

A detailed landscape illustration on the left side of the image. It features a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff into a river. Cherry blossom trees with white flowers are scattered throughout the scene. In the background, traditional Japanese buildings with dark, curved roofs are visible under a hazy sky.

Legend
of the
Five RingsTM
ROLEPLAYING



WEDDING AT KYOTEI CASTLE
THE 2018 L5R GEN CON ADVENTURE

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Wedding at Kyotei Castle: The 2018 L5R Gen Con Adventure

When inauspicious signs threaten to derail a crucial wedding between the Crane and Phoenix Clans, it falls to a group of young samurai to choose whether to see the match through or call it off—resulting in great loss of face for the Crane and Phoenix Clans. Certainly, not all of the guests are here to congratulate the honored couple.

In *Wedding at Kyotei Castle*, the PCs must choose whether to defend or disrupt the marriage between Tsume Takashi and Shiba Itsuyo, which would seal a strategic alliance between the Crane and Phoenix clans. Over the course of four scenes, the PCs witness the stakes of the conflict in the Kintani, the Golden Valley, including the cost the peasants must bear while samurai squabble over the land. No sooner do the PCs arrive at Kyotei Castle than they discover that the castle shrine has been blighted by death, and the wedding ceremony must be moved to a local shrine on the outskirts of the castle.

As they investigate whether the cause of the ill omen is supernatural or mundane, they stumble across a conspiracy to install the lost heir of a Lion Clan vassal family as daimyō of the castle. But will the PCs attempt to collaborate with the conspirators or thwart them? Their choices will lead them to the local shrine or the walls of Kyotei Castle, where battles for the heart of the daimyō and the valley itself will be waged.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

To ensure peace in the Golden Valley, a young daimyō of a Crane Clan vassal family, Tsume Takashi, is to be wed to Phoenix Clan bushi Shiba Itsuyo, daughter of the lord of Nikesake, a neighboring Phoenix Clan city. This is purely a political match, and in fact, the couple has met only once before, when the engagement was sealed. There is no love between them—at least, not yet, anyway—but such is expected in Rokugan. Moreover, Takashi's heart is still broken by the geisha Reika from Pine House, who manipulated Takashi into a relationship so that she could

gain access to the inner castle at Kyotei and murder his father, Tsume Retsu, in his very bedchambers. Reika was carrying out her family's revenge, having learned that she was truly the last heir to the Damasu family and would have been the rightful lord of the castle—had it not been for Retsu's savagery.

Reika escaped the justice of the Emerald Magistrates with the help of a local rōnin named Ito. The Scorpion Clan's spy network knows the history of Kyotei Castle and discovered Reika's secret, which they plan to use to deprive the Crane Clan of their castle. By putting the Crane on their back foot and preventing an alliance between the Crane and Phoenix clans, the Scorpion ensure their dominance in the Imperial Capital. To further this goal, a Shosuro actor named Yu has been masquerading as a rōnin. She helped Reika appeal to the Lion Clan and be adopted as Damasu no Akodo Maeda, and the last surviving heir of the Damasu family. Because vassal family names are not often used outside the clan, she is only ever introduced to others as Akodo Maeda, allowing her to keep her Damasu identity hidden until she needs to leverage it.

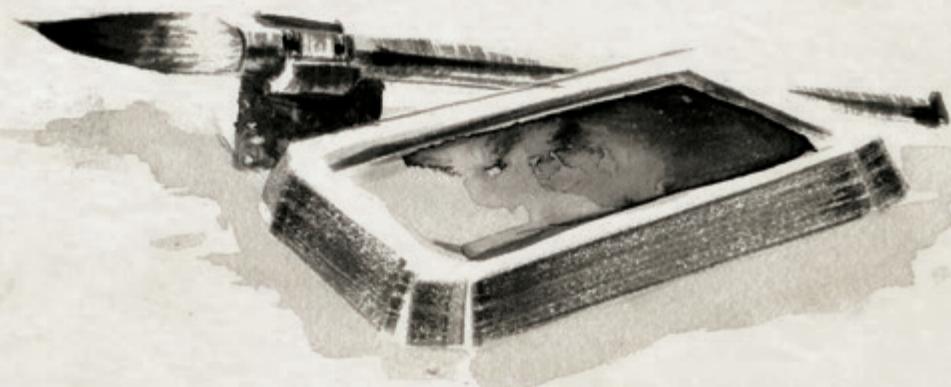
The Lion Clan does not know of Maeda's role in the murder of Tsume Retsu, nor do they realize she plots to kidnap and marry Takashi, rekindling his love for her to convince him to marry her. If she succeeds, this would force his sworn samurai to join her side or commit seppuku in protest. If that doesn't work, she'll kill him and as many of his samurai as possible, blame the massacre on rōnin, and leave the castle open to a Lion Clan attack.

It's up to the PCs to decide whether they should thwart Maeda or aid her. The fate of Kyotei Castle—and of Toshi Ranbo—hangs in the balance. If the castle falls, the Crane Clan's land-based supply lines to Toshi Ranbo could be cut off entirely, forcing them to conduct dangerous river traffic. And that shift in power could prove a golden opportunity for the other Great Clans.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure is an introductory scenario for the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*. To play, you will need to have a copy of the *Legend of the Five Rings Core Rulebook*, and GMs should be familiar with the system rules and setting lore. You will also need at least one set of the custom dice, the pre-generated character sheets for this adventure, and some pencils and scrap pieces of paper.

This module showcases the importance of choice in the *Legend of the Five Rings*, as well as the weight of consequences. The fourth scene may play out in several different ways depending on the course of action decided by the PCs, so GMs will need to be flexible and improvise as needed according to the actions of the PCs and the tenets of Bushidō.



NUPTIAL NUISANCE

Even if Maeda is successful in convincing Takashi to marry her, and they are wed by a shugenja in the presence of the gods and their ancestors, Takashi is acting against the wishes of his lord and is therefore a traitor. Yet, despite Takashi's treachery, his samurai retainers are dutybound to follow him into his union with Maeda—or commit seppuku to protest their lord's unjust order. Moreover, the Crane Clan would never recognize the marriage as legitimate, forcing them to install another daimyō to rule Kyotei Castle.

In the meantime, however, the Akodo would be able to set up shop in Kyotei Castle by sending reinforcements to support Maeda. The Crane would have no choice but to retake the castle by force after naming a replacement lord. Needless to say, the Lion approve of any plan that forces the Crane to go to war against them.

Dramatis Personae

A wedding's importance is measured by the caliber of its guests. Although the Tsume family is but a vassal family, they are being permitted to marry into the lead family of a Great Clan. The Crane and Phoenix have sent the most prestigious guests, and most of the other clans have sent a delegate or two in order to win the favor of the new couple. Notably absent are the Crab Clan, whose enmity with the Crane stretches back to the first war between clans. The Crab have deemed that (beyond the possibility of sending a player character) the journey is too far and too great a distraction from their main mission on the Carpenter Wall.

CRANE CLAN CAST

TSUME NO DOJİ TAKASHI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  

Tsume no Doji Takashi (TSOO-mey no DOH-jee TAH-kah-shee) is the groom and a friend to the PCs. His *giri*, or duty, is to defend Kyotei Castle in service to the Crane Clan as its daimyō. His *ninjō*, or personal drive, is to find out what happened to Reika and rekindle the love they once shared—even if that means making her his consort after he is wed. He sees the position of being daimyō as a burden he never truly wanted, although he can hardly admit that even to his closest friends.

Takashi is a young man in his twenties who wears his black hair in a high ponytail. He doesn't have the ruthlessness needed to govern the valley. He's a sensitive and introverted young man, who would rather dedicate his life to the arts than defend a military strongpoint. He seems aloof, and frequently defers to Nasu Shizuma in important matters, although he excitedly chats about anything related to artisanry. He trained at the Kakita Duelist Academy, although he wished he could have studied at its Artisan Academy instead.



ADVANTAGES

Forbidden Love (Reika):
 Mental; Interpersonal

DISADVANTAGES

Dark Secret (Reika killed his father):
 Martial; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Extravagant robes (Physical 1, Ceremonial), calligraphy set

Gear (other): Tea set, Rokugani pony

ABILITIES

WHISPERING WINDS

Once per session as an action, Takashi may make a **Courtesy (Air)** check targeting one character in the scene. The TN is equal to 6 minus the target's glory rank (to a minimum of 1). If he succeeds, Takashi learns a rumor about the target.

  Takashi learns one of the target's advantages or disadvantages of the target's choice.

FANNING THE FLAMES

When making a Social skill (Fire) check, Takashi may spend  in the following way:

Fire  One target gains the Dazed condition.

NASU NO SHIBA SHIZUMA

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  

Nasu no Shiba Shizuma (NAH-soo no SHEE-bah SHEE-zoo-mah) is Lord Takashi's general and chief advisor. As a man well past retirement age, he also served the late Tsume Retsu in the same role. Decades ago, after Tsume Retsu came to the assistance of the besieged Phoenix clan at Nikesake Castle, Nasu no Shiba Shizuma swore his fealty to Retsu and was given permission by his lord to become Retsu's *yojimbo*, to help unite the Phoenix and Crane in the valley against the Damasu no Akodo family. Though he still honors the Phoenix Clan and still bears the Nasu no Shiba name, he has served the Crane Clan for decades and is as much a Crane as he is a Phoenix. Despite his history of waging war, he is a devout follower of Shinsei's teachings. He struggled to counsel Retsu toward more peaceable resolutions. However, he now fears that Takashi will fail to uphold everything Retsu sacrificed to attain.

As a member of the Nasu vassal family sworn to the Shiba, it was Shizuma who helped to arrange the match between Takashi and Itsuyo. Retsu's sins weigh heavily on Shizuma, but he will die before he allows anyone

THE BLOODY HISTORY OF KYOTEI CASTLE

Twenty years ago, the Damasu family of the Lion Clan ruled the Golden Valley from their stronghold at Kyotei Castle, which lies along a merchant's road between Otosan Uchi and Toshi Ranbo. The castle and the nearby town of Chikuzen are strategically located between Lion, Crane, and Phoenix lands, making the castle one of many witnesses to bloodshed over the last several centuries.

Tsume Retsu, a vassal to the Doji family of the Crane Clan, conquered Kyotei Castle by force of arms. Lord Damasu Kojima and the entirety of the Damasu family (a vassal family sworn to the Akodo family of the Lion Clan) fell in battle. After the dust had settled, the Doji family allowed Retsu to hold

the castle as its new lord. However, the Doji had not ordered Retsu to take such drastic action, and so the Doji's diplomatic arm found itself busy trying to hold back the furious vengeance of the Lion Clan and assuage fears of further aggression on the part of Lord Tsume toward the Phoenix.

Rumors have always swirled that the castle is haunted by the Lions who fell there. Perhaps it is cursed, for after seventeen years of ruling the Golden Valley from Kyotei Castle, Lord Retsu was discovered dead in his very chambers, apparently a victim of murder. A search went out for the culprit, and after weeks of fruitless investigation, a castle guard was charged with the lord's murder and executed.

to undo the work of his late lord, for that would mean admitting that the suffering Retsu inflicted upon the Damasu family truly had no greater purpose.

Shizuma's many wrinkles and firm demeanor are among his most remarkable traits, as is his proclivity for quoting the *Tao of Shinsei*. He wears his greying hair in a traditional topknot. Overall, he appears to be a steady and earnest man whose dedication to duty makes him a paragon among samurai.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
55	HONOR	16	
70	GLORY	16	
65	STATUS	7	
•+2, •-2	DEMEANOR - ASSERTIVE	4	VIGILANCE

ARTISAN 2 MARTIAL 4 SCHOLAR 3 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Wisdom of Experience: • Scholar; Mental	Long at Court: • Martial; Mental, Physical
Bolstering Presence: • Social; Interpersonal	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Calligraphy set, personal chop

Gear (other): Katana, plated armor (Physical 5, Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear), various estates

ABILITIES

LORD'S COMMAND

Once per scene, as a Support action, Shizuma may advise a character who can hear them on how to complete a task they wish the character to perform. The character may use his ring or skill in place of their own for the next check they make to complete this task before the end of the game session.

