman in her twenties and was honored last winter to attend the Winter Court of the Emperor, a fact she will not hesitate to drop in conversation. Okiku wears a fine kimono and has her white-dyed hair pulled back in a long wrapped tail. A good friend of Kakita Ayami, she disapproves of this marriage (regarding the Minor Clans as beneath anyone's notice) but is politically required to support it, a fact which PCs may pick up with Contested Awareness rolls. She regards her friend as undergoing a dreadful sacrifice on behalf of the Clan, a sacrifice made all the worse because her older sister was murdered a few months ago. Secretly, Okiku fears she may someday be required to undertake a similar unpleasant marriage.

Daidoji Hajime: Okiku's personal bodyguard, a stern, fit young man with white-dyed hair in a short ponytail. He wears light armor at all times and always carries at least one concealed weapon (usually a tanto), even inside the inn. Hajime will speak (politely) when spoken to, but will not otherwise join the conversation. He will react suddenly and ferociously to any threat or open insult against Okiku.

Togashi Shuji: One of the legendary Ise Zumi, the tattooed men who serve the Dragon Clan Champion. Shuji is an ageless man, smooth of skin but with eyes that have seen many experiences. He enjoys observing the world and the people in it, and watches everything with a delighted wonder undimmed by the years. He speaks seldom, generally only when spoken to, and

prefers to be brief and cryptic. Here, he functions as a "clue-bus" who can help dead-in-the-water PCs figure out some of what is happening.

Hida Hirose: the sole guest from the Crab Clan (except for any Crab PCs). Since the Crab also share a border with the Sparrow, the Crane felt compelled to invite one of their number to the wedding. They were somewhat surprised when one of the Crab accepted. This muscular, hard-faced man is friends with Zurui the Mantis and the two share frequent conversations, discussing the politics of the Empire and relations between their Clans. Hida Hirose clearly disapproves of the marriage between the Sparrow and the Crane, and doesn't hesitate to sneer at any courtiers or Scorpions he meets.

Kitsune Sanae, ambassador from the Fox Clan: A quiet, gentle woman whose eyes show flecks of green amid their dark brown. Sanae wears her hair long and carefully bound up on her head, and always moves and speaks with complete calm and deliberation. Trained as a Mirumoto bushi, she habitually does not wear her swords, preferring to dress in formal flowing kimono and carry only a simple tanto tucked under her obi. Only if she is gravely insulted will she fetch her swords, change into a hakama, and challenge her abuser. She (and her Clan) have mixed feelings about the upcoming wedding, since the Fox would prefer the Three-Man Alliance remain independent of the Great Clans.

Zurui, ambassador from the Mantis: this deceptively heavy-set man usually wears a pleasant smile, but perceptive PCs will note the powerful muscles beneath his fat and the calculating glint in his dark, observant eyes. Zurui is here both to advocate a Sparrow alliance with the Mantis (to which end he has brought with him a proposal for a marriage to a Mantis Clan maiden), and to sabotage the marriage between the Sparrow and Crane. Hand-picked by Yoritomo, he is a practical and ruthless man, perfectly prepared to bend the rules of Honor in the name of his Clan.

Tsuruchi Okame, ambassador from the Wasp Clan: the representative from the third Clan in the Three-Man Alliance, Okame is a young man with pleasant features and quick, precise mannerisms. He sees the Sparrow-Crane marriage as a good idea, since it helps protect the Alliance (and especially the Wasp) from its perceived enemies (the Scorpion and Lion). He shows a certain degree of distant hostility to members of both those Clans, but is otherwise polite.

The Play

The play is performed in the garden of Shiro Muzai, and a formidable assortment of guests wait before the low wooden stage for the performance. You can see the families of the bride and groom in the front, speaking together politely before the entertainment begins. Other guests include representatives of the Crane, Scorpion, and Crab, as well as the Minor Clan representatives you met earlier.

Kakita Mujitsu is among the guests and greets you with a smile, but before you can do more than exchange pleasantries, the tapping of a taiko drum announces the beginning of the performance. Everyone takes their seats as the first actors, dressed in the elaborate costumes and make-up of Noh, glide onto the stage.

The play is performed entirely in silence (the current fashion in Noh theater), with the elaborately costumed and made-up actors conveying the meaning of the piece entirely through body language, gesture, and facial expression. The audience watches raptly, transfixed by the intensity of the play.

The play tells the story of two anonymous samurai, a man from the Lion and a woman from the Phoenix. The two meet on a battlefield, and later again at court. With each meeting, their feelings for each other deepen, and finally they surrender to their passions (conveyed artistically by the two of them retiring together behind a shoji screen). Later, however, the two learn that they are to be married to others for political reasons. In a final meeting the two lovers simply gaze at each other for a long, excruciating time before drawing knives and committing mutual suicide. (Unrolling red cloth symbolizes the blood.)

There is sustained applause for the artistry and skill of the players. Even Hida Hirose seems grudgingly impressed, while the Crane are positively rapturous in their praise. Perceptive PCs will, however, notice (with **Simple Perception** rolls at TN 10) two people who seem to have deeper and more lingering responses to the play, remaining subdued and dark-eyed long after: Soshi Kyosaku and Kakita Ayami. If questioned about their reactions, neither will admit anything to the PCs; Ayami will claim she is feeling slightly unwell, while Kyosaku will plead weariness, claiming he did not sleep well the night before. PCs who succeed on **Contested Awareness** rolls with either of these individuals, however, will realize that something more is involved, and that the play has struck a chord with something in their personal lives.

Socializing

After the play, servants bring additional lanterns to light the gardens, while others circulate with sake and small candies made from mochi (sweet bean paste). The smiling actors (now free of their heavy makeup and elaborate costumes) circulate through the crowd, accepting personal congratulations from the guests. The PCs are free to circulate as well, meeting the actors and the other guests at the wedding.

The Kyojou Theatre Troupe: The troupe totals 10 members, of whom seven are Kakita-trained and three Shosuro-trained. The head of the troupe is a handsome Crane, Kakita Esemono, but he shows no particular favoritism toward his own clan and will readily admit that the finest actor in the troupe is Shosuro Kumiko, a lovely Scorpion woman. “Our goal is to offer the Emperor the finest performance possible,” he explains. “After all, we regularly perform before the Shining Prince at Winter Court. Surely the duty of excellence is more important than Clan pride. Wouldn’t you agree?”

The troupe plans to perform once more tomorrow night, to honor the wedding to be held the following morning.

All of its members present the same image of perfect manners and artistic dedication. In truth, the three Scorpions do not share Kakita Esemono’s dedication to excellence above all – for them, the Troupe is simply a useful tool – but they will not betray their carefully cultivated image.

Yogo Aika: the third Scorpion at the wedding, this elegant but plain-featured woman is here as the guest of Doji Okiku, whose friendship she has cultivated in court, playing on Okiku’s sympathy for her poor looks and apparent inability to find a husband. PCs will notice the two of them sharing friendly conversation throughout the evening. Aika is actually a cold-hearted, ruthless Scorpion, the very ideal of their Clan, who thinks nothing of exploiting friendship, bushido, or love in the service of the Scorpion. She arranged her invitation here at the orders of Bayushi Tenkawa, who wanted backup in case his suspicions of Soshi Kyosaku proved justified.

Kakita Ayami (the bride-to-be): this gentle and delicate young woman, still possessed of much youthful innocence despite the experiences of recent months, is now deeply troubled. She has fallen passionately in love with Soshi Kyosaku, but knows that such a relationship is wrong and that her feelings are leading her to betray her duty to the Clan. As a result, she seems pensive and uncertain, her public smiles clearly

pasted on over internal turmoil. Any PC making a **Contested Awareness** roll will easily be able to perceive that Ayami is deeply troubled about the upcoming wedding. She will only confess a few hints of her real feelings to others who seem to understand her trouble (perhaps by suggesting that they have felt conflicts between duty and emotion).

Kakita Enryo: Ayami's father, and the daimyo of Shiro Muzai, this elegant and well-trained Crane courtier is the very model of Rokugani diplomacy, a master of subtlety, understatement, and self-control. Seething underneath this facade is a man of considerable passion and temper, and PCs who make **Contested Awareness** rolls may become aware that there is much more to Enryo than meets the eye. Further, a PC who notices this and then rolls **Intelligence+Courtier** at TN 20 can recall some rumors of scandals around Enryo's younger days in Rokugan's courts, stories of forbidden romances and secret duels. Enryo secretly worries that his children (particularly his daughters) may have inherited his own passionate nature, which nearly wrecked him during his youth. His only son is representing the family in Ootosan Uchi and thus could not attend the wedding.

Suzume Oaku: the groom-to-be is a typical Sparrow, a simple, quiet man who dresses in the plainest of kimono and whose hands are roughened by the work he regularly shares in the field with his peasants. Oaku is not at all sure that the alliance with the Crane is a good idea, but is obedient to his father's wishes. He is also aware that Ayami is somehow troubled about the wedding, and does not look forward to what will probably be a tense and loveless marriage. Given the chance, he will try to express his feelings to someone, although he knows better than to speak of such things with Cranes or Scorpions.

