

Cursed Ground

**A One-Round Low-Mid Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of Akodo, 1141 (Early Summer)**

by Michael Sander & Natalie Gibson

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Despite rumors that the site of the Topaz Championship is haunted following the horrific events four years ago, Kakita Yae has invited you to join her as her guests in the idyllic Crane village of Tsuma.

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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 source book 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.

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 2.

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:

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 3): The TNs for Social Skill Rolls may be increased by 5 at the GM's discretion (though this should primarily only affect Rank 3 PCs). Increase Kakita Dashi's "triggered" bonuses to Traits by 1 and Reduction by 5.

Adventure Summary and Background

Takuetsu Province has earned a reputation for being one of the most beautiful regions in all of the Empire, and this remains true despite the tragedy that occurred here during the Topaz Championship four years ago. In that time, the province has developed a more troubling reputation for being haunted by the ghosts of those who perished or went missing during the events that surrounded the death of Toturi Kaede (and the sudden creation of a portal to a previously unknown Spirit Realm). The provincial governor-regent, Kakita Yae, has spent much of the last several years trying to combat these rumors, and return her peoples' attention to creating the magnificent works of art expected from the students of the Kakita Artisan Academy. Her plans for Tsuma center around the construction of a great Temple to Kaede, the Fortune of Noble Sacrifice, as well as encouraging the samurai of Rokugan to seek out her province for relaxation and artistic inspiration.

Unfortunately, Yae's plans to build the shrine have been met with a series of delays which have caused many in the Crane hierarchy to question Yae's ability to govern the province. Adding to this doubt are the numerous rumors surrounding not only her leadership ability, but also a lack of discretion when it comes to her personal affairs. Rumors like these are hard enough to fight when they aren't true.

Kakita Yae has a budding relationship with Doji Arenji, one of the head ikebana sensei at the Kakita Artisan school, and she has begun to discuss the possibility of marrying the talented artist once her son, Kaktia [kid], has taken over as governor. Despite a significant age-difference, Arenji has also caught the romantic attention of Yogo Ran, a young court shugenja sent to foster friendly relations between the Crane and Scorpion Clans. The Doji has done little to foster the young woman's obsession, but Ran's affection continues to grow, leading to further rumors and tensions in the

court at Tsuma. Yae's hatamoto, Kakita Niji, has taken exception to this, seeing the young woman's infatuation with her older sensei as just another Scorpion ploy to discredit the Crane. The recent arrival of the governor of the Scorpion province of Bayushi Ichiro seems to have confirmed this in the mind of the aging shugenja. Niji isn't without his own closeted skeletons, however, which may explain his desire to see the Scorpion leave Tsuma as soon as possible. By whatever means necessary.

GM Notes: This mod is presented as Low-Mid, meaning characters with School Rank 1-3 should have little difficulty participating. Additionally, the story is intended to be a "bridge" for secondary characters to some of the larger events their primary characters may have already experienced. While not an official part of the **Thwarted Destiny** series of mods, there are some references to the events and themes that have occurred in those modules. Secondary or Replacement characters are encouraged to play despite this, as it offers a chance to connect these characters to a storyline that the player may otherwise lose contact with due to character death or other circumstances.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Ishiken
- Oath of Fealty: Kakita Yae
- Membership in the Nightingales
- Membership in the Owls (Imperial Investigators/Eyes of the Miya)
- Shikkui's Pendant (from SoB13, "Prison of Earth")
- Returned or Kept the Kakakita Blade Fuyumusha (from SoB22, "Tear Away the Darkness")

Introduction

Each of the PCs has been sent by their daimyo to represent him or her at the court of Kakita Yae, governor of Takuetsu Province, during the summer Cherry Blossom Festival. Takuetsu is home to the village of Tsuma, which most should remember as the site of the disastrous Tournament of the Topaz Champion four years ago. Yae is very open about the fact that she has moved her court from its traditional location in Kyuden Kakita to Tsuma as part of an attempt to show that the village is just as peaceful and idyllic as ever. PCs who owe fealty to Yae have been assigned to duties assisting with her guests. Monks and ronin may be in Tsuma for their own reasons, but have been invited to take part in the court dinners and other events. Yae has promised two weeks of culture and

relaxation, something surely appreciated in politically tense times such as these.

A gentle breeze carries hints of lavender and ajisai blossoms into the famed Crane village of Tsuma, masking the less pleasant aroma of fish drying under the early summer sun. In the years since the last Topaz championship, the people of Tsuma have turned their attentions to creating an industry around their current governor's love of flowers and ikebana. Kakita Yae has encouraged this by allowing the conversion of the former tournament grounds to an expansive field of flowering plants. Hard-packed earth that was once the scene of agile displays of horsemanship and daring athletic competition has been turned over to make way for a rainbow of vibrant lilies, roses, chrysanthemums and even precious tulips imported (with permission, of course) from gaijin lands.

Despite the flamboyant and colorful display, there are still hints of the tragedy that occurred here; subtle reminders of the death of Toturi Kaede and the spiritual calamity that followed it. In the center of the chrysanthemum beds is a small memorial shrine, and those of you have spent even a day or two in the small village can feel the melancholy that mingles with the perfume in the air.

Today, however, there is a sense of excitement among the populace, as the peasants and merchants prepare for the beginning of Takuetsu Province's Cherry Blossom festival, hoping to impress the visiting samurai. The accompanying court will open tonight with a formal dinner and everyone is scurrying to make sure everything is ready in time.

The PCs have been invited to participate in Kakita Yae's court in addition to the festival activities. As such, it is considered a (major) breach of etiquette to wear armor or carry a weapon other than the samurai daisho while staying under Yae's protection, and PCs should face the appropriate penalties for doing so, especially during official court events. Sparring in the Kakita Academy dojos is, of course, one of the few exceptions to this breach, though live steel is frowned on when practicing against students.

Crane, Lion, and Crab players have been here for several days, waiting for the others' arrival today. Members of the latter two Clans have been treated well, with no sense of distrust or disfavor, despite the traditional rivalries they share with the Crane. Each of the Clan samurai have been given rooms in Kyuden Tsuma, the small but well-appointed castle that is Kakita Yae's summer home. Monks are given rooms in the monastery located within the walls of the Kakita

Artisan Academy, and ronin will have their choice of acquiring a room at the Tranquil Lotus Inn or fending for themselves outside the city gates. The local magistrates frown heavily on vagrants sleeping in the streets, and will arrest anyone attempting to camp under the stars inside the city's low walls.

The PCs are given time to make preparations for this evening's dinner, and there are no penalties for wearing out-moded or less spectacular court kimono - Yae wants this to be a time for relaxing, not worrying about political fashion. This does not prevent her from making her own statement, however.

As you enter the inner court chamber of Kyuden Tsuma, you are met by a riot of color from several dozen massive ikebana displays placed throughout the room, as well as several smaller arrangements on the central dining table. Several samurai stand around the table, waiting for your arrival and that of the governor-regent, Kakita Yae. Each of you find your places, which have apparently been determined randomly, rather than your clan affiliation or status.

A gong sounds, and Kakita Niji, the provincial hatamoto, announces the arrival of his daimyo. Yae enters the court carrying yet another impressive bouquet of flowers. Smiling brilliantly, she welcomes her guests, "Greetings, and thank you for joining us for the Cherry Blossom Festival. My son and soon-to-be lord of Takuetsu province, Kakita Toshio, wishes to extend his apologies, as he is unable to join us for this brief, and hopefully relaxing, summer court. For too many years, we have allowed the catastrophes and conflicts that have plagued our magnificent Empire to build new tensions between our clans, and turned our eyes away from that which draws us all together – our craftsmanship, our poetry, and our ability to create beauty in the face of unspeakable darkness. Darkness claimed my husband almost a decade ago, and tragedy struck here again six years later, but we have answered those benighted events with a brilliant rainbow of blossoms, like the light of Lord Sun shining down after a summer rain shower. Please, be seated, and let your only concern be the food in your bowls and the company of friends."

The dinner is quite extravagant, with many of the dishes taking on the colors, shapes, and even perfume from various flowering plants. Impressed by the meal, a few of the guests lament having to eat the pieces of edible art placed in front of them.

In addition to the PCs, there are several other samurai present. Brief descriptions follow, with more detailed information presented in **Appendix 1**.

Kakita Yae - Still beautiful despite nearing middle age, Yae trained in the nearby Kakita Artisan School, and has spent most of her life presenting her works in courts throughout the Empire. The death of her husband left her in a position that she was not prepared for, and she eagerly anticipates the day when she can return her attention to creating beautiful things. She wears a kimono bearing iconography referring to Lord Sun.

Bayushi Ichiro - Daimyo of Hizoku Province. Players may have met him in SoB29, "Fields of the Dead." Since that time, it appears Ichiro has sided with the Regent, going so far as becoming one of Okucheo's Owls. He is plain-spoken and does not take flattery well. Scorpion players with Honor of 5.0 or higher should be able to sense waves of disapproval flowing off of Ichiro when they speak. His kimono is well crafted but plain, though a silver netsuke in the shape of an owl hangs from his obi, and his mask consists of a pair of gaijin spectacles with round lenses made of red glass. PCs who are members of the Eyes of the Miya, the Owls, or show obvious support of the Regent will receive an invitation to meet with Ichiro for drinks at the Tranquil Lotus on the evening of the second day of court.

Doji Arenji - A senior sensei at the Artisan Academy and close friend of Kakita Yae. While he enjoys her company, Arenji also understands discretion, and tries to ensure that the two of them spend as little time alone as possible so as not to lend credence to the rumors suggesting that there is more going on between the two. His kimono is extravagantly embroidered, with the central focus being a depiction of Lord Yakamo kneeling before a young woman, though it is hard to tell if this is intended to be a rejuvenated Amaterasu or possibly an older Toturi Tsudao. Sharp-eyed PCs (**Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 20**) will notice several nightingales have been worked into the design as well. PCs who show artistic promise or belong to Kakita Yoshi's Nightingales will be invited to join Arenji for tea on the third evening of the court.