TSUME KOTONOHA

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  4  2

Tsume Kotonoha (TSOO-mey KOH-TOH-no-hah) is Takashi's captain of the guard. While Shizuma oversees the Tsume family forces when they venture beyond the castle, it is Kotonoha who is responsible for security within the castle—and for Lord Takashi himself. Any breaches of spies within the castle walls—or attempts on Takashi's life—would be a terrible stain on her honor and glory, and she takes that possibility very seriously. Unsurprisingly, she prefers to resolve such threats against her lord by force of arms—hers against theirs.

Kotonoha is physically built like an ox and has a personality that isn't far off that mark, either. She's no nonsense, painfully honest and forthright, and her dedication to her post leaves her without any time for pursuing her own passions, leaving her painfully dull to talk to as well.



ARTISAN 1 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Tested in War: • Martial; Mental, Physical	Hot-Tempered: • Social; Mental
Sworn to Bushidō: • Social; Mental	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Yumi (Bow): Range 2-5, Damage 5, Deadliness 3

Gear (equipped): Lacquered armor (Physical 4, Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear), wakizashi, quiver

Gear (other): Plain robes (Physical 1, Mundane), yari (spear), knife, a handful of koku and bu

ABILITIES

CRESCENT MOON STYLE

When performing a Guard action, Kotonoha may spend • in the following way:

•: After another character performs an Attack action targeting Kotonoha or another character she is guarding, Kotonoha may perform a Strike action targeting them. This effect persists until the start of Kotonoha's next turn or until she performs a Strike action.

SWORN PROTECTOR

Once per scene, when an Attack action check targeting another character at range 0-1 succeeds, Kotonoha may intervene, becoming the target of the action instead.

TSUME YEMON

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  4  3

The head priest of the Kyotei Castle shrine is Tsume Yemon (TSOO-mey YEH-mohn), a forty-something man who came to Kyotei Castle after serving as Tsume Retsu's spiritual advisor. Unfortunately, his post caused him to quickly discover the extent of the Damasu ghost infestation, and their constant haunting of the grounds has slowly eroded away his sanity. As a result, whenever something bad happens to the Tsume family or

the castle, he immediately casts blame at the vengeful ghosts of the Damasu. So far, all of his attempts to mediate with the ghosts or to exorcise them have been met with failure. He is becoming increasingly desperate to be rid of them—almost obsessively so. Even if presented with evidence to the contrary, Yemon still believes the dead cranes (see page 19) to be a sign from the spirits—and he pleads with the PCs to help him banish them.

Yemon is easily recognizable for his formal priest's cap and white robes, as well as his long moustache. Yemon is plainly more at ease in nature than he is in conversation, and he comes across as awkward, stilted of speech, and even shy. He is constantly making signs against evil and offers prayers on behalf of other characters to their ancestors in order to protect them from the ghosts of Kyotei Castle.



ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 0 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Mystical Knowledge: • Scholar; Mental	Scholar's Physique: • Martial; Physical
Holy Personage: • Social; Interpersonal	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0-1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Sanctified robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 3, Ceremonial), scroll satchel, offerings

ABILITIES

COMMUNE WITH THE SPIRITS (RITUAL)

As a downtime activity or Support action, Yemon may make a **TN 1 Theology check** using Air, Earth, Fire, Water, or Void to appeal to nearby spirits of that Element (appeal to the departed, such as ancestor spirits, and other non-elemental supernatural presences if using Void) for aid. If successful, he may choose and receive one of the following boons from the spirit or spirits he contacted:

• **Sense the Kami:** Detect all spirits and uses of their magic by shugenja within a number of range bands equal to the ring he used plus his bonus successes.

- ➊ **Spiritual Knowledge:** Learn one fact the spirits know about the area.
- ➋ **Elemental Gift:** The kami deliver a small amount of the Element in question to him. For instance, a prayer to a water kami might cause it to begin raining lightly, for a short time.

THRESHOLD BARRIER (RITUAL)

As a downtime activity, Yemon may make a **TN 2 Theology check** using Air, Earth, Fire, Water, or Void targeting a threshold, gate, or other entryway at range 0–1. If successful, the threshold is barred against a particular type of entity, based on the ring he chose, for one hour, plus additional hours equal to his bonus successes. When an entity of this type attempts to enter, it must resist with a **TN 3 Meditation (Void) check** or be repelled by the spiritual barrier. Whether it succeeds or fails, Yemon immediately become aware of its attempted entry. The particular type of being is based on the ring he chose, as follows:

- ➊ **Air:** Ethereal Otherworldly beings such as spirits and ghosts.
- ➋ **Earth:** Living Tainted beings.
- ➌ **Fire:** Undead beings with corporeal form.
- ➍ **Water:** Wild animals.
- ➎ **Void:** Humans.

New Opportunities

- ➊ Instead of protecting a threshold, Yemon may protect the entirety of a sealed area that extends a number of range bands around him no greater than his bonus successes.
- ➋ If any beings of the type Yemon is attempting to seal the threshold against have passed through the threshold within the last twenty-four hours, he becomes aware of their passage.

Doji Kuzunobu

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:



As the husband to Crane Clan Champion Doji Hotaru, Doji Kuzunobu (DOH-jee KOO-zoo-noh-boo) is perhaps the highest-ranking guest at Kyotei. His attendance is somewhat perfunctory, however, as his mere presence allows Hotaru to relay her approval of her vassal without diverting her attention from the war at hand. These past few years, Kuzunobu has served as Hotaru's stand-in at countless courts and ceremonies, and the constant stream of entertainment has lost its luster.

Although he always maintains an appreciative and lighthearted air, in his heart he longs to return to the Kitsune Forest, where he grew up among the Fox Clan. That wild streak is no more evident than in his gift—what some might call a curse—of being a shapeshifter. If asked for advice concerning Takashi's infatuation with Maeda, Kuzunobu offers the advice that one must always do their duty, but love has nothing to do with duty.

Doji Kuzunobu is recognizable by his long, dark brown hair that he wears unbound, as well as the mischievous smile that always seems to play upon his lips. He is among the most graceful and lyrical of courtiers, and he is fond of paying compliments to anyone who will listen to his poetry. Only at night, when the lanterns are dim and world of dreams seem closer, can one see the hint of sadness or longing in his gaze directed past the castle walls.

SOCIAL	PERSONAL				
60 HONOR	ENDURANCE	10			
45 GLORY	COMPOSURE	12			
39 STATUS	FOCUS	6			
➊ +2, ➋ -2 DEMEANOR - AMBITIOUS	VIGILANCE	3			
ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 0 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 0					
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES			
Gift of the Forest: ➊ Scholar; Mental		Mischiefous Heart: ➋ Social; Mental, Interpersonal			
Blood of the Fox: ➋ Martial; Physical					
FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR					
Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged					
Gear (equipped): Concealed armor (Physical 2, concealable), book of personal poems, sweets					
ABILITIES					
ON FRIENDLY TERMS					
Doji Kuzunobu can talk to animals and understand their speech (though he usually hides this ability).					
MYSTERIOUS ESCAPE					
Should Doji Kuzunobu be declared the target of an attack, he vanishes in a swirl of leaves and condescending laughter.					

LION CLAN CAST

DAMASU NO AKODO MAEDA

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  6  3

Twenty-three years ago, Damasu no Akodo Maeda (AH-koh-doh mah-EY-dah) was born the daughter to Damasu Kojima, the lord of Kyotei Castle. On the fateful night that Tsume Retsu attacked, she was smuggled out of the castle by one of her father's samurai—the man who would become known as Itto. To protect her and keep her close to her home, he sold her to one of the geisha houses in nearby Chikuzen, the Pine House, where she trained to become the geisha named Reika. When she came of age, he told her the truth of her birth.

After that, Reika plotted her revenge, which presented itself in the form of Tsume Takashi, a frequent visitor of the Pine House. Reika played at being his lover, until eventually he invited her up to his quarters in the inner castle of Kyotei, commanding the guards to let her pass. She used the attic above Takashi and Retsu's rooms to traverse to Retsu's room and murder him in his sleep. That morning, by the time the castle discovered Retsu's fate, she was long gone with Itto.

She and Itto lived on the road for some years, gathering rōnin allies to her cause in the promise that she would one day elevate them to be Damasu samurai, including a warrior named Kuu (actually the Scorpion agent Shosuro Yu in disguise—see page 13). Eventually, she was found by a Lion Clan magistrate (thanks to Kuu and her Scorpion allies) and brought to Akodo Toturi himself. Itto vouched for her lineage, and she was formally reinducted into the clan in an oath-taking ceremony.

Now known as Akodo Maeda, she declared that she would be wed to Tsume Takashi, despite everyone's knowledge that the Crane would never assent to it. However, the Lion clan did not forbid her, tacitly giving her their blessing. Having heard of Takashi's wedding, she realized this was her last chance, and she set off with her band of brothers and sisters in arms, along with a complement of Lion Clan soldiers to give her support in case she came under attack by the Crane, to accept the wedding invitation on behalf of Ikoma Ujiaki. Although the Crane had sent an invitation out of courtesy to their enemy, they never expected the Lion to accept.

During her stay at the castle, Maeda intends to rekindle Takashi's love for her. She hadn't planned on the deaths of the cranes forcing the ceremony to be moved (Shosuro Yu took care of that clandestinely, by poisoning one of the castle's shrine keepers and impersonating her to kill the birds), but it results in the perfect opportunity

to go ahead with the marriage. Maeda plans to burst into the wedding and hijack the proceedings, replacing Itsuyo as the bride. Further, she intends for Takashi to take her name and join her family—they are equal in status, and so it could go either way as to who joins whose family if they were to marry. Maeda wears her long, jet-black hair in a high chignon bun. Despite her transformation to warrior, she still retains the grace and skills of her geisha training.



ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 5	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 3	TRADE 0
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ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Geisha Training:  Social; Mental, Physical	Dark Secret: (Is the geisha Reika)  Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Yumi (Bow): Range 2–5, Damage 5, Deadliness 3

Gear (equipped): Lacquered armor (Physical 4, Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear), wakizashi, quiver, yari (spear), knife

Gear (other): Plain robes (Physical 1, Mundane), a handful of koku and bu

ABILITIES

CRESCENT MOON STYLE

When performing a Guard action, Maeda may spend  in the following way:

: After another character performs an Attack action targeting Maeda or another character she is guarding, Maeda may perform a Strike action targeting them. This effect persists until the start of her next turn or until she performs a Strike action.

SWORN PROTECTOR

Once per scene, when an Attack action check targeting another character at range 0–1 succeeds, Maeda may intervene, becoming the target of the action instead.

ITTO

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  4  2

Rōnin and Maeda's bodyguard, Itto (EE-toh, slight pause between syllables) will not hesitate to sacrifice himself for her. Long ago, he was loyal to her father, Kojima, and his final charge was to smuggle Reika out of the castle when she was still an infant. Since then, he remained in the vicinity of Chikuzen, championing the peasants there—but also to protect and watch over Reika as she came of age in the Pine House.

After Reika murdered Tsume Retsu, Itto helped her flee the town to forge a new life for herself. He saw the deed a justice done, and thus not in conflict with the tenets of Bushido he has always held dear. Since then, he trained Reika as best he could in the ways of the warrior, always vigilant for the chance for her to regain her place as Lord of Kyotei Castle as a Damasu. As fate would have it, the chance eventually came. After Reika was adopted as Akodo Maeda, Itto remained as a rōnin, having originally hailed from the Goseki family—he is the Kitsu Medium's lost uncle, which the ancestors will affirm if the Kitsu communes with them.