Suzume Akebono: Oaku's father, a plain-featured man weathered with age, whose face likes to smile but lately has more often frowned. Akebono is one of the reluctant instigators of the Crane-Sparrow alliance, and is deeply concerned about the possibility of a future war with the Scorpion (to punish the Sparrow for the battle of the Suzume Hills). He regards the alliance with the Crane, while unpleasant, as necessary to offset the Scorpion threat. Akebono can be charming, in a rough-hewn and small-scale Sparrow sort of way, but has an unfortunate habit of launching into long, ultra-detailed stories which drag on seemingly forever.

Suzume Takiya: Akebono's bodyguard, and the only Sparrow bushi at the wedding, this man is usually cheerful and talkative, but grows quiet and observant when watching over his charge, young Oaku. He is

devoted to his young lord and hopes the marriage will be a good one; personally, he knows his lord would have preferred a marriage to a fine, level-headed Sparrow girl, but such was not to be. Takiya distrusts most Great Clan samurai, but feels a certain kinship with Dragon and Crab (both of whom live more austere lives than the other Clans) and may confide with them.

The Incident: Kyosaku and Ayami Accept Their Fate

Tonight Soshi Kyosaku will meet at the Inn with his lover Ayami, and the two will realize that the play was a message from the Fortunes. Only if they follow the path of those two lovers, surrendering their hopes for this doomed life, can they have a chance for happiness in a future incarnation.

This event will, in turn, trigger a chain of responses from both the Scorpion and the Crane, a chain which the PCs may wind up interrupting at any of several points along the way. The GM should carefully study the following sequence of events so that it can run smoothly, especially since different PCs may witness different portions of the incident.

1. Kakita Ayami arrives at the inn in disguise. She goes upstairs to Kyosaku's room.
2. After a brief, unhappy conversation, Kyosaku suggests that they both take a walk to cleanse their minds. Ayami decides to take a bath instead. She descends to the women's bath while Kyosaku goes outside.
3. On her way to the baths, Ayami is spotted by Zurui, the Mantis ambassador.
4. While in the bath, Ayami is (unknown to her) identified by Shosuro Kumiko. Kumiko departs to disguise herself and learn more. On her way out of the baths, Ayami is spotted by Okiku, who at first does not realize who she has seen.
5. Kyosaku walks in the garden behind the inn, trying to soothe his confused thoughts and feelings. Here he briefly encounters Togashi Shuji and Zurui the Mantis.
6. Kyosaku and Ayami return to his room together and discuss matters for some time, trying to decide what to do. During this time, Shosuro Kumiko climbs onto the roof of the inn and eavesdrops on their concluding words.
7. Ayami and Kyosaku commit mutual suicide. Kumiko, realizing what has happened, heads out to alert her fellow Scorpion. She meets Shosuro

Masuku outside the baths, and the two depart to collect the other Scorpions in the area.

8. Doji Okiku, finally convinced that she saw her friend, searches through the inn for her – the PCs may encounter her questioning the servants. Zurui the Mantis will also be investigating at this time.
9. Scorpion actors and infiltrators arrive at the inn to “clean up” the suicide scene. Shosuro Kumiko seduces and murders Asahina Tojio, and Ayami’s body is moved to Tojio’s room. Kyosaku’s body is dumped in the forest, and Shosuro Masuku takes his place.
10. Doji Okiku finds the “fake” suicide in Asahina Tojio’s room. She rushes to Shiro Muzai to inform the rest of the Crane. Zurui discovers the same scene shortly after.
11. Crane troops arrive and seal off Tojio’s room. Any witnesses are ordered to Shiro Muzai.

Players’ Actions

The entire sequence begins when the PCs return to the Inn of the Smiling Tiger after the evening’s entertainment. **The GM should ask each player to state what they are doing for the rest of the evening.** It is fairly late, and some PCs may well decide to retire immediately (as Soshi Kyosaku does, going upstairs to his room shortly after his arrival). The other two main options are an evening bath, or some late socializing in the Inn’s common room. If the PCs ask, several other guests, including Zurui the Mantis, Hida Hirose, and Daidoji Hajime, are in the common room sharing some sake.

PCs who go straight to bed should roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 20. If successful, while the PC lies waiting to fall asleep, they hear someone walk down the hallway, tap at a doorframe, then be admitted to a room. After a brief, muted conversation (from which the PC can determine that the speakers are a man and a woman), the two both depart. (A PC who peeks out into the hallway glimpses a man and a woman – dressed in dark, colorless garments – descending the stairs. If they instead try to figure out where the conversation came from, they can roll Simple Intelligence at TN 15 to realize it was Soshi Kyosaku’s room.)

Some time later, the two return. If the PC did not make a conscious effort to wait for them, they must again roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 20 to hear them. A longer conversation ensues, and while the words cannot be made out clearly (both speakers are keeping their voices low), the man and woman are obviously upset about something. Finally, after a long silence, the PC

hears a brief, strangled cry and a pair of heavy, sodden thumps.

If the PC does not investigate, there will be silence for some little while, save perhaps for the sounds of other guests heading to their rest. Eventually, however, if the PC stays awake, they hear several people quietly come upstairs and head down the hallway to the same room where the previous noises occurred. This is the Scorpion “clean-up crew.”

If the PCs decide to take an evening bath, what they encounter will depend on whether they are male or female (bathing is segregated by gender).

Female PCs will find their bath shared by Shosuro Kumiko, one of the Kyozeu Troupe actors. She will chat pleasantly with the PCs, asking how they enjoyed the play. While they speak, another woman enters the baths and quietly washes herself, not joining the conversation. If the PCs met Kakita Ayami at the play (or in another adventure, such as *The Ties That Bind*), they can roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 15 to recognize her. If anyone speaks to her, she will try to avoid their gaze and responds with minimal words. If a PC actually names her, she looks alarmed, mumbles something about “the castle baths are so crowded,” and hurriedly departs.

Shosuro Kumiko will recognize Ayami, but will say nothing about this, and departs the baths soon after. PCs can only tell if she recognized Ayami by rolling **Contested Perception** vs Awareness.

As Kakita Ayami leaves the baths, another woman enters: Doji Okiku. She glances at Ayami in passing, then looks surprised and looks around sharply at her departing back. Okiku has recognized her friend, but she will not confide this to anyone save a trustworthy fellow Crane. She will certainly say nothing until Shosuro Kumiko leaves the baths (which she will do shortly – she is also interested in Ayami’s presence).

Male PCs in the baths find themselves sharing the soaking tub with Asahina Tojio and Shosuro Masuku, another of the Kyozeu Troupe actors. The Crane will speak rapturously of the many beautiful ladies at the castle, and will comment on the divine loveliness of Shosuro Kumiko, asking Masuku many questions about his fellow actor (the Scorpion responds only with a polite smile). Tojio does not, however, make any mention of Kakita Ayami – indeed, she is the only woman whose charms he does not praise. If any PC comments on this, he looks shocked: “Of course I

would never dare to court a lady whose marriage means so much to my Clan,” he remarks huffily.

Shosuro Masuku will be polite but distant to any PCs, deflecting any questions on topics other than his art. He bathes in a leisurely fashion and lingers in the bath some while after Tojio departs. If a PC hangs around long enough, Masuku will eventually dress and make ready to leave the inn. In the hall outside, however, he encounters Shosuro Kumiko, and after a hasty low-voiced conference the two depart together. Kumiko has just informed him of the incident in Kyosaku’s room.

If any PCs spend time in the inn’s common room, they will find the room shared by Zurui the Mantis, Hida Hirose, and Daidoji Hajime, while a few commoners engage in a late-night drinking bout in one corner. Asahina Tojio will join the conversation later, after finishing his bath. The conversation will be casual, with the Crab and the Daidoji trading tales of battles on the Kaiu Wall (Hajime, like many Daidoji, served a year there), while Zurui joins in with the occasional joke or comment.

- Zurui will speak with any non-Crane PCs about the wedding, asking their thoughts about this “mending of anger” between the Crane and Sparrow.
- Once Asahina Tojio arrives, Hida Hirose (by now fairly drunk) will begin making fun of him, cracking crude jokes about Crane foolishness. The others will attempt to ignore him, while Hajime will try to turn him onto other topics. Soon enough, Tojio will lose patience with this ridicule and retire for the evening.

While the PCs are here, have them roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15. If successful, they notice a woman in a cloak and hood enter the inn and quietly ascend the stairs. If any PC decides to follow her, they will see her knock softly and enter at Soshi Kyosaku’s room.

