

The Scorpion's Sting

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

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As the Imperial Court struggles to reassemble after a devastating earthquake, the Lion prepare to deliver a stunning accusation against another Clan.

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A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

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

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

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

GM's Information

THIS TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

This adventure is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1 through 3 Characters should be allowed to play. In this case, since this is a court intrigue module where power-balance is less of an issue, Rank 4 characters can be allowed as well. This adventure was not written with Rank 5 or higher characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table.

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

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

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

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

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

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

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

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

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank Two.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank One):

- TNs for Skill and Trait checks should be lowered by 5.
- The Scorpion assassins have Fire 3, Earth 2, Air 3, and do not have poisoned weapons.
- The Scorpion actors have Sleight-of-Hand skill of 4, rather than 5.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank Three or higher):

- At the GM's discretion, raise the TNs for skill and trait rolls by 5.
- The Scorpion assassins have Shadow Brands (+1 kept die to all actions in dim light).
- The Scorpion actors have Sleight-of-Hand skill of 6, rather than 5.

Adventure Summary and Background

This adventure takes place in the palace of Kyuden Seppun, the seat of the Imperial bodyguards. With the Imperial palace at Ootosan Uchi wrecked by fire (see the adventure *Fist of the Earth* for details), the Imperial court has temporarily relocated here.

With a new Emperor only barely crowned, the upcoming Winter Court has been placed on hold, and it is widely expected that Hantei the 39th will remain here among the Seppun until next year.

The most urgent matter facing the Imperial Court is the selection of new samurai to fill the two most important posts in the Empire: Emerald Champion and Imperial Chancellor. With the Crane under intense military pressure from the Lion, many Clans see this as a chance to break the Crane Clan's stranglehold on these offices, and the political maneuvering is intense as each Clan jockies for position and advantage.

In the midst of these matters, the Lion Clan is preparing to drop a political bombshell. Through information gained from several sources, they are prepared to accuse the Scorpion Clan of being responsible for the illegal opium trade which scourges the Empire. This political assault is being supported by the Crab Clan, which bears a grudge against the Scorpion, and the Unicorn Clan, which regards itself as the only Clan which is honest enough to be trusted with the trade in medicinal opium. The Unicorn plan to follow-up the Lion accusation by demanding that the Emperor cede them control of the medicinal opium trade – and with it, control of the Scorpion city of Ryoko Owari.

The Scorpion are not unaware of these developments. They have plans in motion to block and defeat the Lion maneuvers, and to punish both the Lion and the Unicorn for their interference.

The outcome of these events may well determine whether the Scorpion and Unicorn Clans are drawn into the developing Clan War.

Introduction

The palace of Kyuden Seppun is a splendid place, second in grandeur only to Kyuden Doji and the lost beauty of the Imperial Palace. The bright colors of scores of samurai kimono lend a festive air to the palace gardens, despite the gloomy, gray-clouded weather. Mother Sun herself seems to be in mourning for the late Emperor, hiding her afternoon light behind a layer of clouds.

With less than a month before the traditional beginning of winter, all the Clans have been sending representatives to Kyuden Seppun to call upon the new Emperor and to witness the confirmation of many new family daimyo. The Seppun courts have been fertile ground for political maneuver, as the Clans jockey for whose representatives will fill the newly vacant posts such as Chancellor and Emerald Champion.

Today, on the fifteenth day of the month of Hida (the month of the Boar, November, in common usage), several score samurai have gathered in the splendid inner gardens of Kyuden Seppun to pay their respects to the Son of Heaven. Looking around, you can see representatives of almost all the Clans, Great and Minor, and even a few ronin, dressed in carefully-cleaned garments and looking very much out of their depth.

Seppun Daiori, the one surviving daimyo of the Imperial families, steps out of the inner chambers of the castle and bows in greeting. There are deep lines grooved into his face, the marks of grief for his son, who perished in the same earthquake which took the life of the last Emperor. Nevertheless, his voice is calm as he addresses you. "Welcome, one and all, to the humble palaces of the Seppun. The Son of Heaven thanks you for your good wishes and gifts, and informs you that he will hold court tomorrow, when you may present yourselves before him. At that time he will also invest the new daimyo of the Kakita, Otomo, and Miya families. Tonight, you are the guests of the Seppun family, and our lowly hospitality is at your disposal." He pauses, then nods to an elegant courtier standing to one side. "The famed painter Kakita Atsukure has announced that he will be presenting his latest work tonight for our enjoyment at the evening meal. I trust you will all join me in honoring his gift."

Once Daiori has made his announcement, Scene One begins.

The Scorpion Plot

The Lion Clan is preparing to announce to the courts that they have proof of Scorpion involvement in the illegal opium-smuggling cartels which are such a scourge on the Empire. The key to their accusation is the testimony of six witnesses: a ronin (Sohryu), a Crab (Yasuki Fumato), two Tortoise (Chuji and Matsuo), and two magistrates, one from the Unicorn (Ide Mayu) and the other from the Lion (Akenui, a former Akodo). These six individuals are being housed at an inn, the Shining Mempo, outside the Seppun Palaces until they are needed.

The Scorpion intend to dispose of these witnesses before they can be called before the new Emperor at midday tomorrow. Without them, the other evidence which the Lion have accumulated will be easily discredited (Rokugani justice places the highest emphasis on personal testimony).

The Scorpion have developed an elaborate set of plans designed to disable all the witnesses:

- Sohryu will be assassinated on his way to the inn. Who will miss a ronin?
- Yasuki Fumato will be tricked into a fatal duel with a Crane who hates the Yasuki family.
- The two Tortoise will be maneuvered into a violent bar-brawl in which they both die.
- Ide Mayu will be seduced, doped with opium and then left in a compromising scene, so that it appears she is a dishonorable drug-abuser and lecher.
- The former Akodo, Akenui, will be framed, dishonored, and forced to commit seppuku.

Scorpion PCs will be recruited to assist with these efforts. Some of the non-Scorpion PCs, on the other hand, will be recruited by the Lion spymaster Ikoma Uso to protect the witnesses from the Scorpion machinations.

Notes on Running this Scenario

Besides the main plot of the Scorpion attempting to eliminate the witnesses and the Lion attempting to protect them, there are two other major sub-plots in this scenario. It is intended that these sub-plots will ensure that most or all of the PCs will have something to do during the adventure.

The first sub-plot concerns a Kakita master-painter, his quest to find allies for the Crane Clan, and a Unicorn

magistrate's attempt to sabotage that quest. Crane-friendly PCs may be recruited to help the Kakita protect his reputation.

The second sub-plot concerns a vengeful Scorpion, Bayushi Dainashi. Any PCs who have played the adventure *A Magistrate's Duty* may well have gained Dainashi as a Sworn Enemy. He will attempt to frame and ruin one of these PCs, although his efforts will be somewhat lacking in finesse.

The GM may choose to drop one or both of these sub-plots if all of the PCs end up as part of the main Lion vs Scorpion plotline.

Scene One: The Gardens of the Seppun

In the wake of Seppun Daiori's announcement, the many guests at the palace begin to circulate, converse, and gossip. The PCs will be free to do so as well. The GM should use this as an opportunity to establish some of the NPCs here and to get the PCs into the spirit of the Imperial Court, where who you know is often more important than who you are.

General Gossip

Besides the specific topics which each NPC may discuss (see below), there are a number of general themes which will recur throughout conversations at the Court. The GM should feel free to work these into the conversations which the PCs have over the course of the evening.

- Bayushi Kachiko, the late Emperor's assistant and the wife of the Scorpion Clan champion, was badly burned in the fire which followed the collapse of the Hantei palace. Since then, she has been sequestered in Kyuden Bayushi, with only her husband and a few high-ranking shugenja allowed to see her. Rumors have spread as to both the severity and the horror of her injuries.
- The young Emperor has spent most of his time since the disaster last month in seclusion. Only his bodyguards and a few high-ranking courtiers, notably Seppun Daiori, have been allowed to see him. Only in the last week has he begun to hold courts, confirm new daimyo, and generally accept the reigns of office. Rumor has it that he will make a major announcement tomorrow.

- The Emperor has not yet announced when he will declare a new Emerald Tournament to choose a replacement for the late Emerald Champion, Doji Satsume. Nor has he chosen a replacement for the late Imperial Chancellor, Kakita Yoshi. With the Crane visibly “on the ropes” in their war against the Lion, many of the other Clans see this as a chance to advance their own candidates for these offices, usually held by Crane. The Unicorn are particularly interested, seeing this as an opportunity to truly take their place alongside the other Great Clans.
- There are a number of rumors circulating about some sort of major announcement or political bombshell which the Lion have planned for tomorrow. Although exact details vary from one person to another, most agree that it has something to do with the problem of opium. There are also rumors that another Clan is involved in the plan, although which Clan (Unicorn, Crab, Scorpion, or even Phoenix) is uncertain.
- Violent skirmishes continue to bedevil the border between the Dragon and Phoenix Clans. The original cause of the matter – a quarrel between two rival duelists – has now been almost forgotten, and with the Mirumoto daimyo, Hitomi, absent and unaccounted for, many believe that war is inevitable. The Lion for one seem almost eager for such a conflict, and have stationed several [kaisha] along their borders with the Dragon Clan and their allies, the Dragonfly.
- The Lion armies which took Toshi Ranbo are now pushing on to conquer the remaining northern territories of the Crane, most notably the castle of Shiro Kyotei. All of these lands were once Lion, of course, and the new Lion Champion, Matsu Tsuko, has stated that she will not rest until all such lands are restored to Lion rule.
- The Mantis Clan has just announced the upcoming marriage of its champion, Yoritomo, to the lady Kitsune Ryosei of the Fox Clan. Many believe that the Mantis will soon petition the new Emperor for Great Clan status. At least two other Clans, the Crab and the Unicorn, have publicly stated their support for elevating the Mantis. The Lion, Crane, and Scorpion remain opposed, while the position of the Phoenix and Dragon is unknown. Indeed, no one is sure what the Dragon position is on anything, since their families are so divided and confused, and their Champion (as usual) is isolated in Kyuden Togashi.

NPCs of Note

Certain NPCs should make a point of introducing themselves to members of their own Clan, notably Ikoma Uso, Bayushi Goshui, and Kuni Yori. Also, the GM should use the conversations during this period to establish the overall situation: the Lion are planning a major announcement, something connected to the opium trade. Both the Crab and the Unicorn may be involved, and there is some sort of connection to the Scorpion Clan as well.

The following notable and/or high-ranking NPCs are present at the court:

Bayushi Goshui, Scorpion ambassador to the Imperial Court. A charming and friendly man who hides his features beneath a full-face wooden mempo. Goshui’s main goal here is to thwart the Lion’s planned accusation against his Clan. Besides the secret plans he has put in motion (see “The Scorpion Plot,” above), Goshui will also be maneuvering in the courts to build anger against the Lion and to cast aspersions on their motives. He will draw particular attention to the fact that, while the Lions’ official justification for war was the city of Toshi Ranbo, they have not halted the war now that the city has returned to their hands. If anyone mentions to him the rumors of a major Lion announcement tomorrow, he will be dismissive.

Bayushi Dainashi, minor Scorpion heir. PCs who played the adventure *A Magistrate’s Duty* have met this selfish, temperamental young man, whose slim good looks are spoiled by a constant pouting expression. Dainashi is here to make his debut into the courts of Rokugan, but is in a bad mood because he was unable to bring along his secret lover, Bayushi Kumi. He will normally be little more than an irritant, dropping poisonous insults and over-clever witticisms. However, if any of the PCs have him as a Sworn Enemy, Dainashi will do his level best to ruin them. See “Dainashi’s plot” for details of what he will do.