Itto is well into middle-age and proudly wears a traditional topknot to remind others of his station. He can be always found in Maeda's vicinity on the lookout for threats, although Itto himself appears nonthreatening and approachable. He will not betray Maeda's plan, but if he can identify the PCs as being sympathetic to their cause, he may refer Maeda to them.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
30	HONOR	12	
40	GLORY	11	
20	STATUS	5	
 +1,  +1,  -2 DEMEANOR - DETACHED		3	VIGILANCE
ARTISAN 0		MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 1
SOCIAL 0		TRADE 2	

RESTLESS SPIRITS

The ghosts of the Damasu haunt the castle to this day, crying out for revenge. They are bound to this castle until the Damasu family is restored—until the last remaining Damasu heir takes her rightful place as lord of the castle. That heir was smuggled out of the castle to safety and sold to a local geisha house to keep her identity hidden, where she became known as Reika.

When Reika returns to the castle under the identity of Akodo Maeda, the spirits recognize her immediately and take an interest in her. Their "haunting" comes in the form of Maeda enjoying extremely good luck while she's in the castle. PCs who are sensitive to the spirits, such as the Kitsu Medium and Kaito Shrine Keeper, may sense the spirits' interest in Maeda during Scene 3.

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

Killer Instinct:

 Martial; Mental

Unnecessarily Rude:

 Social; Interpersonal

Worldly Wanderer:

 Scholar, Trade; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Yumi: Range 2–5, Damage 5, Deadliness 3

Gear (equipped): Wakizashi, worn traveler's robes (Physical 2, Mundane), quiver, empty sake jug, straw hat, handful of bu and zeni

ABILITIES

SCHOOL OF THE WOLF

Once per round, when an Attack action check targeting him succeeds, Itto may suffer 3 fatigue to change the target to another character (other than the attacker) at range 0–1 of him.

STRIKING AS FIRE

When performing an Attack action (Fire) check, Itto may spend  as follows:

Fire  +: Increase the severity of any critical strike dealt as part of this attack by 2 per  spent this way.

PHOENIX CLAN CAST

SHIBA ITSUYO

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  4  4

Shiba Itsuyo (SHEE-bah ee-TSOO-yoh) is the bride-to-be and daughter of the lord of Nikesake, a nearby Phoenix Clan village that was once threatened by Takashi's father. She is trepidatiously entering into this marriage in order to make her family happy and do her duty to the Phoenix Clan, but the sight of Takashi swooning over Maeda at the party causes her to have second thoughts—will she have to put up with a consort in the castle so soon? Nevertheless, she is a soldier at heart, and she sees this marriage as her current battlefield and will fight her battles with honor. After the marriage, she fully intends to assume all the duties of the castle lord in everything but name, having heard that her future husband was more interested in the privileges of power than its responsibilities. This way, the future security of the Phoenix Clan will be truly assured.

Shiba Itsuyo is a trained bushi and carries herself as one, although she looks more like a courtier at first glance. While in Kyotei Castle, she wears her long black-brown hair loose, with a golden-feather hair ornament above her left ear. Her robes are richly embroidered and look crisp and new, having been an early wedding present from the daimyō of Anshin Province. During the wedding itself, and on her way to the shrine, she wears the customary white of the bride with an elaborate headpiece reminiscent of a phoenix in flight.



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Tested in War:  Martial; Mental, Physical	Ebisu's Curse:  Social; Physical, Spiritual
Sworn to Bushidō:  Social; Mental	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Yumi (Bow): Range 2–5, Damage 5, Deadliness 3

Gear (equipped): Lacquered armor (Physical 4, Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear), wakizashi, quiver, knife

Gear (other): Plain robes (Physical 1, Mundane), a handful of koku and bu

ABILITIES

CRESCENT MOON STYLE

When performing a Guard action, Itsuyo may spend  in the following way:

: After another character performs an Attack action targeting Itsuyo or another character she is guarding, Itsuyo may perform a Strike action targeting them. This effect persists until the start of Itsuyo's next turn or until Itsuyo performs a Strike action.

SWORN PROTECTOR

Once per scene, when an Attack action check targeting another character at range 0–1 succeeds, Itsuyo may intervene, becoming the target of the action instead.

SHIBA KATSUDA

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  7  6

Shiba Katsuda (SHEE-bah kah-TSOO-dah) and Chisei, the Lord and Lady of Nikesake are proud of the match they've made for their daughter and thankful to Nasu Shizuma for his help in coordinating with the matchmaker to see it through. With their daughter's hand, they will do more for the peace of Golden Valley than they've been able to accomplish in decades. Their younger daughter, Kanoka, will assume stewardship of Nikesake after they are gone so long as she is appointed by the Phoenix Clan Champion, ensuring their legacy. Together, they are resolved to see this marriage through. Katsuda looks the stereotypical samurai, with an impressive beard and a stern expression.



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Wisdom of Experience: Scholar; Mental	Long at Court: Martial; Mental, Physical
Bolstering Presence: Social; Interpersonal	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR
Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged
Gear (equipped): Calligraphy set, personal chop
Gear (other): Daishō, plated armor (Physical 5, Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear), various estates

ABILITIES
LORD'S COMMAND
Once per scene, as a Support action, Katsuda may advise a character who can hear them on how to complete a task they wish the character to perform. The character may use Katsuda's ring or skill in place of their own for the next check they make to complete this task before the end of the game session.

LADY CHISEI	
ADVERSARY	CONFLICT RANK:  1  5
Lady Chisei (CHEE-say) comports herself with an aloof bearing, having been raised among the librarians of the Asako family and trained as a scholar. She is a resource for any PCs who need a primer on history or theology, and she does not need to make checks to recall scholarly information.	
SOCIAL	PERSONAL
60 HONOR	ENDURANCE 6
50 GLORY	COMPOSURE 12
39 STATUS	FOCUS 6
 +2,  -2	VIGILANCE 4
DEMEANOR - SHREWD	
ARTISAN 3	MARTIAL 0
SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 3
TRADE 0	

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Inexhaustible Politeness: Social; Interpersonal	Sheltered from War: Martial; Mental
Wealth and Resources: Trade; Material	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Extravagant robes (Physical 1, Ceremonial), calligraphy set

Gear (other): Tea set, Rokugani pony

ABILITIES

WHISPERING WINDS

Once per session as an action, Chisei may make a **Courtesy (Air) check** targeting one character in the scene. The TN is equal to 6 minus the target's glory rank (to a minimum of 1). If they succeed, Chisei learns a rumor about the target.

  Chisei learns one of the target's advantages or disadvantages of the target's choice.

FANNING THE FLAMES

When making a Social skill (Fire) check, Chisei may spend  in the following way:

Fire  One target gains the Dazed condition.

ASAOKA MAEZAWA	
ADVERSARY	CONFLICT RANK:  5  5

Asako Maezawa (ah-SAH-koh MAH-ey-ZAH-WAH) is fledgling Phoenix Clan Champion Shiba Tsukune's newest personal advisor. After a rocky rough start, Maezawa is sworn to Tsukune's service and loyal to her over all others. While the Elemental Masters are looking into possible sources of the elemental imbalance, Maezawa has been sent to ensure that the Phoenix are strong in their military defenses lest any of the other clans learn of their difficulties communing with the elemental kami. When he heard about the slaughtered cranes, Maezawa investigated for signs of mahō-tsukai, but found no evidence of evil sorcery.

As a trained healer, scholar, philosopher, and investigator, Maezawa deftly uses conversation to lead characters into admitting their own faults and desires. He is of advanced age, and unassuming in stature, but these qualities mask his sharp eyes and quick wit. Sent here on behalf of Shiba Tsukune, he can help the PCs determine that the cranes were not killed as part of an act of evil sorcery, if this is an avenue they are pursuing.



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Excellent Liar: ◎ Social; Interpersonal	Ulterior Motives: ◎ Social; Interpersonal
Patience: ◎ Scholar; Mental	World Weariness: ◎ Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Sanctified robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 3, Ceremonial), scroll satchel, offerings

ABILITIES

WHISPERING WINDS

Once per session as an action, Maezawa may make a **Courtesy (Air) check** targeting one character in the scene. The TN is equal to 6 minus the target's glory rank (to a minimum of 1). If they succeed, Maezawa learns a rumor about the target.

✿✿: Maezawa learns one of the target's advantages or disadvantages of the target's choice.

FANNING THE FLAMES

When making a Social skill (Fire) check, Maezawa may spend ✿ in the following way:

Fire ✿: One target gains the Dazed condition.

SCORPION CLAN CAST

SOSHI OZURU

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK: 2 7

SOSHI OZURU

For some veteran players, a Scorpion Clan samurai who does nothing all evening is more suspicious than one who makes outings into the garden. Feel free to metagame and have Ozuru react to the players' table-talk in a way that would set the players and PCs at maximum unease. He's a shrewd courtier, after all.

contacts, they are unknowingly working in concert. Ozuru has been sent to lead any intrepid investigators off the trail of the Scorpion Clan operative. His mission is to gauge the appropriate level of "suspiciousness" and act in that manner.

Ozuru's pointed goatee and mustache give him an almost sinister air, while his mask in the shape of ravens' wings is painted wood, each feather intricately carved and lacquered to gleam in the candlelight. He has a smooth voice and is a flatterer above all else, and is happy to converse with any PCs who would otherwise be investigating the Scorpion Clan's machinations.



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Excellent Liar: ◎ Social; Interpersonal	Fear of Failure: ◎ Martial; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Extravagant robes (Physical 1, Ceremonial), calligraphy set

Gear (other): Tea set, Rokugani pony

ABILITIES

WHISPERING WINDS

Once per session as an action, Ozuru may make a **Courtesy (Air) check** targeting one character in the scene. The TN is equal to 6 minus the target's glory rank (to a minimum of 1). If Ozuru succeeds, Ozuru learns a rumor about the target.

✿✿: Ozuru learns one of the target's advantages or disadvantages of the target's choice.

FANNING THE FLAMES

When making a Social skill (Fire) check, Ozuru may spend ✿ in the following way:

Fire ✿: One target gains the Dazed condition.

“UNICORN CLAN” CAST

IDE TORAO AKA SHOSURO YU

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  1  5

Idé Torao (EE-day TOH-rah-OH) is a guise of Shosuro Yu (show-SOO-row YOU), a superb Shosuro-trained actor who is able to take on any persona with ease. Their hazel eyes seem to change color with their clothing—green for Torao and brown for Yu (a Vigilance 4 character can discern that their eyes are hazel, and capable of seeming as both). Yu is the agent of one of Bayushi Shoju's spymasters and has been sent to prevent an alliance between the Crane and Phoenix. Yu has been stirring up bandit activity in the region, killed the Crane to force the wedding to move, and passed information to Itto and Maeda's band to coordinate the kidnapping and the Akodo attack on the castle.

The persona of Torao is a clean-shaven if smug man with long black hair tied into a high bun with an embroidered purple-and-gold ribbon. He has a tendency toward being boisterous, and can perform a number of traditional Unicorn songs well enough to fool most people. However, PCs can detect errors in his performance that suggest his status as a fake with a **TN 2 Culture (Air) check**. Torao is wearing thick, fur-lined gloves—which he claims are quite fashionable in Khanbuluk, but are actually intended to hide the crane-bites on his hands.



ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 3

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Master of Disguise:
 Social; Interpersonal

Disdain for a Bushido Tenet (Honor):
 Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Extravagant robes (Physical 1, Ceremonial), calligraphy set, shuriken ([Thrown] Range 1–3, Damage 2, Deadliness 4, Concealable), ninjatō (short sword) (Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5, Concealable, Razor-Edged)

Gear (other): Tea set, Rokugani pony

ABILITIES

WHISPERING WINDS

Once per session as an action, Yu may make a **Courtesy (Air) check** targeting one character in the scene. The TN is equal to 6 minus the target's glory rank (to a minimum of 1). If they succeed, Yu learns a rumor about the target.

 : The courtier learns one of the target's advantages or disadvantages of the target's choice.