Some little time later (after Tojio arrives from the baths), have the PCs again roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 (if they specified they were watching for the woman, the TN is 10). Success means they see the woman descend the stairs and head to the baths. A moment later a man, also wearing a cloak, descends and walks outside. If the PC made TN 20 or better, they recognize the man as Soshi Kyosaku.

Zurui the Mantis will be the only NPC to notice this. After a few minutes he will feign disgust at Hida Hirose’s jokes and announce that he is going for a “walk to clear the sake fumes from my head.”

If the PCs remain in the common room, they will eventually see both the man and the woman return upstairs. At this point, if they have not already identified either of these people, they can roll **Perception+Investigation**. TN 10 or better recognizes Soshi Kyosaku, and TN 20 or better recognizes Kakita Ayami if the PCs know her or saw her up close at the play. Again, if the PCs follow, they see them enter Kyosaku’s room.

If a PC decides to go outside (to take a walk, follow Kyosaku or Zurui, or whatever other reason), they will encounter Kyosaku walking back and forth in the inn’s extensive garden. He is pensive and distracted, and does not notice anyone else unless they speak with him directly (which Zurui will do if the PCs restrain themselves). Togashi Shuji is also in the garden, sitting silent in the shadows, and observes the scene quietly before stepping forward to join any conversation.

- Zurui will inquire after Kyosaku’s health, observing that he looks distressed, then changes the topic to the upcoming wedding. “Tell me, Soshi-sama, how do the Scorpion look upon this? After all, it was not that many years ago that the Sparrow helped to inflict a humiliating defeat on your Clan. Scorpions have long memories, I am told.” He watches Kyosaku’s responses carefully.
- Soshi Kyosaku will be clearly disturbed by anyone (Zurui or otherwise) mentioning the wedding, but tries to put on a good front. “Why would the Scorpion be troubled by good fortune finding our humble neighbors?”
- Anyone rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell that Kyosaku’s unease, while certainly connected to the wedding, is far deeper and more personal than any mere Clan politics would suggest.
- Eventually Kyosaku will seem to reach some kind of decision. His face firms and he heads back to the inn, excusing himself. “It will be a long day tomorrow, and I must rest,” he lies.
- Zurui looks after him with a speculative air, but will only speak further if in the presence of a PC he thinks trustworthy (Minor Clans, or possibly Crab or Unicorn). “One would expect the Scorpion to oppose such an alliance, yet Kyosaku-san seemed more... personally concerned. Do you know any reason why?” Regardless of how they answer, Zurui will return to the inn, trying to think of ways to turn this to his advantage.
- Togashi Shuji will not join the conversation with Kyosaku, but will step forward afterward (especially if Zurui left without speaking). “The worst conflicts,” Shuji remarks, “are always those between emotion and duty. Would you not

agree?” In the fashion of a true Ise Zumi, he will not explain his words.

Okiku Searches for her Friend

During the time immediately after the suicide of Kyosaku and Ayami, if the PCs are anywhere in the inn but in Kyosaku’s room, they will encounter Doji Okiku. She is moving about the inn, questioning all the servants who are still awake, inquiring whether they saw “another Crane lady” in the inn. She will eventually question her bodyguard Hajime as well, along with anyone still in the common room with him (it is up to the PCs how they answer – Hajime was distracted by the drunken Hida Hirose and never saw anything).

Okiku will eventually give up and return to her room – by which time the Scorpion clean-up crew has come and gone. Okiku will notice that the door to Asahina Tojio’s room is ajar, and bodies lie within.

The Scene in Kyosaku’s Room

If the PCs actually snoop into Kyosaku’s room, either after overhearing the strange noises or after following Kakita Ayami there, the GM should consider charging them a point of Honor for invading another’s privacy (although this will depend in part on which Clan they belong to, and how they justify their actions to themselves). Inside, they will see the following scene:

The room is dark and still, the only light coming from the pale beams of Lord Moon which slip through the open window. Sprawled on the futon, arms draped around each other, are the bodies of a man and woman; they have apparently committed mutual suicide, each driving a knife into the other’s throat at the same time. Dark blood stains their garments and the futon beneath them.

The PCs will easily recognize the man as Soshi Kyosaku. If they know or spoke with Kakita Ayami, they recognize her as well – otherwise they must roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 10 to identify her.

At this point, it is up to the PCs what (if anything) to do. The Scorpion clean-up crew will arrive shortly, and will take action against any PCs in the area. If the PCs leave to inform the authorities of what has happened, the Scorpion move in behind them to alter the scene in their favor.

The Scorpion Clean-Up

Alerted by Shosuro Kumiko, the Scorpion “clean-up crew” will arrive within a few minutes of Kyosaku and Ayami’s deaths, while Doji Okiku is still downstairs looking for her friend. The crew consists of Kumiko, her two fellow Shosuro actors (Masuku and Bikou), Bayushi Tenkawa, and Yogo Aika. They gather outside, dressed in dark, muffled garments, then enter the Inn secretly through the servants’ quarters. Shosuro Bikou is dressed and equipped as a “ninja” in case such a distraction is needed.

The Scorpions’ goal is to substitute a Crane for Kyosaku’s body, thereby laying all the blame for the incident on the Crane Clan. Asahina Tojio is the chosen target, and Kumiko will immediately head for his room to seduce and murder him. The other four enter Kyosaku’s room. What happens then depends on whether any PCs are in the room or the immediate vicinity:

- Any Scorpion PCs will, if possible, be “recruited” to help in the deception. Refusal is treason against the Clan.
- Non-Scorpion PCs will either be attacked and overcome (if numbering two or less), or the Scorpion will attempt to distract them and draw them off with a false “ninja” sighting (if there are three or more of them).
- PCs who are attacked directly will be disabled with paralytic poison, and will awaken in their rooms with no memories of what happened (Yogo Aika has used the spell *Forget* on them to erase their memories).
- The “Ninja distraction” ploy will work as follows: a “ninja” (Shosuro Bikou) in the requisite black pajamas will briefly appear in the window, toss a few shuriken at the PCs (missing them), then flee. He will attempt to lead the PCs into the trees behind the inn, occasionally throwing more shuriken or otherwise attracting their attention. In the meantime, the rest of the Scorpion will move in and clean up the scene, disposing of any remaining PCs as outlined above.
- Once the scene is secure (either due to the absence of any PCs, or their distraction/defeat), the Scorpion quickly move the bloody futon, knife, and the body of Kakita Ayami to Asahina Tojio’s room, where Shosuro Kumiko has just smothered him. Tojio’s body is positioned appropriately and his throat is cut. Simultaneously, Soshi Kyosaku’s body is smuggled out of the inn (the Scorpion enduring the dishonor of touching dead flesh for the sake of their Clan) and concealed in the woods. Shosuro Masuku takes on Kyosaku’s persona.

- Yogo Aika will purge the spirits from Kyosaku's room and Tojio's room to prevent any meddling shugenja from learning the truth of what happened.
- The door to Asahina Tojio's room will be left slightly ajar so that the scene can be easily discovered. Unless a PC makes this discovery, it will be Doji Okiku who learns the "truth" as she retires that evening.

After the Scorpion Clean-Up

Kyosaku's room will be "normal" (except for the missing spirits). Shosuro Masuku, now in the clothing and persona of Kyosaku, will scold any rude samurai who try to barge in and look for evidence. The PCs will have to succeed in a **Contested** roll of their **Perception+Investigation** against Masuku's **Awareness+Acting** to see through his persona.

Asahina Tojio's room will contain the intertwined bodies of Tojio and Ayami, much like the real suicide scene:

The room is dark and still, the only light coming from the pale beams of Lord Moon which slip through the open window. Sprawled on the futon, arms draped around each other, are the bodies of a man and woman; they have apparently committed mutual suicide, each clutching a bloody knife. Dark blood from their slashed throats stains their garments and the futon beneath them.

In order to see the flaws in the hasty Scorpion deception, the PCs will have to investigate closely – which will be impossible once the Crane "close down" the scene. If they do manage to search the room before the Crane arrive, see the appropriate section in "Investigations," below.

Shortly after the Scorpion complete their work, Doji Okiku will discover the bodies. Horrified, she immediately rushes to Shiro Muzai to report what she has found. Zurui the Mantis sees her depart, considers briefly, then goes upstairs and discovers the scene as well. He will still be looking around when the Crane arrive.

The Crane Arrive

The Crane will soon learn of what has happened, either from PCs or from Doji Okiku (unless intercepted, she will run straight to Shiro Muzai to report what she has discovered). In either case, after a hasty conference the Crane dispatch a small troop of samurai (eight bushi) to

secure the Inn and prevent word of the incident from leaking out. If any PCs are investigating the scene, reported the crime, or otherwise demonstrate knowledge of what has happened, the Crane bushi will order them to the castle immediately. "Lord Kakita Enryo-sama must speak with you," they say. Zurui the Mantis will also be included in this "invitation."