Ikoma Ujiaki, senior Lion general. Ujiaki is a handsome man in late middle-age, and a high-ranking general of the Imperial legions. He is here on behalf of the Lion Champion Matsu Tsuko, who is in the field coordinating her Clan’s continuing offensive against the Crane Clan. Ujiaki will be reserved and flawlessly polite in public, avoiding any substantive comment on the Lion Clan’s intentions and turning aside questions about their plans for this court. (He will only say that the Lion intend to make an important announcement at the court tomorrow.) In the presence of Lion or Lion-

allied PCs, he will be more open, quietly explaining that the “treacherous Scorpion” will soon pay the price for generations of lies and corruption. “For two hundred years they have spread the poison of opium through the Empire, sapping our spirits and mocking bushido. Now, with the help of the Crab and the Unicorn, that will end.”

Kansei, Lion sensei. Kansei, a former Akodo, is a lean, bony-faced man in his early forties, with graying hair worn in a loose topknot. Despite his advancing age he is a formidable swordsman and a famed instructor in combat and dueling. He is currently the eldest sensei at the Akodo school and is much-revered by the younger Lion – thousands of former students look up to him as a leader and teacher. He is also, unfortunately, the father of an illegitimate child by one of his long-ago students, Akodo Momiji. The Scorpion clan learned of Kansei’s secret and is now using it to blackmail and control him. It is from Kansei that the Scorpion have learned the identities and locations of the Lion Clan’s witnesses. Bayushi Dainashii will also try to use Kansei in his plots against the PCs.

PCs who have played the adventure *Soul of Akodo* may have met Kansei there, and may even be aware of his connection to the Scorpion Clan. He will be polite to such PCs but refuses to discuss the events of the past.

Ikoma Uso, lion diplomat and spymaster. Uso is a charming, smooth-featured man in his late thirties. His hair is undyed and he wears a small goatee. He is not particularly athletic and dresses like a courtier, not a bushi. His usual expression is a polite, pleasant smile. Uso is a master spy and manipulator, here to recruit samurai to protect the Lion Clan’s witnesses prior to their presentation in court tomorrow.

PCs who have played the adventure *Treachery and Deceit* may have met Ikoma Uso before. He will greet them in a blandly polite and friendly manner, politely avoiding drawing attention to the “unfortunate circumstances” under which they last met.

Doji Hoturi, Crane Clan Champion. The newly-confirmed Champion of the Crane is here to witness the confirmation of Kakita Kaiten (below) as daimyo of the Kakita family. Hoturi is clearly shaken and depressed by the recent tragedies, which included the deaths of his father Doji Satsume and his younger brother Doji Kuwanen (not to mention the burning and disfigurement of his former lover Bayushi Kachiko). Hoturi is a skilled courtier, however, and will not confess his true feelings to anyone except, perhaps, a

lovely and sympathetic young woman (not a Scorpion).

Publicly, Hoturi will do his best for his Clan, particularly with regard to the current war with the Lion. He will skillfully denigrate the Lion at every opportunity, while pushing other Clans (especially the Unicorn) to recognize the justice of the Crane position and the brutality of the Lion aggression.

Kakita Kaiten, promising duelist and Kakita family heir. This young duelist is here to be confirmed as the new daimyo of the Kakita family, replacing his late father Kakita Yoshi, who perished in the earthquake at Otosan Uchi. Kaiten is a talented and formidable young bushi, one who has studied the sword in preference to his father’s mastery of the courtly arts. He is polite to everyone, but displays a thinly-veiled hostility to Lions, and has a low opinion of the Crab. He will try to curry favor with Unicorn, since he too hopes to bring them into the war against the Lion.

Kakita Atsukure, Crane painter. Atsukure is a skinny, round-shouldered man in his early thirties, and is beginning to develop a bit of a pot-belly. A skilled painter whose works have been shown in many of the greatest courts of Rokugan, Atsukure as a slightly inflated opinion of himself and his gifts, and believes he can use his newest painting to convince the Unicorn to join with the Crane against the Lion. Whether or not this is true, he will soon run afoul of one Unicorn, Shinjo Taneka, who fears the possibility.

Atsukure is rather snobbish and supercilious, and will make a point of subtly insulting any Lion or Lion-favorable guests at the court. He is frequently surrounded by an admiring circle of lesser courtiers, and makes a point of speaking about his magnificent new painting to anyone he thinks sympathetic to the Crane cause (especially Unicorns). He proclaims that his painting will soon bring a new understanding of peace and serenity to the Empire. If anyone acts even slightly interested or impressed, he will offer to show it to them “as a special favor” before the unveiling tomorrow. Unfortunately, one of these early viewers will be Shinjo Taneka.

Ide Tadaji, Unicorn ambassador to the Imperial Court. A middle-aged man with a well-trimmed goatee and a friendly smile, Tadaji dresses in the traditional garments of his Clan, including a long embroidered robe and a fur-lined hat. Charming and talkative, he will deflect any probing questions, while establishing clearly that the Unicorn would prefer the medicinal opium trade be placed in their hands rather

than the questionable hands of the Scorpion. “Many of the samurai from other Clans, including the courageous Crab and the honorable Lion, have expressed support for our petition in this matter. With the blessing of the Fortunes, the Divine Emperor will see it so as well.”

Iuchi Shahai, power-hungry young shugenja-ko. The slim and lovely daughter of the aging Iuchi daimyo, Iuchi Daiyu, is here to pay her respects to the young Emperor. Shahai is an extremely pretty young woman, dressed in a softly flowing kimono that flatters her slender frame. Although she is only a year or two past her gempukku, there is an almost unnerving maturity about her, and her eyes glitter with ambition and a thirst for knowledge and power. PCs who have played the adventure *Kuro’s Fire* may have met Shahai before – if they mention that occasion, she will sniff about the “ridiculous farce” of the Shrine of the Five Rings and its “so-called Test of the Elements.”

Shahai has no real role in the scenario, and is here for whatever nefarious purposes the GM may find appropriate. Her goal in life is to acquire power – magical power, political power, personal power – by any means possible.

Shinjo Taneka, obsessive magistrate. This slim man in early middle age is driven to annihilate the illegal opium trade. Now that he is so close to seeing his goal realized, he is willing to do almost anything to complete it. PCs who played the LR adventure *A Hidden Blade* may have met him before (he was framed for the murder of the Lion ambassador, in an attempt to drive the Lion and Unicorn into war).

Taneka will be one of those allowed to view Kakita Atsukure’s painting before it’s unveiling tomorrow. Panicked by the possibility that the painting may sway others of his Clan toward supporting the Crane, he will steal the canvas, triggering a sub-plot which may involve some of the PCs.

Kitsuki Yasu, daimyo of the Kitsuki family. The sole representative of the Dragon Clan (except for any PCs), the ultra-judgmental Yasu is here to pay his respects to the new Emperor. He is disgusted with the behavior of the rest of his Clan, especially the Mirumoto, who are busy fomenting a feud with the Shiba. He will berate any Mirumoto he sees for their “foolish warmongering,” and will also condemn any Agasha PCs for failing to reign in the Mirumoto.

Isawa Hitsukawa, enlightened Air shugenja. This is a quiet, elegant older man, approaching the age of retirement. He is an Air shugenja with a deep

interest in the spirits and Fortunes, and is also quite learned in the Tao of Shinsei. Hitsukawa is largely free of emotional problems or attachments – indeed, he is halfway to being a monk already. PCs who have played Kuro’s Fire may have encountered him before, although he will be reluctant to speak of that occasion – one of the tests there shook him badly. Given the chance, he will prefer to discuss the current problems between his Clan and the Dragon, and the need for both sides to swallow their pride and accept an honorable and peaceful compromise. “Sadly, opinion on this is far from universal, even within my own Clan. Some of the Acolytes of Fire, for example, are much in favor of teaching the Mirumoto a lesson in humility upon the battlefield.”

Shiba Osagi, Emerald Magistrate. A pretty samurai-ko in her mid-twenties, Osagi wears her hair in a short cut and dresses in a samurai’s hakama and gi rather than in a maiden’s kimono. She wears the sash and badge of an Emerald Magistrate prominently. Osagi was assigned magistrate duty in Dragon lands, but was recently expelled due to the rising tensions between the Mirumoto and Shiba. She is disgusted with the behavior of the Mirumoto and is convinced that the Shiba have no blame in the matter.

PCs may have met Osagi before if they played the adventures *Spiritual Presence* or *Fate of a Hantei*. She will greet such PCs in a friendly fashion (especially if they helped to save the new Emperor from the Bloodspeakers), and may even behave in a slightly flirtatious fashion toward male PCs who impressed her in the past. However, Mirumoto PCs will instead be attacked for their family’s militant behavior. If anyone (Dragon or otherwise) blames the Shiba family for the current troubles, Osagi will become quite angry, and may even challenge such “honorless fools” to a duel.

Kuni Yori, daimyo of the Kuni family. The Crab Clan’s representative to the court is dressed, as always, in a heavy black robe and hood, and wears the facial makeup of a Kabuki mask. He always speaks in an unnerving whisper. Yori is here to assess the mood of the court, and to confirm his Champion Hida Kisada’s belief that Hantei Sotorii is too weak (and too likely to be Tainted) to be allowed to hold the throne. Yori cares nothing for the other political maneuvers at the court, and dismisses most of them as the “squabbling of foolish children, while shadows fall around them.” If anyone mentions the topic of opium, however, or draws attention to the Lion Clan’s plans, Yori will smirk. “The Scorpion have grown too arrogant over the years,” he remarks. “It is time for them to be reminded of their proper place – scuttling in the dirt.”

The Painting is Stolen

At some point during the long session of gossip and maneuver prior to dinner, Kakita Atsukure will take Shinjo Taneka, Kakita Kaiten, and, if possible, a few PCs into his quarters to view his painting. He will offer this invitation to PCs who are Crane or obviously Crane-sympathetic (or at least anti-Lion), or who express interest in his art.

The painting shows a magnificent image of a tree, shining in the light of dawn, the leaves glistening with dew. A horse crops the grass in the distance. A birds nest rests comfortably in the crook of two branches, and a blue-gray bird is asleep in the nest, head tucked under wing, while its fluffy white chicks sleep around it. It is an image of perfect peace and tranquility.

It will require a **Painting/Perception** roll at TN 10 or a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 15 to notice the subtle message which Atsukure has worked into the painting: stalking through the grass below the tree, almost hidden by the tall grass, is a tawny cat, its eyes gleaming with hunger as it looks up at the peaceful birds nest. The horse has clearly not noticed the cat.

Both Kakita Kaiten and Shinjo Taneka will recognize the underlying symbolism of the painting (the hungry cat stalking innocent birds while the horse pays no attention), and Kaiten will comment approvingly on it without ever saying what the underlying message conveys (the Crane appealing to the Unicorn). Taneka will frown slightly and refrain from commenting on the themes of the painting, although he will praise its technical skill and accomplishment.

Scene Two: Dinner

The meal is splendid, as only to be expected from the Seppun family. Gossip and talk continues during the meal, although it is quieter and more restrained in order to avoid disturbing the ambiance. Much speculation surrounds Kakita Atsukure's painting – he is already an artist of great fame, and the connoisseurs among the guests cannot wait to see his latest work.

PCs who make an effort to pay attention to any conversational currents or odd behavior at the dinner may observe the following:

- Shinjo Taneka comes to the dinner a few minutes late, and arrives in a different kimono (his old one got damaged while he was stealing the painting). PCs can notice this if they roll

Investigation/Perception at TN 15 or **Courtier/Awareness** at TN 20, or if they specifically ask about Shinjo Taneka.

- Kakita Atsukure has a look of mingled anxiety and triumph about him. This will change when he goes to fetch the painting at the end of the dinner.
- The Lion have a sense of anxious, impending triumph about them. Kansei, however, looks quiet and troubled, and Ikoma Uso is calm and placid. He is watching everyone in the room without appearing to. This can be detected with a **Stealth/Awareness** or **Courtier/Awareness** roll at TN 20. There is a measuring quality to his looks, as though he is searching for something.
- Although all the Scorpion NPC guests are charming and polite, a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 20 detects that there is great underlying tension among them. The only exception is Bayushi Dainashii, who looks sour and surly.
- Kuni Yori occasionally gives the Scorpions a look of smirking satisfaction. This can be detected with a **Courtier/Awareness** roll at TN 15 or **Simple Awareness** at TN 20.

