

# **Emperor's Favor**

## **Part One: Blackened Honor**

**A One-Round Low-Mid Rank Adventure for Heroes of  
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido  
Month of Shiba, 1138 (Late Summer)**

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A death in the Scorpion lands brings to light questions on the Empire's future...

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This module is written for the Legend of the Five Rings: Fourth Edition, published by Alderac Entertainment.

## GM's Information

### **THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!**

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

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

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

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters. All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate, as sometimes reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

Players will have Module Tracking Sheets that need to be filled out at the end of the game, which is to keep track of certain circumstances and events for future GM's to create a better roleplaying experience for the player. Important information to be included in the game will be listed at the beginning of the module, and information that needs to be recorded will be listed at the end of the module. Please fill out the GM tracking sheet attached to the end of this module and return it to the Campaign Coordinator. If you need an electronic version of the form, please contact the Campaign Administrator or Campaign Coordinator (e-mail addresses are available on the website).

Rokugan has a complex and rich culture that is different in many ways from modern Western civilization. The Legend of the Five Rings book details these numerous differences, but it is suggested that GMs keep a few specifics in mind.

- Family name precedes personal name for all characters; Akodo Toturi was a member of the Akodo family with the personal name of Toturi.

- Samurai do not commonly concern themselves with money or commerce; exchanges between samurai are treated as gifts, and payments are made to peasants as though humoring the lower orders petty ways.
- An event is not truly considered to have happened without samurai witness; even criminal investigations rely entirely upon eyewitness testimony.

Some events that occur within this module affect the storyline and may need to be reported by the Campaign Administrators. This module has an effective 'active' period which is 3 months after its release, and these events (listed at the end of the module) **MUST** be reported by the GM to the campaign administration before the end of the active period for them to take effect.

### **Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties**

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward or punishment. **Please consult the Honor table on page 91 and the Glory table on page 93** of the Legend of the Five Rings Fourth Edition core sourcebook for more specific guidelines for Honor and Glory gains and losses. Specifically, be mindful of the performing PC's current Honor, Glory, and Infamy when meting out rewards and punishments.

### **Reminder**

This module is intended for entertainment purposes; this means that the goal is to provide an enjoyable playing experience for the players. The events of the module should be challenging, so as to ensure the players have a sense of accomplishment, but the mechanics presented here are, ultimately, guidelines. If adjustments are necessary to adapt to the specific group of players, it is suggested that care should be taken to ensure the player characters do have a reasonable chance of achieving their goals (or at least of achieving an entertaining failure). Remember that the GM has the final word at the table, and use that power with both discretion and consideration.

### **This is a Two Part Mod!**

Remember, this is a two-part adventure, and both parts must be played in order and with no other adventures in

between. In a convention setting, this should usually mean two slots back-to-back. There is only one module cert for the entirety of Emperor's Favor.

## Adjusting for Party Strength

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

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

**Low End Party** (more than two characters are Rank One):

Shosuro Jima has only Kenjutsu 4. The Shosuro Infiltrators have only Kenjutsu 2 (which also reduces their damage with their ninja-to to 4k2).

The GM can selectively reduce skill TNs by 5, at his or her discretion.

**High End Party** (more than two combat-capable characters are Rank Three):

The Soshi Shugenja has Earth 3. Shosuro Jima has Reflexes 4 (increasing his Armor TN to 30, and his initiative to 7k5).

## Adventure Summary and Background

During their planning for the Scorpion Coup, Bayushi Kachiko, the wife of the Scorpion Champion, recognized the Lion Champion, Akodo Toturi, as one of the greatest threats to her husband's plans to kill Hantei XXXVIII and claim the throne for himself. To remove this obstacle, Kachiko sent one of her finest agents to seduce Toturi, with instructions to kill him with a poisoned drink on the day of Bayushi Shoju's attack. The agent, a geisha named Hatsuko, found she had little difficulty winning the heart of the Lion Champion, but found herself falling in love with Toturi as well. As a result, on the appointed day, Hatsuko found she could not kill Toturi as Kachiko commanded. Instead, she gave him a lesser dose of the poison, enough to incapacitate him for a few days, and fled.

Toturi survived, but for his failure to defend the Emperor, he was made ronin, and the Akodo family

was dissolved. Hatsuko, for her part, tried to hide away from Kachiko's agents, and while the Mistress of Scorpions did not find her, the former geisha discovered that her heart would not stop bleeding over how she had betrayed her love. Moreover, it soon became clear that she was carrying Toturi's child.

Unable to bear the shame and guilt, Hatsuko climbed a waterfall one beautiful morning and threw herself off of it. However, she was caught, by none other than the great Elemental Dragon of Water itself. Sensing the destiny of the unborn child within her, yet fearing that the child might disrupt Toturi's own destiny, the Water Dragon carried Hatsuko back to Tengoku, suspending her and her son-to-be in a timeless sleep. In Ningen-do, Toturi built his ronin army, fought at the Day of Thunder and was proclaimed Emperor of Rokugan. The Celestial Dragons withdrew from the realm of mortals, but before it left, the Water Dragon returned Hatsuko to Rokugan, stripping her of all memory of Toturi so that her son would grow up without direct contact with his father.

More recently, various factions within the Scorpion Clan have begun to struggle for the future of the Clan's identity. One such faction, led by the current Clan Champion, Bayushi Yojiro, argues for a Scorpion Clan that deals in secrets and shadows, but eschews betrayal as a principal weapon in the Scorpion's arsenal. Betrayal and the distrust it creates, according to this group, have twice nearly destroyed the Clan in the last decade. The other faction fights for a vision of the Clan that is deeply rooted in the Scorpion's traditions of fear and mistrust, claiming that the Clan's duty demands all tools available, no matter the cost. The struggle between these two groups is rushing toward open war, albeit one that the rest of Rokugan is not likely to ever see.

No secret stays safe forever, and there are those in Rokugan who know of Hatsuko's return and the identity of her son's father. One of these individuals has decided that the time has come to reveal the boy's existence to the world. The conflict between the two Scorpion factions has provided an opportunity to expose the secret forever, with consequences that will shake Rokugan to its foundations.

## Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- *Fire and Water*: characters who pursued the Katana of Fire are likely to have met Bayushi Kimetiko and Shosuro Atsumori (and may even have met Shosuro Jima, although briefly). Kimetiko's and Atsumori's attitudes

toward such characters will color their interactions with them.

- Characters with Oath of Fealty: Shosuro Atsumori are considered to be local to Ryoko Owari, and gain the benefits of such status at the points noted in the adventure.
- Characters with Sworn Enemy: Shosuro Atsumori are targeted for possible revenge during the mod (see the Conclusion).

## Introduction

The PCs begin the adventure in West Hub Village, at the home/office of Yotsu Seou, an Emerald Magistrate. Clan samurai have been sent by their daimyo in response to a request from the Emerald Champion for samurai to serve as Seou's yoriki, though the exact nature of their service has not yet been made clear to them. Ronin samurai have been sent a letter by Seou herself, offering employment (at the rate of two koku for the duration of service, along with room and board). As the PCs enter Seou's house, read the following to them:

*The residence that serves as both home and office to the Emerald Magistrate Yotsu Seou is either too great or too small for her standing, depending on your viewpoint. It is of ample size for a samurai-ko with no family, boasting a small garden and tiny family shrine within its privacy fence, but lacks any true grandeur. It looks much like the many other samurai residences that line the narrow street; given that she is from a ronin family, one might be surprised that Seou could afford such a home, but given that she is an Emerald Magistrate, one might have expected something much grander.*

*As you enter the house, an elderly servant leads you to Seou's dining room, past furnishings and decorations that speak of taste but not necessarily much money. Seou herself is waiting for you, a small woman in a blue kimono bearing a pattern of silver stars. Seou is quite attractive, but it is clear that she is no pampered courtier – weather and hard work have left their mark on her over many years. She smiles broadly, rising and bowing to you as though to equals, and gestures for you to sit.*

A **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, identifies the Yotsu family as a small family of ronin who were granted a family name by Hantei XXXVIII about 40 years ago. Making TN 25 on the roll (or making a **Lore: History / Intelligence** roll, TN 25) identifies Seou as one of the heroes of the Clan War and a prominent member of Toturi's Army. During the Clan

War and the battle against the Lying Darkness afterward, Seou had a reputation as a woman who could be given a task to accomplish and it would be done, but the manner in which she completed these tasks was not always clear. She is currently the only ronin member of the Emerald Magistrates, a position she gained through her past relationship with the Emperor, but her lack of any Clan ties means she is rarely afforded the respect that her position ought to be given. A character who makes a **Courtier / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, can realize that it is likely Seou has called on Great or Minor Clan samurai like the PCs (those who meet the definition, anyway) in order to bolster her own position as much because she might need their help in her work.