After this time, Asahina Tojio's room will be guarded and inaccessible (unless the PCs have volunteered to help Kakita Enryo). The Crane bushi will offer no explanations of their actions, but most people at the Inn will assume a crime of some sort has been committed, and that Asahina Tojio is involved in some way. The remaining Scorpions at the Inn (Tenkawa, Kumiko, and Bikou) will begin dropping stories about Tojio's womanizing, paving the way for the revelation of the "suicide."

A Meeting with Kakita Enryo

The PCs will be peremptorily summoned to Shiro Muzai if they revealed their knowledge of the crime, or reported it themselves. They will also be summoned if they are Crane Clan, have shown open friendship to the Crane, or are known to be hostile to the Scorpion.

After arrival, Zurui the Mantis and any PCs who are not reliably Crane-friendly will be met by a Crane courtier, who informs them that the "incident" is being investigated. "This is a Clan matter, and will be dealt with by us. Please do not speak of this matter until we have made a public declaration." He will not let anyone leave the castle until they give their word not to speak of what they know. Zurui will grudgingly say, "I will not share this with any it does not concern," which the courtier will accept. The GM should pay attention to the wording any other PCs use, since failing to keep one's word can be dishonorable.

Crane and Crane-friendly PCs will get a more elaborate reception. They are led to a small audience room in the castle, where they are met presently by Kakita Enryo himself. The Crane daimyo looks haggard and slightly dazed, but makes a visible effort to pull himself together in the PCs' presence. He is accompanied by several other Crane, including Doji Okiku. "What I am about to say is a Clan secret, and must not be shared with anyone," he explains, shooting a hard look at any non-Crane PCs who have been admitted. "I trust you are honorable enough not to betray such a confidence."

Enryo proceeds to explain the discovery of Kakita Ayami and Asahina Tojio's entwined bodies, his expression rigidly controlled. "It seems clear to me that this is a Scorpion deception, aimed at sabotaging our alliance with the Sparrow. The two must have been murdered and arranged to look like a dishonorable suicide. The Scorpion have never forgiven the Sparrow for the battle of the Suzume Hills, after all. My daughter was an honorable and loyal Crane, and would never have given in to such foolishness." Any PC rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 15, however, can detect hidden doubts under Enryo's words.

He goes on to explain that it may be possible to salvage the Crane-Sparrow alliance, "if we can offer proof of the Scorpion crime." With such proof, he explains, it will be possible for the Crane Clan to offer a new bride to the Sparrow. "Doji Okiku-san will be glad to make such an effort for her Clan," he remarks. Okiku bows stiffly, her face set in a mask of duty.

If any PCs saw the real suicide, and tell Enryo, he will refuse to believe them. "You must have mis-seen it," he says, his face rigid with suppressed rage and grief. Enryo will not accept any explanation save that of a Scorpion deception. Again, though, any PC rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can sense the hidden doubt and turmoil beneath Enryo's strong front.

If the PCs agree to help the Crane "prove the Scorpion deception," Enryo will present them with his personal chop, giving them authority to investigate the incident in his name. He explains that they must complete their investigation in time for the scheduled evening entertainment at the castle, since Kakita Ayami's absence cannot be concealed past that time.

If the PCs refuse to help, Enryo (clearly angry, although he keeps it under control) demands their promise not to speak of the matter to anyone, then dismisses them.

A Meeting with Bayushi Tenkawa

If any PCs are Scorpion, or have shown themselves to be friendly to the Scorpion (or possibly strongly hostile to the Crane), the morning after the incident (probably while other PCs are meeting with Kakita Enryo) they will receive a visit from Bayushi Tenkawa. The politely smiling Scorpion asks them to join him for a morning stroll. "The weather is fine today, and I have found it is better appreciated with company." On the way down the street, they will meet (seemingly by

chance) Yogo Aika, who joins them at Tenkawa's invitation.

Once they are outside the town, strolling through the warm sunshine, Tenkawa gets down to brass tacks. "It seems that two Cranes committed suicide last night – Asahina Tojio, a notorious womanizer, and Kakita Ayami, the daughter of the honorable local daimyo...and the betrothed of Suzume Oaku. A lovers' suicide, it would appear. However, the Crane are concealing the incident for now, trying to find a way to save face." If anyone asks Tenkawa how he knows this, he merely smiles and shares a brief look with Yogo Aika.

"It would be most regrettable," he continues, "if the Crane were to find a way to salvage their alliance with the Sparrow. It would also be most regrettable if this unfortunate incident should bring any shame on any other, innocent, parties. Our fellow Clan-member Soshi Kyosaku, for example, who was a friend of Ayami. You understand?"

Tenkawa and Aika expect the PCs' help in concealing the Scorpion crimes and, if possible, ensuring that the Sparrow learn the "truth" about the suicide. They will never openly say what the Scorpion have actually done (operating on the theory that, as Aika puts it, "what is not known cannot be betrayed") but they will make it clear that the "suicide" story must hold up and that Soshi Kyosaku must not be connected to the incident in any way.

If any of the PCs actually mention their personal knowledge of the true suicide, Tenkawa looks pained at their lack of subtlety or secrecy, and reiterates his goals in plainer language.

If any PCs refuse to help, Tenkawa and Aika both look pained, and drop several subtle hints about how it can be dangerous to thwart the Scorpion Clan. If the PC persists in refusing, or threatens to expose the real truth about the suicide, the two Scorpion sigh and let them go. Thereafter these PCs are carefully shadowed by the Scorpion (see "Assassination?" below).

A Meeting with Zurui

If the PCs are Minor Clan, or have shown sympathy to the Mantis (or open hostility to the Crane), Zurui will approach them (immediately after their meeting with Kakita Enryo or Bayushi Tenkawa, if they went to either of those) and ask them to meet with him privately in his room at the Inn of the Smiling Tiger.

Once the PCs arrive, Zurui gets right to the point. “We all know that Kakita Ayami died last night, along with Asahina Tojio – a notorious womanizer by all accounts.” He regards the PCs’ reactions, and if they strike him as favorable, continues. “My master Yoritomo, lord of the Mantis, is deeply opposed to the Crane-Sparrow alliance. The Great Clans cannot be trusted to treat us as anything more than occasionally useful tools, and the Crane are worst of all,” he growls. “Only by standing together will the Minor Clans be able to gain the respect we deserve. My master Yoritomo has sought an alliance with the Sparrow for months, but they have rebuffed him in favor of the Crane. If we can expose the truth of this matter – that a Crane maiden killed herself rather than marry a Sparrow – the wisdom of Lord Yoritomo’s position will be clear to all.”

If any PCs have reservations about revealing information they have sworn to keep secret, Zurui points out that the Sparrow are entitled to know what has become of the bride they were promised. “I swore to reveal this only to those it concerns. If it does not concern the Sparrow, who does it concern?”

Zurui wants the PCs to help him arrange an immediate meeting with the Sparrow contingent, in order to expose what is happening before the Crane can manage to save face. He will expect any Mantis PCs to support him implicitly, of course, but hopes for support from one or more Great Clan PCs to lend weight to his efforts. He is certainly willing to get the help of Scorpion PCs – what matters to him is not the truth, but thwarting the Crane.

If any of the PCs know about the real suicide, and tell Zurui, he is enthused. “Even better! A black eye for both the Crane and the Sparrow’s old enemies the Scorpion! Let us inform the Sparrow at once.”

If the PCs refuse to help, Zurui looks angry, and promises they will regret denying his master Yoritomo, but takes no other action.

Investigations

The PCs may decide to investigate on their own (especially if they are Meddlers or Kitsuki Magistrates), or they may find themselves doing so as allies to Kakita Enryo. Regardless, they will have one day to seek the truth; by that evening, when the Kyojou Troupe is scheduled to perform again, the Crane will not be able to conceal Ayami’s death any longer.

Asahina Tojio’s Room

If the PCs are able to investigate the scene in Asahina Tojio’s room (either before the Crane shut it down, with Enryo’s permission, or by sneaking in), they can uncover the following clues:

- A PC who examines the bodies (without touching them!) and rolls **Perception+Investigation** at TN 20 can notice that the wound in Asahina Tojio’s throat does not look quite right for the way it should have been inflicted. They also notice bruising on his neck, as though he were choked.
- Anyone who examines the contents of the room can roll **Intelligence+Investigation** at TN 15 to notice that the weaving pattern on the bloodstained futon and its coverings do not match those of the other folded coverlets in the room.
- If a PC specifically examines the futon, they can roll **Intelligence+Investigation**, **Battle**, or **Medicine** at TN 20 to notice that there are two different sets of bloodstains on the futon, one slightly older than the other. If they make TN 25 or better, they can tell that the blood from Tojio’s wounds is the more recent stain.
- If the PCs search the room for other clues, they can roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 15 to find an extensive collection of love letters and poems hidden beneath Tojio’s writing desk, along with a near-competed love poem which he was composing. The identities of the various ladies who wrote the letters can be deduced with **Intelligence+Calligraphy** at TN 10; none of them are Kakita Ayami (a courtier, of course, will find these letters to be prime blackmail material). The intended recipient of the incomplete poem can be deduced by rolling **Intelligence+Poetry** at TN 15. It is meant for Otomo Otohime, a prominent courtier maiden in the capital city of Otosan Uchi.