FANNING THE FLAMES

When making a Social skill (Fire) check, Yu may spend  in the following way:

Fire : One target gains the Dazed condition.

Starting the Scenario: The Adventure Begins

Before play begins, welcome everyone to the game. Help the players choose characters, answer questions about the system or setting, and identify to yourself which players are likely to be strong personalities and who might need encouragement to get involved and let their character shine. After each player has selected one pre-generated character, have them read their *ninjō* and *giri* privately. Once you've had a chance to answer any last-minute questions and arrange the play area, start the scenario by reading the following aloud:

Rokugan is a land of choice and consequence—you are samurai serving one of the Great Clans, and your path is one that walks the line between life and death, duty and honor, justice and compassion. Bushi, or warriors, walk the path of violence; courtiers walk the path of diplomacy; shugenja walk the path of the spirits; and monks walk the path of enlightenment.

An informal war rages between the Lion and Crane clan from the Osari Plains to the City of Toshi Ranbo, cutting a swathe of devastation across northeastern Rokugan. This so-called “border conflict” has already led to the slaying of the Lion Clan Champion at the hands of the Crane Clan Champion, the deaths of hundreds of samurai, and countless more ashigaru and peasants killed, lost, or displaced.

And so, a wedding sealing a martial alliance between a vassal family of the Crane Clan and neighboring family of the Phoenix Clan threatens to become another battlefield. The ceremony is to be held at the Crane lord’s castle at Kyotei, one of the first Lion castles to fall in the conflict, and the Lion have never forgotten this bruise to their pride. You are one of the few esteemed guests, carefully chosen to represent your clan owing to your history with the bride or groom.

Additionally, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Each of you hails from a different Great Clan, and as such, your lord has their own interests in sending you to Kyotei Castle—interests that may might lead you into conflict with those of the other player characters. This means that some PCs might be working against each other by the end of the scenario, but not all players enjoy this level of competitiveness in their RPGs. As a group, decide whether you want to allow party conflict. Write down your preference on a scrap of paper and give it to me (the GM). If anyone isn’t comfortable with a party conflict game, we’ll run without party conflict.

If everyone chooses to enable party conflict, PCs will be allowed to try to undermine each other directly, fight each other, and might even become each other’s villains before the scenario is over. The scenario works either way, so vote for the one you’d prefer.

After the group has voted, if even one person has voted for “no party conflict,” run the game in that mode, which has the following restrictions:

- ➊ The PCs don’t have to agree about everything, and should feel free to try to make an argument to the group why their proposed plan is best. However, once everyone has made their proposal, the group should vote to decide their course of action.
- ➋ The PCs cannot attack each other or use Scheme actions or similar rhetorical means to undermine each other.
- ➌ Players must communicate openly with the GM, rather than secretly. However, remember that a PC doesn’t know everything their player does. If a player shares a secret of their character with the GM, your character doesn’t know it (even though you do)!
- ➍ If an action wouldn’t make sense for a particular character to go along with at first, instead of rejecting it, think of why it actually might make sense in context. All of the characters’ *ninjō* and *giri* have been written to give them a great deal of leeway when it comes to their choices in this story.

If no players voted for the cooperative option, let the players know that they can expect the other players to potentially be working against them. Players may pass notes to the GM, but all rolls must be done in front of the group if a check is required, even if the PC is acting in secret.



Scene 1: The Price of War

As the curtain rises on the action, read or paraphrase the following text aloud:

The dirt road through the Golden Valley was once known for its gentle hills, immaculately kept inns, and friendly merchants, but in these troubled times, travelers are as likely to meet with bandits as they are fellow samurai. Crane and Lion clan forces clash in the nearby foothills of Toshi Ranbo, and ragged mercenary soldiers look to the supply trains that flow between the palaces of the Crane and Kyotei Castle for supplemental recompense. There is safety in numbers, and as fate would have it, you find yourself journeying alongside others who proudly wear their wakizashi and clan crests.

Take a moment to allow the players to introduce their characters one at a time. Ask them to describe what they look like, any remarkable or recognizable traits (such as obvious advantages or disadvantages), and their general demeanor as they travel on foot. Custom dictates that samurai introduce themselves to others of similar station with the proper courtesy, which provides a great opportunity for banter between players of different clans. Encourage players whose characters are brusque to narrate their character's thoughts and body language, even if their characters are not particularly conversational.

Once introductions are complete, continue to set the scene by reading aloud or summarizing the following:

The pines encroach on either side of the road as you surmount the slope in the high heat of summer; their green-brown canopies would have shaded you from the oppressive sun were they not so emaciated. Where once you might have expected the sing-song call of turtle doves, the sharp caw of buzzards reigns. Then, against the shrill of cicadas, a clatter of hoofbeats rises. Shouts erupt beyond the rise, followed by a desperate scream. What do you do?

The player characters may elect to hold back and even take up hiding positions, but to do so is a breach of the Bushido tenet of Courage, and they will need to forfeit their attribute rank's worth of Honor to do so (e.g., 6 Honor if their Honor is 60). (This means that players have the option of following through with their action or not; if they reluctantly follow through with the demands of Bushido, they aren't penalized, but neither are they rewarded.)

Player characters who unflinchingly respond to the call for help are awarded 3 Honor to mark the potential sacrifice to their own personal safety. See **The Clans' Views of Bushido** on page 301 of the core rulebook for additional modifiers.

SPENDING ON THE ROAD

Air : The peasants appear to be lying to the bandits about something.

Earth : The Crane-Lion fighting has been particularly intense in this area, owing to its proximity to Toshi Ranbo. The peasants are likely refugees from such a conflict.

Fire : It's possible that the lord of these lands—Tsume Takashi—has indeed dispatched mercenary warriors to collect taxes on their behalf, but the honor-conscious Crane Clan is not known for hiring such brutes.

Water : The bandits' armor looks worn, mismatched, and ill-fitting. They have likely pilfered it from fallen samurai from one of the nearby battlefields.

Void : The feeling of death is a heavy miasma in the air, making it hard to breathe.

Below the ridge, the PCs happen upon a scene far too common in war: a gang of ruffians on horseback, clad in dinted lacquered armor and wielding spears, whooping and circling around a haggard-looking peasant family of three. They shout, *"Your lord sent us to collect the taxes early! Pay up—or pay with your lives for your insolence!"* The peasants resist, claiming they have nothing left, but the bandits are not convinced, and they draw their swords. *"Don't hold out on us, we know you wouldn't have left your family fortunes behind!"*

At this point, the PCs can intervene and challenge the validity of the bandits' claims. A **TN 3 (Air 2, Earth 4) Sentiment check** confirms that these ruffians are bluffing—they are but common highway thieves now, even if they were once legitimate mercenaries. A **TN 3 (Fire 2, Void 4) Labor check** reveals that the villagers have nothing on their persons to offer the brigands other than their meager lives.

The manner in which the bandits respond depends on how the PCs phrase their demands:

"IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR, CEASE THIS BANDITRY, YOU COWARDLY THIEVES!"

If the PCs challenge the honor of the warriors by calling them criminals to their face, the ruffians immediately respond with violence against the PCs. The confrontation devolves into a skirmish (see page 262 of the core rulebook). If the Kakita Duelist is playing, they can challenge one of the bandits to a duel using the Challenge action (detailed on page 263 of the core rulebook).

“THESE VILLAGERS PLAINLY HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO OFFER YOU! REMEMBER THE VIRTUE OF COMPASSION, AND LET THEM PASS IN PEACE.”

One or more PCs attempting to intimidate the bandits may attempt a **TN 4 (Water 3, Fire 5) Command check**, using the rules for Assistance from the core rulebook.

“WE CAN PAY YOUR PRICE. LEAVE THIS PLACE AND TAKE YOUR MASTER'S TITHE, BUT DO NOT HARRY THESE UNFORTUNATE SOULS FURTHER.”

PCs seeking to avoid conflict by acceding to the bandits' demands can make a **TN 3 Courtesy or Commerce check (Water 2, Air 4)** at a cost of 1 koku, decreasing the TN by 1 for each additional koku they offer to pay. The bandits pocket their prize and ride onward, not wishing to tempt the Fortunes further.

“WHO SENT YOU, AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?”

The bandits claim to be acting on behalf of the Crane (Lord Tsume Takashi) or the Lion (Lord Ikoma Ujiaki)—whichever clan they think the PCs owe more allegiance to (if there are more Crane, Phoenix, or Unicorn players, they claim loyalty to the Crane; if there are more Lion, Crab, or Scorpion players, they claim loyalty to the Lion; if the sides are tied, they claim loyalty to “the true lord of Golden Valley!”). (In truth, they are part of Itto's motley crew, and they're trying to make Takashi look bad while turning a profit in the process.)

At this point, any Crane, Lion, or Phoenix characters should be relayed the history detailed in **The Bloody History of Kyotei Castle** on page 5, as this is basic information their characters would know—and they're welcome to share that knowledge with the other PCs. Any other characters may succeed at a **TN 4 Government check (Earth 3, Fire 5)** to also know the terrible story of the Damasu-Tsume feud.

BANDITS

MINION

CONFlict RANK: 1 1

Bandits are outlaws who thrive in the more rural and remote regions of Rokugan. They usually form gangs because, unlike their urban criminal siblings, they rely more on swift, violent attack than on subtle manipulation, stealth, or subterfuge to achieve their nefarious objectives. Bandits usually target travelers on the Imperial roads, their scouts identifying easy targets in advance.



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Nothing to Lose:  Martial, Social; Mental	Fool's Avarice:  Social; Mental
	Quarrelsome:  Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Yari (Spear): Range 2, Damage 5, Deadliness 3, Wargear

Sling: Range 2-3, Damage 3, Deadliness 3, Concealable, Mundane

Gear (equipped): Thick clothes (Physical 2, Mundane), knife, pouch of slingstones, drinking cup

ABILITIES

AMBUSH TACTICS

When performing an Attack action against a target with the Dazed or Disoriented condition, increase any damage dealt by 2.



BANDIT LEADER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  3  2

Bandits who manage to survive their dangerous profession usually become cunning and dangerous. Often, they end up leading a gang of their less experienced fellows, or join forces with a truly lethal individual such as a rōnin.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
10	HONOR	ENDURANCE	9
15	GLORY	COMPOSURE	8
03	STATUS	FOCUS	6
 +2,  -2	DEMENOR - SHREWD	VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 2 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Age and Cunning:
 Martial, Social;
 Interpersonal, Physical

DISADVANTAGES

Fool's Avarice:
 Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Rusted Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Damaged, Razor-Edged

Kusari-gama: Range 0/2-3, Damage 3, Deadliness 3, Concealable, Snaring, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Ashigaru armor (Physical 3, Wargear), assortment of knives, sake jug, handful of bu

ABILITIES

DIRTY TRICKS

When performing an Attack action check, a bandit leader may spend  in the following way:

: One character at range 0-2 suffers the Disoriented condition. Then the bandit leader may move 1 range band.

...GET THEM, YOU FOOLS!

As an action, a bandit leader may have up to two bandits who have not yet acted this round immediately move 1 range band and perform a Strike action with skilled assistance.

AFTER THE FIGHT

If the PCs are able to drive off the bandits, the PCs may learn the following information from the peasants, named Chitsuzen, Ayame, and Kira (their daughter):

 Banditry is increasingly common, as rōnin mercenaries hired by Lion and Crane clans look to the local populace to supplement their wages.

ENCOUNTER ESSENTIALS

There is **one bandit leader** and a number of **bandits equal to the number of players**. Although they are on horseback, treat them as though they are effectively on foot except that they may move one additional range band per round as part of their move, and if they are within range 1-2 of a target, they may spend  on any check to knock the target prone.

The bandits attempt to flee if their leader is defeated or more than half of them are defeated.

The peasants are in no shape to help fight, although they will be targeted by the bandits if a skirmish breaks out and there are no PCs within range on the bandits' turn.