Kakita Niji - Stern, stoic, and always in control, Niji is the very picture of a pious Crane shugenja. He was trained by the Asahina, and will not tolerate any conflict in his master's home. He was a trusted advisor to Yae's late husband, and took over most of the daily duties expected of a provincial daimyo upon his friend and lord's death at the hands of a Goju assassin. Despite being more qualified for the position of governor than Kakita Yae and her son combined, the older man seems content to work behind the scenes.

Kakita Keishu - Niji's daughter serves as the provincial magistrate, sharing her father's eye for

detail. Keishu is attractive, if somewhat sturdier than most Crane women, and still wears her hair in a maiden's foxtail. She does not flirt, nor does she respond to blatant attempts to woo her, but will look favorably upon any male samurai who treats her with respect. Unlike her father, Keishu believes his service has been unfairly overlooked, and is not shy about saying so.

Kakita Tsubarashi - The gruff, insensitive gunso in charge of the local garrison, Tsubarashi has offered to make Keishu an 'honest woman' on several occasions, receiving various degrees of scorn in return. He will make the same blunt offer to any attractive and single female PCs.

Kakita Rei - Kakita Bushi and Apprentice Emerald Magistrate. Rei is in Tsuma finishing up her duties for her former daimyo, Kakita Inejiro, before taking up a position serving Kakita Yoshi. Rei is a PC in the campaign, and other PCs may have met her in a previous adventure. Her maiden's foxtail has been replaced with a long braid that hangs to her waist, and she will make mention of her new Unicorn husband. While she has not trained with the Kakita Kenshinzen herself, she was tasked by Inejiro with identifying anyone who deserved an audition for entry into the prestigious sword master school. If a player expresses an interest, she will invite them to meet her in the Dueling Academy Dojo so she can evaluate their technique.

NOTE: Over the course of the first night's dinner, **Kakita Rei** will quietly invite any PCs who have met her before to join her at the House of the Tranquil Lotus for tea. If she has not met any of the PCs, she will ask those PCs who have Honor of 4.0 or better to meet with her, and in either case she extends the invitation to anyone the invited PCs believe are trustworthy.

Yogo Ran - A beautiful returned spirit, she is a Soshi-trained court shugenja assigned to Yae's court as part of the Scorpion's ongoing trade negotiations with the Crane. Ran's mask changes constantly, and is made of seasonal flowers. Like Keishu, Ran wears her hair caught up in a maiden's foxtail, but will readily inform curious or flirtatious PCs that she is already betrothed.

Mirumoto Kejiko - Supposedly, Kejiko is in Tsuma as part of a student exchange between the Kakita and Mirumoto Duelist academies. In truth, the young woman requested to be sent here so that she could try and find out what happened to her brother, Mirumoto Yanagi. Those who wish to flirt with her will find her engaging and clever, with a sharp tongue and quick

sense of humor, but her preoccupation with her brother prevents her from engaging in romance.

Kakita Dashi – One of Yae’s more gifted vassals, Dashi is a returned spirit. Dashi is responsible for planning the menu for each night’s feast, as Yae will happily point out. Cold, and somewhat elusive, Dashi will avoid discussing his past life, choosing to divert conversation towards the changes in Rokugani cuisine during the 300 years he spent in Meido.

Isawa Nao - Horrifically scarred Phoenix Fire shugenja, researcher and scribe, he wears a mask covering most of his face, like a Scorpion. Nao’s mask resembles the black half of the traditional symbol for balance, with a white circle surrounding his right eye. Perhaps even stranger than the fact he wears a mask at all is the realization that he the one he has chosen does not cover the disturbing web of scars and fire-smoothed skin that makes up the right side of his face and twists his mouth into a toothy grimace. The skin that peeks out from beneath the mask appears untouched by the flames, however. Nao is a PC character, and PCs may have met him or his twin brother, Yogo Boukken, in a previous adventure. (Boukken appears in SoB04, “Personal Sacrifice” and SoBQ1, “A New Guard.” PCs who played either mod may attempt to roll **Investigation (Notice)** / **Intelligence** at TN 20 to recognize the connection.)

After all the courses have been served and conversation has begun to wind down, Kakita Yae stands once more, waving her fan to capture her guests’ attention.

“It has been an honor to meet each of you, and to share the bounty of these lands. It is my wish that over the several days, each of you will join me in honoring the Fortunes of creativity by presenting an artistic work of your own. Some of you may have already begun such a work, and you will be provided with any materials you need to continue.”

“I know that some of you may be concerned that you have nothing to offer, but I assure you that the very act of creation itself is a blessing, no matter the outcome of such endeavors. Additionally, Doji Arenji-sensei has agreed to offer instruction in the art of ikebana to any who wish to try their hand at what I consider to be one of the most beautiful and relaxing artforms given to us by the grace of the Heavens.”

PCs who have a Crafting Cert may make an additional Crafting Roll during this module, so long as they give up at least five morning or evening time slots during the first five days to focus on their crafting. This additional roll may not be used on Spy Network or Commerce

rolls, and the PC is expected to make a presentation of his or her work during one of the evening time slots. PCs using this extra roll to do Spell Research must be prepared to use the spell in an artistic performance of some fashion.

Additionally, PCs wishing to study Ikebana under the tutelage of Doji Arenji must agree to meet him each morning for the remainder of the court. At the end of the mod, players who made this commitment may gain a free Rank of Artisan: Ikebana if they do not already have it as a Skill. If they DO already have the skill, they may spend one experience point at the end of the mod to gain the **(Cipher)** Emphasis of the Artisan: Ikebana skill. This Emphasis allows them to attempt to determine if there are any subtle messages hidden in a flower arrangement based on the color, breed, and position of the plants chosen.

Tea with Kakita Rei

When the PCs arrive at the Tranquil Lotus, they, along with Kakita Rei, are led into one of the private rooms. Rei serves tea, and grudgingly allows those who wish to order sake or other beverages to do so. After taking some time to make small talk and ask how her friends have been doing since the last time she saw them (or asking about the adventures of new friends), her tone becomes more serious.

“Once again, thank you for joining me here this evening, though I do apologize for not being upfront with my reason for inviting you all. Several weeks ago, I was contacted by Shiba Utsuro, one of Toshiken-sama’s Emerald Magistrates. He claimed to have reliable information that someone connected to the Kolat conspiracy was planning some sort of attack on Tsuma during the Cherry Blossom Festival. Utsuro-sama’s ‘information’ rarely results in anything useful, so after speaking with my superiors in the Magistrates, I have been told not to worry too much about a threat, but to be on the lookout, just in case. That’s where you come in.”

“I can’t be everywhere at once, so I would consider it a great personal favor if you could keep your eyes and ears open for anything unusual. There are bound to be the little intrigues that happen during any court, of course, but I ask you to let me know if anything actually dangerous turns up. Other than that, please enjoy yourselves while you are here in Tsuma. Kakita Yae-sama has a reputation for hosting an elegant court, and from what we’ve seen already, it appears well-deserved.”

The players may roll **Lore: Heraldry/Intelligence TN 15** to recall some of the rumors regarding Shiba

Utsuro's obsession with the Kolat. (PCs who have met Utsuro in previous modules have a Free Raise on this roll; Utsuro has been in SoB20, "Forgotten Tomb" and SoB30, "The Enemy You Deserve.") He has a reputation as someone who hunts shadows where there are none with insufficient regard for propriety, and his most recent crusade against Yasuki Minoru ultimately proved fruitless, resulting in Utsuro being banished from Yasuki Yashiki and damaging relations between the Crab and Phoenix Clans. Minoru's death by poisoning in Honor's Treaty City has only increased those tensions.

The PCs may ask if there is something specific to be looking for, but Rei will shake her head regretfully. "I'm sorry that I don't have more information for you. Utsuro-sama was unable to provide me with any specifics, and based on his reputation, I don't really expect anything to happen here."

Presuming the PCs agree to help Kakita Rei keep an eye on things during the celebration, she will thank them enthusiastically, and let them retire for the evening.

Part One: The First Week

The court is scheduled to run for ten days; for purposes of organizing time in the module, each day is divided into Morning and Afternoon sessions, followed by dinner and an artistic presentation. PCs may choose to perform one action during each session. For example, a PC interested in studying ikebana with Doji Arenji in the morning may do so, and still have time to visit the Dueling Academy dojo after lunch. There is also an opportunity after dinner to catch up on the latest gossip by visiting the common room of the Tranquil Lotus or Yae's Garden. The following is a breakdown of what players can potentially learn if they visit specific locations or speak with certain individuals during the first five days. (This will continue through Day Four, where the focus of events will change.)

Now is the perfect opportunity for PCs who have not met to introduce themselves to one another, and for anyone who would like to get a ear-full of local gossip to roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** at **TN 5**. Successful PCs learn one piece of gossip, and an additional piece for every 5 points above the TN. Crane PCs gain a Free Raise to this roll.

- Fighting between the Crab and Crane Clans is officially over now, and many wonder if the coming summer months will prove to be as

peaceful as promised. A treaty was arranged between the Clans at the beginning of the year, and several holdings were exchanged as a result, but the Crab Clan took three small trading ports along the River of Gold in an early spring offensive. The Crab claim that these attacks took place before their forces could be informed about the peace agreement, which has caused some doubt in the courts, but the Crane have yet to decide on a public course of action.

- There are many rumors surrounding Kakita Yae and her ability to govern. Some speculate that she actually carries out few of the day-to-day duties, relying on Kakita Niji, her late husband's trusted hatamoto and friend, to handle these matters while she focuses on her own artistic pursuits. Others wonder if perhaps she has grown too close to Doji Arenji, a talented and well-respected senior sensei at the Kakita Artisan Academy's ikebana school.
- Some of the local peasants have reported seeing the spectral image of a young man in priest's robes wandering in the area of a small spring at the far end of the new blossom farm. This spring is the source of a new breed of golden lotus that only blooms on the night of the new moon, which is also the only time the apparition has been spotted.
- Plans to construct a grand shrine to Toturi Kaede on the site of her death have been put on hold while the priests responsible for purifying the site determine what is disrupting the elemental balance in the area. There are several theories, but apparently there is no agreement among them, making the solution to the problem elusive.
- Few people wish to speak of the Tragedy at Topaz in anything but muted whispers; the death of the Empress and the destruction wrought from the creation of a portal to a new Spirit Realm are certainly the most ill-omened events that have ever transpired in this province. Even the burning of the Kakita Academy by the Crab Clan during the Clan War is regarded as little more than a typical military action in comparison. Yae is careful to not refer to the Tragedy in anything but an oblique manner, but her commitment to putting it in the past is obvious.
- The Emerald Champion has officially sent word to the master sensei of the Empire's most prestigious Schools that the Empress Tsudao will soon be ready to begin training. While the Hantei Emperors traditionally studied under Kakita sensei, Toshiken has instead decided to hear petitions from nearly every Clan who might be interested in providing the child Empress instruction in the way of the samurai. Some whisper that by doing so, he will undoubtedly gain more influence among the Clans as they strive for the honor.