Soshi Kyosaku’s Room

The Scorpion plan is for “Kyosaku” to remain in his room (pleading illness to avoid meeting anyone who might see through his act) until after the whole wedding (or non-wedding) is over, then announce his daimyo has recalled him and return to Scorpion lands, never to be seen again.

If any PCs decide to investigate in Soshi Kyosaku’s room after the “false Kyosaku” is in place, they will have to justify their actions to the false Kyosaku, who will exploit Rokugani customs and etiquette to the utmost in rebuffing them. Unless the PCs have Kakita Enryo’s authority, they will probably not be able to investigate Kyosaku’s quarters except by stealth. If they do make it inside, however, or if they managed to

investigate before the clean-up, they can learn the following:

- The false Kyosaku does not, of course, remember any conversations which the real Kyosaku may have had with the PCs the night before. However, as an accomplished Shosuro actor, he will bluff very well. PCs trying to see through his vague responses must make **Contested** Rolls of **Perception+Investigation** against his **Awareness+Acting**.
- If the PCs confront the false Kyosaku with proof of his deception (such as the discovery of the real Kyosaku's body) he will fling down a nageteppe (smoke grenade) and escape in the confusion, resuming his identity as Shosuro Masuku.
- One of Kyosaku's kimono – the one he was wearing when he went walking in the garden – is missing. The garment is still on his body in the woods. The false Kyosaku will claim the garment was frayed and he sent it to be mended. The inn servants will not be able to confirm this tale until midday, by which time the Scorpion have bribed them.
- The woven pattern on the futon in this room does not match the sheets and coverings. The false Kyosaku will claim it has always been that way, but if the PCs question the inn servants before midday, they can learn that the futons and covers in each room are designed to match.
- If the PCs search the room for bloodstains or other such direct evidence, they can roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 25 (TN 20 if they specifically examine the window) to discover a few faint smears of blood on the windowsill. "Kyosaku" will pretend to know nothing of this, and summons the inn servants in "anger" at this "contamination" of his room.
- PCs who have experience dealing with Scorpions may decide to search the room for hidden papers or other clues. The false Kyosaku will protest such activities, of course, in the strongest possible terms. Nevertheless, if the PCs do manage to search, they can roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 25 to discover a small Scorpion puzzle-box hidden in the closet. The puzzle-box contains a brief, half-written note and a pair of carefully folded papers of delicate pale blue color.
- The note is, apparently, an incomplete attempt to ask his superiors' forgiveness for "failing most terribly" in his assignment to seduce and dishonor Kakita Ayami. "I fear my loyalty to my Clan, never doubted before, has at last been shattered." He does not specifically say why.

- The poems are love poems, written in a feminine style, and signed with the chop of Kakita Ayami.

Interrogating the Spirits

As mentioned before, Yogo Aika will have purged all the old spirits from both Kyosaku's and Tojio's rooms. The new spirits know nothing of what happened prior to their arrival. This is suspicious in and of itself, of course, and clearly suggests a shugenja intervening to conceal evidence.

However, knowledgeable spirits can still be found outside the inn, especially outside Kyosaku's room. There are Air and Earth spirits here in abundance. If invoked with the Commune spell, they can describe two persons dragging a dead man's body out of Kyosaku's room, lowering it to the ground, and carrying it into the surrounding trees. (If the PCs suffered through a "ninja distraction," the spirits will also describe that, in humiliating detail.) They can describe the two who carried the body as "a man and a woman, dressed in the colors of night."

Kyosaku's Body

If the PCs search the forest, they will have to roll **Perception+Investigation** or **Hunting** at TN 35 (TN 25 if they communed with spirits beforehand) to discover the body of Soshi Kyosaku, concealed in a ditch under leaves and old branches. Yogo Aika is watching the body with the spell Reflecting Pool, waiting for an opportunity to remove it permanently, and will alert her comrades that "the jig is up."

If the PCs examine the body (with the help of *eta*, no doubt), they can roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 20 to see that the wound in Kyosaku's throat matches the type of injury in Kakita Ayami's throat, and that Kyosaku has no strange bruises.

The Inn of the Smiling Tiger

Crane bushi will guard Asahina Tojio's room throughout the day, and will not allow anyone inside unless they carry Kakita Enryo's chop. They will not explain anything except to say, "A crime has been committed."

The actors of the Kyozeu Theatre Troupe will be present in the Inn of the Smiling Tiger throughout the following day. Mostly they will be in their rooms, preparing for the performance they expect to offer at Shiro Muzai that evening. The PCs will meet most of them briefly at meals or in the baths. All of them are apparently ignorant of exactly what has happened –

sincerely so, except for the Scorpion. PCs who watch them closely, however, can roll **Perception+Investigation** at TN 15 to notice that Shosuro Masuku is never around. If any PC mentions it, the Crane actors will look confused and wonder what could be occupying their comrade. Shosuro Kumiko will then cover for Masuku by explaining that he felt a bit unwell and is resting so that he will be prepared for the performance tonight.

- If the PCs check Shosuro Masuku's room, they will find that he is missing.
- By midday, the Scorpion will have bribed all the servants at the inn to support their story. However, these are fearful commoners, and a ruthless or intimidating PC can probably not only frighten them into telling the truth, but also into confessing that the Scorpion bribed them.
- Daidoji Hiroji will spend the day waiting idly (and somewhat worriedly) for his mistress to return from Shiro Muzai. He will explain (to any PCs who ask) that his mistress never came down from her room this morning, and that eventually he received a message that she was at the castle and would remain there until tonight.

Togashi Shuji

Togashi Shuji spends much of the day meditating in the inn's garden. If any PC approaches him, asking about the incidents the night before (or about anything else, for that matter), Shuji will instead engage them in a discussion of loyalty. "What is loyalty? Is it the willingness to do anything, anything at all, when commanded? Or is it merely the desire for the approval of one's superiors? And what happens when one comes to desire another's approval even more? Is that a betrayal of loyalty, or an affirmation of it?" He will laugh off any PCs who take offense at his words. "I am a monk, and the asking of uncomfortable questions is my business," he explains.

- If any of the PCs seem genuinely interested in learning the real truth of what has happened (or are fellow Ise Zumi), Shuji will consider for a time, then remarks, "The three sins are Fear, Desire, and Regret. Of these, the most insidious is Desire, for it alone brings pleasure to its victim."
- If the PCs seek more clues, or ask him questions about the suicide victims, he remarks, "I have heard it said that the Scorpion, like the ant, is an industrious insect, and stores all manner of valuables and keepsakes in its lair."
- He will say nothing more unless the PCs seem completely stumped for ways to prove the truth about Ayami and Kyosaku. In such a case he will suddenly spring to his feet, remarking, "Come, let

us take a walk. Exercise in clean, fresh air, and the pleasant sights and scents of the forest; invigorating and restful together." He will lead the PCs through the forest to Kyosaku's grave and "accidentally" uncover Kyosaku's hand with his foot as he passes. Shuji seems as surprised as anyone by what the PCs find. "Well, imagine that! Whatever are you doing there, Soshi Kyosaku-san? And here I thought you were ill in your room – isn't that what you told the innkeeper this morning?"

Assassinations?

The Scorpion will be watching the PCs carefully (especially if any of them refused Tenkawa's request for help). Further, Yogo Aika will be keeping tabs on Kyosaku's body with the spell Reflecting Pool, and will know if the PCs discover the body.

If it seems plain that the PCs are going to expose the real truth about the suicide, the Scorpion may decide to take action. If they do, it will be in an isolated location (such as the woods where Kyosaku's body is concealed). The three Shosuro actors will disguise themselves as "ninja" and stage an ambush, dropping out of nowhere to strike with poisoned weapons. The PCs must make a **Contested** Roll of their **Perception+Battle** (or Stealth or Hunting) against the ambushing Scorpions' **Agility+Stealth**. Any PC who fails the roll is surprised and suffers one free attack at TN 5 to be hit.

Yogo Aika will conceal herself nearby (with the help of *Know the Shadows*) and use her spells to help defeat the PCs. She will never show herself and flees at the first sign of the fight going badly. The "ninja" will also flee – concealing their retreat with nageteppe smoke grenades – if the battle seems hopeless. If any of them are reduced to the Down rank, they will attempt to end their lives by cutting themselves in the face, preventing identification.

Resolving the Situation

There are several possible confrontations and resolutions possible to this adventure, depending on what Clans the PCs belong to, which faction they support, and how they deal with any evidence they discover.