*“Thank you for coming so swiftly, samurai-sans,” Seou says, signaling the servant to bring tea for the group. (If the group is large, with 7 or more PCs, Seou's table is not actually large enough to hold them all; she elects to stand so that the PCs may sit.) After introducing herself and allowing the PCs to do likewise, she continues, “I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks. If you do not object, I would prefer to move directly to business.” Seou's manner is unusually casual for a samurai in her position; not only is she not a woman with much use for flowery speech in everyday matters, she addresses the PCs as equals, acknowledging the conflict inherent in her unique status.*

*“I have been assigned a delicate task. A Scorpion Clan magistrate assigned to Ryoko Owari, Bayushi Kimetiko, has been accused of corruption. Kimetiko-san is a close political ally of Bayushi Yojiro, the Scorpion Champion, and no direct testimony has yet been offered against her. As a result, there are no charges against Kimetiko-san; she has instead been placed on ‘leave,’ while her work is ‘under review.’ According to my superiors, the Scorpion Clan requested an outsider to investigate, and I was assigned because my lack of Clan ties gives me the most objective viewpoint.” Though she resists blatant sarcasm, there is an undertone to her words that suggests she thinks she was actually given the assignment because no one else wanted to take it on. “Be that as it may, I myself prefer multiple viewpoints, and so I have asked your daimyo for your aid. I trust together we will reach the truth quickly. Do you have any questions?”*

Some of the answers she provides to questions the PCs might ask include:

- **What is the nature of the charges against Kimetiko?** (Note: if any PC suggests there have been charges laid against Kimetiko, Seou

corrects them – there are allegations only, with no testimony there can be no charges.) “Kimetiko is accused of accepting bribes from one of the local fireman gangs. At this point, I do not know much more.”

- **What can you tell us about Kimetiko?** “She is a favored vassal of Bayushi Yojiro, which has protected her so far. She has a reputation as a woman of honor, despite her Clan; before the Clan War, Yojiro himself had the same reputation. One can only assume that, if true, it would make her a very unpopular person in Ryoko Owari.”
- **Who is accusing her?** “Thus far, there are no names, just rumors. No one has yet had the courage to risk Yojiro’s anger by publically committing to the allegations.”

Once the PCs have concluded their questions, Seou adds, *“I remind you, samurai-sans, that ours is not a formal investigation, and this remains technically an internal Clan affair. We have no real authority, and the moment we give them cause, the Scorpion will throw us out faster than you can blink. We must be on our best – or at least most discreet – behavior.”* With a final nod, she dismisses them, arranging to depart first thing in the morning.

## Part One: An Honorable Scorpion

The next day, Seou leads the PCs out of West Hub Village toward Ryoko Owari Toshi. The journey takes a little less than a week, and is largely uneventful. Though the Lion and Unicorn are locked in battle some distance to the northwest, the route Seou chooses stays far away from the front, and the Lion patrols they meet on the road are merely very thorough about examining the group’s travel papers. Seou herself wears ashigaru armor lacquered in the brilliant green of the Imperial Legions while on the road, her magistrate’s sash clearly visible.

Ryoko Owari itself is clearly visible from several miles away, a massive city surrounded by green walls, in the midst of square mile after square mile of poppy plantations and rice paddies. One section near the river, where several buildings look damaged or have even collapsed, has a darkened, ashen look to it, and the PCs are reminded of reports from earlier in the year, when a fire apparently swept through much of the city’s docks.

Once inside the city walls, the crush of humanity takes even the natives who have gotten used to the way the

Empire works elsewhere a little by surprise, as it always does when they return home. The space that most samurai are used to being granted by peasants simply disappears in the congestion, and though the passersby work hard to give the PCs and Seou as much room as they can, no one could keep from occasionally bumping into them slightly. “Keep a hand on your coin purse,” Seou says over her shoulder as she pushes through the throng.

The crush eases somewhat when the PCs reach the Noble Quarter, and Seou turns to address the PCs. “Our first order of business is to present ourselves to Shosuro Atsumori, the city governor. Once that is done, we will meet with Bayushi Kimetiko. I have already sent messages to both of them, telling them to expect us.” If anyone expresses a desire to bathe or change first, Seou waves the issue away. “Atsumori will have the necessary facilities, trust me.”

The meeting with Atsumori is mercifully short. The heavyset man studies the PCs and Seou with sharp, glittering eyes as they introduce themselves. If any PC has played Fire and Water and met him there, Atsumori’s gaze lingers on them, clearly remembering the last time they met. Once the introductions are complete, Atsumori nods. *“I am pleased to host you and your entourage, Yotsu-san,”* he says smoothly. *“I look forward to the swift and successful conclusion of your investigation.”* Seou smiles in return, bowing again, and replies, *“We will impinge on your hospitality as little as possible, Shosuro-sama, and cause as little disruption to your city as we can manage.”* Atsumori’s expression tightens slightly at that, but with a wave of his hand, he dismisses the group. Seou quickly leads them out into the city streets once more, and leads the way to Kimetiko’s home. (Seou seems quite familiar with the city.) PCs who met Kimetiko in Fire and Water also know where it is.

*There are a number of similarities between the homes of Yotsu Seou and Bayushi Kimetiko, in particular the fact that you would have expected both of them to be larger based on the position held by their owners. Kimetiko’s home has a slightly larger garden, but is otherwise roughly the same size as Seou’s. A tall privacy fence surrounds the house, and a mostly-maintained gravel path leads to the front door. When you ring the announcement gong just outside, however, you are surprised to see that Kimetiko herself answers it.*

*The magistrate is an exceptionally beautiful woman, though she lacks the practiced sensuality that many Scorpion beauties maintain. Her eyes are sharp and piercing as they examine the samurai on her porch,*

*but her expression is largely hidden behind her mask, a porcelain design that covers her nose, mouth and chin and looks like a painted doll's face, with a single tear falling from the left eye. "Yotsu Seou, Emerald Magistrate, I presume?" she asks, a tightness in her voice.*

*"Hai, Bayushi-san," Seou replies, introducing the rest of you as well.*

*After a moment, Kimetiko steps back, gesturing for the group to enter. "Please, Yotsu-sama, enter and be welcome in my home."*

*"Please, Bayushi-san; I am Yotsu-san," Seou replies, entering. Kimetiko nods slowly, then turns to lead you to a decently-sized dining room, with comfortable cushions surrounding a simple but well-made lacquered table. Gesturing for you to sit, Kimetiko steps into the kitchen for a moment before returning with a pot of tea. She proceeds to serve you herself, making Seou's eyes widen.*

*"Forgive me, samurai-sans," Kimetiko says as she pours. Her eyes are fixed on the table. "I am afraid I cannot offer you the hospitality you deserve within my home. My current... situation... has deprived me of my household servants. Therefore, if you please, I would like to offer you dinner at a local inn of which I am quite fond, at my expense; it is the least I can offer."*

*Seou looks extremely uncomfortable as she nods. "Of course, Bayushi-san. We would be honored to be your guests."*

The inn to which Kimetiko leads the PCs is called the Inn of the Smiling Mask and it is only a few blocks away from her house. The owners seem to be quite familiar with and fond of Kimetiko; as soon as she enters, the innkeeper leads her and her entourage at once to a private dining room. Kimetiko complements the food and recommends to Seou that she take rooms here if she has not already found them elsewhere, a recommendation Seou graciously accepts.

*As soon as the serving girl takes your orders, Kimetiko sweeps her gaze around the room. Clearly barely controlling her temper, she begins, "With your permission, Yotsu-san, I would like to deal directly with the matter before us. I am of course aware of the accusations I face. I wish to state at once that they are untrue." Taking a deep breath, she continues in a slightly calmer tone, "But you must perform your duties, of course. You will have my full cooperation with your investigation."*

*Seou leans back on her cushion, studying the other woman before nodding slightly. "Of course, Bayushi-san. Given the specific nature of the allegations, I believe we would need to see your financial records."*

*Kimetiko hesitates a moment, clearly reluctant, before answering, "Yes... of course, Yotsu-san. You will likely also want to speak my yo- that is, my former yoriki, Yogo Manesu and Shosuro Jima. The records are at my home. As I am not currently allowed to enter my office, I will arrange for them to be sent to you there tomorrow morning, along with my yoriki, so you may proceed without any interference from me. At which point you will find... whatever you will find."*

Kimetiko's reluctance stems not from guilt, but from a strong suspicion that her enemies will have somehow managed to insert falsified evidence of wrongdoing into the records. While Kimetiko has other secrets she does not wish the PCs to find, she has no intention of sending evidence of them to the PCs along with her records.

The PCs may at this point ask her any questions they would like. Kimetiko is an intelligent woman who is well aware of the way Ryoko Owari works; her answers are therefore tinged with more than a hint of jaded bitterness. Some of the answers she might provide to their questions include:

- **Do you have any enemies who might have framed you?** "I am a magistrate in a city whose lifeblood is crime. I have enemies much the same way the night sky has stars."
- **You have testified that you are innocent of any crimes and there is no testimony to oppose you. Why are we even here?** "Ah, but I have not been charged with a crime, so testimony is irrelevant. I have not been stripped of my position, I am not under arrest. I am just... paralyzed. Powerless. It is extremely difficult to fight rumors, samurai-san."