Places of Interest in Tsuma

Chrysanthemum Shrine

The Chrysanthemum Shrine is dedicated to those who perished or were lost following the death of the Oracle of Void (the event referred to now as the “Tragedy at Topaz” and recounted in SoB00, “New Beginnings.” It is located in the center of the former tournament grounds, surrounded by a field of various breeds of chrysanthemums, and was intended to be the first phase in a larger temple shrine honoring the life of Toturi Kaede, named Fortune of Noble Sacrifice by her husband, Toturi I. Megumi, one of the local monks (PCs who played New Beginnings will have met him at the Tranquil Lotus), tends the shrine on a daily basis, polishing the brass plaque that lists the names of those known to have died during that catastrophe.

A second list of names commemorates those whose fate is unknown or who simply disappeared into the spiritual vortex that opened into the previously unknown Spirit Realm of Kousoku no Chigiri.

Names of the Fallen:

- Toturi Kaede – Empress, Oracle of Void, Mother of Tsudao
- Otomo Banu – Imperial Courtier, Cousin of the Last Hantei
- Seppun Chijin – Meiharu
- Seppun Eitou – Meiharu, Physician to the Empress
- Doji Tsumiko – Member of the Imperial Court
- Bayushi Gubei – Scorpion Yojimbo
- Shosuro Furuyari – Renowned Playwright and Poet
- Asako Misao – Priest of the Kami, Imperial Cartographer

Names of the Missing: (There are 94 samurai named as missing, but the list below are those with Glory sufficient to be readily recognizable by name alone.)

- Daidoji Rekai – Heir to Daidoji Uji
- Mirumoto Yanagi – Priest of the Kami
- Togashi Nobu – Honorable Monk
- Kitsu Yukufumi – Priest of the Kami, Ishiken
- Tsuruchi Okame – Mantis Scout
- Kitsuki Kokuchi – Dragon Magistrate, Emerald Yoriki
- Ide Dashimono – Unicorn Historian and Storyteller
- Tonkatsu – Ronin Yojimbo

If a PC visits this shrine in the morning, they will have an opportunity to speak with **Mirumoto Kejiko**. **Kakita Yae** oversees the gardeners herself, stopping by every afternoon, along with **Doji Arenji**, to make sure everything is as it should be.

PCs who speak with Kejiko here, or later at the Tranquil Lotus, have an opportunity to learn about her brother's disappearance during the Topaz Championship.

“Yanagi was a brilliant boy, and a very talented priest of the water kami. He was so excited to have received an invitation to join the Dragon delegation to the Topaz Championship, despite not being allowed to participate himself. I was not fortunate enough to join him on his journey, and was horrified when word of what happened here reached us. There are stories of samurai who returned from the other side of the portal, but they also speak of others who did not. To see his name listed here among the missing gives me hope that perhaps he will return.”

Kakita's Shrine

Kakita's Shrine is one of many dedicated to the founder of the Kakita style of iaijutsu that has become the basis for settling disputes under Rokugani law. This shrine is fashioned after a dojo, with tatami mats laid out and wooden practice swords available for those who wish to offer their meditation in the form of kata or even actual duels. The interior walls of the shrine are studded with sword racks, each one bearing a katana or daisho and a small plaque listing the name of the weapon's previous owner and the year the sword was given over to the shrine. One of these blades, located in a place of honor at the center of the wall opposite the entrance, is wrapped with a heavy chain apparently carved from a single piece of jade. (If a PC returned Fuyumusha at the end of Tear Away the Darkness, they will immediately recognize this sword. Other players who ventured into the Shadowlands during that module may roll **Raw Intelligence TN 25** to recognize the sword as one carried by the Lost samurai, Hidoi.)

After the events of Day Four, it is noticeably warmer inside the shrine than it is outside.

PCs who visit the Shrine in the early afternoon will find **Kakita Dashi** partaking in his daily meditations, while **Kakita Keishu** visits in the early morning, prior to beginning her daily magisterial duties.

The shrine's caretaker is Jujin, and he will volunteer himself as an opponent for any who wish to offer a duel to honor Kakita. See **Appendix #1** for Jujin's stat block. A PC who faces Jujin in a duel and rolls well enough on their Focus Roll (40 for Rank One characters, 50 for Rank Two, and 60 for Rank Three) earns his respect, and may be awarded one of Jujin's Blades at the conclusion of the mod if they express interest in assisting the monk. Anyone who defeats him

will be awarded a blade regardless of their roll, and may use him a reference for entry into the Kenshinzen Advanced School.

Players may have questions about the contents of the shrine, particularly the jade-bound sword.

- Why are these swords mounted on the wall?
“These are the blades of Kakita-trained samurai who died honorably but without an heir. Some of them have lain unused for centuries, waiting for the blessed ancestors to call them into service once again.”
- Are these nemuranai blades?
“Sadly, the spirits of the majority of these katana have not yet awoken. Those rare blades that do earn the blessings of Tengoku are given as gifts to students of Kakita who have brought honor to the Crane and to the Empire.”
- Do you know what is causing the elemental imbalance that has delayed construction of Kaede's Shrine?
“Not specifically, no, but I believe that it is somehow tied to Fuyumusha's anger. The fire kami within the shrine are particularly difficult to placate since it arrived.”
- What about the sword bound in jade?
A look of sadness comes over the otherwise stoic monk, and he begs forgiveness before excusing himself. Jujin will send a message the following morning, inviting the PC to join the monk for tea at their leisure.

Jujin will likewise send in invitation to any PC who faced him in a duel and proved themselves worthy.

Tea With Jujin

This encounter takes place only if a PC agrees to meet with Jujin for tea after receiving his invitation. It should happen sometime after the official opening of Kakita Yae's court. There is a great deal of exposition in this scene, so it may be useful to the GM to have every PC who expresses an interest present in order to go through it once. The material should be paraphrased, but it is most important to deliver the information of interest to the players – the history of the five fallen Crane samurai may not matter to them, even if it is very important to Jujin.

As you enter Kakita's Shrine, you see Jujin kneeling in meditation in front of the jade-bound katana, chanting quiet blessings and thumbing a string of crystalline prayer beads. Several sticks of incense send tendrils of smoke swirling around the tainted blade.

“Forgive me for my rudeness before, [Clan]-sama. The story behind that blade is one that brings many

emotions, and I was not as prepared to tell it as I should have been. Please, sit, and I will tell you what I can of this sword's history, and that of its brother and sisters,” Jujin indicates three additional blades on the wall just above the place of honor, and an empty stand where a fourth sword rested until recently.

“The katana is Fuyumusha, and is one of five blades - four katana and a wakizashi - forged by a Crane swordsmith, Ashidaka Ganriki of the Kakita, as gempukku gifts for his grandson and four of his grandson's classmates.” (If asked, Jujin will identify the Ashidaka family as a vassal family of the Kakita who are most known for making the famous Kakita blades. Crane PCs automatically know that, or non-Crane PC may roll **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** at a TN of 20.)

“As Ganriki completed the rituals involved in the forging of each blade, he added prayers that the ancestors would guide the children and help them overcome the obstacles that kept them from achieving true balance. Unbeknownst to him, Tengoku heard his prayers, and bestowed each of the swords with a sleeping spirit whose purpose was to gently nudge the bearer of the blade towards a more balanced life. It wasn't until Fuyumusha was returned to the Crane that we learned of its awakening.”

“During the Jade Magistrate's attempts to purify the blade, they made contact with the kami that resides in Fuyumusha, and convinced the spirit to reveal the events surrounding Giketsu's death and its own disappearance. During the Second Day of Thunder, a massive oni spawn was bearing down on Giketsu's squad as they fought to prevent a swarm of lesser mugina from cutting them off from the larger unit fighting at Ootosan Uchi. With sudden clarity, the young warrior saw the one opening that could possibly save his friends - a sacrificial charge that he thought would distract the obese monstrosity long enough for them to rejoin their unit. Drawing Fuyumusha and uttering a guttural cry that rivaled the sounds emanating from the slaving hordes around him, Giketsu charged the oni, plunging his sword deep into the creature's flank. It screamed in pain, but still managed to grab my...” Jujin pauses and clears his throat. *“.. grab the young warrior and swallow him whole before decimating the remainder of the unit.”*

“Despite having failed to save his friends, the young man's moment of clarity and decisive action awakened Fuyumusha, which then found itself imbedded in the side of one of Jigoku's spawn. When the Dark Son was defeated and his horde was forced back beyond

the Kaiu Wall, the newly created nemuranai went with it. Eventually, Fuyumusha fell into the possession of a Lost Scorpion samurai called Hidoi before it was returned to us several months ago, but not before succumbing to the Taint as well.

“Since the spirit within the blade did not become Tainted until after it awakened, the Kuni priests believe that it can be redeemed. However, Fuyumusha now refuses to allow their purification rituals to succeed until the spirits of its brother and sisters are awakened as well. The Jade Magistrates have allowed the sword to be placed here, where the meditation and prayers of Kakita's students may help to remind Fuyumusha of honor and its duty, or until it allows itself to be purified.”

PCs can roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** at TN 20 to determine that Jujin is hiding something. Pressing him on the matter will elicit a different response depending on the method used. If the PCs take a compassionate line of questioning, Jujin will admit that he was once the sword-smith Kakita Ganriki, and retired after the loss of his grandson. He has chosen to carry the duty of caring for this shrine himself, so that he can watch over his creations and work to leave behind the regret he feels over the deaths of the five young samurai.