Helping the Mantis

If any of the PCs support Zurui and seek a meeting with the Sparrow, they will need to visit Shiro Muzai (where

the Sparrow are staying) and gain an audience. The guards at the gates will not admit them, instead taking their chops (names) and a short message to whomever they wish to see. The GM must judge whether their message earns them an audience. PCs can help their cause with a good Sincerity roll, but ultimately it is their choice of words which matters.

If they do gain admission to see the Sparrow, they will have to make a convincing presentation of their story and then roll **Awareness+Sincerity** at TN 20 to convince the Sparrow of the truth of their words. The GM may wish to modify the TN based on the identity of the PCs – Scorpions will have a much harder time being believed than, say, Phoenix.

- If the Sparrow are convinced, they demand an immediate meeting with Kakita Enryo. He is forced to admit that his daughter and Asahina Tojio (or Soshi Kyosaku, if the PCs revealed the whole truth) died together in a way suggesting a lovers' suicide.
- If other PCs have accumulated evidence showing that Tojio was murdered or the suicide faked, Enryo will present this evidence along with the offer of Doji Okiku as an alternate bride. The Sparrow will accept this explanation. (See "Supporting the Crane," below.)
- If Enryo does not have such evidence to support him, he will still offer an engagement to Doji Okiku, but the Sparrow will stiffly decline.
- Zurui will immediately ask to speak with the Sparrow privately about this matter (in order to propose an alliance with the Mantis). The Sparrow are more than willing to listen to him now.
- If no one supports Zurui, he will be unable to gain a meeting with the Sparrow in time to interfere with the Crane plans. As a skilled courtier he will know better than to merely run around telling everyone that a suicide has occurred – that would be a grotesque breach of etiquette, and he will try to discourage any PCs who seek such a route.

Supporting the Crane

If the PCs are helping the Crane, or investigating on their own, they can uncover the various evidence listed under "Investigations." How they present this evidence is up to them; it can be used to expose the truth (joint lovers' suicide) or to "prove" that Ayami was murdered by the Scorpion, depending on which clues are brought forward and what face the PCs choose to place on them.

- If the PCs offer their support to the Crane and present evidence supporting the theory of a Scorpion murder/frame-up, Enryo will summon the

Sparrow and present this evidence along with an offer of marriage to Doji Okiku. The GM should adjudicate how persuasive the PCs' story is (remember that in Rokugan, personal testimony and direct physical evidence are considered paramount – logical deductions are ignored). If their story is sufficiently persuasive, and is not contradicted by other evidence (see "Revealing the Truth," below, and "Helping the Mantis," above) the Sparrow will reluctantly accept this offer.

Revealing the Truth

If some of the PCs decide to expose the whole truth (both the original double-suicide and the subsequent Scorpion duplicity) they will have their work cut out for them. Both the Crane and the Scorpion will endeavor (for different reasons) to deny the truth and to punch holes in the PCs' evidence – neither of them wants the actual truth to come out, since it would dishonor both Clans. In fact, only the Sparrow (and, for his own reasons, Zurui) will be really interested in hearing the truth, and the PCs will have to convince them to listen (see "Helping the Mantis," above).

- The weak point of the Scorpion deception is the false Kyosaku – the Scorpion cannot risk bringing him to Shiro Muzai, since the people there know Kyosaku well and will probably see through the deception.
- If the PCs have found the body of the real Kyosaku (and survived an assassination attempt), the Scorpion will know they are finished. The false Kyosaku will already have vanished, and the Scorpion do their best to deny knowledge of everything else. Their stories probably cannot be broken, but the PCs should be able to convince the Sparrow of what happened.
- Absent the body, the PCs can try to point out the discrepancies in the "suicide scene," show the letters and poems in Tojio's room, testify about Scorpion behavior, and so forth. The GM should adjudicate how strong their position is – the Clans of the various PCs will have a bearing on this.
- If the PCs succeed in exposing the whole truth, the Sparrow will be horrified by all this Great Clan corruption and duplicity, and prepare immediately to depart for their own lands. Kakita Enryo will still try to offer a marriage to Doji Okiku, but it will be summarily rejected. Zurui will attempt to meet with the Sparrow and offer a marriage into the Mantis Clan – absent any opposition from the PCs, he will succeed.

Supporting the Scorpion

Any PCs who are supporting the Scorpion (which should include any Scorpion Clan PCs) will have the twin goals of exposing the fake suicide while concealing the real one. They may find themselves helping Zurui in his goal of exposing the suicide to the Sparrow, or doing so on their own.

- If no one finds the evidence which exposes Kyosaku's suicide, or if only a few discrepancies come to light, it should be possible to put all the blame on the Crane.
- If Kyosaku's suicide is revealed, the "fall-back" Scorpion position is that everything else was done by the mysterious "ninja." Under no circumstances will the Scorpion admit to their involvement in the alteration of the suicide scene, the concealment of Kyosaku's body, or the murder and framing of Asahina Tojio.

Aftermath: Wrapping Things Up

Ultimately, whatever approach the PCs take and whichever Clans they side with, there are three basic ways for this story to end.

If any of the PCs managed to public ally expose the actual truth (the love affair between Kyosaku and Ayami), or if they helped Zurui to do so, both the Crane and the Scorpion Clans are dishonored by the affair. The marriage between the Crane and Sparrow is cancelled, and the Sparrow depart for their homelands filled with anger at both Great Clans. There are mutterings of the possibility of war. The Mantis will certainly gain their alliance with the Sparrow in this case, since these events have proven that the Great Clans cannot be trusted.

If the Scorpion succeed in their attempt to pin the blame on the Crane, the Crane alone are dishonored, and the Sparrow reject the marriage and alliance. A Mantis/Sparrow alliance is possible, depending on whether Zurui managed to short-circuit the Crane damage-control effort.

If the Crane succeed in covering themselves, either by switching the blame to the Scorpion or by offering an even better bride, the alliance with the Sparrow goes ahead (and the Scorpion may well be dishonored – nothing new about that). The Mantis are also disappointed in this case. See "A Wedding," below, for details.

It is possible that unusually clever or creative PCs may find a "fourth way" that is not described here. The GM should adjudicate such a result based on the possibilities discussed here. It is also possible (though not likely) that the entire party may simply ignore this entire affair. In that case the Scorpion deception will succeed (option two above).

A Wedding

If the Crane succeeded in salvaging the alliance by offering a marriage to Doji Okiku, the PCs witness one final scene:

The morning light of Mother Sun shines on the garden of Shiro Muzai. Doji Okiku's face is a study in controlled serenity, while Suzume Oaku looks doubtful and uncomfortable, as a priest speaks a prayer and binds their wrists with the red cord that signifies marriage. The gathered Crane applaud happily, delighted not only with the marriage but with their narrow aversion of embarrassment and dishonor. There is applause from others as well, but that of the Scorpion and Mantis representatives seems distinctly forced, and the Fox and Wasp representatives seem little happier. You suspect this matter is not nearly so closed as the Crane might hope.

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:	3 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
PC helps their Clan "win" the situation:	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 5 XP

Honor

If the Scorpion Clan succeeds in sabotaging the Crane-Sparrow marriage, all Scorpion PCs gain +1 point of Honor. If the suicide of Soshi Kyosaku is exposed, all Scorpion PCs lose 1 point of Honor. If the Crane succeed in pinning everything on the Scorpion, all Scorpion PCs lose 2 points of Honor.

If the Crane salvage the alliance with the Sparrow, all Crane PCs gain +1 point of Honor. If the alliance is sabotaged (by the Scorpion or Mantis, or both), all Crane PCs lose 3 points of Honor.

If the Mantis achieve an alliance with the Sparrow, all Mantis PCs gain +2 Honor. If the Mantis attempt to sabotage the alliance, but are unsuccessful, all Mantis PCs lose 3 points of Honor.

Sparrow PCs lose 1 point of Honor if there is no marriage of any kind.

Glory

+1 Glory to any Mantis PCs if they succeed in pushing through a Sparrow-Mantis alliance.

+1 Glory to any Sparrow PCs if an alliance of some kind (with any other Clan) is salvaged.

-2 Glory to PCs from any Clan (Scorpion, Crane, or Mantis) which is the “loser” in this affair.

Additional -1 Glory to Scorpion PCs if Soshi Kyosaku’s suicide is also exposed.

Other Awards/Penalties

If any non-Mantis PCs helped the Mantis, and the Mantis succeeded in gaining an alliance with the Sparrow, all such PCs gain a **Rank One Favor: Mantis Clan**.

If any non-Scorpion PCs helped the Scorpion, and the Scorpion succeeded in sabotaging the Crane-Sparrow alliance, those PCs gain **Rank One Favor: Scorpion Clan**.

If any PCs helped the Crane, and the Crane succeeded in salvaging the alliance with the Sparrow, those PCs are each given a Crane fetish (certed item): the Tortoise Shell Fetish.