Despite her situation, Kimetiko is quite insistent that the PCs pursue their inquiries with full rigor, up to and including giving advice on how best to proceed with their investigation. Eventually, however, her sense of frustration gets the better of her.

*"Allow me to explain something about Ryoko Owari, samurai-sans. You are, without doubt, honorable samurai. Consider for yourself, then, what you might do if your lord commanded you to do something you*

*believed was dishonorable.” Pausing a moment to let that sink in, she continues, “That is life every day in the Scorpion Clan. We walk a fine line here, samurai. One slip and it will kill you.” She frowns down as the serving girl enters the dining room and places a steaming bowl of rice and fish in front of her. “Forgive me,” she says after the girl leaves, “but I suddenly find I have no appetite. Please excuse me, and enjoy your meal. Yotsu-san, I will send the files and my men to you tomorrow.” At Seu’s frown and nod, Kimetiko rises and departs, leaving her food untouched on the table.*

## Exploring Ryoko Owari

Once dinner is done, Seu announces that the group has the evening free. Should anyone suggest heading out into the city, in particular to savor the infamous delights of Teardrop Island’s Licensed Quarter, Seu sighs and chuckles. *“Far be it from me to say that Teardrop Island isn’t worth the trip, samurai-sans, but remember that I expect you here and functional at sunrise tomorrow.”* She refuses to accompany anyone who leaves, preferring to stay at the inn and make notes on the investigation.

Teardrop Island is home to the vast majority of the city’s legal dens of vice and iniquity, where nearly every variety of pleasure and perversion is available to samurai who have the coin to spend. The island’s sole entrance is through “Swords Polished,” a small building where a trio of exceptionally polite but extremely firm ronin take all manner of weapons (including a shugenja’s spell scrolls) for “polishing,” in order to keep the peace within the quarter itself. Swords Polished does actually employ several skilled artisans who perform all sorts of respectful maintenance on the weapons in their care, including sharpening and polishing katana blades, replacing metal studs on tetsubo, and retouching the kanji on spell scrolls with sacred ink. Swords Polished also provides basket hats for samurai who wish their visits to the quarter to be discreet. Once within, PCs may fulfill nearly any illicit desire they might possess. Samurai with a Compulsion related to a vice of any kind must immediately check to see if it overcomes them once they enter, and should a PC choose (or be forced by a Disadvantage) to overindulge, the effects should be felt throughout the remainder of the adventure in the form of a +5 to all TNs. (It will also cost the samurai anywhere from 1 to 5 koku, depending on how exotic their preferred experience might be, and an amount of Honor equal to their current Honor rank.)

Other areas of town that might draw the attention of the PCs include the Temple Quarter, where several large temples and dozens of smaller ones can be found, the largest being the temple to Daikoku in the center of the district, and the Merchant’s Quarter, where even as night falls commerce from across the Empire crosses paths in the shadows of warehouses burned and collapsed in the recent fires. Any item not restricted by Imperial law (including gaijin trade goods) is readily available here, and even some restricted goods might be found by those who know where to look, though at prices that would make even most samurai blanch.

Regardless, any PC who goes out to explore the city can hunt rumors that might be relevant to the allegations being made against Kimetiko. A **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, TN 20, reveals the following information (Scorpion PCs gain a Free Raise on this roll, and local samurai gain an additional Free Raise, for a total of two Free Raises):

- Kimetiko is widely and seriously disliked among the city’s nobility. She is an effective magistrate who has successfully prosecuted a number of cases against corrupt Scorpion samurai, some in fairly high positions. (There are a few Scorpion who consider her a useful weapon against their enemies, though none who would miss her even so.) Most recently, she was involved in some kind of confrontation with Shosuro Atsumori’s youngest son on the night of the fires this past spring – there are no details, but no one imagines it improved her relationship with the city’s governor. The only thing that has so far kept her alive and functioning is her extremely close ties with Bayushi Yojiro, the Clan Champion. Until the current accusations came to light, the samurai she had investigated were apparently worth less to those in power than the price of Yojiro’s anger.

Achieving a TN 30 grants the following additional information:

- Over the last several months, several Scorpion samurai known to be either political allies of Bayushi Yojiro or reputed to be of an atypically honorable bent have suffered political misfortune, physical ailment or legal action – or all of the above. Kimetiko is just the latest example of this. At the same time, however, several Scorpions whose reputations paint them as among those most willing to do whatever it takes, no matter how dishonorable, for the sake of their goals have suffered similar

turns of fate. Among the most unusual elements of this rumor is that so many people are willing to discuss it, even to those outside the Clan.

Regardless of how the samurai spend their evening, they should be back at the Inn of the Smiling Mask by not long after midnight.

## Part Two: The Price is Paid

Not long after any samurai who went out on the town return to the inn, the group is awakened by hammering on the door to Seou's room. Peering outside, they discover a Scorpion bushi in light armor, his face covered by a mask painted to look somewhat like his own, but with a mouth sewn shut.

*Seou slides her door open, and the faint scraping of metal against metal can be heard from something she is holding warily in her right hand as she looks out into the hall. The Scorpion intruder immediately bows in contrition, but does not wait for her to speak before bursting out, "Forgive me for waking you, Yotsu-sama, but I came as soon as I heard: Bayushi Kimetiko is dead – murdered in her home earlier tonight." Seou stares at the man, then curses under her breath and slams her door shut. The Scorpion looks confused for a moment, then relieved when her door opens again, revealing Seou shrugging into her green magistrate's armor. "Show me," she tells the Scorpion, and gestures for you all to follow.*

As the PCs travel the short distance to Kimetiko's home, the Scorpion introduces himself as Yogo Manesu. *"I am – I was one of Kimetiko-sama's yoriki,"* he explains, his voice tightly controlled. When Seou asks him to describe the scene, he answers, *"It... it looked like a gang meeting gone bad, Yotsu-sama. I... Kimetiko-sama was a most honorable woman, I... I had not believed the rumors..."*

A character making an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, TN 20, can see that Manesu's reaction to Kimetiko's death is quite strong, suggesting an emotional attachment more potent than would be appropriate for a man in his position. Seou seems to pick up on this, for if the PCs do not say anything, her reply is a quiet, *"Don't make any judgments until you have all the facts in front of you, Yogo-san. Kimetiko-san would have told you the same, as you well know."* This reply seems to provide some solace to Manesu, and he gets a better grip on his emotions.

If a PC wonders whether a Yogo in love with a murder victim might be connected to the death via his Yogo curse, the PC may make a  **Lore: Heraldry or Lore: Scorpion / Intelligence** roll, TN 30. Samurai with Oath of Fealty: Shosuro Atsumori gain three Free Raises on this roll, Yogo characters gain two and other Scorpion gain one Free Raise. With a success, the PC recalls that Manesu has already resolved his Yogo curse, having betrayed his beloved father to the authorities three years ago when he discovered his father was embezzling money from the Clan. It was that act that drew Kimetiko's attention to him and eventually earned him his current position. It is said that Manesu, like Kimetiko, is a junshin, an honorable Scorpion. (Alternatively, hunting rumors requires a few hours of questions **Courter [Gossip] / Awareness** roll, TN 15, and acquires the same information.)

If any of the PCs asks who else knows about the murder or whether other Scorpion magistrates have been summoned, Manesu half-shrugs. *"I arrived just moments after the body was discovered by a neighbor; I know there was a patrol of bushi in the area, so the house is likely sealed by now, but I came directly here, and well... this area was actually part of Kimetiko-sama's territory, so the nearest magistrate is some distance away."*

Due to the proximity of the Inn of the Smiling Mask to Kimetiko's home, it takes only a few minutes to reach the house the PCs left just a few hours before. A pair of stern-looking Shosuro bushi stand outside the gate, and as Seou leads the group up toward them, one steps forward, raising a hand. *"Forgive me, samurai-samas, but this residence is sealed at this time."*

Seou pulls her magistrate sash out of her pouch and holds it out, almost in the bushi's face. *"I am Yotsu Seou, Emerald Magistrate, and the woman killed in this house was under investigation by me! I am on an assignment granted by the Emerald Champion, and you will let me pass!"* she snaps.

Seou has to make a **Intimidation / Awareness** roll, TN 20, to get in the door. The TN is 25, but her sash grants her a Free Raise. If desired, the PCs can assist her by roleplaying an appeal and making **Intimidation (Bullying)** or **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** rolls of their own at TN 20 – each success grants Seou an additional Free Raise. Should Seou fail, Manesu steps up and bribes the guards; the shame causes him to leave the scene immediately afterward, however, depriving the PCs of his assistance for the remainder of the adventure. If he does not have to leave, Manesu will remain outside the house, attempting to keep the

Shosuro bushi distracted from considering whether they made a mistake letting Seou in, unless the PCs or Seou calls for him. He does not wish to see Kimetiko's body again.