Taking a harder stance or accusing him of lying gains the same information, but Jujin will not respond kindly, nor will he offer one of his blades to anyone other than a PC that returned Fuyumusha if they are this harsh with him.

If a PC volunteers to carry one of the blades or to help find a way to awaken them, Jujin will consider their request, but they will have to prove that they are worthy if they have not already done so. There are two ways of doing this: challenging Jujin to an Iaijutsu duel and winning or rolling well enough on the Focus (as noted above), or being one of the few PCs that actually recovered Fuyumusha and returned it to the Crane. If a player that has not yet played Tear Away the Darkness manages to do so in the future, they should contact the Admin. **It should be noted that carrying one of these blades is a commitment the PC should not undertake lightly.** A PC with a “special weapon” already should be aware that they will likely need to set it aside while they bear one of Giketsu's blades.

Jujin rolls 10k4, and his 9s explode, on Assessment. He rolls 10k10+14 with the Emphasis on Focus if he wins the Assessment Roll (10k8+8 if he does not), and 10k6+8 on Strike. His Armor TN in the duel is 35.

The monk is gracious in victory, and truly impressed with any PC who defeats him. If a character fails to measure up, he will be polite but firm, apologizing for declining their offer but refusing to grant them custody of a sword. “Your spirit is strong, samurai, but you are not yet ready for this burden.” A player who earn the right to bear a blade should contact the Campaign Admin to receive a cert for the weapon.

Kakita Dueling Academy Dojo

The dueling academy is one of many separate schools found within the high walls of the Kakita Artisan Academy. Yae's guests have been given permission to observe the students as they move through their basic lessons, and may even participate in their daily sparring sessions if they wish.

If a PC visits the Dojo in the afternoon, they have an opportunity to speak with or spar against **Kakita Rei** or **Mirumoto Kejiko**. A PC that wishes to challenge Rei to an Iaijutsu Duel may do so, and may roll **Kenjutsu** or **Iaijutsu / Perception (TN 30)** to notice a strange affectation in Rei's dueling stance. Rei seems to place all of her balance on one leg, while raising the other foot slightly off the ground. The shift only lasts the briefest of seconds before she catches herself and returns to a more traditional stance. If asked about it, she will tell them, “It is a habit that I picked up while training with my father. Inejiro-sensei has tried to break this habit, but it just feels 'right' to me.”

Yae's Garden

In addition to the massive fields of flowers covering the former tournament grounds, Kakita Yae has a splendid private garden inside the walls of Kyuden Tsuma. She spends most of her day here, tending to her flower beds and selecting the buds and blossoms that will decorate her courtroom. There is a winding stone path that leads through the meticulously landscaped garden, and several isolated viewing areas designed for relaxation and private conversations.

Yogo Ran can most often be found here as well, blending the leaves and petals of the garden into her mask, or making cuttings to use in her morning lessons with **Doji Arenji**.

House of the Tranquil Lotus

This modestly appointed inn was originally built to house the competitors in the Topaz Championship. PC's who played “New Beginnings” were among those who stayed here five years ago, though they may remember it being in slightly better condition. The garden and small shrine behind the building are still under the careful ending of Megumi, the monk, but the Inn itself has seen very few customers in the years

following the Tragedy. It has become the gathering place for the local garrison, and most evenings the common room is full of Kakita Bushi relaxing after a day of patrolling or drilling on the plains outside of town.

Mirumoto Kejiko is staying here, and **Ikoma Kouma** will stop in here on his way through town. **Kakita Tsubarashi** and **Kakita Keishu** will also be here in the evenings, along with **Bayushi Ichiro**.

The Marketplace

Tsuma's marketplace is much smaller than PCs may remember, as most of the commerce here involves the local peasants, rather than hundreds of samurai guests present for a major Imperial event. Should a samurai wander among the various stalls selling vegetables and simple tools, they will eventually come across two enterprising merchants who offer free samples of their competing products.

“Samurai-sama! A moment of your time, samurai-sama!” A merchant dressed in a respectable-looking blue and gray kimono approaches you with a tray containing a small clay pot and some freshly cut bok choy. The pot is labeled with a bright green shrimp. “I would be honored if you tasted my Jade Prawn fish sauce, samurai-sama!”

“Bah!” comes another voice, this one belonging to a slight man in a light grey kimono with blue accents who is carrying his own tray. “You don't want to taste that horse piss, do you, samurai-sama? You should try my 14th-Tsufish brand fish sauce, instead! Guaranteed, no horse piss!”

The two men continue to sing the praises of their respective sauces, while making more and more outrageous claims about the contents of the other brand. If the PC samples the sauces, both men will cease arguing and wait patiently until the samurai declares which is better. Jade Prawn brand is savory and lightly sweet, with hints of shrimp along with the traditional salty fish flavor. 14th-Tsufish is equally savory, but the sweetness is accented with a slight, peppery heat. Both are quite good, and both men are willing to discuss distribution rights with a Commerce-minded samurai patron.

Library of Kyuden Tsuma

This collection of scrolls is largely focused on Kakita Yae's floral pursuits, but it also serves as Kakita Niji's office. Servants constantly flow in and out of the space, bringing news from all corners of Takuetsu Province and leaving with Niji's instructions on behalf of Yae. There are some writings that may be of interest to

shugenja as well, as Niji keeps correspondence with researchers and sensei from several different shugenja schools. This is perhaps why Isawa Nao spends as much time in this library as Yogo Ran will let him.

If **Kakita Niji** and **Isawa Nao** aren't listed as being in a particular location, they are most likely here.

Other places of interest in Tsuma include the Poisoned Water Sake House, and “Medinaat-al-Salaam”, a trading house operated by the Unicorn. Both establishments have fallen on hard times as a result of the loss of business since the end of the annual tournament, with the sake house frequented primarily by ronin and peasant merchants and the Unicorn working as brokers for foreign tulip bulbs.

Court of the Cherry Blossoms

As mentioned above, the PCs will have two opportunities to do things each day, in the morning and the afternoon. They are, of course, not the only characters involved in the court, and this section details what events are available as well as what the other characters are doing. Several of the following events are triggered by specific actions from the PCs; if it is possible to provide them for the PCs with minimal changes, the GM should make what adjustments are necessary, but it may simply happen that they do not occur for any given group of PCs based on their choices and involvement.

Each event lists where it takes place and which NPCs are present; for each session, refer to the locations for which NPCs will be present there. There are also certain “trigger” events that will occur through the court; these should be presented for the PCs to observe if possible, and there is some flexibility in their scheduling to allow for it.

Day One - Morning

Activities – Doji Arenji's Ikebana Class (Yae's Garden)

NPCs: Doji Arenji, Kakita Yae, Yogo Ran, Isawa Nao

Yogo Ran has convinced her childhood friend Isawa Nao to attend Arenji's class by insisting there is knowledge to be found outside of books. Players taking this class may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Awareness TN 15** to notice that Ran is having a hard time focusing her attention on teaching Nao. Through the class, Kakita Yae constantly draws Doji Arenji's attention towards each student's work, trying to build up her guests' confidence with the art. Rolling **20+** reveals Arenji to be uncomfortable receiving so much of Yae's attention.

Halfway through the class, Yae excuses herself, reminding Arenji of their daily inspection of the large field of flowers after lunch. Once she leaves, Ran's focus returns, though now she is the one guiding the Doji around the room.

Each PC participating in the class makes an **Artisan: Ikebana / Awareness** roll. The highest result will be honored at tonight's dinner. If no PC participates, Yae will give praise to Yogo Ran's centerpiece. Have the PCs taking this class roll every day, with the highest roll becoming the focus for the evening's table.

Day One – Afternoon

Activities: None planned. PCs are free to visit any of the local sites, or work on their own projects. Yae has secured the use of pretty much any common materials used by artisans and craftsman, as well as ensuring that the appropriate tools and forges are available to her guests.

Day One or Day Two – Afternoon, Yae's Garden

PCs who return to Yae's Garden after lunch on either the first or second day have an opportunity to overhear an argument between Yogo Ran and Bayushi Ichiro.

As you walk through the splendor of Yae's personal garden, you hear hushed voices coming from one of the secreted alcoves.

Getting close enough to hear what is being said without being detected requires **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility TN 20**, and will cause an appropriate Honor loss for the use of a Low Skill. Failure results in the listener's footsteps crunching loud enough on the gravel walkway to be overheard by the Bayushi, ending the conversation.

“You will stop this nonsense with Arenji immediately, Yogo-san. You bring dishonor not only on yourself, but also on your host and her family. If pressed too far, you could even cause a major loss of face for both Clans.”

“With all due respect, Bayushi-sama, you should mind your...”

*“Preventing the mistakes of impetuous children *is* my business, girl. You are promised to someone else, and will do nothing to jeopardize your duty.”*

You hear the snap of a fan, and the crunch of geta on the gravel path hastily leaving the area, followed by another set of heavy footsteps.

If the eavesdropper is Scorpion, Ichiro will silently approach the PC from behind. *“There may be hope for the Scorpion after all,” the voice of Bayushi Ichiro comments. “Keep an eye on her.”*

Day One - Dinner

The meal today is less extravagant than the night before, but still amazing. All of the flowers have been replaced with new arrangements, and the winning arrangement from today's class has been selected as the centerpiece of the dining table. The PC who designed the centerpiece gains 1 point of Glory.

After the final course has been served, Yae stands and moves to the center of the court chamber. “I would like to begin tonight's artistic presentation by inviting you to join me in my garden.” The Kakita moves through her garden with a silent grace, leading her guests along the paths towards a small koi pond. Floating in the center of the pool is a spectacular sight; one of the rare Golden Lotus flowers. Reaching out over the water, Yae removes the lotus blossom from its resting place and presents it for inspection. Each of the petals is a deep golden yellow with jade-green tips.

“We discovered these beautiful specimens growing in a small spring that appeared on the far end of the training grounds following... before we began converting the area into flower beds. Before blooming, the buds are a fascinating deep, almost blood red, marbled with black veins. On the night of the new moon, when Lady Hitomi has hidden her light so that we may turn our attentions to the thousand kami of the night sky, the lotus spreads its petals, revealing its true golden brilliance.