As the dinner winds down, Kakita Atsukure excuses himself and leaves to fetch his painting. He returns after a few minutes, and anyone looking at him can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 to detect that he is alarmed and agitated. However, he quickly smooths away such feelings and bows low before Seppun Daiori. "Seppun-sama, I humbly request that the viewing of my painting be delayed until tomorrow. It is a representation of the purity of nature, and after viewing it by candlelight I feel it is best seen in the clear light of day. To do otherwise would be to insult you all with an inferior experience." Daiori nods and agrees to delay the viewing until late tomorrow morning, just prior to the Imperial Court.

If any PCs scan the crowd for reactions (perhaps hoping to see signs of guilt), they can roll **Simple Awareness**. A TN of 15 or higher detects suppressed smirks on the faces of all the Lion and Crab present (except for Ikoma Uso, who seems indifferent). A TN of 20 or higher notes disappointment among the Crane, as well as other courtiers who are followers of the arts. A TN of 25 or better detects a knowing smirk on the face of Bayushi Dainashii. A TN of 30 or higher notes a faint exhalation of breath from Shinjo Taneka.

Dainashi's Plot

If any of the PCs have Bayushi Dainashi as a Sworn Enemy, he will try to harm or discredit them. His actions will vary depending on who the PCs are and which elements of the plot they involve themselves with.

If the PCs are Scorpions or Scorpion-allied, they will probably be recruited by Bayushi Goshiu to assist in disposing of the witnesses at the Shining Mempo Inn. Dainashi will know about this, and will forge a letter in their name, warning of the Scorpion plots. He arranges for this letter to be sent to the Lion witness, Akenuei. See "A Warning Letter" under Scene Four for details of what happens when Akenuei gets the letter.

Dainashii will also attempt to frame one of the non-Scorpion PCs for the theft of Kakita Atsukure's painting. He is the only person who witnesses Shinjo Taneka's theft of the painting, and quickly realizes that he can use this to his own advantage. He will move the painting to the room of one of the PCs (preferably someone of relatively low Glory who can be realistically framed as an anti-Crane zealot). He will then plant evidence in Kakita Atsukure's chamber framing the PC in question.

Dainashii will wait until the next day, when Atsukure must admit the painting's theft, to accuse the unfortunate PC. See "Scene Five: The Fate of the Painting" for details.

Scene Three: After Dinner Talk

Scorpions and Scorpion Allies

After dinner, Bayushi Goshiu will approach all the Scorpion PCs (except those with the Junshin disadvantage – he keeps himself well-informed on which members of his Clan can be trusted). He may also approach PCs who are Scorpion-allied or who are being blackmailed by the Scorpion, although he will be more cautious around such individuals unless he is very confident of their loyalty.

Goshiu will explain the situation in an indirect manner. "As you may know, the Lion are boasting of some dramatic announcement they plan to make tomorrow. In reality this is a blow against our interests, disguised as an act of Honor – as the Lion so love to disguise their deeds." He smirks. "Six, hmm, individuals will be staying at the Inn of the Shining Mempo tonight. It will be in the interests of the Scorpion Clan if none of

these individuals are able to appear credibly before the Imperial Court tomorrow."

Goshiu will wait for a signal from the PCs – an offer of help, a request that he explain, and so forth – before speaking further. Once assured of the PCs' support, he will provide additional information:

- A ronin will be arriving at the Inn later tonight, coming by way of the South Bridge. He should be assassinated before he can reach the place. Scorpion agents have been assigned to this task, but the PCs should make sure there are no interruptions to their task.
- A pair of Tortoise are already staying at the Inn. It should be a simple matter to ensure that they are drawn into a brawl – many samurai despise the Tortoise Clan. Their deaths in that brawl must be assured.
- A certain Yasuki merchant, Fumato by name, is staying at the Inn as well. "We should ensure that his presence is noted – especially by Doji Takashi, a nobleman he has grievously offended. Takashi-san was to have stayed here at the Seppun Palaces, but we managed to see to it that he was reassigned there."
- "There is a lovely magistrate of the Unicorn Clan staying at the Inn as well, I believe. Ide Mayu, her name is. It would be very unfortunate if she were to be found in incriminating circumstances. Involving a handsome man, for example. After she retires for the evening, you will want to be alert to any possible noise or commotion from her quarters. Who knows what dishonorable activity might occur there?"
- Finally, Goshiu will make mention of a Lion named Akenuei. "A former Akodo, I believe. Quite tragic, what has happened to that family. I have even heard that he has spoken of his hatred for the Matsu who now rule the Lion. Why, he might even betray them for spite." Goshiu passes a sheaf of papers to the PC. "If the plans for the Lion offensive against Shiro Kyotei, for example, were found in his belongings later this night, it would be hard for him to deny – especially if several witnesses could testify to his earlier speech about the vile and incompetent Matsu."

If any of the Scorpion/Scorpion-allied PCs are Sworn Enemies of Bayushi Dainashi, the young samurai will watch them carefully while they speak with Goshiu.

He will then write a letter to Akenui the Lion, warning him of what is to come, and signing it with the name(s) of the PCs in question. Dainashii will arrange for this letter to be delivered anonymously to Akenui later this evening (see “A Warning Letter” in “Scene Four: Inn of the Shining Mempo” for details).

Regardless, Bayushi Goshiu will urge the PCs to depart for the Inn forthwith, and promises to make excuses to cover their absence from Kyuden Seppun this evening.

Lions, Lion allies, and enemies of the Scorpion:

Ikoma Uso will approach those PCs he finds acceptable. This will obviously include any Lion PCs, Lion allies from other Clans (except the Scorpion), and those who are opposed to crime or opium (magistrates, Unicorn, Kitsuki). He will also approach anyone who has shown overt hostility to the Scorpion Clan. Finally, he will approach *junshin* Scorpion. (Uso’s information network has informed him that these Scorpions are genuine believers in bushido, and hence suitable targets for manipulation.)

After setting the scene with some polite conversation, Uso will explain the situation thusly:

“We are preparing to make accusations against the Scorpion Clan in the court tomorrow. We, like the Unicorn, have long suspected that the Scorpion are behind the illegal opium trade which bedevils our Empire with vice, corruption, and dishonor. Now, thanks to our investigations in the City of the Rich Frog, and the assistance of other Clans, we have proof: the testimony of six witnesses, from many different parts of the Empire. We will bring them before the Emperor’s Court tomorrow to present their damning words where all can hear them. But to do that, they must survive this night. The Scorpion may try some vicious treachery. The Lion Clan has need of brave and wise samurai to watch over these witnesses tonight, protect them from any Scorpion plots, and ensure that they arrive safely at the court of the Seppun tomorrow.”

If the PCs ask why the Lion have not already made arrangements to protect these important witnesses, Uso explains that there are already some guards at the Inn. “However, the assistance of others will be a great help. Where Scorpions are concerned, one can never be too careful. And the presence of representatives from other Clans (or from their own Clan) may give the Scorpion pause.” He smiles in a self-deprecating manner. “I may be merely starting at shadows. Perhaps the

Scorpion have no intention of obstructing an accusation which will shame them before the entire Empire, and possibly drive them into war with both us and the Unicorn...”

If the PCs agree to help, Uso will explain that the witnesses are being housed in the Inn of the Shining Mempo, outside the palace complex. “It is easier to guard them there than here, where our efforts might be construed as an insult by the Seppun.” He asks the PCs to spend the night at the Inn and make sure the witnesses sleep safely, then help escort them to the court tomorrow. “We have some of our own bushi there already, of course. But one cannot have too much protection when the Scorpion are involved. And if something treacherous does occur, the more witnesses are present, the better.”

If the PCs agree, Uso will provide brief names and descriptions of the six witnesses. The total information he can supply is outlined as follows:

- A ronin named Sohryu, a “thin and unimpressive man.” Uso explains that the ronin is being escorted to the inn by a Matsu bushi, and should arrive in the village via the South Bridge later tonight. “Sohryu is from the City of the Rich Frog, and was a part of the Scorpion opium distribution network before he saw the error of his ways and sought to restore his Honor.”
- A “disreputable merchant” named Yasuki Fumato. “A loathsome little man, hardly worthy of the station to which he was born. But he brings a wealth of evidence on the Scorpion distribution of their poison among the Crab Clan.”
- Two of the “minor Clan of the Tortoise, beloved of the Emperor.” (Uso says this with a tone which implies his own loathing for the Tortoise Clan.) Their names are Chuji and Matsuo. “They can speak at length on the Scorpion Clan’s activities, and their status as the Emperor’s favored servants makes them witnesses which all must respect. Their garments will make them easy to spot – no other peasants wear Clan mons, after all.”
- An “honorable Unicorn magistrate, a samurai-ko named Ide Mayu. She has investigated the opium trade for many months.” Uso says she travels alone and is “reported to be quite attractive”; he warns that “the ways of Unicorn are unpredictable, and she is reputed to partake overmuch of sake.”

- Finally, one of the Lion at the Inn is himself a witness. “His name is Akenuei, formerly of the disgraced Akodo family. He was one of our investigators in the City of the Rich Frog, and brings with him the accumulated results of many interrogations and investigations.”

If the PCs agree to help protect the witnesses, Uso gives them a letter of introduction to deliver to Matsu Akotsu, the man in charge of the Lion security detachment at the Inn. He also promises to cover for their absence from the Seppun palaces tonight.

Cranes and Friends of the Crane

Kakita Atsukure will seek the help of any Crane PCs (especially shugenja) to recover his painting in time to present it before the court tomorrow. If no such PCs are available, Atsukure will seek the help of Unicorn or Dragon PCs – he regards those factions as potentially “on his side.” (He is of course unaware that it is a Unicorn who stole the painting.) He might also seek the help of an Isawa or Asako from the Phoenix, but not a Shiba (the Shiba are now allied with the Lion). As a last resort, he may seek the help of a Scorpion, although he would by far prefer not to be indebted to that Clan. Under no circumstances will he approach a Crab or Lion, and it will not occur to him to seek the help of Minor Clan or ronin PCs (although he might take that help if it is offered).

Atsukure will couch his request as follows: “Honorable samurai, I face a most difficult situation, one which will require the utmost discretion to resolve without grave dishonor. Might you be willing to help me? The Crane Clan will stand in your debt.”

If any PCs agree to help him, Atsukure explains the situation: the painting has vanished. Its absence will publicly humiliate him, costing him much Honor and Glory. Atsukure lacks any skills at investigation or magic, and asks the PCs to (discreetly) look into the matter on his behalf. His preferred result would be to get the painting back with none being the wiser. “Far better for all concerned if the theft and recovery are kept secret, so that face and decorum is preserved.”

Scene Four: Inn of the Shining Mempo

The Inn of the Shining Mempo is located near the center of the sizable village which serves Kyuden Seppun. The large gold-painted mask of a smiling face makes it easy to spot. It is a fine-quality inn, a two

story building with an elegant garden surrounding the front and one side. A large bathhouse and an even larger stable in the back provide for the needs of the guests.

As you enter the Inn, a polite servant steps forward and opens a weapons closet for you to deposit your swords. Looking past him into the well-appointed common room, you can see a number of samurai and a few ronin, as well as a few wealthy-looking commoners tucked discreetly in back corners. Many of the guests nod or bow politely to you as you enter.