## The Crime Scene

Once inside, the PCs get their first look at the scene. Not only have the PCs arrived before the Shosuro magistrates, but they have also beaten the arrival of the eta, meaning the murder scene has essentially been untouched so far.

*The contrast between the quiet, ordered house you were in just hours ago and the scene of destruction and death now before you is shocking. Paper walls have been slashed, pottery shattered, and furniture knocked over. In the middle of her sitting room, Kimetiko lays face-up, eyes staring vacantly at the ceiling, a deep sword cut across most of her abdomen and her bloodied katana just a few inches from her lifeless fingers. Around her are three other bodies, all young men in plain brown kimono with bands stitched with a stylized red flame around their left arms. They bear the wounds of Kimetiko's sword, but their own weapons are not to be found. The scene is silent and still, though the flies have already begun to buzz into the room.*

There are a number of clues to be found here.

A character who examines Kimetiko's body should make an **Investigation** or **Medicine / Perception** roll. Based on the results, the character receives the following information:

- (TN 15) Rigor mortis has not yet set in on the body, suggesting that she died no more than three hours ago.
- (TN 20) The sword cut across her abdomen was the fatal blow. It was almost certainly made by a katana.
- (TN 25) She has several other smaller wounds, all of which were made by swords, but may not have all been made by katana. Some of the cuts appear to have been made by a straight blade, rather than one with the traditional katana curve.

Examining the other three bodies allows the PC to make a **Lore: Underworld** or **Lore: Scorpion / Intelligence** roll, TN 20, to recognize the armbands as the sign of one of the local firefighter gangs, the Strong Arm Firemen. (Shosuro characters receive a Free Raise on this roll; characters with Oath of Fealty: Shosuro

Atsumori know this automatically.) If no PC recognizes the bands, Manesu will do so if asked. They may also make a **Perception / Investigation** roll, with results as follows:

- (TN 15) All three were killed by katana, two with cuts to the stomach and the third with a slash across the throat.
- (TN 20) The two who were killed by stomach slashes actually have two cuts, either overlapping or very close parallels, along the wounds that have opened their kimono. One cut – the one made by a katana – is quite deep, while the other is very shallow, too much so to determine what weapon was used to make it. The cuts on the third are singular.
- (TN 25) Although the one killed by a throat strike has blood all over the front of his kimono, there is almost no blood on the outside of the kimono of the other two, and very little on the inside as well, although blood covers their skin under the clothes.

Alternatively, a character can also use **Medicine / Perception** to examine the bodies.

- (TN 15) Rigor mortis has not yet set in on the two who were killed by stomach slashes, indicating that they were killed no more than three hours ago. It *has*, however, started to set in on the third.
- (TN 20) The two who were killed by stomach slashes actually have two cuts, either overlapping or very close parallels, along the wounds that have opened their kimono. One cut – the one made by a katana – is quite deep, while the other is very shallow, too much so to determine what weapon was used to make it. The cuts on the third are singular.
- (TN 25) The shallower cuts show no signs of having bled, suggesting that they were made postmortem.

Finally, searching the house itself can also yield clues with an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll:

- (TN 15) After the battle was over, the place was thoroughly searched – several hidden storage spaces (a loose floorboard in the bedroom, a hollow in the exterior wall near the side door, etc.) have been opened and any contents retrieved. There is no sign of Kimetiko's financial records, nor of any koku she might have had in the house.

- (TN 20) The attack consisted of several invaders – definitely more than the three visible ones, possibly as many as half a dozen – entering from both the house’s front door and the smaller side entrance. Kimetiko fought back, but was likely cut down fairly quickly. (A **Battle / Perception** roll, at the same TN, can also learn this information.)
- (TN 25) In addition to whatever might have been taken during the search, a PC who makes this TN notices two items in the house that were not present before: a samisen in the corner near the front door, and a finely-made tea set in the kitchen near the stove. Both are lacquered and painted with the same motif: a crane and dragon intertwined, with vines of ivy as a border around them. (If no PC notices these items, Seou does.)

The design is an emblem of the House of Celestial Beauties, a very upscale geisha house situated in the Noble Quarter. A **Lore: Underworld / Intelligence** roll, TN 20, is enough to know the information, though asking a local like Manesu or a PC with Oath of Fealty: Shosuro Atsumori will also work. If a character makes the roll, they will also know that the House of Celestial Beauties is actually owned by the Shosuro family, and is not typically known for working with any of the fireman gangs. Making a TN 30 on the roll reveals that the House specializes in foreign dignitaries and is used by the Scorpion as part of their information-gathering and blackmail apparatus against the other Clans. (Scorpion characters need only make a TN 20 to know this, but are unlikely to share the knowledge.)

## Putting the Pieces Together

Once the physical evidence has been observed, if the PCs are having trouble assembling it into a coherent picture, they may make an **Investigation / Intelligence** roll, TN 30, to determine the following:

- Only one of the three attackers was actually wearing the kimono he is now in when he died, but he was killed before the attack and placed here.
- The other two attackers were indeed killed here, most likely by Kimetiko, but they were wearing different clothes. After they died, they were dressed in the kimono they are currently wearing, which was then cut to have the slashes in the fabric match the wounds on their bodies (cutting the kimono while on the bodies left the shallower second cuts).

The obvious conclusion is that the crime scene was staged in order to frame the Strong Arm Firemen for the crime.

## Asking Around

As Manesu mentioned that the body was discovered by a local, the PCs might wish to interview that person. They might also wish to simply canvass the neighbors for additional information. Either way leads them to Shosuro Chindan, an exceptionally nosy samurai-ko who lives in a slightly larger house directly across the street from Kimetiko. When the PCs first see Chindan, she is peering over her own privacy fence (with the help of a stone bench placed handily alongside it) at the goings-on in Kimetiko’s home. As soon as she sees that the PCs are looking at her, she hastily steps off the bench and out of sight. As soon as the PCs knock on her gate, however, she opens it, clearly having been standing right there.

Chindan is a vain and shallow woman, interested primarily in the petty dramas of her neighbors as a means to ignore her own dreadfully dull existence. She reads too many pillow books and not enough anything else, and tends to view the whole world as though it were a kabuki play. As a result, though she is initially unwilling to admit she was snooping into Kimetiko’s affairs, it is fairly simple to get her talking. Any roleplayed attempt at flattery or a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll, TN 15, are enough to get the following information from her in her fluttery, breathy voice:

- She saw a woman wearing a very fine kimono – not Kimetiko – enter Kimetiko’s home just a few minutes before the attack occurred. The woman was carrying a samisen and a wicker basket, the kind one often uses to carry tea sets. If specifically asked if the woman looked like a geisha, Chindan agrees that she did.
- Once the woman entered Kimetiko’s house, Chindan heard shouting – Kimetiko, she believes, though she couldn’t make out words.
- Just a couple minutes later, she also saw several men wearing black kimono (she can confirm that the kimono were not brown, and she saw no armbands) enter the house as well. There were sounds of fighting, though not for long, and then a short silence; then the men slipped back out into the night. All the men were careful to stay hidden in the dark shadows along the street, and she could see none of them clearly enough to identify them.

She is also not sure how many there were, though she thinks it was probably five or six.

- Once the men were gone, there was another brief moment of silence and stillness, then the woman in the fine kimono reappeared at the front door, looking frightened, and hurried up the street, clutching her sandals. She wasn't carrying her samisen or basket anymore.

If an interrogating PC asks her why she did not become directly involved, Chindan looks scandalized. "Why would I shame myself by intruding on someone else's affairs? How can you suggest such a thing?" she asks. That essentially ends her willing cooperation.

## Questioning the Kami

Finally, shugenja characters might wish to ask the kami for information on what occurred. Though magic cannot be used to provide testimony directly, it might well point investigators in the right direction to acquire such testimony. There are no usable Fire kami in Kimetiko's home, but the Air and Earth kami are present in abundance, and the broken remnant of a flower vase holds a small amount of Water as well.

The Air and Earth kami will identify Kimetiko's killers as "men with steel, whose souls were filled with Air" (the Air kami says this with approval, the Earth with disdain). With additional questions or Raises for clarity, they can also tell the shugenja that they hid their faces "until they died, but afterward they changed the colors on their empty shells." If the PC should ask about Kimetiko's other visitor, the kami will confirm the presence of another woman, not one who participated in the attack, who left after the killers did. With additional Raises for clarity, the kami will add that she was terrified and in hiding throughout the attack.