“They can only be collected during that one night each month, and once the lotus has been cut from its stem, the blossom will last until the next new moon. Our attempts at transplanting the Golden Lotus to other pools and marshes have all failed, but you are all invited to join us two nights from now for the next harvest.”

One PC may present an artistic work, or show off progress on a long-term project at this time. If multiple PCs wish to do so, the honor is granted to the PC with the highest Status; the remaining PCs will have time to make similar presentations during each of the subsequent dinners. Afterwards, the PCs are free to entertain themselves for the evening, but Kakita's Shrine, the Kakita Dojos, and the Marketplace are all empty.

Day One – After Dinner

Activities: unofficial gathering (Tranquil Lotus)
NPCs: Kakita Keishu, Kakita Tsubarashi

When you enter the inn's common room, you are greeted with a loud, “Kanpai!” from the various Crane guards and other locals that frequent the Tranquil Lotus. Eventually, everyone settles back to their cups and bottles, and the dull roar of polite conversation returns. The pleasant atmosphere is soon shattered by Kakita Tsubarashi, who had been sharing a table with Kakita Keishu, surging to his feet to confront the magistrate. “You need to watch what you say, Keishu-sama. You know I can't allow such slander to be spoken about my Lady Yae.”

“Sit down, Tsuba,” Keishu laughingly replies. “You and I both know you've said worse. Besides, I'm nowhere near drunk enough to lose to you in a duel.”

The gunso sighs, and then retakes his seat.

As none of the other patrons (including the PCs) heard what was actually said, there is no grounds for anyone else to press for a duel.

Day Two - Morning

Arenji's Class - same as Day One, though Ran is noticeably focusing her attention on Isawa Nao, who is basking in the attention. Arenji does not seem to notice. PCs may again roll **Artisan: Ikebana / Awareness** to determine the centerpiece for dinner later today. Arenji will ask what theme the winning PC was trying to express with their arrangement.

Ikoma Kouma, a returned spirit from the early days of the Lion cavalry, gallops into town on his way to deliver a batch of scrolls to Kyuden Kakita and stops by the Chrysanthemum Shrine before continuing on. If asked, he will explain he is carrying the latest batch of edits, corrections, and gap-fillers prepared by the Lion historians to help the Crane fill in the holes in their libraries. Kouma will track down any Lion PCs that are present with news from home, but otherwise will press on to the Kakita Stronghold.

Members of the Owls receive invitations to meet with Bayushi Ichiro at the Tranquil Lotus after dinner that night.

Day Two - Afternoon

Players are free to explore the village, work on artistic projects, or fill this time with other things. **Kakita Tsubarashi** will invite any of the less artistically inclined PCs to join him "and the boys" at the Tranquil Lotus after dinner.

Day Two – Afternoon, Library

NPCs: Isawa Nao, Kakita Niji, Bayushi Ichiro
PCs in the Library at this time will have an opportunity to witness Bayushi Ichiro confronting Niji rather loudly; it is obvious he intends for everyone to hear what he's saying.

“I've spoken to the girl, Niji-san, but I don't expect to have changed her mind. Let me know if it becomes a larger issue, and I will personally see to it she gets re-assigned.”

Niji's response is quieter, as though uncomfortable with the matter. “Thank you, Bayushi-sama. I will.”

The Scorpion leans in and says something else to the hatamoto, but you can't make quite out the words.

PCs can attempt to eavesdrop, rolling **Investigation / Perception TN 25** and losing the appropriate amount of Honor. (The Read Lips Advantage would catch this as well.) If successful, they hear Ichiro say, “... *and next time, tell your master to do her own dirty work.*” Whether this is in reference to Yae or someone else is unclear. **Isawa Nao** has overheard this, and will relay it as testimony if the PCs interview him after the events on the night of Day Four.

Day Two - Dinner

Tonight's dinner has a slightly less floral theme to the various dishes, focusing instead on sweet and savory flavors that are more common in the Mantis Islands of Spice and Silk. The courtroom itself has been given a subtle make-over, with broad, deep green leaves framing unusual jungle flowers. If asked about this unusual choice, Yae will direct attention to Kakita Dashi, who explains that all artists must push their abilities on occasion, and the new flavors and ingredients offered by the Mantis gave him that chance.

As the final course is served, Doji Arenji begins his presentation, which is unsurprisingly a demonstration of Ikebana, though he has chosen to mirror the theme of tonight's meal and builds a stunning arrangement of jungle foliage and rare, tropical flowers. The final addition to the display is a flowering blossom that resembles a hummingbird in flight. Arenji gently cups the brightly colored flower in his hands and plucks it from the stem, sending the ‘bird’ into the air, where it traces several slow spirals before settling gracefully on Yogo Ran's shoulder. The young Scorpion claps delightedly, showing the flower to those seated next to her before tucking it into the sleeve of her kimono.

PCs can roll **Raw Perception TN 20** to notice a slight increase to the breeze coming from the garden just as the Doji released the flower into the air. Success on this roll means they can roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** vs Niji's **Stealth (Spellcasting) / Agility** (9k4, with Empahsis) to notice the Crane whispering under his breath and making small motions with his fingers. A shugenja with at least two Ranks in Spellcraft who sees this can easily recognize this as a simple *Summon Air* spell. If Niji is confronted about this, he will deny the allegation, and will challenge anyone who presses it further, with Keishu acting as his champion.

Following Arenji's performance is an opportunity for a second PC to make an Artistic presentation.

Day Two - After Dinner

Activities: unofficial gathering, Ichiro's meeting (Tranquil Lotus)

NPCs: Bayushi Ichiro; Kakita Keishu, Kakita Tsubarashi, Kakita Dashi, Yogo Ran, Isawa Nao, Mirumoto Kejiko

Bayushi Ichiro has invited any members of the Owls (formerly the Eyes of the Miya) and anyone else who seems loyal to the Regent to join him for drinks in one of the Inn's private rooms. Once the drinks have been served, Ichiro begins to explain the reason for this gathering.

"Hantei Okucheo has given us a chance to further the cause of the ancestors who returned to help the Empire when we needed them most. The very least we can do to thank them for their help is to make sure they continue to receive the recognition and reward that they deserve, just as any of us do." He tosses off the contents of his cup and continues briskly. "To this end, it is our duty to identify those few ungrateful samurai who refuse to give Okucheo-sama the respect he, and those who returned with him, have earned. I have even heard rumors of people attempting to blame them for the problems now facing the Empire! Your duty, as Owls, is to report these blasphemous accusations to others loyal to the Regent, so that they may be corrected."

There are a number of possible reactions from the PCs, particularly those new to their position as Owls or previously unaware of the intrigue surrounding the Imperial Regent.

- What will happen to the people we report?
"They will be given an opportunity to learn the truth, and to then assist us by revealing who it was that gave them such false information in the first place."
- What if they refuse?

"If the blasphemy is so deeply ingrained in them that they cannot see the wisdom in Okucheo-sama's mercy, they will be offered the same right of proving the honor of their position that any samurai has."

- I did not sign on with the Owls to be a spy for Okucheo!

"It is unfortunate that you feel that way, samurai-san. You must do what you feel your honor demands, and I bear you no ill will, but I would suggest thinking very carefully about who you speak with regarding this meeting." A PC who no longer wishes to be a member of the Owls at this point may turn over their cert, losing the Positional Status that comes with it. They gain **Sworn Enemy: Hantei Okucheo** in its place.

Common Room - While the Owls are meeting in the private room, several of the other NPCs have joined the off-duty members of the Kakita Garrison in the common room for some drinks and relaxing conversation before heading on to bed. Those listed above are all here, and the PCs have several opportunities to overhear bits of conversation; there are no rolls associated with doing so, and while it is a somewhat questionable act, only those with an Honor Rank of 9 or 10 would lose any Honor (one point of loss for those Ranks).

Keishu and Tsubarashi are commiserating together in a darkened corner, Ran has Nao all but tied to her obi at a table near the door, while Kejiko and Dashi are both sitting alone at their respective tables. Kejiko will welcome anyone who wishes to join her, turning the conversation towards her brother, and why his name is on the plaque at the Chrysanthemum Shrine if they haven't already heard the tale. Dashi is less welcoming of company, dourly sipping his sake and scowling at nothing in particular.

Eavesdropping on Keishu and Tsubarashi garners the following snippet:

"Did you see that?" Keishu asks, incredulously. "I half-expected the Scorpion strumpet to burst into flame from sheer excitement when the stupid bird-flower-thing landed on her."

"Careful, Kei-Kei!" Tsubarashi warns with a harsh whisper. "Ichiro will not take kindly to someone mocking the Flower Princess."

"For the last time, Tsuba, stop calling me that!"

Listening in on the Yogo and the Isawa allows the PC to overhear the following exchange:

"... don't be upset with me, Nao-kun. I know I am promised to Boukken, but that's just a political thing and.."

"What makes you think I care?" the Isawa quietly growls.

"Well, he's your brother, and Arenji and I.."

"What makes you think I care what happens to my brother?! You should do whatever it is that makes you happy, Ran, but be careful. Ichiro means to send you home if you aren't more discrete. Boukken will not care either way."

"That's a horrible..."

"Yes. Horrible. Good night, Ran-san. I have 'ikebana class' in the morning."

The Isawa gets up and leaves, at the same time Ichiro's meeting concludes. As the Isawa departs, he offers a polite bow to **Ikoma Kouma** who has just returned from his delivery to Kyuden Kakita. His messenger bag is still full, however, this time with scrolls containing edits, corrections, and gap-fillers provided by the Crane historians to help the Lion repair holes in their histories. The Ikoma orders a drink and sits at a table with a couple of the local guards.

Things have just settled down again when when Kouma suddenly jumps to his feet and turns, startling **Kakita Dashi**, who had been approaching the Lion from behind. *"What do you want now, Kakita-san?! I've told you that I can't help you!"*

"Please, Ikoma-san. I must know!"

"I. Can't. Help. You. I am a messenger! I ride my horse to wherever the Lion send me, and I come back with things the Lion need. Do you doubt my sincerity, Kakita-san?" The Lion scout challenges.