- ➊ If the **Bloody History of Kyotei Castle** (page 5) has not yet been relayed to the PCs, the peasants can recount the tale for them. Though they do not openly speak ill of him, they shudder at the name of the late lord Tsume Retsu.
- ➋ Lord Tsume Takashi is not able to protect the villages beyond the castle town, and when they aren't harassed by bandits, they're threatened by rival clans' armies. These peasants are fleeing for Otosan Uchi after their village of Three Trees was attacked by the Lion Clan.

In addition to the information, Kira offers her *omamori* (a protective charm) to whichever PC stepped up to help first as thanks. Tell that PC's player to record this wooden charm on their character sheet (that PC now benefits from the Divine Protection rule, below, but do not tell them about it).

Divine Protection: If later in the adventure the PC carrying the *omamori* would suffer a critical strike, cancel the critical strike as it is miraculously deflected off the charm, cracking it but leaving the PC unharmed. This effect can only happen once.

If the PCs all decided to hold back and let the scene play out, the bandits discover the tossed coin purse and exact their vengeance on the peasant family, leaving all but one bleeding out on the side of the road. The PCs have a chance to stabilize her injuries with a **TN 4 Medicine (Void 3, Earth 5) check**, but she only haggardly thanks them for their aid before asking them to leave her to catch her breath. She is able to answer their questions and relay the above bulleted information, but she offers them no tangible assistance.

HACHIMAN'S SPOILS

Player characters with Vigilance 3 or greater, or those spending Water  on checks, spot a bulging coin purse half-hidden amid the pine needle-strewn forest floor. It seems the peasants ditched the last of their savings before the bandits caught up with them. It's up to the PCs to decide whether the PCs return the coins (award them 1 Honor each for the trifling sacrifice of Compassion), pocket a few for themselves before returning the rest (forfeit 3 Honor but gain 2 bu each), or confiscate the entire purse as karmic "payment" for their protection (forfeit 6 Honor but gain 1 koku each).

The PCs may spend additional time talking to the peasants, but if the scene begins to run out of steam or goes overlong, remind them that their true mission is to get to Kyotei Castle in preparation of the wedding there.

The PCs make their way through the small town that surrounds the castle, which is bustling with activity thanks to the delegations of visiting samurai, their servants, and their baggage trains. Although the PCs may be interested in exploring the town, custom dictates that they present themselves to the local lord first and foremost, lest they be considered intruding on the lord's territory. Once they have been properly received as guests, the lord may give them leave to explore the castle town—or not. Refusing to follow this convention requires that the PCs forfeit 2 Honor due to the breach of Courtesy.

MISTRESS OJUNO

Mistress Ojuno, a feeble-looking woman of advanced age, has the voice and demeanor of tempered steel. She has been in service to the Tsume family her entire life, having served both Retsu's father, Retsu himself, and now Takashi. She is able to relay the history of the family, the castle, and the surrounding region if asked.

Scene 2: Ill Omens

At the start of this scene, if you haven't done so already, make sure to hand out the Wedding Guest Note sheets. Make sure to give each player their character's specific sheet, as each character has access to unique information!

Once the players make their way to the castle, read or paraphrase the following scene introduction aloud:

A dozen spear-wielding guards look down upon you from the walls while the great gate is opened, and two more soldiers approach you with a bow of respect. They politely request to inspect your traveling papers giving each of you an appraising look. No more than another minute passes when an old woman appears, bowing deeply to all of you in turn. She introduces herself as Ojuno, personal servant to Lord Tsume, and leads you through the gate to the courtyard and then an indoor reception hall. As you find

your seats, the sound of rushing footfalls cascades up and down the hallways, punctuated by shouts and fearful voices. Ojuno remains completely poised despite the disturbances all around you, and serves tea from a tray proffered by a younger servant.

"We ask your humble forgiveness, honored samurai, but I am afraid your arrival comes at an ill hour. Lord Takashi would have come to greet you himself were it not for the most unfortunate of calamities to have befallen our sacred shrine."

At this point, the PCs may politely inquire as to nature of the calamity. Due to their personal background with Takashi—but also the PCs would inevitably find out through rumor otherwise—Ojuno summarizes the recent events:

- ➊ This morning, a flock of cranes was found dead and strewn about the grounds of the castle shrine.
- ➋ The dead flock is an extremely grave omen, casting a dark cloud of doubt over the wedding proceedings. Are the kami or ancestors themselves displeased with the match?
- ➌ The wedding would have been postponed until the proper auguries could be completed were the alliance not of such a vital military importance. But with the Lion Clan army still at the doorstep of Toshi Ranbo, the union must be sealed as soon as possible.
- ➍ Because the entire shrine has been made unclean with the stain of death, Head Priest Tsume Yemon has had no choice but to send word to the nearby Golden Valley Shrine to request that they move the ceremony there.

The PCs may offer to help, otherwise Ojuno herself requests their assistance as friends of the bride and groom to preserve the peace. The PCs are allowed to rest and bathe, change out of their traveling clothes into something more befitting their status, and eat a light meal. (Don't forget that strife resets to half the PC's total composure between scenes.) If the PCs refuse to help Ojuno, then skip straight to **Scene 3: Feast and Famine** on page 20.

KYOTEI SHRINE

The castle shrine is small, large enough to hold the name plaques of a single family and a vessel to house a single kami. Tsume Yemon, the head priest, has gone into the surrounding forest in order to purify himself and request the forgiveness of the local spirits. And so, it is up to the three shrine keepers to clean up the mess and begin preparations for reconsecrating the shrine. When the PCs arrive, they see two of the shrine keepers are pouring water over the gravel to clean the blood from the ground, while a third off to one side is on her hands and knees scrubbing

a stepping stone. Upon passing under the threshold *torii* gate to the shrine, every character can feel a chill down their spine and the hair on the back of their necks standing up. Something is very wrong here, spiritually.

It's up to the PCs to decide how they want to investigate, but chances are they will want to question the shrine keepers, inspect the cranes to determine the cause of death, and potentially beseech the spirits of the shrine if one of them has the Commune with Spirits ritual. Alternatively, the shrine keepers can perform the ritual at the PCs' behest, even though they are fearful of disturbing the already-disturbed kami of this place.

THE KEEPERS OF KYOTEI SHRINE

The two shrine keepers cleaning the gravel are Eimi (Ey-EE-mee) and Masa (MAH-sah), shrine keepers in their late teens who have been serving under Yemon for the last two years or so. Masa speaks for the pair, answering whatever questions the PCs have to the best of his ability: When he and Eimi returned to the shrine after their breakfast, the cranes were littering the ground (they were the first to discover the scene). They are both visibly shaken and express deep concern for the kami of the place.

Yemon, the priest and their master, is especially spooked and fears that it may be the "work of the angry spirits who haunt this castle." (See **Tsume Yemon** on page 6 for an explanation of Yemon's fears.)

Shrine keeper Satsuki (sah-TSOO-kee), the keeper who is off on her own, appears visibly worried and has been cleaning the same spot for minutes. She's younger than Eimi and Masa by a year or so and is the most junior shrine keeper of the trio. If the PCs succeed at a **TN 2 Courtesy or Command check (Fire 1, Air 3)** to get her to talk (the Kaito PC can automatically succeed without making a roll, given that they are both shrine keepers), she admits that she was feeling terribly ill this morning and missed her morning duties! She's terrified that people will think she was responsible for the atrocity that occurred because she was suspiciously absent.

However, Eimi and Masa will both swear that they saw Satsuki this very morning, sweeping the steps as she is supposed to do. But if Satsuki really was indisposed this morning, then who was the third shrine keeper? The PCs may deduce that it was awfully convenient for Satsuki to be ill at the same time that the massacre took place. Perhaps the ghosts of the castle were possessing her, or maybe someone had poisoned her meals the day before.

A DANCE OF DEAD CRANES

The cranes have already been removed from the gravel of the shrine, but they have not yet been taken away and burned. Eimi or Masa can direct the PCs to the cart

SPENDING ⚜ IN THE SHRINE

Air ⚜: Satsuki has bloodshot eyes and looks sickly, as though she has been vomiting.

Earth ⚜: One or more of the PCs happen to have brought sacred incense with them, which will help to reconsecrate the shrine faster and purify themselves if need be.

Fire ⚜: The Damasu family ancestors would have been honored at this shrine in the past, and if offerings are no longer being left for them, their spirits in Yomi may have cursed this place.

Water ⚜: Hidden in a small corner of the shrine, there is an offering for the Damasu family—a small plate of incense with a note placed under it. It reads "As the Crane respected our hospitality, so too shall I respect theirs." It is signed "Reika of the Pines."

Void ⚜: When the wind rises, you think you can almost hear the sounds of battle emanating from the castle.

with the cranes, which is awaiting transport to the local crematorium by *burakumin*. The PCs may inspect the dead cranes at a distance, requiring a **TN 3 Medicine or Survival check (Water 2, Fire 4)** to notice that the cranes' feathers show signs of being trapped, their necks snapped, and their bodies stabbed. Any PC who wants to handle the dead cranes may automatically succeed at the check, but doing so means they must forfeit 6 Honor and undergo a cleansing rite before they are allowed back on shrine grounds (including the Golden Valley Shrine).

These clues point to the possibility that these cranes were killed by mundane means. Were this truly a supernatural event, the cause of the death would likely be indeterminate—they would have plunged to their deaths out of the sky. However, that reveals a more disturbing truth—that someone took the effort to gather up and slaughter over a dozen cranes in order to send an extremely threatening and obscene message to the Crane Clan.



BESEECHING THE SPIRITS

If the PCs or one of the shrine keepers succeeds at the Commune with the Spirits ritual (a **TN 1 Theology (Void) check**), that character is able to sense that there are extremely distressed spirits here, and sees the following vision. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Your eyes look upon the courtyard, cast in the pall of a vision. The dead cranes stalk about, picking at the corpses of dead lions—not the samurai, but the beasts. Suddenly, a roar cuts through the air, and the cranes turn their heads as one to look at a new lion, striding into the courtyard. The dead lions jerk to life, their roar joining hers. The cranes alight, rising into the sky and circling above, but one crane remains, facing the lions.

Color slowly fades back into the world as you find yourself on your back, a cold sweat drenching you. What could this vision mean?

PHYSICAL INVESTIGATIONS

If the PCs have investigated the shrine thoroughly, they should suspect that the cranes were killed by human hands, that someone impersonated Satsuki to plant them in the shrine, and that the ghosts of the castle had nothing to do with the atrocity but are no less pleased. Their next course of action should be to suss out which

SPENDING ⚜ IN THE COURT

Air ⚜: Akodo Maeda pours sake and makes small talk with the skill of a geisha.

Earth ⚜: Tsume Kotonoha is the closest blood-kin to Tsume Takashi, and she would stand to inherit the castle if he were to die before siring heirs.

Fire ⚜: The PCs may notice when Soshi Ozuru, Akodo Maeda, or Tsume Takashi has left or has entered the room.

Water ⚜: The ancestral swords of the Damasu family, now the prize of the Tsume family, are on display in an alcove. You catch the rōnin Itto's sorrowful gaze lingering upon the swords for an instant.

Void ⚜: For but an instant, the PC catches a glimpse of a middle-aged daimyō dressed in armor with the Damasu crest sitting beside Akodo Maeda, seemingly counseling her, although the PC cannot hear any words.

of their fellow wedding guests impersonated Satsuki—and their best chance of doing so is at the dinner scheduled for later this evening, at which point all the guests of the castle will be convened.

The PCs may choose to relay what they've learned to Ojuno, who is eternally grateful and refers them to share their findings with Yemon at the dinner this evening. When the GM feels the PCs have accomplished all they are going to or have spent long enough or is otherwise ready to wrap the scene up, inform the players their characters must move on to prepare for dinner.