NPC List for Lies, Lies, Lies

This is a complete list of all NPCs in this scenario, along with their statistics. The GM should use this section as a “touchstone” to remind himself of each NPC’s appearance, behavior, and motivations.

Cranes

Kakita Mujitsu, innocent poet

Mujitsu is a charming and courteous young man with long white hair in a loose ponytail. Mujitsu has led a sheltered life in the Kakita Academy, and this is his first chance to travel the Empire and see it at first-hand. He is quite free of any of the usual Clan prejudices; he genuinely likes everyone he meets, even ronin, and will hastily and sincerely apologize if he inadvertently insults anyone.

FIRE 3	AIR 2
	Awareness 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Kakita Artisan (Poet) 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/2.4

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, History 2, Lore (Myth and Legend) 1, Poetry 3, Sincerity 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten’s Blessing, Higher Purpose (bring peace between the Clans), True Friends (many)/Idealistic

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine tanto

Kakita Enryo, troubled daimyo

Daimyo of Shiro Muzai, and father to the bride-to-be Kakita Ayami, this elegant Crane courtier, handsome despite his advancing years, is the very model of Rokugani diplomacy: a master of subtlety, understatement, and self-control. Seething underneath this facade is a man of considerable passion and temper; in his younger days Enryo was something of a womanizer, and narrowly avoided publicly dishonoring himself on several occasions. Enryo’s other daughter, Seka, died several months ago, and his only son is representing the family in Otosan Uchi. He secretly worries that his children (particularly his daughters) may have inherited his own dangerously passionate nature.

FIRE 3	AIR 4
Intelligence 4	

EARTH 2	WATER 2
Willpower 3	Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 3

Honor/Glory: 2.4/5.6

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 4, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 1, Lore (Crane Clan) 4, Manipulation 3, Meditation 2, Oratory 3, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dangerous Beauty, Gentry, Luck, Social Position (daimyo), Voice/Bad Fortune (children inherited his lechery), Lechery

Equipment: Excellent kimono, fine daisho

Kakita Ayami, gentle daughter and bride-to-be

This gentle and delicate young woman, still possessed of much youthful innocence despite the murder of her older sister some months ago, is now deeply troubled. She has fallen passionately in love with Soshi Kyosaku, but knows that such a relationship is wrong and that her feelings are leading her to betray her duty to the Clan. As a result, she seems pensive and uncertain, her public smiles clearly pasted on over internal turmoil. She will only confess a few hints of her real feelings to others who seem to understand her trouble (perhaps by suggesting that they have felt conflicts between duty and emotion).

FIRE 2	AIR 2
Intelligence 4	
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Kakita Artisan (Origami) 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/2.1

Skills: Courtier 2, Etiquette 2, Origami 3, Calligraphy 2, Lore (Myth and Legend) 2, Lore (Shugenja) 1, Meditation 1, Shintao 1, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: True Love (Soshi Kyosaku)

Equipment: Fine kimono, tanto

Doji Okiku, beautiful courtier-ko and Scorpion dupe

A Crane courtier, skilled in rhetorical maneuver but vain of temperament, Okiku is a beautiful woman in her twenties and was honored last winter to attend the Winter Court of the Emperor, a fact she will not hesitate to drop in conversation. Okiku wears a fine kimono and has her white-dyed hair pulled back in a

long wrapped tail. A good friend of Kakita Ayami, she regards her friend's wedding to the Sparrow as a dreadful sacrifice on behalf of the Clan. She is also good friends with Yogo Aika, whose plain looks and apparent inability to attract a husband have earned her sympathy.

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 2

Honor/Glory: 3.4/3.6

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, Lore (Crane Clan) 3, Lore (Imperial Courts) 2, Manipulation 3, Oratory 1, Poetry 2, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Cadence, Voice/Vanity

Equipment: Fine kimono

Daidoji Hajime, dedicated bodyguard

Doji Okiku's personal bodyguard, a stern, fit young man with white-dyed hair in a short ponytail. He wears light armor at all times and always carries at least one concealed weapon (usually a tanto), even inside the inn. Hajime will speak (politely) when spoken to, but will not otherwise join the conversation. He will react suddenly and ferociously to any threat or open insult against Okiku.

FIRE 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

Wounds = (Earth+2) per rank [Daidoji School]

TN to be Hit: 25 (light armor)

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 2

Honor/Glory: 2.4/2.5

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Sincerity 2, Yarijutsu 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Irreproachable, Quick

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set

Asahina Tojio, arrogant womanizer

A Crane courtier and shugenja, this man is handsome and stylish, but rather superficial and arrogant, an

example of the negative side of the Crane. He is notorious in the courts of Rokugan as a womanizer and will make subtle passes at any attractive female PCs. This unfortunate reputation will eventually lead to his murder by the Scorpion.

FIRE 2	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Asahina shugenja 1

Honor/Glory: 2.2/2.5

Skills: Bard 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Dance 2, Etiquette 3, History 2, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Manipulation 2, Meditation 1, Seduction 3, Sincerity 3, Tantojutsu 1, Theology 2

Spells: 3 Air, 2 Water, and 1 Fire, as deemed appropriate by the GM.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dangerous Beauty, Gentry/Bad Reputation (womanizer), Compulsion (womanizing)

Equipment: Fine kimono, tanto

Sparrows

Suzume Akebono, tedious daimyo

A Sparrow Clan daimyo, and father to the groom-to-be Oaku, Akebono is a plain-featured man weathered with age, whose face likes to smile but lately has more often frowned. Akebono is one of the reluctant instigators of the Crane-Sparrow alliance, due to his fears of a possible future war with the Scorpion. He regards the alliance with the Crane, while unpleasant, as necessary to offset the Scorpion threat. Akebono can be charming, in a rough-hewn and small-scale Sparrow sort of way, but has an unfortunate habit of launching into long, ultra-detailed stories which drag on seemingly forever.

FIRE 2 Intelligence 4	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

Honor/Glory: 3.8/4.6

Skills: Bard 4, Calligraphy 3, Conversation 5, Courtier 3, Etiquette 4, Heraldry 3, History 4, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Sparrow Clan) 4, Meditation 3, Oratory 3, Sincerity 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bland, Gentry, Social Position (daimyo), Voice/Bad Reputation (tedious storyteller)

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set

Suzume Oaku, reluctant groom

The groom-to-be is a typical Sparrow, a simple, quiet man who dresses in the plainest of kimono and whose hands are roughened by the work he regularly shares in the field with his peasants. Oaku is not at all sure that the alliance with the Crane is a good idea, but is obedient to his father's wishes. He is also aware that Ayami is somehow troubled about the wedding, and does not look forward to what will probably be a tense and loveless marriage.

FIRE 2	AIR 2
	Awareness 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 10

Honor/Glory: 3.5/3.0

Skills: Bard 2, Calligraphy 2, Conversation 2, Courtier 1, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 1, History 2, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Crane Clan) 1, Lore (Sparrow Clan) 3, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (daimyo's heir), True Friend (Suzume Takiya)

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set

Suzume Takiya, devoted bodyguard

Akebono's bodyguard, and the only Sparrow bushi at the wedding. Takiya is a short, plain-featured man who is usually cheerful and talkative, but grows quiet and observant when watching over his charge, young Oaku.

He is devoted to his young lord and hopes the marriage will be a good one, but he knows Oaku would have preferred a marriage to a fine, level-headed Sparrow girl. Takiya distrusts most Great Clan samurai, but feels a certain kinship with Dragon and Crab, since they live more austere lives than the other Clans.

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 with light armor)

School/Rank: Suzume Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/1.6

Skills: Athletics 2, Bard 3, Calligraphy 2, Conversation 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, History 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Sparrow Clan) 2, Meditation 2, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 1), True Friend (Suzume Oaku)/Small

Equipment: Light Armor, kimono, daisho set

Scorpions

Soshi Kyosaku, love-torn seducer

Kyosaku is, externally, a slim, stylish Scorpion with smooth manners, a handsome face, and a superb education. Beneath this pleasantly flawless facade, he is being torn apart by his love for Kakita Ayami, who he was supposed to seduce and dishonor. He will show no sign of his distress, however, until after watching the Kyozeu Troupe perform their play.

FIRE 2	AIR 4
Intelligence 3	
EARTH 2	WATER 3
	Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Soshi shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.4

Skills: Bard 1, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Dance 3, Etiquette 3, Investigation 2, Law 2, Meditation 1, Poetry 3, Seduction 4, Sincerity 4, Sleight-of-Hand 2, Stealth 3, Tantojutsu 2, Tea Ceremony 1, Theology 2
Spells: 4 Air, 3 Water, 1 Fire and 1 Earth, chosen as the GM sees fit.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Cadence, Dangerous Beauty/True Love (Kakita Ayami)

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel, tanto

Bayushi Tenkawa, ruthless Scorpion agent

Tenkawa is an older courtier, his hair thinning and his body language careful and deliberate. He puts on the air of a quiet, gentle man who is troubled by the sordid maneuverings of Rokugani politics. This is a front: he is actually a Scorpion agent of supreme skill and ruthlessness, and suspects (correctly) that his clanmate Kyosaku may be faltering in his mission to dishonor Kakita Ayami.