The samurai here are for the most part a random assortment from all of the Great Clans. There are also several ronin (who are a cut above the scruffy wave-men one might find in a lower-class Inn), but no Minor Clan representatives except for the two Tortoise Clan witnesses (and any PCs). These samurai are generally friendly and a bit loud (they have almost all had at least a little sake), but generally not rude or aggressive unless provoked. The commoners (wealthy merchants and artisans) stay out of the samurai’s way and tend to their own affairs.

All of the witnesses except the ronin Sohryu are already present at the Inn. Most of the guests are unimportant and anonymous, but the following individuals are noteworthy:

Witness: Yasuki Fumato, acquisitive merchant.

This merchant is a small, physically unimpressive man with a weak chin and shifty eyes. However, he carries a daisho set of his own and is reasonably competent in its use. Fumato will try to avoid discussing the reason he is here, and the entire topic clearly makes him very uneasy. In actuality, he was a double agent working for both the Scorpion and the Crab, and was ordered by Kuni Yori to betray the Scorpion and assist the Lion accusations. He is very uncomfortable with the current situation and will watch any Scorpions present with the nervous attention of a rodent among predators.

Fumato has a serious personal flaw – he is incredibly greedy and materialistic, and obsessed with collecting items of beauty and renown to decorate his home in Crab lands. If any of the PCs (and especially any ronin or Minor Clan PCs) have items of beauty and renown on their persons, he may try to buy them – or bribe someone into stealing them for him. This impulse made him the bitter enemy of Doji Takashi – Fumato arranged to “acquire” a famed Crane sword which Takashi was trying to recover for his Clan.

Witness: (Kasuga) Chuji, Tortoise samurai.

Chuji is a tough, temperamental man, proud of his small Clan, who despises the “arrogant goody-goodies” of the other Clans who “benefit from our work while spitting on us.” He sees this as a chance to pay back one of those arrogant Clans, the Scorpion, for centuries of abuse. The Scorpion are well aware of his temper, of course, and plan to use it against him.

Witness: (Kasuga) Matsuo, Tortoise samurai.

Matsuo is quieter and more cautious than Chuji. He is also much older, a rugged and world-weary man in his forties, with hands calloused as much by work as by holding weapons. He will speak in a friendly but quiet manner to anyone who treats him well, and simply ignores those who sneer at him or deride him. He will try to restrain Chuji’s more violent impulses, but without help from the PCs he will not have much luck.

Witness: Ide Mayu, Unicorn magistrate. This pretty young woman is a skilled investigator and a determined foe of the opium trade. Unfortunately, she is also a fun-loving young woman who enjoys drinking and flirting (rather openly) with any handsome man, even those beneath her station (such as ronin). Of course, such behavior has actually assisted with her investigations in the past, and is part of the reason why she can testify to the Scorpion Clan’s activities. Mayu has spent most of the last few months in the City of the Rich Frog, looking into the opium trade there, and is glad to be away from that “den of vice.” However, she also secretly enjoyed the free-wheeling life there, and dislikes those who obsess too much over manners and protocol (such as samurai-ko who travel without escorts to protect their chastity...).

Witness: Akenuei, Lion, former Akodo. This 30-year-old samurai is a bitter man who secretly suspects that the dishonoring of his family was a sinister plot by the “crazed Matsu” to seize control of the Clan. Akenuei is a Lion Clan magistrate and Border Warden, and has spent most of the last six months in the City of the Rich Frog, investigating the opium trade. He was not present for any of the major recent battles between the Lion and the Crane, and did not witness the shaming of the Akodo family at Toshi Ranbo. He generally disapproves of the current war and especially of prolonging it now that Toshi Ranbo has returned to the Lion. “And now we plan to provoke the Scorpion while supporting the Shiba against the Mirumoto, AND continuing the war with the Crane?! Madness!”

Anyone who talks with Akenuei for any length of time about the Matsu family and the current state of affairs in the Lion Clan will find it easy to provoke him into

making wild accusations and insults against the “war-crazed” and “thuggish” Matsu. The Matsu bushi at the Inn will glare and grumble but do not respond to these insults, since Akenuei is of higher rank than they are.

Lion officer: Matsu Akotsu. This strong, thick-moustached and somewhat loud man is the commander of the Lion Clan security detachment. Along with three other bushi (see below), Akotsu is here to ensure the safety of the witnesses. He is an honorable and brave man, but lacking in subtlety or sophistication. If the PCs are here to assist him (and present their letter from Ikoma Uso), he will express irritation and potential insult at Uso’s “lack of confidence” in him and his men. Smart PCs will find a diplomatic way of smoothing Akotsu’s ruffled feathers – otherwise he will make a point of ignoring them and going his own way.

Atsukure has a low opinion of most of the people he has been assigned to guard, especially Yasuki Fumato (“scummy merchant filth”), the two Tortoise (“filthy commoners masquerading as samurai”), and Akenuei (“a perfect example of how the Akodo line has degenerated – small wonder that fool Totori dishonored the whole family”). He will do his best to carry out his duties anyway, but these attitudes will inevitably color his efforts.

Lion security detachment: Matsu Kojaro, Yokuan, and Ikoma Budo. These three bushi are under the command of Matsu Akotsu, and will follow his lead on how they deal with the PCs. Of the three, Matsu Kojaro is aggressive and boorish (especially toward Cranes and Scorpions), while Yokuan (a former Akodo) is quiet, reserved, and observant. The third samurai, Ikoma Budo, has actually been replaced by a Scorpion actor, and has been assigned several tasks, including provoking a brawl with the two Tortoise witnesses. He will play the part of a proud, temperamental, slightly drunk Lion bushi, expressing ill-concealed contempt for ronin, Minor Clan samurai, and Cranes. (He also expertly feigns contempt for the Scorpion Clan.)

Scorpion “distraction” Shosuro Sanetama.

This is a smooth-faced man who wears a wooden mempo covering his eyes, with a nose-guard shaped like a Scorpion’s stinger. His usual expression is a mocking smile. Sanetama wears only a wakizashi, not a daisho, and if he is challenged or insulted he will call upon someone else (preferably a PC) to serve as his champion.

Sanetama’s task here is to draw everyone’s attention so that the real Scorpion agents and assassins will be free

to operate. He will be quite overt in his behavior, playing the part of the “sinister Scorpion” to the hilt, making vaguely menacing remarks, deliberately speaking to the witnesses, asking troublesome questions, and so forth. His only overt action, however, will be to draw Doji Takashi’s attention to the presence of Yasuki Fumato.

Crane daimyo, Doji Takashi, and his wife Kimi.

This Crane is a mid-ranking daimyo and sword collector, while his wife is a lovely young woman formerly of the Asahina family. Takashi is ostensibly staying here due to a lack of rooms at the Seppun Palaces – a situation which was arranged by the Scorpion Clan, of course. Takashi is more than a little disgruntled about this, and is generally in a bad mood about having to share an Inn with lowly samurai, ronin, and commoners.

PCs who have played the adventures *Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina* or *Soul of Akodo* may have met Doji Takeshi before. He will react to them as appropriate, depending on how they behaved in those adventures. (Some of these PCs may be secretly aware that his wife Kimi had an affair shortly before their marriage.)

Embittered ronin: Fujiko. This woman is fairly well-kept as ronin go, with clean clothing, well-combed hair and a daisho set which has obviously been lovingly cared-for. She is also a bitter and hateful woman, consumed with a personal vendetta against the Dragon Clan. Her father, a ronin named Toyaka, was casually slain by an arrogant Dragon shugenja who accused him, falsely, of stealing. Fujiko has sworn to slay a hundred Dragon to avenge her father. She is a bitter, unpleasant woman, totally consumed with her quest for vengeance, and will behave with cold aloofness or ill-disguised loathing toward anyone not directly associated with her quest. Only fellow ronin and sworn enemies of the Dragon Clan will get a positive response from her. If any of the PCs are Dragons (and especially if any of them are Agasha) she will seek a lethal duel.

Fujiko has no connection to the larger plot. Her presence at the Inn is purely a coincidence.

Friendly ronin, Toku. This young man, little more than an ashigaru who lucked into a set of swords, is traveling the Empire in search of his fortune, hoping against hope to be accepted as a “true samurai” and a worthy man. He is friendly and generous in nature, and will chat just as easily with Clan samurai as with the peasants who are his own kin. His sense of humor, while excellent, is a bit rough, and he may

inadvertently offend those of more delicate courtly sensibilities.

Toku is an idealistic young man in search of a leader and a cause. He will listen attentively to any PC who seems to offer him one. He has no other role in the scenario, although players who are familiar with the “historical” Clan War story arc may enjoy having the chance to meet him.

Handsome ronin, Kojita. This ruggedly good-looking man is actually a Scorpion actor, and is one of those tasked with trying to dishonor Ide Mayu. He is a skilled deceiver who will offer an excellent imitation of an honorable man defeated by fate (he will refuse to mention what Clan he was expelled from, suggesting politely that such is not a proper question to ask, but drops hints that he used to be either a Crane or a Phoenix). He will try to insinuate himself into any conversations that involve Ide Mayu, for example by claiming to have visited the City of the Rich Frog, implying that he may have information on the Scorpion opium trade, and so forth. He will also flirt subtly with Mayu, for example by offering to pour her sake (a Crane custom, by the way). Unless the PCs intervene, he will probably succeed in his mission.

Merchant, Fubu (Scorpion assassin). One of the quiet, nondescript merchants in the corners of the common room is a Scorpion assassin. His task is to make sure that the two Tortoise do not survive once a bar brawl begins. Also, he is back-up in case the ronin Sohryu makes it here alive. Fubu will stay in the corner and avoid all attention, confining himself to low-voiced conversations with the other commoners. It is unlikely the PCs will ever know he is here unless they spot him “in action.”

The Assassination of Sohryu

If the PCs ask around when they arrive, they will learn that the ronin Sohryu has not yet arrived at the Inn, although the innkeeper has been instructed by the Lion to hold a room for him. “Most troublesome, honorable samurai, since I have been forced to turn away more than one customer from the Great Clans despite having a room vacant. I do hope this ronin arrives soon.”

Sohryu is expected to arrive from the south, across the small bridge on the edge of town. If the PCs go in search of him, they may be able to save him and his Matsu escort.

Sohryu is, as Ikoma Uso described him, a thin and unimpressive man whose kimono is worn and travel-

stained. His saya (sword-sheaths) have clearly seen better days as well, although the blades themselves are carefully maintained. He has an anxious, furtive aspect about him, and clearly regrets getting himself involved in this clash between Clans. His escort, Matsu Hitoiki, is a typical brash and aggressive young Lion samurai, and is rather disgruntled at having to guard such a lowly ronin.

The Scorpion will strike as the young Lion and the scruffy ronin cross the bridge into town. A young man in Crane colors will step out of the shadows on the near (village) side of the bridge. “Lion dog!” he shouts, brandishing his sword. “You slew my father at the field of Toshi Ranbo! Now I, Kakita Tokumei, have come for vengeance! Face me, if you have the slightest fragments of courage in your soul! Or flee and brand yourself a coward!”

The Matsu will of course draw blade and charge (unless the PCs manage to stop him, either by physically restraining him or by making an effective verbal appeal to honor and duty). Meanwhile, two Scorpion assassins will emerge from the darkness outside the village and slip up on Sohryu from behind.

The “Crane” is a Shosuro actor (the name “Tokumei” means “anonymity”), and will attempt to lead the Matsu through the shadowed alleys of the village, far enough away to prevent him from helping Sohryu. Once that is accomplished, he throws down a nageteppe (smoke bomb) and vanishes into the darkness, leaving behind a blue kimono and white wig.

If the PCs accompany Matsu Hitoiki, they will return to find Sohryu vanished, leaving behind only a few drops of blood. His body has been dumped in the river and can be recovered downstream. He died from a poisoned ninja-to.