BEFORE THE FEAST

As the PCs depart the shrine, offer each PC the following option: they can return to their chambers and pursue their Passion, in which case they remove all of their strife, or they can pursue one downtime activity (such as gathering information on a topic, winning an NPC's trust, or gathering supplies). Each PC who pursues a downtime activity may make one check to undertake the activity over several hours before making their way to the feast.

Scene 3: Feast and Famine

That evening, a shared meal in the Tsume main courtroom with all the wedding guests provides a chance to talk to the other guests, and thereby discern the alibis as well as possible motives of those in attendance. The dinner also represents a chance to learn more about the couple, as well who stands to gain or lose by the marriage falling through. This will force the players to decide for themselves whether they want to see this marriage through or break it—and in so doing, the alliance between the Crane and Phoenix. If the players have all chosen to work together, then they are trying to see the marriage through. But if they are playing a game with party conflict enabled, this is also a chance for the player characters to gather allies and advance their agendas in secret.

If the PCs succeeded at investigating the shrine, they should be on the lookout for someone capable of poisoning and impersonating Satsuki. They might set their sights on the Scorpion, Soshi Ozuru (and not without reason), but if they learn that Doji Kuzunobu is a former member of the Kitsune family (who, say certain whispered folktales, include shape-changing spirits among their number), they might be suspicious of him as well.

Yet, with careful investigation, their sights should settle on Ide Torao, who doesn't quite fit the role he supposedly fills. Although they do not have the legal right to arrest him themselves, they can potentially convince Tsume Takashi to exercise his authority instead. Due to the nature of the Rokugani justice system, the PCs can simply accuse Ide Torao of a crime on the strength of

PARTY GUESTS AND THEIR ALIBIS

Although this gathering doesn't have the same weight as the wedding feast itself, this dinner is vitally important to the Tsume family in terms of demonstrating its hospitality toward their guests. The great and the good are here ostensibly to celebrate the future couple, but in reality, this is just another opportunity to play at politics. Luckily for the PCs, this also represents their best chance to investigate the guests and discern which of them may harbor ill will toward the couple.

Use this quick guide to identify who's who, the alibi they offer if asked about where they were in the morning when the shrine was defiled, and where additional details about them can be referenced. These additional details are vital for roleplaying any conversation with them, including how they react to the PCs and what they are willing to discuss. Note that many of them are offended if they are overtly asked about their morning whereabouts, forcing the PCs to forfeit 1 glory each whenever they ask about the character's alibi directly.

PARTY GUEST GROUPS

PHOENIX CLAN

- ➊ **Shiba Itsuyo**, the bride-to-be, daughter of the lord of Nikesake, page 10. Itsuyo spent the morning with her parents, preparing for the big day tomorrow.
- ➋ **Shiba Katsuda and Chisei**, Lord and lady of Nikesake and parents of the bride, page 10. Katsuda and Chisei spent the morning with their daughter, preparing for the big day tomorrow. They are very proud of their daughter, and if the PCs attempt an extended conversation with them, they route the PCs along to her.
- ➌ **Asako Maezawa**, the elderly advisor sent on behalf of Shiba Tsukune (the Phoenix Clan Champion), page 11. Maezawa was walking with Doji Kuzunobu at the time of the incident, and saw someone dressed as a shrine maiden running through the woods as they returned to the castle. He then investigated the slaughtered cranes himself earlier in the day, and discerned that evil sorcery was not at work.

CRANE CLAN

- ➊ **Tsume no Daidoji Takashi**, the bridegroom and Tsume family daimyō, page 4. Takashi spent the morning with Shizuma and Kotonoha. (He confides to any of the PCs that they were discussing the rumors of bandits on the roads.)
- ➋ **Doji Kuzunobu**, husband of Doji Hotaru, kitsune, page 7. Kuzunobu was taking a walk with Asako Maezawa in the nearby forest in the morning, admiring the local beauty. The pair saw someone dressed in the clothes of a shrine maiden running through the woods away from the castle.
- ➌ **Tsume Kotonoha**, Captain of the Guard for Kyotei Castle, page 5. Kotonoha was in the meeting with Tsume no Daidoji Takashi. If the PCs attempt to have an extended conversation with Kotonoha, she diverts them to Shizuma, citing his expertise and wisdom.
- ➍ **Nasu Shizuma**, Tsume family general and advisor, page 4. Shizuma, Takashi, and Kotonoha were in the meeting this morning (which he freely admits was about what to do about the bandit problem).

OTHER CLANS

- ➊ **Ide Torao**, "emissary" from the **Unicorn Clan**, page 13. Torao did not arrive at the castle until after the PCs did, just this afternoon. (Secretly **Shosuro Yu** of the **Scorpion Clan**. He killed the cranes, then met up with his retainers in the woods for his "formal arrival.")
- ➋ **Soshi Ozuru**, **Scorpion Clan** delegate, page 12. Ozuru spent the morning in the castle town of Chikuzen, taking in the local sights. There, he briefly encountered Akodo Maeda and Itto around the time of the incident.

their honor, and he will be taken into custody. Doing so rewards the PCs with 6 glory each.

If the PCs also manage to uncover Akodo Maeda's plot, they might even be able to confront her at the dinner (in which case, the final scene changes from **Scene 4a: The Wedding**, on page 25 to **Scene 4b: The Siege**, on page 27).

PAST LIVES

To set the scene and mood, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The desecration of the shrine has cast a pall over the entire castle, and as you take your seats, even the flickering candle flames seem dimmer than normal. Quiet conversation, rather than boisterous celebration, is the mood of the evening.

The bride, Shiba Itsuyo, confers with her parents and the venerable Asako Maezawa, who all seem to be offering her wisdom on married life. The Unicorn trader Ide Torao and Doji Kuzunobu, husband of Doji Hotaru, are jovially discussing the season's fashions in fabric designs, while Captain Tsume Kotonoha listens politely, visibly regretting her seating assignment. General Nasu Shizuma is conversing with a visitor from the Scorpion's Soshi family, whose name you catch as "Ozuru," gruffly answering the Scorpion's questions about the local geisha house, the Pine House.

For his part, Lord Takashi Tsume is quietly drinking, occasionally flashing a polite smile toward one guest or another. As the latest guests to arrive, you have the advantage of being able to approach whoever among the guests catches your interest.

Give the PCs roughly 30 minutes to engage with the guests and try to ascertain what information they can.

After that time has passed, read or paraphrase the following aloud as latecomers arrive at the party:

The room itself seems to gasp as an elegant-yet-resolute Lion Clan woman takes her seat across the room from you, accompanied by a weathered bodyguard who wears no colors or crest of his own. Lord Takashi pauses, and slowly lowers his chopsticks to stare at the woman, his shock plain on his face. But to recognize his breach of propriety would be yet another breach, and the guests ignore it.

Servants bring out tray upon tray of seasonal appetizers and delicate meals befitting a Crane Clan feast, but none of the dishes are able to steal Takashi's attention away from the Lion Clan woman. Her crests mark her as a member of the Akodo family, the ferocious family of warriors. The poor bride-to-be Itsuyo suffers through the

LATE ARRIVALS

• **Akodo Maeda**, leader of the **Lion Clan** delegation to the wedding, secretly the dispossessed heir to the Damasu family and Kyotei Castle, page 8. Maeda was visiting the Pine House geisha house in the castle town of Chikuzen this morning, alongside Itto. She briefly encountered Soshi Ozuru around the time of the incident.

• **Itto**, a rōnin and **Maeda's bodyguard**, page 9. Itto was accompanying Maeda on her trip to the Pine House geisha house in the castle town of Chikuzen this morning. If the PCs attempt an extended conversation with Itto, he diverts them along to Akodo Maeda.

dinner, managing a conversation with General Shizuma, but her hands tremble the slightest bit even as she pretends as though nothing is wrong. At last, the dessert tray is brought out, signaling a time for the guests to mingle before the entertainment begins.

The woman in question is Akodo Maeda, whom Takashi recognizes as his erstwhile lover—and the woman who disappeared after his father was murdered. For her to return not as a geisha, but as a full-fledged samurai in service to the Lion Clan, has shocked Takashi to the point of forgetting his manners—and about Shiba Itsuyo entirely. Meeda has bewitched him as surely as any otherworldly being could.

AS THE NIGHT WEARS ON...

After Akodo Maeda's arrival, the GM should once again allow the PCs to take over as the primary drivers of the action—let them decide how they want to approach the scene and whom they want to converse with. However, if a lull sets in or the players seem at a loss, the GM can introduce any of the following beats into the scene:

• **Doji Kuzunobu** is a trickster at heart and just wants to enjoy himself—weddings in the Kitsune Forest are joyous affairs, after all! He'll challenge one or more PCs to a lighthearted poetry contest, which happens to involve several carafes' worth of sake. Is he trying to incapacitate the PCs before the big day tomorrow, or just trying to relax?

• **Ide Torao** attempts to lighten the otherwise-solenn dinner by offering to perform for the couple, who has little choice but to accept or

risk offending their Unicorn guest. Torao offers several stanzas of the Traveling Song, which seem specially designed to compliment the couple but also to subtly take jabs at the Lion Clan delegation, who honorably endure his teasing without so much as a frown.

- ➊ **Soshi Ozuru** is here to provide the Scorpion infiltrator with cover, and so he does his best to appear suspicious throughout the evening. He takes leave of the party on several occasions to try to lure the PCs away on a wild goose chase (and prevent them from talking to the Scorpion spy, although he does not know the spy's identity—such is standard operating procedure for the Scorpion). On the first outing, he'll take a walk around the garden. On the second outing,

he returns to the garden, but he lingers by the moonlit pool, watching the koi swim. On his third and final outing, he will venture deeper into the courtyard to visit the desecrated shrine. If confronted, he pretends as though he has been admiring one of the PCs all evening (regardless of gender), and was hoping they would join him to appreciate this beautiful night together.

- ➋ **Tsume Kotonoha** cannot abide the gaiety of the dinner while her charges are at risk, and she abruptly leaves halfway through the dinner. Is she truly making preparations for tomorrow, or is she plotting something more sinister?
- ➌ **Asako Maezawa** approaches to discuss the incident of the murdered cranes. He reveals that he

SCENE ESSENTIALS

This scene may be run as a freeform investigation in which the PCs pursue whatever leads they have accumulated so far, such as the search for a potential poisoner or impersonator, or even the heir to the Damasu herself. Because the Damasu heir is introduced as Akodo Maeda, her true identity as the heir to the Damasu family should not be immediately apparent to the PCs or guests, although some might guess as to her identity. She clearly has some connection with Takashi, and she clearly makes Itsuyo uncomfortable. If Maeda comes to trust any of the PCs, she will try to bring them in to enact her plan in Scene 4.

The actions of the guests during the dinner may also arouse or defuse the PCs' suspicious. For the PCs to put the pieces together and confront Ide Torao for his role, they may collect the following clues:

- ➊ Characters analyzing or surveying Ide Torao with the Performance skill notice that he has exceptional skills as a singer and dancer, far and beyond what is typically taught to Ide traders and emissaries.
- ➋ A character using an appropriate shūji targeting Ide Torao may learn that he possesses the Dark Secret disadvantage, although they cannot figure out with certainty what that dark secret is.
- ➌ A character using an appropriate check or narrative action can discern Torao's ninjō or giri: to sow chaos or to serve the Scorpion, respectively.
- ➍ A character spending Void ♫ on a social check targeting Ide Torao can learn that his objective in the scene is to appear innocuous.

- ➊ Unicorn PCs notice that Torao isn't singing the Traveling Song with the customary accent and emphasis on certain words.