FIRE 3	AIR 4
Intelligence 4	Awareness 5
EARTH 2	WATER 3
	Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Bayushi courtier 4

Honor/Glory: 0.8/3.1

Skills: Acting 2, Courtier 4, Dance 3, Etiquette 4, Forgery 3, Iaijutsu 1, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 1, Law 3, Lore (all Clans) 3, Oratory 2, Poetry 2, Seduction 2, Sincerity 5, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Stealth 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (many), Apparent Honor (2), Crafty, Heartless/Sworn Enemies (many)

Equipment: Fine kimono, daisho set

Yogo Aika, shugenja-ko, skilled manipulator and Scorpion Clan "ninja"

The third Scorpion at the wedding, this elegant but plain-featured woman is here as the guest of Doji Okiku, whose friendship she has cultivated in court. Aika is actually a cold-hearted, ruthless Scorpion, the very ideal of their Clan, who thinks nothing of exploiting friendship, bushido, or love in the service of the Scorpion. She arranged her invitation here at the orders of Bayushi Tenkawa, who wanted backup in case his suspicions of Soshi Kyosaku proved justified.

FIRE 3 Intelligence 4	AIR 4 Awareness 5
EARTH 3 Willpower 4	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Yogo shugenja 4

Honor/Glory: 0.7/2.4

Skills: Acting 3, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Dance 3, Etiquette 4, Investigation 3, Law 3, Meditation 3, Poetry 2, Seduction 5, Sincerity 3, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 3, Tea Ceremony 2, Theology 2

Spells: (Air) *Cloak of Night, Forget, Know the Shadows, Mists of Illusion, Secrets on the Wind, Way of Deception, Wind-Born Slumbers*, (Water) *Path to Inner Peace, Reflective Pool, Reversal of Fortunes, The Tie That Binds*, (Fire) *Biting Steel, Evil Ward, Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Earth) *Earth's Stagnation*, plus can create Yogo school wards as per Way of the Scorpion.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Apparent Honor (1), Innate Abilities (Know the Shadows, Forget, Wind-Born Slumbers), Quick/Bad Reputation (Can't Find a Husband)

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel, tanto, nagateppo (smoke grenades)

The Kyozeu Theatre Troupe

Kakita Esemono, troupe leader

A handsome Crane in early middle age, Esemono wears his hair undyed (an exception to the usual Crane

custom) to facilitate his acting roles. He shows no particular favoritism toward his own clan and will readily admit that the finest actor in the troupe is Shosuro Kumiko. "Our goal is to offer the Emperor the finest performance possible," he explains. "After all, we regularly perform before the Shining Prince at Winter Court. Surely the duty of excellence is more important than Clan pride. Wouldn't you agree?"

FIRE 3 Intelligence 4	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kakita Artisan (Noh theatre) 2

Honor/Glory: 3.4/3.2

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Etiquette 4, Hand-to-Hand (Mizu-do) 2, Lore (Myth and Legend) 2, Lore (Noh Theatre) 3, Meditation 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Social Position (head of Kyozeu Theatre Troupe)/Idealistic

Equipment: Fine kimono, assorted costumes and make-up

Shosuro Kumiko, Shosuro Masuku, and Shosuro Bikou, shosuro actors and assassins

These three actors are actually skilled assassins and impersonators who use the Kyozeu Theatre Troupe as cover for their operations. All three are polite and good-looking in a bland, generic sort of way that allows them to easily slip into other, more vivid personas. Further, all three carry supplies of poison, concealed weapons, ninja gear, disguises, and other such dishonorable things amid their more normal theatrical belongings.

FIRE 3	AIR 4 (Kumiko has Awareness 5)
EARTH 3	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Shosuro butei 4 (5 for Kumiko)

Honor/Glory: 0.4/3.5

Skills: Acting 5, Athletics 3, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Dance 4, Defense 3, Etiquette 4, Forgery 4, Hand-to-Hand 3, Locksmith 4, Meditation 3, Ninjutsu 4 (ninja-to, shuriken, nagateppo, climbing claw), Poetry 2, Poison 5, Seduction 5, Sincerity 3, Sleight-of-Hand 5, Stealth 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Heartless (all three)

Equipment: Fine kimono, assorted costumes, disguises, and make-up, ninja-to (1k2), shuriken (1k1), nageteppe (smoke grenades), climbing gear, and any other “ninja” equipment they might need. All their weapons are poisoned with a paralytic agent; any PC wounded with such a weapon must roll Simple Earth at TN 10 or lose 1 die from all physical actions. If a PC fails this Earth roll three times in the same combat, s/he falls unconscious for a number of hours equal to six minus their Earth rank (minimum one hour).

Other Guests and Minor Clans

Hida Hirose, grim crab samurai

The sole guest from the Crab Clan, reluctantly invited because the Crab also share a border with the Sparrow. This muscular, hard-faced man is friends with Zurui the Mantis, and the two share frequent conversations, discussing the politics of the Empire and relations between their Clans. Hirose clearly disapproves of the marriage between the Sparrow and the Crane, and doesn't hesitate to sneer at any courtiers or Scorpions he meets.

FIRE 2 Agility 4	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 4	WATER 3 Strength 4
VOID 3	

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

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.7/1.8

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, History (Crab lands) 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (crude).

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor (not worn at court), daisho set, assorted other weapons (not with him at present)

Togashi Shuji, enigmatic clue-bus

Shuji is one of the legendary Ise Zumi, the tattooed men who serve the Dragon Clan Champion. He is an ageless man, smooth of skin but with eyes that have seen many experiences. He enjoys observing the world and the people in it, and watches everything with a delighted wonder undimmed by the years. He speaks seldom, generally only when spoken to, and prefers to be brief and cryptic.

FIRE 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
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EARTH 3	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Togashi Ise Zumi 3

Honor/Glory: 2.4/3.6

Skills: Athletics 3, Bojutsu 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand (Kaze-do) 3, History 3, Investigation 4, Lore (Dragon/Dragonfly clans) 3, Medicine 2, Meditation 4, Shintao 4, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2, Theology 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Tattoos (Butterfly, Mountain, Sun, Unicorn)/Meddler

Equipment: Hakema (pants), bo staff

Zurui, ruthless Mantis ambassador

This deceptively heavy-set man usually wears a pleasant smile, but the perceptive will note the powerful muscles beneath his fat and the calculating glint in his dark, observant eyes. Zurui is here both to advocate a Sparrow alliance with the Mantis and to sabotage the marriage between the Sparrow and Crane. Hand-picked by Yoritomo, he is a practical and ruthless man, perfectly prepared to bend the rules of Honor in the name of his Clan.

FIRE 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 with light armor)

School/Rank: Mantis bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.2/1.6

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Commerce 3, Courtier 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Kenjutsu 3, Nofujutsu 3, Sailing 2, Sincerity 3, Stealth 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Storm Legion

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, daisho set

Kitsune Sanae, elegant Fox samurai-ko

A quiet, gentle woman whose eyes show flecks of green amid their dark brown. Sanae wears her hair long and carefully bound up on her head, and always moves and speaks with complete calm and deliberation. She is trained as a Mirumoto bushi, but habitually does not wear her swords, preferring to dress in formal flowing kimono and carrying only a simple tanto tucked under her obi. Only if she is gravely insulted will she fetch her swords, change into a hakema, and challenge her abuser. She (and her Clan) have mixed

feelings about the upcoming wedding, since the Fox would prefer for the Three-Man Alliance to remain independent of the Great Clans.

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Mirumoto bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 2.4/1.3

Skills: Archery 2, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, History 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Fox clan) 2, Lore (shugenja) 2, Meditation 2, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Different School (Mirumoto bushi)

Equipment: Fine kimono, hakema, daisho set, tanto

Tsuruchi Okame, friendly Wasp ambassador

The representative from the third Clan in the Three-Man Alliance, Okame is a young man with pleasant features and quick, precise mannerisms. He sees the Sparrow-Crane marriage as a good idea, since it helps protect the Alliance (and especially the Wasp) from its perceived enemies (the Scorpion and Lion). He shows a certain degree of distant hostility to members of both those Clans, but is otherwise polite.

FIRE 2	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Wasp bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.8/0.9

Skills: Archery 3, Courtier 1, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Fletching 2, Hunting 3, Lore (Three-Man Alliance) 2, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing

Equipment: Kimono

Critical Events Summary

Fill out this page for all playings of this event at ShaunCon XIX (November 2001)

Did the Crane-Sparrow alliance succeed?

If not, did the Mantis achieve an alliance with the Sparrow?

Were the Scorpion machinations exposed?