If any of the PCs stayed behind with Sohryu, they must face the two assassins alone. In order to detect the stealthy approach of the Scorpions, the PCs must either specify that they are watching behind them, or succeed in **Contested** rolls of their **Investigation/Perception** or **Hunting/Perception** against the Scorpions’ **Stealth/Agility** (remember that the Scorpions get extra kept dice for their Rank One school technique). If the PCs fail to detect the approaching assassins, they will be surprised, and will suffer attacks at TN 5 to be hit before they can roll for initiative.

The assassins are dressed in dark “ninja pajamas” and carry nothing to identify them as Scorpions. They are armed with ninja-to and shuriken, both of which are coated with poison. Targets struck by these weapons

must make a **Contested Stamina** roll against the poison’s Strength of 3 or die in agony. A successful roll means the target survives, but is in wracking pain and suffers a +10 TN penalty to all actions (including resisting additional poisonings) for the next twelve hours. Poisoning victims (including Sohryu) can be saved if they are treated within one round with the **Poison**, **Medicine**, or **Herbalism** skill (**Intelligence** trait, TN roll 15, 25, 20 respectively).

The assassins’ goal is to kill everyone quickly and leave no witnesses. If they are unable to do this quickly and cleanly, they will flee, using nageteppe (smoke grenades) to cover their retreat. If any of them are reduced to Down or lower, they will attempt suicide using their own poison. Under no circumstances will they confess or identify themselves.

Yasuki Fumato’s Duel

At some point, the Scorpion Shosuro Sanetama will engage in a friendly conversation with Doji Takeshi. He will affect insult if any of the PCs try to drive him away, and for his part Takeshi will be irritated with such interference. (Takeshi may even reprove such PCs for failing to show proper courtesy: “Shosuro-san is a guest here like any other, and deserves the same courtesy.”) During the conversation, Sanetama will arrange to drop the names of some of the other guests at the Inn – including Yasuki Fumato. “Most unusual, to see one of the Yasuki here.”

Once Doji Takashi realizes who Fumato is, his whole aspect changes, and his face flushes with emotion. After a few moments he sends his wife to their room to fetch “the letter.” She goes reluctantly, with a worried and saddened expression, and returns after a few moments with a folded document. (PCs can try to intervene with this if they wish, although doing so is fraught with peril – the PCs are approaching a married woman, after all.) Once he has the paper, Takeshi rises, stalks over to Fumato, and presents it: it is a signed authorization for a duel. (The cause: Fumato allegedly stole a Crane sword which had once belonged to Takashi’s family, a grievous insult.)

If nobody intervenes, Takeshi will insist that the duel be conducted immediately. The Lion guards will not intervene – this is a matter of Honor, after all, and Fumato is merely a slimy merchant. Since Fumato carries his own swords, he has little choice but to agree. In this case the following scene occurs:

The two combatants face each other on the street before the Inn, standing in the pools of yellow light

cast from open windows and doors. Fumato is trembling and sweating, clearly terrified, while Doji Takeshi has an expression of cold concentration on his face. Suddenly Fumato turns, squealing, and starts to run. Quick as a flash Takeshi lunges forward, his katana blurring from its saya, and slashes the hapless Yasuki from hip to shoulder. The Crab merchant tumbles to the ground in a spray of blood, dead almost instantly. Takeshi flisks the blood off his sword with a single sharp gesture, sheaths it, and walks back inside the Inn with an expression of icy satisfaction.

PCs can try to intervene in this matter at any time. Since Fumato carries his own swords, it will normally not be possible for a PC to serve as his champion. (Crab PCs might be able to insist on such a thing if they make a careful and eloquent appeal that emphasis honor and seemliness.) However, it may be possible for the PCs to delay the duel, either by suggesting that it is unseemly to rush into it without due preparation, or by pointing out that Fumato does not yet have permission from his own daimyo to fight a fatal duel. (Fumato is too rattled to think of this for himself, and the Lion guards find him too distasteful to exercise themselves on his behalf.)

The Brawl

Throughout the evening, Ikoma Budo (the disguised Scorpion actor) will make a point of issuing frequent insults and slanders against the Tortoise Clan. The other Lion will find it difficult not to rise to this bait, especially the two Matsu, who are already unhappy at having to guard these “Tortoise scum.” As the evening proceeds, Ikoma Budo will seemingly become drunk, and his remarks grow ever more intemperate.

Chuji, the younger Tortoise, will find it difficult not to rise to this bait, returning insult for insult. This will enrage the Lion further, since they are getting “back-talk” from a lowly Tortoise, who they regard as no better than a peasant. Matsuo will try to calm his younger kinsman, but is unlikely to succeed on his own.

Given the chance, Shosuro Sanetama will try to insinuate himself into this conversation, or will try to lead others (such as Doji Takashi) into it. He will pretend to be a peacemaker but speaks in a manner calculated to fan the flames on both sides. For example, “Who are we to question the Tortoise, who consort with gaijin and commoners? Surely they have some important reason to dress like peasants and fight like them as well. We are merely not worthy of

knowing the reasons for their behavior, however dishonorable it may seem on the surface.”

This situation is essentially a role-playing challenge – the PCs must find ways to constantly throw rhetorical cold water on the heated exchanges of insults. Skill rolls (with skills such as Sincerity, Oratory, Manipulation, or Intimidation, depending on what approach the PCs take), but ultimately, the PCs must role-play an effective appeal in order to justify these rolls.

If the PCs can successfully keep tempers from escalating, Matsuo will eventually prevail on Chuji to stop drinking and retire for the evening. If the PCs fail to prevent escalation, Chuji will eventually lose his temper and throw a sake bottle at one of the Lions, shouting that “Lion thugs” know no more of true duty than a dog. This will be the signal for a general brawl, with the Lions trying to beat the Tortoise senseless with jiu-jitsu and furniture, while the Tortoise defend themselves with their peasant weapons (which they have kept secreted on their persons).

During the fight, the “merchant” Fubu will attempt to slip into the chaos and prick both of the Tortoise with a poison needle. Ikoma Budo will assist this effort by making sure to toss the Tortoise into the corners where the merchants are hiding, giving them an excuse to be momentarily entangled with the combatants.

PCs can detect Fubu’s actions if they can roll **Contested Investigation/Perception** or **Hunting/Perception** against the Scorpion actor’s **Sleight-of-Hand/Agility**. Otherwise the first sign of trouble will be when the Tortoise collapse. They can be saved by a PC who immediately suspects poison and rolls **Poison/Intelligence** at TN 25, **Medicine/Intelligence** at TN 30, or **Herbalism/Intelligence** at TN 25. Fubu will slip outside as soon as he either delivers his attack or is detected, covering his retreat with a nageteppo (smoke bomb) if need be.

In addition to Fubu’s poisoning attempts, the “Lion” Ikoma Budo will try to “accidentally” deliver a fatal blow to one or both of the Tortoise bushi. A PC who watches the Lion during the fight can roll **Jiu-jitsu/Perception** at TN 15 to realize that Ikoma Budo is fighting “for real” rather than just brawling. If he is confronted or accused, Budo will claim that he was carried away by the heat of the moment, and will offer an apology. “I have trained all my life to kill on the battlefield. I am sorry I could not forget my training under these circumstances.”

If the PCs can avert these assassination attempts (which may also involve Scorpion PCs), they will eventually be able to break up the fight and send the combatants off to bed shame-faced.

Any PC who participates in the brawl voluntarily (rather than trying to break it up) will lose 2 points of Glory and 1 point of Honor.

The Seduction of Ide Mayu

Ide Mayu will spend the evening drinking and chatting with anyone who will give her the time, showing a marked preference for handsome men, both PCs and NPCs. She will not participate in the exchange of insults (and the possible brawl), regarding that entire scene as silly and highly amusing.

The Scorpion actor masquerading as the ronin Kojita will do his best to insert himself into Ide Mayu's discussions. At some suitable moment (preferably when everyone else is distracted by the Tortoise brawl) he will try to slip a small amount of liquid opium into her sake. Mayu will not notice this, and PCs will not see it unless they are watching Mayu or participating in the conversation. In that case they can roll **Contested Investigation/Perception** or **Hunting/Perception** against Kojita's **Sleight-of-Hand/Agility**.

The opium will leave Mayu somewhat dazed (although, not having ever taken opium before, she will blame her feelings on the sake) and more amenable to Kojita's seduction attempts. A PC who is watching the conversation can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to realize that Mayu's faculties have been significantly impaired. If the PC has knowledge of or experience with opium addiction, or has 4 or more ranks of Medicine or Herbalism, the PC can tell that Mayu is suffering from a mild opium dose.

If a PC does not intervene in some way, Mayu will soon grow amenable to Kojita's seductive conversational gambits, and will arrange to meet him in her room. She then claims to be tired and heads upstairs to her room, staggering slightly as she goes. The Lion bushi share some rude comments about Unicorn women, and Matsu Akotsu calls a reminder to Mayu that she must be ready to visit the court in the morning.

If the PCs do not interfere, Mayu will spend an evening of passion with Kojita. The Scorpion deceiver will use this occasion to dose her with a large amount of liquid opium (hidden in sake). Once she is completely stoned

and helpless, he slams open her door and departs, leaving her half-naked and crying out in confusion.

Shosuro Sanetama and Ikoma Budo will both try to rush to see what is causing all the noise upstairs ("it sounds as though someone is injured!")), and the other Lion will be quick to follow, worried about the status of their witness. If they see Mayu in her current condition, the Lion guards will be shocked and disgusted. It will be clear to all that this "foul, dishonorable woman" is no longer a useful witness.

If the PCs manage to somehow prevent any witnesses from seeing Mayu's current condition (such as by managing to block all access to her room and coming up with a credible explanation for all the noise), her disgraceful condition can be kept secret and her honor can be salvaged. In this case Mayu will come out of her opium daze by dawn. She will seek out the PCs and soberly thank them for protecting her from her own foolishness, and promises her lifelong friendship in return. Such PCs gain Ide Mayu as a Major Ally.

The Dishonor of Akenuei

If any of the PCs are here on behalf of the Scorpion, they have been given copies of the plans for the Lion assault on the Crane castle of Shiro Kyotei. Their goal is to plant these plans on Akenuei's person and then ensure they are "discovered" after Akenuei has expressed public disgust with the actions of the Matsu family.

"Ikoma Budo" will assist any Scorpion PCs in their efforts toward Akenuei. If there are no Scorpion PCs here, Budo will have to handle most of the work of dishonoring Akenuei. He will converse with the former Akodo in a sympathetic manner, trying to push him into disparaging the Matsu. This will not be too difficult, given Akenuei's character and belief, although he may require some prodding.

At some point during the evening, preferably during some other distraction (such as the brawl, or Ide Mayu's dishonor), Ikoma Budo will attempt to plant the incriminating papers on Akenuei's person. In order to notice this, Lion-friendly PCs will have to succeed in a **Contested Roll** of their **Investigation/Perception** or **Simple Perception** against the Scorpion actor's **Sleight-of-Hand/Agility**. If they are specifically watching Budo or Akenuei, they get a Free Raise on the roll.

If a Scorpion or Scorpion-allied PC is trying to plant the papers, the GM will need to adjudicate their

attempt, based on when and how they attempt it. As before, other PCs can notice with Contested Rolls.

If “Ikoma Budo” is discovered planting the papers, he will try to pretend that Akenuei dropped them and he was picking them up. If this does not succeed in fooling the other Lion present, he will act offended, claim his Honor has been impugned, blame “Scorpion tricks” or “Crane lies,” and otherwise play the stiff-necked Lion. As a last resort, he will fling down a nageteppe (smoke grenade) and flee.

Scorpion PCs who are discovered planting the papers will have to come up with their own methods of covering themselves.

If and when the papers are successfully planted, it will still be necessary to “discover” them in such a way that Akenuei is dishonored. If the “merchant” Fubu has gone undetected to this point, he will pretend to be drunk and stumble toward his room for the night, in the process bumping into Akenuei and dislodging the papers. Scorpion PCs may come up with other clever ways to arrange the discovery. Once the papers are “revealed,” the Scorpion actors will try to fade into the background and let the real Lions discover the “awful truth.” The Matsu will be especially easy to manipulate in this fashion, and will jump to conclusions about Akenuei’s character, the presence of Doji Takeshi at the Inn, and so forth.