Using the water in the vase to Commune allows the shugenja to see the attack as it occurred, though with a somewhat narrow scope due to the small amount of water left. If the shugenja asks to see how Kimetiko died, they see the following scene:

***Kimetiko stands, hands on her hips, looking annoyed as she faces toward her kitchen. Suddenly she turns, looking surprised, and she pulls her katana from its nearby rack. She shouts at someone you cannot see, her expression one of anger, and then the attack begins. Several men in black kimono, their faces covered in plain black masks, are visible as Kimetiko fights. She manages to cut down two before another – the only one carrying a katana – kills her with a slash***

***across her torso. She falls, her katana tumbling from her fingers, as blood begins to pool around her. Just before the vision fades, another body tumbles to the ground next to her, a man in a brown kimono and fireman's armband.***

Asking about other visitors shows this scene:

***Kimetiko is talking angrily to another woman, a beautiful woman with a painted white face and finely tailored kimono. The visitor is carrying a samisen and a wicker basket, and she sets the instrument down in the corner while Kimetiko continues her rant. With a smile, the woman raises her hands in a placating fashion, trying to speak several times; each time, however, Kimetiko cuts her off. Eventually the woman says something, pointing to her basket, and then slips away toward the kitchen. Kimetiko turns to stare after her, hands on her hips and an annoyed expression on her face.***

The end of this scene is the same moment as the beginning of the previous, suggesting that the woman had only been out of sight for a moment when the attack began.

## **Part Three: The Geisha's Tale**

Once the investigation at Kimetiko's home is concluded, there should appear to be two leads to follow: the Strong Arm Firemen and the House of Celestial Beauties. The Firemen, however, are a dead end. Attempting to locate their gathering places or find any of the members requires a **Lore: Underworld / Awareness** roll, TN 25, and a few hours' work talking to locals and chasing rumors (Manesu, if still available, can undertake this task and gains a Free Raise for doing so, but he abandons the group afterward); in the end, however, all that can be learned is that the Firemen seem to have disappeared earlier tonight. Their favored bars are empty, their meeting houses abandoned; careful examination of some of these places shows signs of violence. By tomorrow morning, the bodies start appearing in alleyways and are being pulled from the river. Any survivors have gone into deep hiding or have left the city entirely.

With the Firemen no longer available, only the House of Celestial Beauties remains as a possible source of information. Unlike its brethren in Teardrop Island's Licensed Quarter, the House of Celestial Beauties eschews flamboyance for refinement, but this unfortunately raises the barrier for access to the House

by quite a bit. Getting an invitation to the House of Celestial Beauties requires either the expenditure of a Favor from a Great Clan or Great Clan family or a successful **Etiquette / Awareness** roll, TN 25. Using either method earns an invitation for the character plus a number of guests equal to his or her Status Rank. While a woman in Seou's position might ordinarily be able to gain an invitation simply by asking for it, Seou's status as a ronin complicates matters. Unless one of the PCs brings her as a guest, she must also attempt the roll. (If all the PCs fail, however, assume she succeeds automatically.)

The House of Celestial Beauties is an extremely impressive facility, covering several acres within a high privacy fence. In addition to the large main house, two other smaller houses are on the grounds, likely used for occasional long-term stays by clients or particularly large events requiring additional privacy. Finely sculpted and maintained gardens surround the buildings, and a large and beautiful shrine to Benten overlooks a koi pond. Inside, the house is as beautiful as its surroundings, with cherry wood furnishings polished to a warm red glow and exquisite folding screens along the walls. Music drifts faintly from somewhere else in the house, swirling through the trails of incense smoke that curl up from a stand in one corner.

The okaa-san (House mother) is a short woman with her salt and pepper hair pulled back in a tight bun and her face painted a perfect porcelain white. She greets the PCs with warm welcome, encouraging them to relax and shed their cares. Before she can get too far into her speech, however, Seou (assuming she is there) politely but firmly interrupts her: ***"I am Yotsu Seou, Emerald Magistrate, okaa-san, and I am here as part of an investigation. I need to know if you sent any of your girls to the home of Bayushi Kimetiko tonight."***

At first, the okaa-san denies any knowledge even of who Bayushi Kimetiko is. Confirming that she is lying requires an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** roll, TN 30; if the PC does not confront the okaa-san directly, tipping Seou off to the deceit is enough for her to do so. Alternatively, a PC can try to intimidate the okaa-san through a **Intimidation (Bullying) / Awareness** roll, TN 20, and the accompanying Honor loss; while the okaa-san does not break immediately, succeeding on the roll grants two Free Raises to the Investigation roll, as she finds it harder to maintain her face.

If the PCs spot her deception, the okaa-san begins stammering an apology, claiming that ***"my old mind, it is so forgetful... of course I remember Bayushi-***

*sama..."* and so on. Eventually she admits the following pieces of information:

- She received an unsigned letter asking her to send Chouzan to Kimetiko's house, unaccompanied. The letter was accompanied by an amount of koku well over her usual fee, and asked for Chouzan by name. As is her usual policy, she destroyed the letter afterward.
- Chouzan has not yet returned, and is overdue by some hours. The okaa-san nevertheless steadfastly insists that Chouzan will undoubtedly return soon.
- She genuinely does not know who sent the letter (and, although she does have some suspicions, she will under no circumstances voice them).
- If the PCs ask what would make someone ask for Chouzan specifically, the okaa-san claims that Chouzan is one of her most requested girls, extremely skilled at getting samurai to relax and lay down their burdens. After a slight pause, she then delicately adds that Chouzan is also more willing to entertain samurai-ko than most of her other girls.
- The okaa-san will confirm if asked or shown the items that the samisen (a specialty of Chouzan's) and tea set both belonged to Chouzan, and were taken with her when she left.

Once the okaa-san has shared the above information, she has nothing else to offer. Despite the okaa-san's protestations to the contrary, Seou does not believe that Chouzan will return to the House of Celestial Beauties – if that were her intention, she would have already done so. As with the idea of a trip to Teardrop Island earlier, Seou reacts to any suggestion that the PCs take advantage of the House of Celestial Beauties' hospitality with an amused, ***"Oh, I enjoy the pleasures of a well-run geisha house as much as anyone, samurai-san, but now is not the time. I do not believe we will find any additional answers here."***

Should the PCs be unable to penetrate the okaa-san's deceit, they have little choice but to retreat back out into the street again. Regardless, however, once they have left the House, a voice cries, "Samurai-samas!" from around the corner of the House's grounds. The source of the cry is Imeko, one of the other geisha working at the House of Celestial Beauties. She is tall, blonde and green-eyed, with an unusual accent that many Rokugani would find disturbing; she specializes in working with the many Unicorn in the city, most of whom consider her an exotic beauty. She gasps out her

name, falling to the street in supplication, before asking, “Are... are you trying to find Chouzan? Is she in danger?”

Observant PCs will realize that Imeko was nowhere in sight while they spoke with the okaa-san, giving a hint about the House’s eavesdropping capabilities. Regardless, however, if they agree that they are planning to find Chouzan, Imeko is a font of information. She is Chouzan’s roommate in the House, and is desperately worried because she has not returned. She can offer all the same information that the okaa-san can (except that she does not know precisely how the request came to the House – only that it was apparently anonymous); in addition, however, she has an important piece of information that the okaa-san did not:

*“Chouzan came to the House... well, her family was having hard times, you see? So the House bought her contract. But she still has family in the city, and she has kept in contact with her brother, Kakuhan. She writes him sometimes. I know the address. I think if she were in trouble, she might go to him – sooner than she would come here, anyway.”* She hands over a piece of paper with an address on it: a tenement in the Merchant Quarter near the docks. If the PCs ask her to come along or show them the way, she looks terrified, claiming that she has to go back inside at once, before the okaa-san discovers she has left the grounds. Only force will suffice to bring her along.

## Kakuhan

Chouzan’s brother lives in a simple one-room apartment in a row of tenements near the docks. When the PCs arrive (as it is quite late, though probably by now closer to morning than midnight), Kakuhan and his wife, along with their three children, are asleep. Seou, more than half-expecting an ambush, signals the PCs to prepare themselves for a fight outside his door, but when she pulls the door open, there is only darkness inside. With the help of a light source (or a moment to allow their eyes to adjust), the outlines of five sleeping people become visible in one corner of the room. As the PCs enter, they begin to stir.

*“What? Who- samurai! What’s going on?”* demands the man, a solidly-built, if not especially tall, peasant. His wife and children – the oldest about 10, the youngest perhaps 3 – also stir, but they crowd into the corner behind him, watching fearfully.

The man says his name is Kakuhan, and while he admits to being Chouzan’s brother, he adamantly refused to say whether he knows where she is. An

**Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** roll, TN 20, reveals that he does know something, but Kakuhan cares deeply for his family, and is willing to stand up to samurai to protect her.

Overcoming Kakuhan’s resistance can be done with either an **Intimidation (Bullying) or Sincerity (Honesty or Deceit) / Awareness** roll, TN 30. If the roleplayed appeal that accompanies the roll includes a threat against his family, the player gains two Free Raises on the roll.