Alternatively, after the PCs have begun to zero in on Torao, the scene may be run as an intrigue. The GMs are attempting to discern Torao's qualities, and must accumulate momentum points on their Social skill checks to learn about him. (PCs accumulate one momentum point per successful Social skill check to interact with Torao, plus one additional momentum point per bonus success on the check.) Once they have accumulated a total of 6 momentum points, they learn the following about Torao:

- ➊ Torao is working with Soshi Ozuru.
- ➋ Torao is a very skilled infiltrator, and moves with a precision and skill that marks a trained killer.
- ➌ Torao is a member of the Scorpion Clan. If the PCs already ascertained this through an appropriate check or narrative action, they are also able to conclude that his goal was to disrupt the wedding—but not in such a way as to actually stop it. With his skills, he could easily have eliminated the bride, groom, or both and made it look like an accident, but instead he simply caused the wedding to be relocated. But why?

If they arrest Ide Torao, he answers any questions a cryptic promise: that the PCs cannot stop what has been set into motion this night—or what the heart truly desires.

did an exhaustive search, and determined that evil sorcery was not the cause of the event. He speculates instead that it was politically motivated, perhaps to disrupt the wedding.

- ➊ **Akodo Maeda** surprises everyone by making a toast to "Tsume Takashi and his bright future." Coming from a Lion clan samurai, this seems somewhat disingenuous. As the night wears on, especially when most of the PCs are distracted or chasing other leads, she will try to catch Takashi alone and rekindle their bond—of course he recognizes her as Reika, and how can he go through with marrying Itsuyo when his heart still belongs to her? They don't come to any conclusions, and she stalks off before an unseemly amount of time has passed. Itsuyo, however, has almost certainly noticed. It is one thing to do one's duty and enter into a marriage of political contrivance. It is quite another to suffer through one's future husband's overt longing for another on the eve of their wedding.
- ➋ **Tsume Takashi** approaches one or more of the PCs to ask about a problem "a character in a poem he is writing" is facing. The character, Takashi says, is haunted by his father's ghost, who demands that he finish his life's work. However, the character wishes to leave his hometown to seek out his long-lost love, and is torn between his duty to his father and his desire. If the PCs succeed on a check to convince him one way or another (a **TN 3 Social skill [Fire 2, Earth 4] check**), Takashi agrees to finish the poem as they suggest. If the PCs ask if this is an extraordinarily blunt metaphor for his current situation, Takashi laughs it off as a joke in an extremely unconvincing manner. If multiple PCs wish to push him in different directions, total up all bonus successes for each side: the side with more bonus successes wins.

OPTIONAL SCENE: CONFRONTING AKODO MAEDA AT DINNER

If the PCs have exposed Damasu no Akodo Maeda's true purpose or identity—or if her arrival sets them on the path to doing so—this can lead to a confrontation at the dinner. The final scene differs depending on whether the PCs confront Maeda at dinner. The GM should not push this conflict to the forefront if the PCs choose to ignore Maeda for now—or simply do not notice her schemes! They will learn her story one way or another, so there is no need for it to happen at dinner.

If the PCs confront Maeda about her origins or scheme, she departs, claiming this insult will not be forgotten by the Lion Clan. If they attempt to stop her from leaving the dinner, Itto intervenes, telling her to flee and holding off the PCs while she makes her escape (see Itto's profile on page 9).

If the PCs offer up a sufficiently cunning plan to stop her from leaving, the GM should give each PC a Void Point to invoke a Twist of Fate—the ghostly phantasms of fallen Lion samurai rise up from the ground. They do not directly harm anyone, but they aid her escape and distract her pursuers long enough for her to slip away. Then, proceed to **Scene 4b: The Siege** on page 27.

THE END OF THE EVENING

When the evening wraps up (whether or not it was disrupted by a conflict with Maeda), offer each PC the following option: they can rest, in which case they remove all of their fatigue and reduce their strife to half of their composure (if it is higher), or they can pursue one downtime activity (such as gathering information on a topic, winning an NPC's trust, or gathering supplies). Each PC who pursues a downtime activity may make 1 check to undertake the activity over several hours before retiring for a bare minimum amount of sleep.



Scene 4a: The Wedding

Regardless of whether the PCs succeeded in arresting Ide Torao for his role in the death of the cranes and the desecration of the shrine, the PCs have a wedding to attend the following day.

The PCs make the short journey to the Golden Valley Shrine on foot, in ceremonial clothing. They may carry their wakizashi, but are forbidden by custom from having heavier weapons or armor. If a PC wishes to find a clever means to smuggle equipment to the wedding for any reason (or arrange for it to be delivered, or hide it in the shrine beforehand), the GM should allow them to do so without a check provided they can offer a reasonable plan, but the PC must forfeit 3 honor. Especially obvious efforts, like trying to arrive in full armor, require the character to forfeit 3 glory as well, and lead to the PC being ejected from the wedding party and sent back to the castle.

If any of the PCs offered to help Akodo Maeda in Scene 3, she charges them with helping her to disrupt the wedding ceremony and capture Kyotei Castle. She promises that the Akodo family will look favorably upon any who help, and that she will not forget the debt she owes them either. To aid her, the PCs will need to accompany the wedding party to the Golden Valley Shrine. They must travel with only their wakizashi, but she offers to bring one weapon to arm each person, and suggests they could wear concealed armor if they own it.

SHOWDOWN AT THE SHRINE

If the PCs choose to accompany the wedding party to the Golden Valley Shrine, six of Maeda's rōnin allies (use the **Bandits** profile on page 16) ambush the wedding party before they are able to reach the sacred shrine (or, at the GM's option, right before the ceremony begins—note that Rokugani wedding ceremonies are only attended by the bride, groom, their families, and the shugenja or priest marrying them). Neither Maezawa nor Kuzunobu are capable fighters—the closest the party has to real defenders are Captain Kotonoha, Shiba Katsuda, Shiba Itsuyo, and four Trained Ashigaru (page 314 of the core rulebook). Itsuyo isn't armed, nor does she have any armor, but she is nonetheless willing to partake in the fight to save her future husband.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

"Hold there!" comes a voice from the bamboo greenery. From the foliage emerges contingent of battle-hardened warriors devoid of any clan markings. They are rōnin—nay, bandits.

But the voice didn't come from the bandits—it came from Akodo Maeda, who has stopped among the procession and has stepped up to grab Takashi by the collar, her katana drawn. "Takashi-san, I have come to rescue you from your plight. It is our passion that burns bright—that demands to be recognized. Itto carried me from this castle as a child when Tsume Retsu slaughtered my family, but now I return as a warrior to reclaim it! Marry me, and right the wrongs that your father set into motion so many years ago. Let the Damasu and Tsume families be united in reconciliation, that no more bloodshed may stain this land."

If the PCs spoke to Takashi about his problem (or rather, his "fictional character's" problem) and convinced him to honor his duty to his father and his clan, he refuses Maeda's demands. If none of the PCs convinced Takashi of the importance of his marriage to Itsuyo or they convinced him to follow his heart, he defaults to siding with Maeda, his erstwhile lover. Takashi has no desire to be a true ruler, after all. Maeda solves many problems for him at once, for the low price of being a traitor to a lord he had no desire to serve.

Regardless of Takashi's allegiance, the battle commences, with the forces organized as follows.

THE WEDDING PARTY

- ➊ General Shizuma
- ➋ Shiba Itsuyo
- ➌ 1 Trained Ashigaru per PC

THE INTERLOPERS

- ➊ Akodo Maeda
- ➋ Itto (if he survived the dinner)
- ➌ Soshuro Yu (in the guise of Kuu)
- ➍ 2 Bandits per PC

THE UNDECIDED

Tsume Takashi joins whichever side he was persuaded to fight on.

THE BATTLE BREAKS OUT

Read or paraphrase the following aloud as the conflict begins:

Armored only in her wedding dress, Shiba Itsuyo steps forward, seizing a spear from an ashigaru nearby. “Damascus no Akodo-san, you have no claim to Doji no Tsume Takashi. I have no desire to shed your blood, but for my clan, I will not hesitate. Begone at once.” The bandits quickly fan out, surrounding the remaining group and cutting off the other guests. Itsuyo, Takashi, General Shizuma, and his ashigaru face off against Maeda and her motley force of bandits and ronin, which includes a vaguely familiar woman. A shrill cry of a bird rings out across the forest, and to the tumult of wings as a flock alights, steel is drawn.

As the battle begins, General Shizuma engages in battle with the ronin Itto, or with Ozuru if Itto is not present. The pair are evenly matched, and if the PCs do not interfere, do not roll for them until the end of the scene: make a competitive **TN 1 Martial Arts [Melee] check** for this pair of fighters (roll █ █ █ █ □ □ □ □ for General Shizuma and █ █ █ □ □ □ □ for Itto (or for Ozuru, roll █ █ █ █ █ █)). The character with more bonus successes is victorious, and the loser is slain (in the case of a draw, both perish).

FIGHT FOR HONOR!

To reject Maeda’s claim despite the grave injustice done by the Crane to her people, each Crab and Lion PC must forfeit 6 honor. If the PCs side with Itsuyo and General Shizuma, they must accomplish a simple task: defeat Maeda and her bandits. Once Maeda is beaten, the bandits scatter—their shot at glory spilled across the ground along with Maeda’s lifeblood.

However, if Takashi sided with Maeda against the PCs, he intercepts the killing blow meant for her. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The blow descends upon Maeda, her eyes filled to the brim with the agony of failure. Crimson sprays across her face—not her own blood, but that of Takashi, who has moved to intercept the blow. Maeda catches him, cradling him in her arms. Takashi mouths something you can’t quite make out, blood pooling in his mouth and spilling out across the sacred ground. Maeda howls with rage and pain, and her forces break, dragging her with them into the woods.

SPENDING IN THE SHRINE

Air : Takashi seems nervous for some reason. While it might simply be wedding-day jitters, something is clearly bothering him.

Earth : The kami enshrined here is said to be the river spirit who carved the valley himself, although his name has been lost, and he is only known as the spirit of the river. This river kami once miraculously healed a mortally wounded hero of the Lion Clan, and still grants the boon of healing. With a proper sacrifice (such as an item of great value), it might be enticed to perform another miracle this day. If a character with the Dying condition is brought into the shrine and someone makes a proper sacrifice, the kami will save their life in exchange for the item of value. This effect can only be resolved once.

Fire : The birds are especially quiet in this vicinity, as if something has driven them out—or there are bandits within the bamboo forest!

Water : A large, ancient bell rests in the courtyard of the shrine. As an action, any character who notices the bell may ring it, increasing the TN of all other characters’ Attack and Scheme action checks by 2 until the end of the ringer’s next turn.

Void : Oddly, you feel none of the supernatural disturbances you did at the castle. The spirits here are not nearly as restless as those at the castle.

FIGHT FOR VENGEANCE!

To side with Maeda against their lord’s wishes, each Crane and Phoenix PC must forfeit 6 Glory. Any PCs who genuinely feel as though they are doing the right thing in assisting Maeda or stopping Takashi from marrying the woman he doesn’t love may be rewarded with the knowledge that they did what they set out to, but they are not acting with honor according to the tenets of Bushidō.

If the PCs side with Maeda, they must defeat Itsuyo and the ashigaru. They need not kill them, but they must inflict the Incapacitated condition on all of them (by inflicting fatigue on them in excess of their endurance). Additionally, if he is not killed by Itto or Osuru, they must kill General Shizuma after these enemies are beaten. While Itsuyo will yield if she is incapacitated and Takashi has sided against her, Shizuma fights to the death, focusing foremost on Maeda.

Settle This with Honor!

If the PCs refuse to let Takashi throw his life away in marriage to Maeda (or refuse to let Maeda throw her life away on this deadly venture), they have a few options, such as:

- ➊ They can challenge Maeda or Itto to a duel to settle the Damasu's claim to the castle.
- ➋ They can try to settle the dispute with an intrigue, using the Appeal to a Person or Group objective, requiring ten momentum points to sway Takashi to their side or convince Itsuyo to relent. General Shizuma and Maeda require fifteen momentum points to persuade to any course of action that gives up their primary goals.
- ➌ The PCs can attempt some other, more complicated ploy to resolve the issue.