Akenuei will be furious, almost apoplectic with rage, at the suggestion that he would betray his Clan. If the Lion-friendly PCs cannot find a way of proving that Akenuei was framed (or at least force the Matsu to admit to some doubt on the situation), the embittered Akodo will furiously declare his intention of immediately committing *seppuku* to prove his innocence.

If the PCs did not witness the planting of the documents, they can still try to prevent, or at least delay, Akenuei’s *seppuku*. Some possible ways to do this would include:

- A high-Honor/high-Glory PC could personally testify to Akenuei’s Honor and offer to champion him. This could well lead to a duel with Matsu Akotsu, depending on the PC’s behavior and Clan. Such a duel would almost certainly be to the death, since it involves a question of treason to one’s Clan.
- PCs could call on the Lion to delay judgment on all such matters until after Akenuei’s testimony at the

Imperial Court tomorrow. This will have to be an effective verbal appeal couched in terms of Bushido and Duty, since Akenuei believes his Honor is in question and the other Lions believe he can no longer be trusted.

- PCs can try to use magic to prove that the documents were stolen/planted. For example, the spell *Whispering Wind* could be cast on Akenuei to prove that he believes himself truthful about the documents. Such magical “evidence” is not legally binding, of course, but it might be convincing to the Lion – depending on which PCs cast the spells, how they justify themselves, and so forth. The GM must adjudicate such matters.
- Calling on the ancestor Ikoma to witness whether Akenuei is telling the truth. Although most Clans do not accept this sort of evidence, the Lion revere their ancestors deeply, and the word of Ikoma will be enough to exonerate Akenuei.

Smart PCs may be able to come up with other ways of averting Akenuei’s fate. The GM should reward creative approaches that still follow the rules of Rokugani etiquette and culture.

A Warning Letter

If any Scorpion PCs are at the Inn, and they have Bayushi Dainashii as a Sworn Enemy, he will send a letter to Akenuei warning him of the plan to dishonor him. This letter, delivered by a servant from the Seppun Palace, will arrive soon after the PCs reach the Inn. Akenuei will accept it with an uncertain expression (he has no idea who could be writing to him), and reads it through with a slowly-deepening frown. If any of the PCs are here to protect him, he will share the contents of the letter with them:

Honored Lion,

Any samurai must respect the true tenets of Bushido, no matter what their Clan may demand. Therefore take heed, the Scorpion Clan plans to dishonor you tonight so that you cannot speak against them tomorrow. Plans for the next stage of your Clan’s war against the Crane will be placed on your person, so that it appears that you have betrayed your Clan. Please accept this warning in the true spirit of Bushido in which it is written.

The letter is signed with the names of the relevant Scorpion PCs. PCs with the Forgery skill can roll **Forgery/Intelligence** at TN 20 to recognize that the

names are not authentic. Certain types of magic may be able to track the letter back to its true source, and PCs with the **Calligraphy** skill can match the paper and ink on the letter to those found in Dainashii's quarters (if they somehow get access to those items). A **Calligraphy/Perception** or **Forgery/Perception** roll at TN 20 can also match the letter to samples of Dainashii's writing (if the PCs can get such samples).

Once he has received this letter, Akenuei will become extremely cautious, avoiding conversation with anyone who is not of or allied with his Clan, and watching all others in the room with hawk-like attention. However, he will still not suspect Ikoma Budo, and he can still be drawn into verbally disparaging the Matsu family.

If anyone tries to plant the documents on Akenuei, he will get a **Contested Roll** with his **Investigation/Perception** to notice it. Because Akenuei is so alert, he gets two Free Raises and spends a Void Point on the roll. If successful, he will intercept the plant and will immediately attack the person in question (whether a PC or Ikoma Budo), shouting "A Scorpion spy!"

If Akenuei still does not notice the documents being planted, once they are "discovered" he will immediately produce the letter as proof that he is the target of a Scorpion frame-up. This, combined with his own fierce protestations of innocence, will probably be sufficient to convince the other Lion of the truth.

Fates of the Witnesses

Eventually, the witnesses and their Lion guards will retire for the evening. All the witnesses are staying in adjacent rooms on the second floor of the Inn, and one Lion bushi will be posted at the head of the corridor at all times. The PCs can take additional security precautions if they wish.

If the PCs did not rescue the ronin Sohryu, he will never reach the Inn alive. His escort, Matsu Hitoiki, will arrive midway through the evening to report the incident in which Sohryu vanished. If Sohryu does reach the Inn, he will eat a hurried, nervous meal and then retire for the evening.

If the PCs make it to bedtime with at least five of the six witnesses still safe and un-dishonored, the Scorpion will give up and take no further action. Likewise, if only three or fewer witnesses remain, the Scorpion will take no further action, believing correctly that the Lion no longer have sufficient evidence to prove their case.

However, if there are only four witnesses left, the Scorpion will attempt to assassinate one of them during the night (unless both their assassins were killed attacking Sohryu, in which case they give up). The preferred target of assassination will be Sohryu, Matsuo, or Yasuki Fumato, in that order. Regardless of which target they choose, the Scorpion will take the same approach:

- One assassin will attempt to distract any guards by staging a "ninja attack," complete with flashing shurikens and ostentatious smoke bombs. The purpose of this attack will be to distract the guards and prevent them from hearing any noise from the room of the assassination victim.
- The other assassin will climb onto the roof of the Inn, lower himself from there to the window of the victim's room, and slip inside. Once there, he will stab the victim with a poisoned needle, bringing about a swift and largely silent death.
- In order to hear this assassin's approach, a PC must be awake, cannot be fighting or chasing the other assassin, and must succeed in a **Contested roll** pitting their **Investigation/Perception**, **Hunting/Perception**, or **Simple Perception** against the assassin's **Stealth/Agility**. Remember that the assassin gets to keep extra dice equal to School Rank. Any PCs who are in the rooms adjacent to the target get a Free Raise on their roll. If a PC is in the same room as the target, the assassin will not attack unless those PCs are asleep. (PCs who are asleep in the same room as the victim can make a **Contested roll** to be awakened, but the assassin has a Free Raise against them.)
- If there is only one surviving assassin, he will still attempt the assassination, but the Lion and any PCs who are standing guard can also make Contested rolls to notice him.
- Regardless, if the assassin is detected before completing his mission he will flee immediately. If he is not detected, the victim will be found dead in the morning, contorted in agony. A PC who rolls **Medicine/Perception** at TN 20, **Herbalism/Perception** at TN 20, or **Poison/Perception** at TN 15 will be able to detect tell-tale signs of poison, including a tiny blue needle puncture in the neck.

If the PCs make it to morning with four or more of their witnesses still alive and un-dishonored, the Scorpion

will give up on any further actions against them. The PCs and the Lion can escort the witnesses safely to the Seppun Palace, where they will await the Emperor's Court.

Scene Five: The Fate of the Painting

If some of the PCs agree to help Kakita Atsukure recover his painting, they have until late the next morning to figure out what has happened to it. (It will thus be possible for some PCs to participate in the mission to the Inn of the Shining Mempo and still have time to help Atsukure the next day.) Regardless of when they begin their work, the PCs will have a number of investigative avenues to explore.

What Atsukure Knows

The painting disappeared sometime between when he “previewed” it (for Kakita Kaiten, Shinjo Taneka, and any PCs who came along) and the end of dinner, when he returned to fetch it. The painting was on a large piece of silk, which was taken from its frame, so the intruder could have rolled or folded it up. Atsukure saw no overt signs of an intruder, although he admits he was too flustered to look closely. He showed the painting to only those individuals listed above.

Atsukure's Room

Atsukure's room does indeed show no overt signs of an intruder. The empty frame holds only a few shreds of silk, the remnants left behind when the painting was cut away from it.

A search of the room will reveal no physical clues unless Bayushi Dainashii is using this incident to frame a PC. In that case, an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 15 will discover a small physical item, belonging to the framed PC, which Bayushi Dainashii planted in the room. The item will be small but easily recognizable as belonging to the PC, or at of the PC's Clan color: an obi bead, a hair comb, a fan, or any similar item.

Searching the painting frame can discover a different, true clue with an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 20. Success discovers a few cuts in the wooden frame, where the knife which cut the painting free left marks behind. Lodged in one of these cuts are a few threads of purple silk. (Taneka was in such a hurry that he nicked his kimono sleeve while he was cutting.)

If a shugenja PC *Communes* with the elements in the room, they will find Earth and Air spirits in abundance,

Fire spirits in the lit candles, and Water spirits in a jar of water among Atsukure's painting supplies. If the PC asks about the theft, any of the Earth, Air, or Fire spirits can describe a “thin man” dressed in clothes “the color of evening clouds” (purple) who came in and hastily cut the painting out of the frame, then folded it up and stuffed it into the sleeve of his kimono. Water spirits can show an image of the same thing – PCs rolling **Simple Perception** at TN 10 can identify Shinjo Taneka.

If a *Communing* PC thinks to ask whether anyone else visited the room, or asks how the other “frame-up” item came to be in the room, the spirits can describe/show Bayushi Dainashii sneaking in later and planting the “clue.”

In either case, remember that the testimony of spirits is not legally admissible evidence – it can merely tell the PCs where they should be looking to get real evidence (or to recover the painting).

Witnesses?

Although no samurai other than Dainashii saw what happened, the Seppun Palace is full of servants. A PC who thinks of questioning them will have to speak with several of them before s/he can track down those who were in the area during the time in question. The servants, a pair of middle-aged men and a nervous young woman, will be easily frightened and confused, and are afraid of getting caught in the middle of some samurai feud. The PCs will have to question them carefully in order to learn anything. (A PC who has good relations with heimin, such as a Tortoise or ronin, will have an easier time getting their cooperation.)

The servants can report noticing Shinjo Taneka, who they describe as “a thin Unicorn samurai, my lord, very quiet and, ah, intense, my lord?” All of them saw Taneka in the area around the time of the theft, and the serving girl noticed something in his sleeve (“like wadded-up silk, maybe a scarf, my lord”).

If the PCs ask about Scorpions, or ask if anyone was in the area after Taneka visited, only one servant (an old man, Otaro, with shaky hands and a liver-spotted bald scalp) remembers noticing Bayushi Dainashii “slippin’ about” shortly after Taneka was in the area.

The testimony of commoner servants is useless against the word of a samurai, but again, this information can tell the PCs where to look for more information.

Recovering the Painting from Taneka

Once the PCs realize who stole the painting, they will face a more troublesome problem: what to do about it. The evidence they have is almost all unusable under Rokugani law – the testimony of commoners is worthless without corroboration from those of samurai rank, and the testimony of spirits cannot be used in any court of the Empire. If the PCs try to accuse Taneka, he will deny everything and shrug them off. If they are foolish enough to accuse him publicly (which Kakita Atsukure does not want), they will risk being expelled from the Seppun court and humiliated, losing significant Glory. (This could be especially bad if Dainashii has actually relocated the painting and framed a PC.) They will certainly not be allowed to challenge Taneka to a duel over such flimsy evidence.

This leaves the PCs two possible options, neither of which they may find particularly savory:

Sneak into Taneka's room and search for the painting. The best time to do this will be the next morning while Taneka is circulating and socializing with everyone else. It will be relatively easy for the PCs to slip into his room without being noticed by any samurai – sneaking in unobserved by servants will be trickier, since servants are so ubiquitous in the Palace, but can be accomplished with some effort.

Searching the room will require an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 15 (or the spell *By the Light of Lord Moon*). Success discovers Taneka's other kimono wadded up inside the rolled-up futon. The painting is still stuffed inside the damaged kimono sleeve – Taneka did not have the heart to simply destroy such a magnificent artwork.