If a PC succeeds on the roll, Kakuhan takes a deep breath. *“Forgive me, samurai-samas, but Chouzan... I would do anything to protect my sister. She came to me earlier tonight, terrified out of her wits. She refused to say what had happened, only begged me to help her hide somewhere. Even without the details, it seems clear to me that whatever happened, it must have involved samurai, and now her life is in danger.”* He pauses, then briefly looks the PCs in the eye before dropping his head once more. *“If you swear on your honors that you will protect her from whatever she is so frightened of, I will take you to her.”*

Seou gives her word without hesitation; the geisha is a witness to a crime, and though as *hinin* her testimony is nearly worthless, it will nonetheless add weight to the larger picture once it can be put together. As soon as she does, Kakuhan nods and says, *“She is in a warehouse I know nearby. It is empty at the moment and largely abandoned; I thought it would be safe for her.”*

Compassionate PCs, particularly those who learned the fate of the Strong Arm Firemen, might wish to make arrangements for Kakuhan’s family to leave a city that is likely to be dangerous for them soon. Although Seou does not suggest the idea, she supports it wholeheartedly, even going so far as to write travel papers for them on her authority as Emerald Magistrate. A PC who contributes in some fashion to aiding the peasants in avoiding the wrath of whatever conspiracy might be hunting them gains +1 point of Honor (+2 points if they are Honor 3 or less).

If, on the other hand, the PCs cannot persuade Kakuhan, they have two choices. They can arrange to have Kakuhan or his family tortured; Seou can order this on her own authority, but Manesu’s help (or that of Shosuro Jima) is necessary to contact the torturer and make the other arrangements. This takes several hours (and is likely to run up against the time limit set by Shosuro Atsumori – see “The Traitor Unmasked” below), but ultimately gains the location of Chouzan’s hiding spot as well. If torture is not a desired option,

the PCs can stake out Kakuhan's apartment; Seou will suggest this if the PCs don't think of it. An **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, TN 20, suggests that Kakuhan is upset enough about the appearance of samurai on his doorstep that he might make a rash action, and indeed he does, only a few moments after the PCs leave. Any characters watching his building see him leave it only a few moments later and head down the street. Though paranoid in the wake of the evening's events, Kakuhan isn't terribly observant; tailing him requires a **Stealth (Shadowing) / Agility** roll against his 2k2 unskilled **Perception** roll. If the PCs succeed on the roll, Kakuhan leads them right to the warehouse where Chouzan is hiding.

## The Ruined Blossom

The warehouse is a large two-story building, roughly square, about a block or so from the river. It was badly damaged during the fire that swept through the city in the spring and has not yet been repaired; the roof at one end has collapsed, leaving it open to the elements. Although again the setting seems ripe for an ambush, the building's only occupant is Chouzan, who is hiding inside an empty office built into one corner of the first floor. However, as soon as the PCs enter, whether accompanied by Kakuhan or not, she attempts to flee, scrambling out a window and into the alley outside. This attempt is basically doomed to failure, however, as she has not yet had the courage to change her clothes or otherwise free herself from the binding, restrictive kimono in which she left the House of the Celestial Beauties earlier tonight. Capturing her is a simple matter, although Kakuhan – if present and not accompanying the PCs – attempts to delay or distract the samurai somehow, probably by grabbing a broken piece of timber from the floor and throwing it at a PC (attack 3k1, damage 4k1).

Once the geisha is in hand, however, getting useful information out of her is somewhat more difficult. Chouzan is in shock, panicky and convinced that any samurai who are looking for her are going to kill her. She kicks and screams like a wild animal, and even her brother's presence is not enough to calm her down. Getting through to her requires a **Sincerity** or **Etiquette / Awareness** roll, TN 25 – if Kakuhan is there as an ally, the PC gains a Free Raise on the roll.

Once calmed down, Chouzan begins to tell her story:

*“Okaa-san came to me tonight and told me I had a client outside the house. I don't know who sent me to her; okaa-san didn't say, and I think maybe she didn't know. I thought it was weird – house visits are rare*

*enough, but I wasn't allowed to take any of the budoka or ronin the House hires as yojimbo for visits like that. Still, I went, because... well, that's what I do when okaa-san tells me where to go. The client was a magistrate, Bayushi Kimetiko. Okaa-san usually tells me things about my clients, things I can use to help them relax; she told me Kimetiko was an honorable woman, and I guess she didn't fit in well with the other Scorpion because of it. It seemed strange that she'd hire a geisha, but I can understand how she'd be lonely.*

*“I took my equipment to her house, but she wasn't really happy to see me when I got there. She was really mad, actually. She said she knew why I was there, that it was a set-up to make her look bad, and that she wasn't going to put up with it.” Chouzan looks down at the ground, shuffling her feet a little. “She was probably right, I guess. When I'm talking with samurai, sometimes they tell me things that they probably shouldn't, and then I tell those things to okaa-san afterward. Sometimes, the samurai who do that... I hear bad things have happened to them later. Normally it's samurai from the other Clans that I hear that about, but recently... well, Kimetiko-sama wasn't the only Scorpion I've entertained in the last few months.*

*“So I guess I didn't really mind that she was mad. It made sense, you know? I would have been mad too. And besides, she was really pretty. So I tried to get her to calm down, and managed to get her to let me make her some tea – I guess her servants were gone or something. I set my samisen down and went into the kitchen. But then...” Chouzan pauses, and some of the wildness returns to her eyes. She has to take a breath before she continues, “All of a sudden, it was like the house just exploded. Someone kicked in the door up front, and I think maybe a side door as well; there was shouting, and then fighting. I didn't know what to do or what was going on, so I hid. I... I climbed into the cabinet and closed the door. But I could hear it all. I.. I heard when Kimetiko-sama shouted, ‘Jima, how could you?’ and I heard when someone else, a man I'd never heard before, answered her, ‘Because it is my duty, and if you were a true Scorpion, you would understand that.’ And then Kimetiko-sama screamed, and... and...”*

*The geisha begins weeping, and it takes her several long moments to collect herself enough to finish her story. “I heard a few more noises, thumps and scrapes. I think they were looking for something, and I was terrified they would find me. But then they just... left. I waited a few minutes after I couldn't*

*hear them anymore, then I climbed out. I... I saw... her. And then I just ran."*

Although a geisha's word is essentially meaningless in terms of actual testimony, Seou's expression is thunderous when she hears the name of Kimetiko's other yoriki. Manesu, if present, also seems shocked by the accusation, but does not dispute it. *"I think we need to speak with Shosuro Jima,"* Seou announces grimly.

## Part Four: The Traitor Unmasked

At this point, the hour is quite late; sunrise is only a few hours away. Seou asks whether the PCs are interested in a few hours' rest before they confront Jima – if they leave the matter up to her, she announces, "We are samurai. We will rest when we are dead," and leads the PCs in search of Jima's home.

Unfortunately, complications are destined to appear before the party reaches their destination. Whether it comes from a passing Scorpion patrol as they head toward Jima's home or a messenger waiting at the Inn of the Smiling Mask, Seou soon finds herself being handed a message from Shosuro Atsumori, the city governor. (The patrol, if that is the source of the message, says that they were given it in case they ran into her – all the patrols that have left the barracks in the last hours have a copy.) Seou opens and reads the message, then crumples it in her fist. *"We have just been informed that, with the subject of our investigation dead, our presence is Ryoko Owari is no longer required,"* she tells the PCs in an angry voice. *"We are to be gone by sunrise."* If the PCs retired to the Inn, Seou changes her mind and announces that she intends to make as much use of the time she has remaining as possible – she wishes to head to Jima's house at once.

Jima's residence is easily located, especially with the help of either Yogo Manesu or one of the Scorpion bushi the PCs encounter as they travel through the city (though such patrols also give Seou more copies of the letter from Atsumori). Once the PCs arrive, they discover that the door to Jima's house – an unremarkable samurai's residence on an unremarkable street in an upscale section of the Merchant Quarter – is hanging open. Stepping inside, they find a house that has been stripped to the walls of anything personal; only a bare futon, a single table, and an empty chamber pot are still present in the house. Unlike the devastation

at Kimetiko's home, this was clearly deliberate and orderly.

As the PCs stand in the middle of Jima's empty house, they hear a noise from behind them: something heavy striking the doorframe. When they turn to look they see a samurai in nondescript dark clothing standing the middle of the street, holding another rock to throw at the door. He drops the rock when he sees the first has done its work, and gestures for the PCs to follow him as he steps backward into a darkened alley across the street from Jima's house.