If the PCs attempt to break up this altercation will learn the following information from Dashi and Kouma:

"Kakita-san keeps begging me to ask the Ikoma historians to find out who he is. Or was, anyway," Kouma explains, before turning to face Dashi. "Except I can't. Because I'm a messenger."

Presumably, the PCs will ask Dashi why he keeps pestering the Ikoma.

Kakita Dashi will look to the ground before answering. "I don't know who I am. I remember

being in Meido, and seeing the samurai around me get up and follow a glowing army from Tengoku marching by. I followed them. Fought with them. But I have never once known who I am. The Crane have no record of me. I trained at the Academy," he insists, pointing in the direction of the dojos, "but my name isn't in the scrolls. I just want to know who I am."

Players who intervene in this situation without resorting to threats of violence may spend a Lion Favor or Influence point to have the Ikoma historians comb their libraries for information on Dashi's past; they may instead pledge an Obligation to the Lion Clan in exchange for the same information. It will take four days for the Ikoma to deliver their request and return with an answer.

Day Two – After Dinner, Yae's Garden

Players who wish to enjoy the quiet beauty of Yae's garden will have the chance to overhear the following conversation. They must roll **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility (TN 20)** to avoid being heard while approaching a secluded area of the garden.

You hear the heated voice of Kakita Yae raised above the gentle rustle of the breeze.

*"What were you *thinking* Arenji?! You know that girl..."*

"I know she is a young woman, and thinks that what she is feeling is the most important thing in the Empire. I promise you, Yae-chan, that I did not mean for the flower to go to her. Tomorrow, I will speak with her, explain to her that that what she wants is not possible."

"She will not simply walk away, Arenji. The Scorpion never do. I may have to have her removed from my court if this foolishness doesn't stop."

The conversation trails off, as the pair moves on.

Day Two - While the PCs are sleeping

A PC who carries Shikkui's pendant should roll **Raw Perception, TN 25**. Success allows them to hear a muffled male voice coming from the strange crystal, speaking in Senpet. PCs who can speak this language are able to make out what might be instructions for brewing a cup of tea. The words end with the phrase *"word is thmenh robsa roc"* before the voice falls silent. The last part is in a language unfamiliar to any PC.

An Ishiken, or the PC with the highest Void (the one who spent the most Void over the day in case of a tie, or

chosen at random otherwise), will have the following dream. The details of the vision should be adjusted to suit the character in question (an Ishiken will see a Shiba bushi, an Asako courtier, etc) :

You stand in a field of flowers, surrounded by four near-copies of yourself. Each of them IS you, but a version of you that was trained in a different school. One is you as a courtier made of fog. One is you as a shugenja with eyes of fire, one is a stone bushi, and the last is a monk who flows through kata like water. As the four converge on you, you feel a tremendous pressure bearing down on you, driving you to the ground. It presses harder and harder, like wind in the sails of a Mantis ship, enveloping you and threatening to burst, letting whatever force is pushing it loose into the world.

Day Three – Morning, Arenji’s Class

Yogo Ran has worked the bird-shaped flower into her mask, and all but ignores Nao in favor of trying to impress the sensei. Both men are visibly frustrated. At the conclusion of the class, Arenji invites Yogo Ran to join him in the gardens that afternoon.

Nightingales and anyone who expresses talent in the arts receives an invitation to meet with Arenji tomorrow afternoon in Yae's garden to discuss “current trends in Rokugani culture.” It is possible for an Owl to be invited to the meeting, but they will not invited to join the Nightingales.

Day Three – Afternoon, Yae’s Garden

PCs meditating or working in Yae's garden will have no trouble overhearing an emotional conversation between Doji Arenji and Yogo Ran.

“I need to apologize, Yogo-san. It has become obvious that the time we have spent together means a lot to you, and you show great promise as a student. But that's all that you can be to me, Ran-san. I am sorry if I have misled you.”

“But... last night. The flower...” You can hear the strain in Ran's voice as she chokes back anger and tears.

“That was simply an accident. To be completely honest, the fact that the flower did more than simply fall to the table came as a complete surprise to me.”

“So... you, and Yae.”

“Yes. Maybe, someday.”

“I... I understand.”

“Good-”

“I understand that the two of you have been laughing at me this whole time, haven't you?” Yogo Ran explodes, “Playing your Crane games. Fine. If you want the dried up crone, you can have her!” The crunch of sandals on the gravel path recedes into the distance, and somewhere a sliding door slams shut.

“That could have gone better,” Arenji concludes with a sigh before returning to his rooms to prepare for dinner.

NOTE: If no PCs witnessed this event, one of the servants will mention the encounter if questioned following the events of Day Four.

Day Three – Dinner

Tonight's feast is far simpler than anything you might have expected after the extravagance of the previous two nights. Rather than colorful blossoms in fancy arrangements, most of the courtroom is decorated with dried grasses and wild flowers. Kakita Yae will happily point out that everything on tonight's menu was prepared by Kakita Dashi using locally grown produce and fish from the nearby river, including the renowned delicacy of tsu fish eggs. Dashi bows, and in turn offers thanks to Kakita Niji for giving him the idea. When it comes time for tonight's artistic presentation, Niji moves to a corner of the court where an elegantly simple biwa rests. Kakita Keishu stands as well, joining her father. Niji plays a traditional biwa piece, with accompanying vocals provided by Keishu. The song is melancholy, and tells the story of a low-ranking soldier who never saw battle, having been assigned to keep watch on the army's camp. The soldier comes upon a giant boar rummaging through the camp's provisions and kills it, but not before receiving a mortal wound from the terrible beast's tusks. The soldier was awarded high honors for having sacrificed his life to ensure his comrades would not go hungry. Yogo Ran hardly says a word during dinner, and pays little attention to the artistic performance, picking absently at her food and shooting dark looks at Yae and Arenji.

Another PC may make an artistic presentation now.

Following the evening's last presentation, Yae will step forward once more. “I would be greatly honored if each of you would join me later this evening at the southern end of the flower fields to assist in harvesting the blossoms of the Golden Lotus. We have constructed a path to the place where they grow, but

the area is fairly marshy. You may wish to take this into consideration when selecting your attire."

Day Three - Late Evening

Activity: Golden Lotus Harvest (Chrysanthemum Shrine)

NPCs: Kakita Yae, Doji Arenji, Mirumoto Kejiko, Kakita Rei, Yogo Ran.

The air surrounding the spring-fed marsh is humid, much more so than is typical for this time of year. Standing at the head of a series of wooden footpaths leading to the small swamp's center.

As you approach the small spring that is the source of the Golden Lotus flowers, the image of a young man appears, surrounded by a blue glow. The man is calling for someone, repeating the same word over and over (PCs with Read Lips can make out the name "Kejiko"). Kejiko runs forward, attempting to embrace the apparition, but as soon as she makes contact, the entire area is bathed in a burst of blue light. The flare coalesces into the scene of a battlefield, outlined in the azure radiance. Around you, samurai are fighting faceless Goju minions in front of a giant stone portal, while others are standing in the midst of chaos, unaware of their surroundings. The entire tableau is eerily silent, though the vision is otherwise a perfect monochrome representation of a hard-fought battle. The young man is spinning, trying to orient himself, trying to find somewhere to hide.

The PCs are surrounded by an image of the chaos of the new-born Kousoku no Chigiri four years ago. Those PCs who played through New Beginnings recognize it immediately; other PCs may roll **Lore: Spirit Realms / Intelligence** (TN 35) to do so. Shugenja may roll **Spellcraft / Perception** to realize that the image is essentially a large-scale casting of "Commune" with Water spirits providing a visual representation of the young man's last minutes. The TN for this roll is 20; those who roll more than 40 realize that there are actually other spirits from the new Realm present among the images. (Ishiken realize this with a roll of 30, but their TN for the basic roll is unchanged.)

If the PCs simply watch the events unfold around them without reacting, they will be 'attacked' by some of the spirits, who are reaching across the boundaries of the Realms to try to claim something of substance for themselves. Those who choose to dodge the images may roll **Defense / Reflexes** at TN dependent on their Insight Rank (as more spirits are drawn to those more established souls): TN 10 for Insight Rank 1, 15 for Rank 2, and 20 for Rank 3. Success means that they are not effected at all. Those who fail, or who choose not

to move at all, lose a point of Void for every Insight Rank that they have. There is no physical damage, however, the sensation is uncomfortable. Those who lose all of their Void must give up a point of Destiny – this should be noted on the PCs' mod sheet, though the effects of this are still entirely unknown. There is no meaningful way to "fight back" – the spirits are not truly present in Ningen-do, and even magic cannot affect them.

Counting this first exposure, there will be a total of three waves of attacks, while Kejiko tries to heed her brother's final message. The PCs will have to make two more rolls following the first. Kakita Rei and Doji Arenji move to defend Yae; however, Kejiko is trying to pay attention to her brother's last words, despite the discomfort of losing Void to the spirits. She will be distracted unless the PCs help defend her, and will miss part of his message.

The simplest method is to Guard her, which increases the TN of their Defense roll by 5 (any Techniques that affect Guard actions are at the GM's discretion, though they should be of some benefit); as long as at least two PCs do this, she will be able to interpret the last part of his message. A single PC may simply stand in the way of the spirits, voluntarily giving up a point of their Destiny to defend the Dragon. This may also be done to defend any of the other NPCs, though all doing so does is give them a positive impression of the PC (potentially useful during the investigation if they choose to defend Yae, but not critical). After three "rounds" of the spirits' assault, the vision of the battle will fade with the following:

Suddenly the young man before Kejiko stops, and a look of surprised anguish crosses his face as a dribble of blood escapes his mouth. He slowly slumps to the ground, revealing another man wearing a wooden mask behind him.

The second man removes his outer robe, wrapping it around the dying Dragon before removing his mask and covering the young man's face. The scene ends as the man walks towards the dais and enormous portal atop it. As the image fades, you see the dying man's mouth move in silent prayer, and Golden Lotus flowers blooming around you. Mirumoto Kejiko collapses to her knees, sobbing over the now confirmed loss of her brother, Mirumoto Yanagi, and the treasured Golden Lotus blossoms begin to wither and die, the magic that sustained them fading.