Blackmail Taneka. This will normally only be possible if the PCs have played a specific previous adventure (*A Hidden Dagger*) and learned that Taneka has a secret geisha lover in the City of the Rich Frog. Taneka is engaged to an Otaku Battle Maiden from a family which despises geisha as “male weakness,” and if they learned of his secret lover, it would disgrace and ruin him.

If PCs do not already know about Taneka's weakness, they might be able to learn about it from Bayushi Goshiu (who knows everyone's weaknesses). Especially clever PCs might be able to bluff Taneka and convince him they know something that they don't.

If the PCs succeed in blackmailing Taneka, he will return to painting to them in exchange for their silence. Taneka is clearly shaken and embittered by this experience, and all such PCs gain him as a Sworn Enemy.

Recovering the Painting if it is Planted

If Dainashii planted the painting, it will not be found in Taneka's room (which could be very troublesome if the PCs accuse Taneka of stealing it). The PCs will have to figure out where the painting is now.

A shugenja PC can *Commune* with the Air, Earth, or Fire spirits in or near Taneka's room to learn that Dainashii took the painting, and in what direction. To learn exactly where Dainashii took the painting, the PC will either have to cast *Commune* several more times (following the directions of different spirits through the Seppun Palaces) or else cast it once with at least three Raises (to get a more powerful spirit with better knowledge).

The PC whose room contains the planted painting can roll **Hunting/Awareness** at TN 20 or **Simple Awareness** at TN 30 to realize that someone has been in the room – things are just a tiny bit out of place.

Searching the PC's room for the painting will require an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 20, **Simple Perception** at TN 25, or an appropriate spell (*By the Light of Lord Moon* or similar) to locate the painting, hidden behind the PCs' extra clothing.

Turning the Tables on Dainashii

Some PCs may be able to somehow learn that Dainashii was responsible for the warning letter sent to the Lion Akenuei (if he sent the letter). This could be accomplished by casting appropriate magic on the letter, by matching the paper and ink with that in Dainashii's room, or by matching the writing to his (see “A Warning Letter” in Part Four for details). A PC who gains such knowledge can use it to blackmail Dainashii into returning the painting.

Exceptionally clever PCs may be able to come up with other ways of turning the tables on Dainashii. A PC with Favors or high-level Allies in the Scorpion Clan could also invoke them to force Dainashii into backing off from his plots. The GM should try to reward PCs who come up with ingenious ways to defeat the spoiled and malicious young Scorpion.

Dainashii Makes his Accusation

Dainashii will wait to finish his plan until the court next morning, when Kakita Atsukure is forced to admit that the painting has been stolen. Before that time, he will speak with the blackmailed Lion Kansei, demanding that Kansei lie and accuse the framed PC of stealing the painting. Dainashii will also approach any non-Scorpion PCs who are being blackmailed or controlled by the Scorpion Clan and demand that they also support his accusation. (He will take an especial pleasure in doing this if these false-witness PCs are among his Sworn Enemies.)

Once Kakita Atsukure is forced to admit that the painting has been stolen, Dainashii will come forward “reluctantly” and explain that he saw the painting being stolen away by the framed PC. “I had not wanted to believe this could be what it appeared to be, ___-san, for your reputation has always an honorable one. But when the great Lion Kansei-sama confirmed that he too had seen the deed, I had no choice but to accept it as true.” Dainashii’s eyes glitter with malice as he delivers his accusation.

See “Conclusions” for details of how this plotline can resolve.

Conclusions

No further events of note will take place until the Emperor’s Court is held late the next morning. At that time the young Emperor will finally make his appearance:

The slim young form of Hantei the 39th seems a little too small for the splendid formal kimono in which he is garbed. Nevertheless, he manages to convey a sense of regal dignity as he paces slowly into the audience hall, nodding slightly in return to the deep bows from everyone present. He takes his seat on the Emerald Throne, whose green surfaces have been buffed clean of the scratches and scorches which marred them after the Hantei Palace burned to the ground. As the Emperor seats himself, the crowd rises with a sigh, and soft conversations begin to circulate as the first of the petitioners approach the throne.

Outcome of the Painting

One of the first petitioners to approach the Emperor will be the unfortunate Kakita Atsukure. If the PCs recovered the painting (from wherever it wound up), Atsukure will be able to display it to the Imperial Court. All present exclaim in praise of its beauty and

skill, and the Crane and Unicorn contingents seem especially moved.

If the painting was not recovered, Atsukure abases himself before the Emperor, begging forgiveness and explaining that the painting has been stolen. Hantei the 39th’s face clouds with petulant anger, and he gestures Atsukure away with an angry wave. The Crane artisan departs the Court humiliated. PCs who scan the crowd at this time can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to notice a faint relieved expression on the face of Shinjo Taneka.

If Bayushi Dainashii managed to plant the painting successfully in a PC’s room, he will now accuse that PC (as outlined above in Part Five). With Dainashii supported by a witness as honorable and prestigious as Kansei, it will be very difficult for the unfortunate PC to clear his/her name.

- If the PC can somehow prove that s/he was framed by Dainashii, it may be possible to turn the tables on the Scorpion. This will require that the PC have evidence and testimony ready to hand – the Imperial Court will not allow a delay for investigation.
- Other PCs can try to defend the victim, for example by testifying that s/he was with them and was nowhere near the stolen painting. How well this defense works will depend on the reputation and Glory of the PCs who offer such testimony.
- If the PC’s defense seems to be making any headway, Bayushi Dainashii will propose that the Seppun guards search the PC’s room for the painting. “If no painting is found I will gladly withdraw my accusation and offer the humblest of apologies.” The Emperor will clearly favor this proposal, since it will end the matter quickly and cleanly. Needless to say, unless the PCs already discovered and relocated the painting, the guards will discover it, delivering the final nail in the framed PC’s coffin.
- The accused PC can, as a last resort, demand a duel to prove his/her innocence. A duel will only be granted if the PC has Glory of at least 3.0, is a member of one of the Imperial families, has Favors or Allies with one of the Imperial families (in which case such Favors/Alliances are expended), or has the advantages Ear of the Emperor or Imperial Spouse. The PC will have to face and defeat ALL accusers, including Kansei (Dainashii will insist on deferring to Kansei, who has the

higher Glory). If the PC is a shugenja or courtier, another PC can champion him/her (no NPC champion will be forthcoming). Duels do not have to be to the death, although Dainashii will express a distinct preference for this and will argue for it quite strongly.

If the framed PC succeeds in defending his/her name (either by somehow disproving Dainashii's accusations, or by winning the duels), the accusation will be dropped. Kansei and Dainashii, if still alive, will apologize humbly, and Kansei will offer his seppuku for "a terrible mistake which called your Honor into question." (It is up to the PCs whether to accept this offer.) Dainashii will make no such offer, and his apology will clearly be bitter on his lips. The PC will gain Dainashii as a **Nemesis**.

If the PC fails to defend his/her name, the consequences are dire. The PC stands condemned before the entire Imperial court as a liar and thief, and suffers the immediate and unavoidable loss of all Glory. The PC must choose whether or not to remain within his/her Clan. PCs who stay within their Clan gain the **Dishonored** disadvantage. PCs who leave their Clan become ronin, and gain the disadvantage **Social Disadvantage (ronin)**. In either case, the PC also gains **Bad Reputation (thief)**.

A PC can choose to commit *seppuku* in order to wipe away the stain of this dishonor.

Outcome of the Lion Accusation

Some little while after the painting plot has come to an end (in whatever fashion), the following scene takes place:

Ikoma Ujiaki, general of the Imperial legions, steps before the Emperor and bows low. Silence falls throughout the court as everyone listens for the much-rumored Lion announcement. "Blessed Son of Heaven, the Lion have always been your Right Hand, the defenders of your safety and your honor. It pains us now to report that others have been less diligent in their duties, have indeed broken the Imperial laws which all are sworn to obey. I speak of the so-called Emperor's Under-Hand, the accursed Scorpion Clan. We stand before you today to accuse the Scorpion Clan of masterminding the sale of the filthy drug opium, whose temptations have ensnared and dishonored countless samurai! Lest you think this is merely some Clan ploy," his eyes sweep the crowd as though daring any to make such a claim, "know this:

the Clans of the Unicorn and the Crab join us here in making this charge."

How this resolves depends on how many witnesses survived alive and un-dishonored. If at least four witnesses survived, their testimony combined with the other evidence (documents, money, etc) is enough to carry the day. If three or fewer witnesses survived, the evidence is not conclusive enough for the Emperor to rule against the Scorpion.

If the Emperor rules against the Scorpion, he declares regretfully that the Scorpion Clan can no longer be entrusted with the medicinal opium trade. There is a soft gasp from the crowd; Bayushi Goshui's usual smile seems pasted on.

Unicorn Clan representative Ide Tadaji immediately steps forward with a petition for the medicinal opium trade to be entrusted to the Unicorn. "We who first discovered opium know best how to employ its virtues without succumbing to its temptations. And we have proven ourselves many times over as a Clan of Honor which respects and upholds the Imperial law." The Emperor agrees, and the Unicorn immediately follow-up with the announcement that they will be annexing the city of Ryoko Owari, "the City of Green Walls, which we have held before," in order to take direct control of medicinal opium production.

The Lion Clan, for its part, announces its intention of marching an army through Beiden Pass to "punish" the Scorpion for their violations of Imperial law. The Emperor, who seems to be a little overwhelmed by these events, simply nods.

If the Emperor rules in favor of the Scorpion, he declares that the evidence presented, "while troubling, is not sufficient to overturn our trust in the Scorpion Clan, who have always been our most loyal servants." The Lion and the Unicorn Clans are clearly both outraged, but have little choice but to bow and accept the Emperor's judgment. Bayushi Goshui bows low and offer fulsome praise to the wisdom and compassion of the Son of Heaven. Kuni Yori of the Crab Clan hisses to himself in irritation and stalks from the room with a perfunctory bow.

As gossip and rumor circulates through the room afterward, it quickly becomes apparent that the matter is not closed. There are tales of a Matsu army massing near Beiden Pass, and many courtiers are heard to suggest that the Crane may soon find themselves with an unexpected ally in their war with the Lion.

Finale: The Emperor's Personal Announcement

After the various plot threads have come to their conclusion (in whatever manner), this final scene occurs:

The young Emperor rises to his feet and takes a few paces forward, bringing immediate and total quiet to the court. Hantei the 39th looks surprisingly calm and in control of himself as he speaks in a piercing voice that is audible in every corner of the court:

“Honored guests. It is the duty of each Emperor to marry, so that the blessed line of the Hantei shall continue uninterrupted. And it has come to my attention that there is a fine and honorable maiden among us who has recently been victimized by the tragic dishonor which has befallen the Akodo name. It seems only fitting, therefore, that I as Emperor should restore her Honor by giving her a new betrothal which will wipe away this shame.”

Soft murmurs spread through the crowd as many realize what the Emperor means, and eyes turn surreptitiously toward Isawa Kaede, the Acolyte of Void. Expressions of alarm, quickly concealed, cross the faces of many Crane courtiers. Kaede's face, however, is a study in blank attentiveness as she listens to the Hantei's words.

“I am pleased to announce that I shall marry Isawa Kaede, daughter of the Master of Void, and make her my Empress at the New Year's Festival this Winter. The magic of the Isawa, tied to the line of the Hantei, will ensure the strength of the dynasty for many generations to come.”

Isawa Kaede bows in acknowledgment and acceptance, her face still completely controlled. The courtiers of all the Clans applaud and offer congratulations for the Emperor's wise decision and good wishes for a fruitful marriage. Not a few of them, of course, must conceal their own surprise and disquiet at this unexpected development.