The figure backs up some distance, pausing only when he is about half the length of the alley along. He has a wakizashi on his left hip, but it is balanced by a scroll satchel on his right hip. His mask is sculpted and painted like a wolf's maw, as black as the rest of his clothing. Once the PCs get about 40 feet from him, the shugenja raises a hand, saying, *"That is close enough, samurai-sans."*

*"I am aware of your assignment, and that your time in Ryoko Owari is rapidly drawing to a close. I am also aware of several things that you are not with regard to this case – most notably, that the stakes are far, far higher than you realize. It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the Empire itself hangs on your investigation."*

*Drawing forth a scroll from his satchel, he continues, "It is vital that you complete your investigation. As long as you are willing to do so, I can give you the location of Shosuro Jima."*

As long as the PCs make some indication of agreement or intention to pursue Jima, the shugenja nods. *"He is in a townhouse a few blocks from here, on the border between the Merchant and Noble Quarters. Until earlier tonight, it was a safe house for the Strong Arm Firemen; now, however, they no longer have use for it." He gives the specific address, adding, "You will want to hurry, samurai-sans. Jima intends to be out of the city long before your deadline arrives to do the same." If any PC asks him his name, the shugenja merely shrugs, "I am Duty and Loyalty, samurai-sans. They can lead a man to strange places." His message delivered, the shugenja reads from his scroll (it is *Gift of Wind*) and disappears.*

### The Townhouse Assault

The townhouse described by the shugenja is on a row of similar houses, all tightly packed together with fences surrounding tiny gardens in the front and back of each

house. A gate leads into the garden on each side, one from the street and the other from the alley behind the houses. The house itself is two stories tall, with each floor consisting of three rooms in a straight line, all roughly equal in size. Jima and his fellow assassins are in the center room on the first floor, rapidly shoving personal items and papers stolen from Kimetiko's house into furoshiki sacks for easy transport.

As the PCs reach the gates, they may make **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** checks, TN 20. On a success, they realize that the gates are extremely rusty and will likely make a great deal of noise when opened. This is, of course, intentional; the gates are intended to serve as alarms should there be intruders. Dealing with the gates requires simply applying some oil to the hinges; lamp or lantern oil works well, as does whetstone oil from a sword maintenance kit. Alternatively, scaling the fence is a simple **Athletics (Climbing) / Strength** roll, TN 15.

The doors to the house itself are locked. Rokugani locks are not a great deal stronger than Rokugani doors; they can be bashed open fairly easily with a weapon attack (Armor TN 5, 20 "Wounds" – the door only takes half damage from non-blunt weapons, however). This approach is not terribly subtle, and if it happens to take more than one Round to get through the door, the fugitives inside will be alerted (with consequences as noted below). On the other hand, Seou can pick the lock without a roll; wise PCs will choose to look away as she does so.

If the PCs only approach one door, as soon as those inside learn about the attack, they flee through the opposite exit; a Contested **Athletics (Running) / Water** roll is required to catch up with them before they disappear into the city.

On the other hand, if the PCs approach both doors, the reaction of those inside depends on whether the PCs have tipped them off already (through either setting off the "trapped" gates or requiring more than one Round to batter down the door). If they have been alerted, the shugenja begins casting beneficial spells on Jima in the central room while the Infiltrators move into the darkened rooms closest to the two doors and hide, weapons drawn. Any PC who does not overcome their **Stealth (Ambush) / Agility** roll with an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll suffers a -10 penalty to their initiative and can only declare the Attack Stance on the first Round of combat. If they have not been alerted, however, all of the criminals are in the central room, packing for their departure – none have weapons ready.

Along with Shosuro Jima and the Soshi Shugenja, there are a number of Shosuro Infiltrators equal to the number of combat-ready PCs minus 2. Add an additional Infiltrator if Manesu is present. Jima focuses his attacks on Manesu if he is present, or the most dangerous-looking PC if not. The shugenja uses a Void Point on each of the first three Rounds to increase his Armor TN by +10, and starts by casting enhancement spells on Shosuro Jima such as Fires of Purity and Reversal of Fortunes before moving to direct-attack spells like Envious Flames or Tempest of Air. Manesu, if present, focuses his rage at Jima's betrayal through his attacks, shifting into Full Attack and directing all his attention toward his erstwhile fellow yoriki.

### Shosuro Jima

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 2
Awareness 4		Intelligence 4	Perception 4	

Honor 0.7                      Status 1.5                      Glory 2.2

**Initiative:** 6k4                      **Attack:** 8k3 (katana, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor and jitte)                      **Damage:** 6k2

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Bayushi Bushi 2

*Way of the Scorpion:* Adds +5 to Armor TN against opponents with lower Initiative; adds +1k1 to Initiative rolls.

*Pincers and Tail:* Can Feint with one Raise rather than two.

**Skills:** Acting 2, Athletics 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 3, Defense 2, Etiquette (Conversation) 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 4 (Notice, Search), Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Knives (Jitte) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Law 3, Lore: Scorpion 2, Lore: Underworld 3, Medicine 1, Sincerity (Deceit) 4

**Mastery Abilities:** May ready a sword as a Free Action; adds +1k0 to damage with swords; can reroll a Search roll one time without penalty; Moderate Terrain does not impede movement, and Difficult Terrain reduces Water Ring by only 1; off-hand penalties do not apply while using knives

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty, Perceived Honor (3 Ranks), Quick, Failure of Honor

### Soshi Shugenja

Air 4	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 3
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Honor 2.2                      Status 1.5                      Glory 2.1

**Initiative:** 6k4                      **Attack:** 6k3 (tanto, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 33 (in                      **Damage:** 3k1

Defense stance)

**Reduction:** 0

**Wounds:** 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Soshi Shugenja 2

*The Kami's Whisper:* Can spend two spell slots instead of one when casting non-damaging spell to conceal all signs of the spell going off except its effect.

**Spells Known:** *Air:* Tempest of Air (ML 1), To Seek the Truth (ML 1), Whispering Wind (ML 2), Your Heart's Enemy (ML 3); *Fire:* Envious Flames (ML 1), Fires of Purity (ML 1), Mental Quickness (ML 2); *Water:* Reversal of Fortunes (ML 1)

**Skills:** Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 2, Defense 4, Etiquette (Conversation) 2, Investigation 1, Knives 3, Lore: Theology 4, Lore: Scorpion 2, Lore: Underworld 2, Sincerity (Deceit) 2, Spellcraft (Importune) 4, Stealth 4

**Mastery Abilities:** need not reroll a Full Defense roll if he maintains the stance for multiple rounds; may move up to Water x5 feet per Move action while using Stealth; off-hand penalties do not apply while wielding knives

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Wrath of the Kami (Earth)

### Shosuro Infiltrators

Air 3    Earth 2    Fire 3    Water 2    Void 2  
Reflexes 4

Honor 1.5    Status 1.2    Glory 1.0

**Initiative:** 5k4    **Attack:** 6k3 (ninja-to, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 28 (ashigaru armor)    **Damage:** 5k2

**Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 10 (+0), 14 (+0), 18 (+2), 22 (+7), 26 (+12), 30 (+17), 34 (Down, +37), 38 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Shosuro Infiltrator 1

*The Path of Shadows:* Does not lose honor for using Low Skills or Ninjutsu weapons in service of Scorpion; gets +2k0 on Stealth rolls.

**Skills:** Acting 2 (Disguise), Athletics 3 (Climbing, Running), Defense 2, Iaijutsu 1, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu (Ninja-to) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Scorpion 2, Lore: Underworld 2, Ninjutsu (Shuriken) 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 1, Stealth (Ambush, Sneaking) 4

**Mastery Abilities:** adds +1k0 to damage with swords; Moderate Terrain does not impede movement, and Difficult Terrain reduces Water Ring by only 1; may move up to Water x5 feet per Move action while using Stealth

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Quick, Silent, Strength of the Earth

Jima and his assassins all have poison pills they will use to kill themselves if possible; any opponent who drops

to Down but not Out uses their pill on their next action, and likewise any opponent who is knocked Out but then returns to consciousness through healing magic or Medicine rolls uses their pill as soon as possible. Nevertheless, it is possible one or more of the assassins might be captured alive. See the next section for what the PCs might learn through interrogating these men.

## Conclusion

Once the assassins have been defeated or have escaped, the PCs can easily search the townhouse for evidence of their activities. They quickly find a set of unsigned orders, commanding assassinations or plots to publicly disgrace several Scorpion samurai, Kimetiko among them. A **Courtier** or **Lore: Scorpion / Intelligence** roll, TN 30, reveals that all the targeted samurai are either close political allies of Bayushi Yojiro or have reputations as junshin. There are indications that some of these orders have come in response to political or legal attacks by these same junshin against loyal but extremely dishonorable Scorpion.

If the PCs manage to capture one of the assassins alive, he may be interrogated to gain much the same information. None of the assassins, including Jima, know who gives their orders – as Jima puts it, “If they know how to contact me, then they must have the authority to command me.” All of them, however, will freely admit to having killed Kimetiko, and to doing many of the other things listed in their orders as well.