Spellcraft / Intelligence (TN 20) brings the sobering realization that the young shugenja probably used his dying breath to call upon the water kami, asking them

to deliver a message to his sister; beyond that, PCs are left to draw their own conclusions about what happened. Water shugenja have little trouble sensing a massive accumulation of water kami gathering in this area, despite the dissipation of the young man's spell.

If asked, Kejiko will acknowledge that this was the result of her brother's final spell, but unless she was unmolested by the spirits, she will be content with knowing Yanagi's fate – though obviously in grief. If, however, the PCs defended her, she will know that her brother was slain by the Scorpion, who was able to return to the Empire. (While it may seem obvious, the vision was inconclusive on its own as the killing blow is not shown.) She will swear vengeance on her brother's killer, though she is unlikely to share this immediately with any PC who has not already befriended her – and not with any Scorpion PC at all.

Part Three: Things Get Interesting

Day Four – Morning

Arenji's Class: Kakita Yae and the PCs are only people here, other than the sensei. Isawa Nao stops in briefly to speak quietly with Arenji, but the class proceeds as normal. While the PCs work on their arrangements, the Doji sensei walks among them, explaining the language of flowers. Each flower has its own meaning, and that meaning can change depending on the color of the flower, and the other flowers around it.

Kakita Rei and **Yogo Ran** are at the Chrysanthemum Shrine, talking quietly. PCs might hear a stifled sob and the occasional sniffle, but cannot hear any of the conversation.

Day Four - Afternoon (Yae's Garden)

Meeting of the Nightingales in Yae's Garden - Arenji, Yae, and Kakita Rei are in attendance, along with any PCs who accepted Arenji's invitation. Servants bring tea and place several small bowls of rice crackers within reach of the assembled artists. The ikebana sensei begins smoothly as soon as everyone is settled:

“Thank you for coming, all of you. As some of you are aware, Kakita Yoshi has called upon the artisans of Rokugan to bring light to an Empire shrouded in intrigue and to create beauty where tense politics creates bitterness. It falls to us to remind all of those sworn to serve Rokugan of the things they have vowed to protect in its name. We can use the power of our art, the fabric of our traditions, and our culture of fine

craftsmanship to remind the Empire that samurai serve something greater than themselves. With so much division in the Empire, it is important that we do not forget that which makes us who and what we are.”

“I, for one, would welcome your thoughts on the matter,” Yae interjects, her eyes moving to each of her guests. Kakita Rei agrees to the need for less conflict in the Empire, but her duties with the Emerald Magistrates prevent her from dedicating as much time as she would like to her art these days.

Once everyone has been given a chance to talk, Arenji will extend an invitation to any PCs who seem interested in joining the Nightingales, unless they are already members. PCs who are members of the Owls will not be extended this invitation, and any PCs who are Nightingales but disagree with the organization's goal of using art and culture to promote communication among the Clans will be asked to leave the Nightingales, losing the cert. Players granted this Position should contact the Campaign Admin for the cert (it is required to select a specific Artisan or Performance Skill to be their chosen art, and the player should consider that prior to gaining the cert).

Day Four – Dinner

For the first time during the Cherry Blossom Festival, the focus of the decorations for tonight's dinner is the cherry blossom. The dinner itself has been moved outside into Yae's Garden, where glowing paper lanterns have been hung from streamers of pink and red silk strung between the cherry trees. “Like the chrysanthemum,” Yae begins, as the first course is being served, “the cherry blossom has long been a symbol of the Imperial families, and their connection to the beauty of the Celestial Heavens. I invite you to join me in spending tonight's meal in quiet contemplation of the wonders of Ningen-do, and all of the beauty it contains.” The meal itself consists of delicately flavored soups and sashimi courses, designed to highlight the more subtle flavors preferred by the Crane, as well as not distracting from the meditations of those dining.

Players with two or more Ranks in **Lore: History**, **Lore: Flowers**, **Lore: Theology** or another appropriate Lore Skill realize that Yae's statement is not technically correct – the two flowers she mentioned are traditionally and historically tied to the Hantei dynasty, but have been adopted by the Toturi Dynasty as well. PCs who do not have at least two Ranks must make a roll using one of the listed Lores (and Intelligence) at a TN of 20 to recall this.

No one speaks during the meal, instead relying on simple gestures and expressions to communicate. If anyone has one of the chalkboards from Winter Court: Kyuden Tonbo, they may return to their rooms to get it without penalty. The novelty of this item will become a topic of exciting hand-waving and results in an award of one point of Glory to someone who brings the board to Yae's attention.

Once the last course has been served, Kakita Rei briefly steps into the main courtroom and returns to the garden with a small bench covered with cloth. Placing the bench on the gravel path and taking a seat, Rei removes the cloth, revealing a set of fine metal tools, a miniature anvil, and a stone bowl containing hot embers. She picks up one of the tools, then reaches into her sleeve to retrieve a spool of silver wire. For several silent moments she works the delicate wire, wrapping it around a small iron bar or flattening it with a hammer. At one point, she places the metal form into the bowl and inserts a thin metal tube into the embers and blows gently, causing the coals to glow brightly and sending a shower of sparks cascading over her hands. After about an hour of delicate metalwork, Rei sets her tools down and places an iron lid on the bowl. Standing once more, she walks silently to Yae, and presents her with her creation; a netsuke in the shape of a miniature tree branch with several delicate cherry blossoms. As she passes, you can just barely make out tiny burn scars on her hands, the result of many years working with metal. Yae shakes her head, and indicates that Rei should give the gift to one of the guests at the table. Once again, Rei presents her work to Yae, motioning to the garden, and then to Yae's guests, only to be met with a second refusal. With a mischievous grin, Rei shrugs and turns towards the koi pond at the edge of the garden. Making a throwing motion towards the fountain, the tall woman suggests giving the netsuke to Yae via the small pool of water. Smiling brightly, Yae finally relents, waving her hands to prevent the offering from being tossed to the fish.

There is time now for one more PC to present their art. They do not have to remain silent for this presentation, but they should receive a Free Raise on their roll if they do.

Day Four – After Dinner

Nothing of note happens this evening, but the GM should feel free to give the PCs another chance at witnessing one of the other conversations that took place earlier in the mod, if any are appropriate. Arenji and Bayushi Ichiro are busy, however.

Day Four – Late

A sudden scream wrenches you from your slumber, and you can hear a commotion from the hallway as other guests of Kyuden Tsuma move to find the source of the screams. Looking into the hallway, you see Isawa Nao supporting the sobbing form of Yogo Ran. “He's dead,” weeps the young woman. “He's dead, and it's all my fault.”

If asked who she is referring to, she will gasp out the name, “Doji Arenji-sensei.” If asked how she knows, she will claim ignorance: “I.. I just know. I can't... I can't feel him anymore.”

PCs can roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception 15** to notice several people missing from among those who have been staying in the castle: Doji Arenji, Bayushi Ichiro, Kakita Yae, and Kakita Niji. Yae's quarters are on the top floor of the castle, along with Niji's, so they simply may not have heard the commotion.

The throng of samurai and servants in the halls turns as one, and rushes towards Arenji's suite. There is an audible gasp when one of the servants pushes the door open, revealing a terrible scene. Lying on the floor are Bayushi Ichiro and Doji Arenji. Arenji is laying in a pool of blood, while Ichiro is face down in a pool of milky white vomit. A tea pot and three cups sits on the floor between the two bodies, and a gentle breeze causes the candles in the room to flicker wildly.

“What is going on here?!” Kakita Niji bellows, as he enters the room, “Her ladyship is trying to... oh. Oh no.” Turning to one of the servants, Niji orders the man to go and fetch Kakita Keishu and an eta. “Touch nothing until my daughter gets here,” the hatamoto warns. “I must go inform Kakita Yae-sama.” He steps back out into the hallway, feet rushing on the wooden floor as quickly as his age allows.

There are several things the PCs can do to investigate while they wait, but doing more than scanning the room will be considered a major breach of etiquette and result in a significant loss of Honor. This includes communing with the kami in the castle without Yae's permission. Rolling **Investigation (Notice) / Perception (TN 20)** reveals a pattern of splattered blood in the room consistent with Arenji having his throat slashed, as well as the fact that one of the three tea cups (the one closest to Bayushi Ichiro) does not come from the same set as the rest of the tea service. Success at a **TN 30** reveals the point of a dagger sticking out of Ichiro's sleeve. **TN 35** draws attention to the fact that there is more of a breeze in this room than in the rest of the suite.

The primary source of information at this point will probably be Yogo Ran, since she knew of the death before she actually saw it. Interviewing her will be difficult, but a bit of patience and compassion will serve well; on the other hand, being more brusque or demanding will cause her to be less coherent. If the players don't interview Ran now, they will have to wait until tomorrow, when Kakita Rei returns with a Writ of Appearance signed by an Emerald Magistrate.

- What happened/How did you know Arenji was dead?

“I was in my room, trying to sleep when I felt what I can only describe as a sharp tug in my chest, a feeling like something snapping in my mind, and then the sudden realization that Arenji-sama was dead.”

- Why do you think it's your fault?/Did you kill them?

“No. But... It's got something to do with me, I just know it.”

The PCs may roll **Lore: Scorpion / Intelligence (TN 20)** to know that this is fairly consistent with stories surrounding Yogo's Curse. (Yogo family PCs or those with Bad Fortune: Yogo Curse do not need to roll for this.) If a player suggests that Ran may be lying, they may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness**; success at a **15** allows them to determine that she believes what she is saying, though she is suffering significant emotional trauma. Success at a **25** reveals that she is hiding something, though pressing her on it will have to wait.

Kakita Niji returns, leading Kakita Yae and motioning for people to move out of her way. A sobbing gasp escapes the governor's lips when she sees Arenji lying dead on the floor. “Oh. Arenji... my... Who!? Where... Where is that Yogo bi-” Spinning, Yae scans the onlookers with a crazed expression, looking for Ran. “She did this!” Yae exclaims, pointing an accusing finger at the younger woman. “She was jealous, and took him away from me!”

“Is that so, Yogo-san?” asks the just-arriving Kakita Keishu. “Are you responsible for this?”

“Yes... I mean no! I... I don't know.”