If any PC has Shadow Corruption, 2 or more ranks in **Lore: Shadow**, or 4 or more ranks in **Lore: Ninja**, that PC (or PCs) may roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20. With a success, the PC catches a brief and alarming vision:

As the smiling young Emperor accepts the congratulations of the court, you catch a brief glimpse

of swirling darkness within his eyes, as though they are gateways into endless night.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure: 1 XP
Good role-playing: 1 or 2 XP, GM's judgment
The Lion succeed in delivering their accusation (for PCs who help the Lion) +1 XP
OR
The Scorpion thwart the Lion (for PCs who support the Scorpion) +1 XP
PC defeats Dainashii's attempted frame-up +1 XP
OR
PC helps Kakita Atsukure recover his painting +1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 5 XP

Honor

Lion PCs get +1 Honor if the Lion successfully deliver their accusation against the Scorpion.
Scorpion PCs get +2 Honor if they help their Clan thwart the Lion Clan's accusations.
PC voluntarily joins in the brawl at the Inn of the Shining Mempo: -1 point of Honor.
A PC who is successfully framed for the theft of Kakita Atsukure's painting suffers a loss of 3 points of Honor.

Glory

All Crane PCs get +1 Glory if Kakita Atsukure manages to display his painting.
Scorpion PCs get +1 Glory if they prevent the Lion from delivering their accusations.
PC voluntarily joins in the brawl at the Inn of the Shining Mempo: -2 points of Glory.
Bayushi Dainashii succeeds in framing a PC for the theft of the painting: PC's Glory drops to zero. Any other PCs who publicly defend that PC lose 1 point of Glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who blackmail Shinjo Taneka into returning the stolen painting gain him as a Sworn Enemy.

PCs who defeat an attempt by Bayushi Dainashii to frame them gain him as a Nemesis.

PCs who are successfully framed for the theft of the painting, but who stay within their Clan, gain the Dishonored disadvantage. PCs who leave their Clan gain Social Disadvantage (ronin). In either case, the PC also gains Bad Reputation (thief).

PCs who help the Lion successfully make their accusations against the Scorpion gain Major Allies (Lion Clan) and Minor Allies (Unicorn Clan) – unless these PCs are later successfully framed for stealing the painting.

Scorpion or Scorpion-allied PCs who successfully prevent the Lion from delivering their accusations gain a Favor with the Scorpion Clan.

PCs who learn about Hantei Sotorii's true status gain Dark Secret: Emperor is a Goju.

NPCs and Opponents

Shiba Osagi, Phoenix Clan Emerald Magistrate

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 with Light Armor)

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 3.5/4.1

Skills: Archery 4, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 4, Law 5, Meditation 4, Naginata 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 3.

Equipment: Daisho set, fine kimono, light armor, badge of an Emerald Magistrate.

Kansei, corrupted Lion Sensei, former Akodo

FIRE 4	AIR 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3
Stamina 4	Perception 5
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 2.8/5.4

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 7, Courtier 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 5, Intimidation 2, Investigation 3, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 5, Kenjutsu 6, Law 2, Lore (bushido) 5, Oratory 3, Shintao 1, Sincerity 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (Lion sensei), Tactician/Dark Secrets (illegitimate son by Akodo Momiji, blackmailed by the Scorpion), True Love (Akodo Momiji).

Equipment: Kimono, excellent katana, fine wakizashi.

Ikoma Uso, Lion Spy

Uso is a charming, smooth-featured man in his late thirties. His hair is undyed and he wears a small goatee. He is not particularly athletic and dresses like a courtier, not a bushi. His usual expression is a polite, pleasant smile.

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Ikoma Spymaster 3

Rank One: Taking the Measure. Gain a free Raise against opponent (in social or combat interactions) by making a Contested Awareness roll.

Rank Two: The Lion Cannot Fail. When rolling with Sincerity, add 3k1 to the roll.

Rank Three: Perception Becomes Victory. Make an Investigation/Perception roll at the beginning of combat at a TN of (opponent's Insight Rank x 5). If successful, may make an additional attack each round against this opponent for this combat.

Honor/Glory: 1.2/4.3

Skills: Bard 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 6, Heraldry 4, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 4, Law 3, Lore (many) 2, Manipulation 5, Meditation 3, Oratory 3, Research 3, Shintao 2, Sincerity 6, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Apparent Honor (2), Blackmail (many)

Equipment: Fine kimono, wakizashi (1k2).

Bayushi Dainashi, spoiled heir

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 with Light Armor)

School/Rank: Bayushi bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 0.6/4.1

Skills: Athletics 3, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Gambling 4, Iaijutsu 5, Intimidation 3, Kenjutsu 4, Manipulation 2, Poetry 1, Sincerity 4, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Stealth 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Compulsion (gambling), Social Position (daimyo's son), Wealth/Bad Reputation (spoiled)

Equipment: Fine daisho set, light armor, kimono.

Doji Takashi, Crane Daimyo and sword collector

FIRE 4 Agility 5	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 3 Stamina 4	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 in light armor)

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 4

Honor/Glory: 3.4/5.9

Skills: Archery 4, Athletics 3, Bard 2, Battle 2, Courtier 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, History 2, Iaijutsu 6, Jiu-jutsu (Mizu-do) 4, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 2, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (shugenja) 2, Lore (swords) 6, Oratory 3, Poetry 4, Shintao 2, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 2, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Gentry, Social Position (minor daimyo)/Fascination (swords)

Equipment: Kimono, light armor (both of fine quality), daisho set (exquisite quality)

Matsu Akotsu, Lion Gunso (sergeant)

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 in Light Armor)

School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 3.2/5.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Bard 2, Battle 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, History 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Lion Clan) 3, Sincerity 3, Yarijutsu 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (Gunso)/Bad Reputation (loudmouth)

Equipment: Daisho set, light armor, kimono.

Typical Lion Bushi (Matsu Kojaro, Yokuan)

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

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

School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 1 or Akodo Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Lion Clan) 2, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Death Trance/Brash

Equipment: Daisho (fine katana, +1 skill die), light armor, bow with 20 arrows, kimono.

Scorpion Assassins (bridge ambush)

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Shosuro Shinobi 3

Rank One: The Shadow Has No Mask.

When rolling Stealth, gain extra kept dice equal to School Rank.

Rank Two: The Shadow Has No Mercy.

When striking an unaware (TN 5 to be hit) opponent, the ninja's raises are not limited by Void.

Rank Three: The Shadow Has No Form.

Instead of calling a normal combat maneuver (Full Attack, Standard Attack, etc), the ninja may use the Distraction Technique. This raises the ninja's TN to be Hit by either 10 or 20 (his choice), but also raises his own TNs by the same amount.

Honor/Glory: 0.4/0.7

Skills: Athletics 5, Climbing 5, Defense 4, Explosives 3, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 3, Kenjutsu 3, Locksmith 6, Ninjutsu (ninja-to) 5, Ninjutsu (shuriken) 5, Poison 4, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None (have Shadow Brands against high-Rank parties).

Equipment: Ninja black pajamas, ninja-to (1k2), shuriken (1k1), nageteppe (smoke grenades), climbing claws, vials of poison. The ninja-to and shuriken are poisoned, target must make a **Contested Stamina** roll against the poison's Strength of 3 or die in agony. A successful roll means the target survives, but is in wracking pain and suffers a +10 TN penalty to all actions for the next twelve hours.

**Scorpion Actors (interchangeable)
pretending to be Ikoma Budo, Kojita,
and Fubu**

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Shosuro Butei 4

Honor/Glory: 0.6/1.4

Skills: Acting 6, Athletics 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 4, Dance 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Forgery 3, Investigation 5, Jiu-jutsu (Hand-to-Hand) 4, Meditation 6, Ninjutsu 3 (nageteppo), Poetry 2, Poison 4, Seduction 6, Sincerity 5, Sleight-of-Hand 5, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty.

Equipment: Assorted costumes, disguises, weapons, and make-up, poisoned needles (Fubu only), nageteppo (smoke grenades).

**Shosuro Sanetama, Scorpion
distraction**

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Bayushi courtier 3

Honor/Glory: 0.8/2.7

Skills: Acting 3, Courtier 4, Dance 3, Etiquette 3, Investigation 4, Jiu-jutsu (Hand-to-Hand) 2, Kenjutsu 1, Law 3, Lore (many) 2-3, Manipulation 4, Oratory 2, Poetry 3, Seduction 3, Sincerity 5, Shintao 2, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Crafty/Sworn Enemies (many)

Equipment: Fine kimono, wakizashi.

Yasuki Fumato, acquisitive merchant

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

VOID 2

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Yasuki Merchant 3

Honor/Glory: 1.2/3.5

Skills: Athletics 1, Commerce 6, Courtier 3, Etiquette 4, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Law 3, Lore (commerce) 4, Lore (opium trade) 3, Sincerity 5, Tantojutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Lion Clan, Crab Clan), Wealth/Bad Reputation (merchant), Sworn Enemy (Doji Takashi).

Equipment: Fine clothing, daisho set, purse (many koku).

Sohryu, pathetic ronin witness

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: None (true ronin)

Honor/Glory: 0.8/0.4

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 3, Battle 1, Etiquette 2, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 1, Investigation 2, Jiu-jutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Law 2, Lore (opium trade) 3, Sincerity 2, Stealth 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bland/Dark Secret (opium smuggler), Small, Social Disadvantage (ronin)

Equipment: Daisho, kimono.

Chuji and Matsuo, Tortoise bushi

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3 (Matsuo is Air 3)
EARTH 2 (Matsuo has Willpower 3)	WATER 2 Perception 3 (Matsuo is Water 3)
VOID 2 (Matsuo has 3)	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Tortoise bushi 1 (Matsuo is rank 2)

Rank one: Fortune's Favor. When fighting with a chosen peasant weapon (tonfa for Chuji, jo stick for Matsuo), the Tortoise's weapon skill is considered to be two ranks higher.

Rank two: The Path of One (Matsuo only). The bushi may sacrifice a point of Honor to gain an unkept die on any non-High Skill roll. No more than

one point per School Rank may be sacrificed at one time.

Honor/Glory: 1.8 (Chuji), 1.1 (Matsuo)/0.6 (Matsuo is 0.8)

Skills: Athletics 3, Commerce 4, Etiquette 2, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (many) 2-3, Sincerity 3, Stealth 4, Tonfajutsu 4 (Matsuo is 5).

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Lion Clan)/Social Disadvantage (Minor Clans), Sworn Enemies (Scorpion Clan). Chuji is Brash.

Equipment: Kimono, straw hat, daisho set, tonfa (Chuji), jo stick (Matsuo).

Ide Mayu, Unicorn magistrate

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2 Stamina 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

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

School/Rank: Shinjo bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.7/3.2

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 3, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 3, Law 4, Lore (Opium trade) 3, Horsemanship 5, Horse Archery 3, Hunting 3, Medicine 3, Naginata 5, Seduction 2, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 2, Umayarijutsu 2, Yarijutsu 2, Yomanri 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Lion clan), Social Position (clan magistrate)/Compulsion (sake), Lechery, Sworn Enemies (Scorpion opium cartels).

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, Unicorn riding horse, daisho set, yari, horse bow (yumi) with arrows, badge of office.

Akenui, Lion magistrate, embittered former Akodo

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 in light armor)

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 2.8/3.4

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Intimidation 2, Investigation 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (archery) 3, Law 3, Lore

(bushido) 3, Lore (opium trade) 4, Oratory 2, Sincerity 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (Lion magistrate)/Contrary, Jealousy (Matsu family), Sworn Enemies (Scorpion Clan).

Equipment: Kimono, fine katana, normal wakizashi, light armor, badge of office.

Fujiko, embittered ronin

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 3	

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

School/Rank: None (true ronin)

Honor/Glory: 2.7/0.4

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 5, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Dragon Clan) 2, Sincerity 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick, Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Antisocial, Driven (to avenge herself on the Dragon Clan), Social Disadvantage (ronin)

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, straw hat, daisho set, 4 koku.