Generally speaking, General Shizuma and/or Damasu no Akodo Maeda must be removed from the equation to reach a resolution. These characters don't necessarily need to die, but sparing them might not be much of a favor, given their goals and desires. If the PCs fail in their efforts, these two characters make every effort to kill each other, for each correctly assesses the other as the most stubborn and vital threat to their goals.

PARTY CONFLICT OPTION

If the group agreed to enabling Party Conflict at the beginning, they may fight each other when the brawl breaks out if their objectives differ! If the group did not enable Party Conflict, the PCs should vote, and all fight on one side. If a player truly feels that their character would not act in this way, they may choose to abstain from the violence, and do one or more of the following that the GM's discretion:

- ➊ Tend to the incapacitated or comfort the dying on either side (in the chaos, nobody attacks characters rendering life-saving aid)
- ➋ Escape to report the happenings to their clan (other PCs may not interfere with this, though NPCs might try to stop them from escaping)
- ➌ Pursue a personal goal that does not put them in direct conflict with the party, such as helping a friend survive or getting information valuable to their clan.

THE FATE OF THE VALLEY (SHRINE)

After the scene has had a chance to play out, the winning side gets to see their objective through. Assuming an eligible pair (Itsuyo and Takashi or Maeda and Takashi) is still alive in the aftermath, the PCs bear witness to the marriage in the presence of the Golden Valley Shrine, with either Yemon presiding over the marriage at spearpoint, or one of the PCs (such as the Kitsu or Kaito) presiding over the marriage instead.

Then, the GM should wind down the adventure with a basic overview of what happens next. If Maeda's gambit was successful, she overtakes Kyotei Castle with Takashi at her side and is reinforced by the Akodo family not long thereafter. If Takashi is killed in the showdown, Maeda and the Lion Clan pull back, but the Crane are forced to name Tsume Kotonoha (Takashi's closest-related cousin) as the castle's new lord. If Maeda has been killed but Takashi lives, he is emotionally wounded but ultimately accepts his duty as husband to Itsuyo and lord of the castle. Perhaps he has even learned strength from the harrowing ordeal.

Scene 4b: The Siege

If the PCs challenged Maeda openly at the feast, then as the sun crests over the forest (well before the hour of the wedding), they awaken to alarm bells and panic in the castle. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The castle is in a frenzy, alarm bells ringing and ashigaru milling about as General Shizuma barks orders from the battlements. As you rub your eyes, you suspect that the worst has happened: Damasu no Akodo Maeda has returned to take her castle through force of arms. War's shadow looms long over the Golden Valley once again.

General Shizuma is available to answer questions and direct the PCs if needed. He invites them to the battlements with him, as they are distinguished representatives of the Crane's allies and formidable fighters or investigators in their own right. He also arms any PCs with appropriate equipment, described below:

BORROWED WEAPONS

- ➊ **Yumi (bow):** Range 2–5, Damage 5, Deadliness 3, 2-Handed

BORROWED ARMOR

- ➊ **Ashigaru Armor:** Physical Resistance 3; Wargear quality

- ➊ **Lacquered Armor:** Physical Resistance 4; Ceremonial, Cumbersome, and Wargear qualities

Once the PCs approach the ramparts or otherwise situate themselves, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

As the bells resound, a small group of riders on horseback emerge from the bamboo forest to the northwest. As they come into view, Damasu no Akodo Maeda, her rōnin bodyguard Itto, several other brigands, as well as Yu/Torao (if they were not arrested) approach the castle. General Shizuma gives the orders for the soldiers on the wall to ready and aim their bows at the approaching riders.

Maeda dismounts and leads her horse to the gate, where the Tsume samurai level their spears in her direction. "Samurai of Kyotei Castle! Kneel before me, for I am your new lord, Damasu no Akodo Maeda, the true heir to these lands. I have come for my castle, and for the man who will be my husband, Tsume Takashi. I honor your faithful service to Takashi and welcome all who will bend their knee to me and to Lord Akodo Toturi!"

Takashi looks down from the ramparts, longing, and panic playing across his face. His uncertainty is clear.

General Shizuma gives the PCs a steely glance before moving toward Tsume Takashi to ask his lord if he is truly contemplating such treachery to his father's memory. Maeda has crossed a line with her actions that means blood will be shed, but PCs still have several options they might pursue.

DEFEND THE CASTLE

If the PCs are resolute in their intent to defend the castle in the name of the Crane, General Shizuma puts forward a bloody proposal: they must kill Damasu no Akodo Maeda and then pretend as though this never happened.

HURDLE 1: CONVINCING TSUME TAKASHI TO FIGHT HIS LOVER

Tsume Takashi objects vociferously to this plan to kill his lover—but has no alternate proposal to resolve the situation, and grows more frantic and fervent if anyone points this out. The PCs must accumulate 5 momentum points to convince Tsume Takashi, but he receives 2 strife after each successful check. If Tsume Takashi's strife exceeds his composure this way, he begins moving toward the ramparts—and at the end of the round, he unmasks and leaps off to resolve his impossible situation, crying out his final lament before perishing. If this occurs, Maeda draws her swords and begins the attack, attempting to butcher everyone within the castle.

HURDLE 2: DEFEATING DAMASU NO AKODO MAEDA

If the PCs are defending the castle, they will have to do battle with Maeda. Normally, a siege is a long, protracted, and painful affair, but Damasu no Akodo Maeda has unearthly allies.

As soon as her assault begins, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

General Shizuma addresses the group. "These walls will not fall easily. We shall pick them off from up here, then sortie to—"

An echoing roar cuts him off, then it is joined by another, and another. From the walls, the floor, and even the ramparts, ghostly hands emerge. The soldiers at the main gate panic, swiping at the spectral figures, who give the mortal warriors no heed.

Moments later, the great gate is thrown open by hands that fade like the morning mists. Maeda cries out "I will honor your will, my slaughtered kin! For vengeance! Tsume Retsu's sins are repaid today!" The ghosts are gone, but the Lions have returned, with Damasu no Akodo Maeda at their forefront!

MAEDA'S FORCES

There are other guards and members of Maeda's forces in the castle, but this group represents the current threat the PCs need to deal with.

- ➊ Akodo Maeda
- ➋ Itto (if he survived the dinner)
- ➌ 1 Bandit per PC, substituting Yu for one Bandit if they are still alive

The PCs might square off against **Maeda**, **Itto**, and her rōnin allies (plus Yu if she's still alive)—if the PCs allowed any bandits to flee after the first encounter, they recognize their faces among the bandits now. Once the battle has concluded, proceed to **The Fate of the Valley (Castle)**. Guards and more supporters of the Lion engage around the battlefield, and the GM can describe them for flavor, but need not factor them into the final outcome.

Itto singles out General Shizuma, and the two occupy one another, evenly matched unless the PCs interfere. GMs can use a contested Martial Arts [Melee] check at the end of the encounter to determine who lives and who dies, if the PCs did not interfere. For General Shizuma roll ████ ████ □ □ □ □ and █ █ █ □ □ □ for Itto. The character with more bonus successes is victorious, and the loser is slain (in the case of a draw, both perish).

The rōnin split up as evenly as possible, generally prioritizing the most martial of the PCs first.

PARTY CONFLICT OPTION:

If the group agreed to Party Conflict at the beginning, any PC may attempt to aid the other side. In this case, they must succeed in the goals from Attack the Castle. If they are particularly successful, the PCs might even find that other members of their group are their final enemies in this scenario!

ATTACK THE CASTLE

If the PCs decide to aid Maeda in her claim, they must help her overcome the hurdles to claiming the castle.

HURDLE 1: ELIMINATE GENERAL SHIZUMA

General Shizuma is on the ramparts with one **Trained Ashigaru** for every two PCs (page 314 of the core rulebook) to represent the castle guard. As soon as they act to aid Maeda or try to convince Takashi to join her (requiring 5 momentum points and functioning as described under **Hurdle 1** on page 28), Shizuma roars that they are traitors and attacks. If the PCs already agreed to help General Shizuma in this scene, they must forfeit honor equal to their honor rank (the 10s digit of their attribute) to betray his trust.

If the PCs successfully convince Takashi to join Maeda, the guards fall back, waiting for the outcome, and Shizuma gains the Enraged condition (increasing the severity of all critical strikes he suffers and inflicts by 2). Shizuma will die before surrendering the castle, even if Takashi orders him to stand down.

THE GENERAL'S FORCES

- General Shizuma
- 1 Trained Ashigaru per PC

After four rounds of combat, **Maeda** and **Itto** are able to join the combat and assist the player characters (the rest of their band is occupied fighting the ashigaru castle guards).

HURDLE 2: STOP CAPTAIN KOTONOHA'S MESSENGER

If General Shizuma falls, Captain Kotonoha (see page 5) withdraws, attempting to send a rider to reach Crane forces for support, potentially plunging the Golden Valley into a full-scale war. The PCs must convince her to abandon this course (requiring 6 momentum points on social checks, or

SPENDING IN THE CASTLE

Air : Itto is consciously guarding Maeda whenever the two are nearby. As an action, a character in an Air stance may feint an attack toward Maeda, drawing Itto to stop what he was doing before and focus on them on his next turn.

Earth : General Shizuma is normally calm and collected, but he won his fame by single-handedly defeating a large group of bandits who wounded his lord Tsume Retsu in battle. It is said that his wrath was terrifying to behold, and took days to quell.

Fire : Itto and Maeda took a great deal of effort to plan this attack, and must know that General Shizuma is the biggest threat. They will likely target him.

Water : The ramparts are still slick with dew, and a character could attempt to push a foe off as an action by making a **TN 3 Fitness (Water 1, Earth 4)** check. If the foe is a minion, they simply fall, suffering 10 physical damage and the Prone condition. If the foe is an adversary, they must resist with a **TN 3 Fitness (Earth 2, Fire 5)** check or fall, suffering 10 physical damage and the Prone condition.

Void : The ghosts of the slaughtered Lion Clan soldiers are burning with rage, and you could let that fury overtake you to channel their power. If you are fighting on the side of Maeda, you count as having skilled assistance (add 1 kept ) on all of your Martial Arts checks.

3 if Lord Takashi orders her to stand down) or defeat her to prevent her from sending the messenger.

PARTY CONFLICT OPTION:

If the group agreed to Party Conflict at the beginning, any PC may attempt to aid the other side. In this case, they must succeed in the goals from Defend the Castle. If they are particularly successful, the PCs might even find that other members of their group are their final enemies in this scenario!

If the group did not enable Party Conflict, the PCs should vote, and all fight on one side. If a player truly feels that their character would not act in this way, they may choose to abstain from the violence, and do one or more of the following that the GM's discretion:

- ➊ Tend to the incapacitated or comfort the dying on either side (in the chaos, nobody attacks characters rendering life-saving aid)
- ➋ Escape to report the happenings to their clan (other PCs may not interfere with this, though NPCs might try to stop them from escaping)
- ➌ Pursue a personal goal that does not put them in direct conflict with the party, such as helping a friend survive or getting information valuable to their clan

THE FATE OF THE VALLEY (CASTLE)

If Maeda is killed, the Damasu ghosts of the castle all cry out at once in agony—they will be eternally bound to the castle, unable to move on to the afterlife. Spiritually sensitive characters are stuck with a feeling of nausea. If Takashi was still undecided, he falls upon Maeda's corpse, weeping inconsolably. General Shizuma or Captain Kotonoha (if either lives) thank the PCs for their service, then grimly set about removing all evidence of the entire affair.

If a group of the PCs stops Maeda from kidnapping and marrying Takashi, then the wedding party returns triumphant, with Tsume Takashi riding a magnificent steed and his new bride Itsuyo riding behind him. The rest of the wedding party follows, visibly relieved. If Maeda is dead or in bonds, she will be brought on a horse ridden by Kotonoha, staying some distance behind the main party.

If time remains, the GM can ask the players what their characters do in the wake of these events, and narrate some thoughts about what their choices might mean for their personal stories.



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