The PCs also find the stolen financial records from Kimetiko's house. A **Commerce, Lore: Law** or **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, finds no evidence of unusual added income that might signify a bribe. However, the same roll also reveals some unusual payouts: specifically, that Kimetiko was funding a small geisha house, the Waterfall at Dawn, outside Zakyō Toshi, for roughly the last year and a half. (Making a TN 30 indicates that Kimetiko was in fact channeling these funds from another source somewhere further up.) Armed with this information, the PCs determine that some of the records are in fact copies of the Waterfall at Dawn's own financial records. According to those records, the geisha house is owned by a woman named Hatsuko. In addition to the usual expenses, there is an entry from this past spring for a sword sensei, an extremely atypical thing for a geisha house to need. Next to the entry is a note that seems to be in Kimetiko's own hand (as compared to the rest of the records, or through confirmation by Yogo Manesu): “Must be trained in the Akodo style,

good at working with children just beginning their training – nothing but the best for the Emperor’s son.”

Characters who make a **Lore: History** or **Lore: Lion / Intelligence** roll, TN 30, remember a story from the time of the Scorpion Coup, about a geisha who poisoned Akodo Toturi, then the Lion Clan Champion, to prevent him from interfering in the plans of Bayushi Shoji. The geisha’s name was Hatsuko. Seou, for her part, goes pale as soon as the name of Hatsuko is mentioned, and when the PCs discover the note mentioning the Emperor’s son, she snatches the papers up with unaccustomed force. *“You will speak of this to no one!” she snaps, pointing a trembling finger around the room. “By the authority of the Emerald Champion, I command you to keep all knowledge of this to yourselves, on pain of charges of treason against the Empire.” She looks around the room, then shakes her head. “Samurai, we have been commanded to leave the city, and we should do so immediately. Speak to no one of what you have read or heard here tonight, but expect to hear from me shortly. Until then, silence is your total command.”*

If any PC asks about Kimetiko, Seou shakes her head regretfully. *“I fear our investigation must prove fruitless; I must report that we found no evidence to prove or deny the allegations against her. Bayushi-sama was a woman of honor who died to protect this secret. She will understand the need of the Empire, and forgive us our inability to restore her reputation to honor. Perhaps, depending on what happens... I promise you this: if the time comes where Kimetiko’s honor can be restored without threatening the Empire, I will see it done. But that is all we can do for her now.”*

With that, Seou ushers the PCs from the room, and by dawn all are on their way back to their daimyo. But Seou will indeed keep her word to contact them soon, a message that begins the second part of Emperor’s Favor.

NOTE: If a PC should choose to violate Seou’s command of silence, first point out that, should they tell someone (their daimyo, an ally, etc.) without knowing for certain how that person will react, they are taking their character’s life into their hands. Seppuku hurts, and what has been said cannot be unsaid. Should the PC continue to insist that they wish to tell someone, have them speak to the Campaign Admin before the second half of the adventure begins.

Finally, if a PC has Sworn Enemy: Shosuro Atsumori, the guards at the city gate hand that PC a letter as he or she leaves the city. Its contents are simple: “Thank you

for returning to my city, samurai. I trust I have made your stay pleasant.” It is signed Shosuro Atsumori. At this point, have the PC make a TN 10 Earth roll. On a success, the PC loses one Rank in his or her highest Trait (determine the Trait based off of the character’s Skills if there is a tie) for the duration of the second half of Emperor’s Favor, as a contact poison, delivered at some point during their time in Ryoko Owari manifests its effects. (The letter is not poisoned. It is merely a means for Atsumori to gloat.) If the PC should fail the Earth roll, he or she not only loses the Trait rank temporarily, but also permanently gains either the **Lame** or **Missing Limb (Arm) Disadvantage**, again determined randomly, as a result of extensive nerve damage. While the Trait rank will return after the second half of Emperor’s Favor, curing the PC of one of the permanent Disadvantages can only be accomplished through a casting of **Peace of the Kami**; no easy feat, as only the most powerful Water shugenja can attempt such a thing. Such is the price of provoking a Scorpion’s anger.

**The End**

## Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

If a PC has a Crafting cert, they may make a Crafting roll at this time.

### Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Killing or Capturing Shosuro Jima and His Allies:	+1XP
Recovering Kimetiko’s Financial Records:	+1XP

**Total Possible Experience: 4XP**

### Honor

Any PC who aided Chouzan or Kakuhan and his family to escape the city gains +1 point of Honor (or +2 points if they are Honor 3 or less).

## **Glory**

All PCs suffer -1 point of Glory due to inactivity.

## **Other Awards/Penalties**

All PCs who follow her commands to remain silent about the possibility of a son to Toturi gain Yotsu Seou as an Ally (Influence 1, Devotion 2).

## **Module Tracking Sheets**

Note any PC who helped Kakuhan and his family or Chouzan leave the city safely.

## **GM Reporting**

When you turn in your reporting sheet, include the following information:

- Did Yogo Manesu accompany the PCs all the way to the end of the module? Did he die?
- Did the PCs aid Kakuhan and his family and/or Chouzan in escaping the city? Did they send them anywhere in particular?

**GM must report this information BEFORE Nov 15, 2011 for it to have storyline effect**

# Appendix #1: NPCs

## Yotsu Seou, Emerald Magistrate

Yotsu Seou is an attractive, if rather short, woman in her late twenties, who dresses extremely well for a ronin – a mark of her unusual position as an Emerald Magistrate. When facing potential danger, she wears ashigaru armor lacquered in the brilliant green of the Emerald Legions, but keeps her katana in a sling over her back rather than in her obi next to her wakizashi, as most samurai would. Instead, she usually readies a set of shuriken in her right hand; she has a developed a habit of rubbing two of them together as she prepares for battle, making a distinctive scraping noise.

As a close ally during the Clan War to Toturi himself, Seou occupies an awkward position in the Empire: a ronin with a surprising amount of political influence. This suits Seou just fine – she has always appreciated the value of surprising those who underestimate a tiny samurai-ko, particularly a ronin. Toturi himself was never one of those people, one of the many reasons Seou holds such loyalty to him. Throughout the Clan War and the War Against the Darkness, Seou was one of Toturi's most trusted agents, one who could be given a task and would see it done, albeit in ways that were not necessarily orthodox. Seou, for her part, considers the ideals of bushido a end, not a means – if she can accomplish a task in line with bushido (doing her duty to her lord, showing compassion to those less fortunate, and so on), then she does not trifle over whether her methods would be considered questionable to others. This gives her an insight into the actions of the criminals she pursues that many of her fellows lack, but the prejudice against ronin she faces every day means that her talents have largely gone unappreciated.

Air 5	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 3
		Intelligence 4	Perception 4	
	Honor 3.7	Status 3.5	Glory 4.6	

**Initiative:** 9k5      **Attack:** 10k5 (shuriken, Complex)  
**Armor TN:** 38 (ashigaru armor)      **Damage:** 2k1 (shuriken)  
**Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Seou's Technique (Insight Rank 4)  
*Tears of Heaven* (Rank Three Ronin Technique): As Complex Action, can choose up to (Insight Rank) different targets (cannot "double up" on targets) and throw a single shuriken at each – makes one

attack roll and compares it to each Armor TN, Raises apply as normal, all shuriken gain bonuses of any declared Raises

**Skills:** Acting (Disguise) 3, Athletics 3, Commerce 2, Courtier 1, Craft: Locksmith 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation (Bullying) 2, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 4, Lore: Law 4, Lore: History 2, Lore: Underworld 4, Kenjutsu 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu (Shuriken) 6, Sincerity (Deceit) 3, Stealth (Ambush, Sneaking) 3, Temptation 2

**Mastery Abilities:** TN to create a disguise is reduced by 5; Moderate Terrain does not reduce movement and Difficult Terrain reduces Water by 1 instead of 2; need not reroll Full Defense if maintaining Stance; can reroll a Search roll once without penalty; adds +1k0 to the damage of ninjutsu weapons, and 10s explode on damage; can move Water x5 feet with Move Actions while Sneaking

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty, Dangerous Beauty, Social Position (Emerald Magistrate), Small, Social Disadvantage (Ronin)

## Yogo Manesu

Manesu never truly intended to become a junshin – he grew up as immersed in the culture of the Scorpion as most others in his Clan, spending time as a child as a "ronin" in the years after the Scorpion Coup and then undergoing exile with the rest of the Scorpion to the Burning Sands not long after his gempukku. When he returned, however, having spent time as a slave and then a freedom fighter, he discovered a strange sense of justice had found its way into his heart – he found that the actions of his fellow Scorpion, their casual cruelties and callous disregard for the consequences to others of their actions, reminded him far too strongly of the Senpet captors who had beaten him and his family in their mines. He could no longer simply close his eyes to the pain the Scorpion caused others in pursuit of their underhanded duties. The crisis point came when he discovered that his father, the man for whom Manesu had taken a sword thrust during the revolt that freed them from Senpet captivity, was embezzling funds from the Scorpion Clan and framing another samurai, a political enemy, for the act. He discovered he could not sit idly by, and he provided the testimony that caused his father's seppuku. As the blade took his father's head, he felt the completion of his Yogo curse, and wept with the shame of it.

That action, however, brought him to the attention of Bayushi Kimetiko, who took him on as her yoriki two and a half years ago. In her he has found a role model,