While this is going on, Kakita Niji moves into the room, carefully finding a clean spot to stand, and picks up the teapot. “This is yours, isn't it, Yogo-san?”

“Yes, it is... but... how did it get here?”

“Perhaps the water kami in the tea pot can tell us, Yogo-san. Would you like to question them, or shall

I?” Niji asks, already suspecting the answer. He gestures for her to enter, carefully holding the pot with its ephemeral witnesses.

Unless a shugenja PC steps in, Yogo Ran will cast *Commune with Water*, describing the following scene:

The water is dark for several seconds, before someone removes the lid of the teapot, allowing in light and a dim view of a low, wooden ceiling. A hand moves over the opening, and adds a couple of drops of clear liquid to the water before replacing the lid. A form, hidden in shadow, lifts the tray bearing the pot and its two matching cups, and carries them from the kitchen down the darkened hallway towards Doji Arenji's suite. Upon entering the room, the person carrying the tray is revealed to be Yogo Ran. Bayushi Ichiro responds angrily, pointing towards the door, as Arenji moves to take the tray from Ran with a bow. The startled girl leaves the room quickly, as Arenji begins to prepare tea for the two men, who quickly return to whatever they were discussing before Ran arrived. As the Doji moves to pour, Ichiro reaches into his sleeve and offers his own white porcelain cup. Arenji smiles and nods, filling the cup and then his own. Ichiro takes a sip of the tea, and looks as though he is about to offer comment when his face takes on a sudden pained expression. He looks down at the cup, and sniffs at it, while the concerned Crane appears to ask if something is wrong. Before Arenji's concern can be uttered, however, the Scorpion lashes out with a dagger, catching the artisan across the throat and sending a spray of blood over the room.

Arenji collapses to the floor, as a pool of blood forms around his head. Ichiro tries to make himself expel the poison, but soon succumbs and sinks to the floor.

“I don't understand!” Ran sobs as the vision fades. “I... I wasn't there! Why would I... Arenji...”

Kakita Yae explodes in anger, “Keishu-san! You heard her! She brought poisoned tea to kill her Scorpion lord and Arenji-kun! Arrest her immediately! Take down her confession! I should never have trusted you, you Scorpion harlot!”

Ran looks up, with tears in her eyes. “I was never in the room! I swear it!”

“Earlier, you claimed to have something to do with Arenji's death, and now you were never in the room. Curious. Come with me, Scorpion,” Keishu commands, with just the slightest hint of bared fangs. “We'll put you in the barracks brig until tomorrow, then we can start questioning.” The confused

shugenja follows the magistrate, but turns to Nao with an unspoken, desperate plea before being led across the village to the garrison barracks.

The players would be right in distrusting the events as they are occurring. There are several discrepancies in the vision granted by the water kami, as well as some things that are flat out impossible for it to have seen, such as things that occurred before the teapot entered the room. **Lore: Law / Intelligence TN 10** reminds the players that while the testimony of the kami is frequently used in the course of an investigation, any evidence they provide cannot be used in the actual trial. It is also apparent that whatever happened here points to Yogo Ran as the murderer, despite her protests to the contrary.

“Everything is under control, everyone,” Kakita Niji insists, after seeing that Kakita Yae was been escorted back to her rooms by several servants. “We have the villain responsible for this horror in custody, and Keishu will no doubt have her confession by morning. I assure you there is nothing further to worry about this evening. I suggest you all go back to your rooms, and try to put this out of your mind.”

As the servants disperse, Isawa Nao approaches you, and you can tell that his anger is barely being held in check. “She didn't do this. She isn't capable, and if we don't do something, Ran-san will fold like a paper crane when Keishu threatens to take her flowers away.”

If asked about his certainty of Ran's innocence, his reply is fairly cutting. *“Have you met her? Wilted flowers make her cry. There's no way she could even consider killing someone. And given that she carried her family's curse, she couldn't have planned for Arenji to die, either. It doesn't work that way.”* If asked to explain about the curse, he will admit that he was himself born a Yogo and so bears the curse as well. *“When I arrived at her rooms, she told me that Arenji had died, and that her Curse had broken. His death might be her fault, but she didn't kill him.”*

Investigating the Murder?

The PCs will need to get permission from Yae to investigate, but she has locked herself in her quarters in mourning. Kakita Niji is there also, and will not disturb her, insisting that his daughter will handle the investigation. **Lore: Law/Intelligence (TN 15)** reminds the players that since this crime involves members from two separate clans, the Emerald Magistrates should be involved in the investigation, so that there are no claims of collusion or bias.

Fortunately, Kakita Rei is an Apprentice Emerald Magistrate, and can offer some assistance. Unfortunately, she can't open an official investigation without permission of the daimyo, or a full Emerald Magistrate.

She can, with proper cause, force her way into Yae's quarters and get permission for the PCs to do a preliminary investigation while she goes to Kyuden Kakita to get one of the Magistrates. **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness (TN 20)** coupled with a well-reasoned argument will persuade her to help in this fashion. If the PCs suggest that she mention Shiba Utsuro's warning about a Kolat plot, she will do so, but Kakita Niji will immediately begin planning his escape, destroying any evidence in his rooms. He will also send Dashi the Assassin after them tomorrow evening to disguise his departure further.

Once Kakita Rei returns from talking to Yae, the PCs have permission to do the preliminary investigation while she gallops off to Kyuden Kakita to speak with an Emerald Magistrate there. They will have access to several key locations where evidence may be found, and may interview servants but will be unable to force any samurai to offer testimony. That will have to wait until Rei returns from the castle with a writ from an actual Magistrate in the morning.

Places to Search:

Arenji's Room

The room has remained largely untouched, as Rei commanded the eta to leave the bodies where they lay until the PCs have had a chance to look around. A closer examination of the scene reveals little additional evidence beyond what was available earlier.

Casting Air spells (such as *Light of the Moon*) is more difficult (TN +5), despite an overabundance of Air kami in the room, as they seem to be busy doing something else. **Investigation (Search) / Perception (TN 25)** reveals a hidden compartment in one of Arenji's vases containing several letters with dates going back two years from Shiba Utsuro asking his friend to keep an eye out for possible Kolat activity. Why Arenji collected them is a mystery, as is why they were hidden away.

If a PC attempts to cast a Commune Water spell on the Teapot while still INSIDE Arenji's room, they will get an image that reflects what Yogo Ran reported to see in her casting. Have the PC make the following rolls, as well:

- **Investigation (Notice) / Perception (TN 35):** There is a very faint flickering around the image of Yogo Ran, the shadows around her are just a little darker than in the rest of the room. After Ran leaves the room, the strange flickering moves around the room, stopping behind Doji Arenji just before the Scorpion lashes out with his dagger. A roll of **50+** grants a rather curious detail: The arrangement of the bodies, and the resulting pools of blood and bile is reminiscent of the Yin and Yang symbol of Balance. **Divination / Intelligence TN 20** or **Lore: Theology / Intelligence TN 25** reveals this to be a powerful omen of uncertain meaning. Have the PC write "Witnessed the omen at Tsuma" on their record sheet.
- **Spellcraft / Intelligence (TN 15):** The water kami should be able to report on things that happen in the room around them regardless of the lighting conditions. The fact that the person who added the poison to the teapot was shrouded in shadow indicates that some other power is involved.

A shugenja PC that removes the teapot from Arenji's room before communing with it will see the same scene, but Yogo Ran is replaced by a black void in the shape of a person. Further, it was this dark visitor that actually slit Arenji's throat and planted the dagger on the already dead Bayushi. If the kami are asked what the black shape is, they respond that it is a "thing that is not there."

A shugenja may roll **Spellcraft / Air (TN 20)** to determine that someone cast a powerful illusion spell asking the air kami to mask the identity of the person who came into the room. This will also explain why there are more air kami in the room than is normal. **Communing** with the Air kami in the room requires calling two extra Raises for clarity to get anything beyond hysterical laughter from the incredibly amused spirits. A successful Spell Casting Roll with a total of two Raises for clarity, coupled with the proper questions results in the following information:

Who called you here? Who asked you to disguise the attacker?

The Air kami replay the sound of a man's voice performing their summoning, though the words used in the ritual are foreign and strange. (PCs who speak Senpet can pick out the words "disguise the unseen as the red girl who wears flowers.") There is another sound, a strange voice that echoed as though from a great distance, but loud enough that it made recognizing the spell caster's voice almost unrecognizable. **Investigation / Awareness TN 40** reveals the voice's owner as **Kakita Niji**.

Why are there so many of you here?

(This applies anytime someone notices an increase in kami at various locations in the mod.) The kami reply cryptically, but indicate that they are gathering to greet spirits from far away.

Bayushi Ichiro's room

Investigation (Search) / Perception (TN 20): The Scorpion's quarters contain very little of interest, beyond some coded correspondence that any Scorpion player will recognize as simple reports on trade negotiations. There is one letter that stands out, however – a petition to the Yogo family daimyo, suggesting that Yogo Ran be reassigned so that the Scorpion might avoid political embarrassment.

Yogo Ran's room

Investigation (Search) / Perception (TN 20) reveals a concealed compartment in Yogo Ran's writing desk. Inside is a stack of lilac-scented notes addressed to Doji Arenji. The notes do not appear to have been delivered to their intended reader, as their seals remain intact. Breaking the seals and reading the letters is a minor breach of etiquette, but reveals several rather blatant poems and professions of love, but nothing that would indicate a desire to hurt Arenji or anyone else.

Examining the Corpses

If the PCs wish to look for clues on the bodies of the departed, they may do so. Note that personally touching a dead body is an act of great desecration – their Honor Rank will be reduced to 0 until they are cleansed at a shrine with a torii arch. (There is such a shrine at the Academy, but performing the rite will take some precious time.)

- They may roll **Medicine (Anatomy), Kenjutsu or Knives / Perception TN 20** when looking at Arenji to determine that the wound is a clean cut caused by the edge of a blade drawn across his neck, and not the series of jagged tears that would be caused by the tip of the blade, as seen in the vision granted by the teapot. Success at a **TN 30** indicates this was most likely done from behind.
- **Investigation (Notice) / Perception (TN 20)** when examining Bayushi Ichiro's corpse reveals an interesting piece of body art: a pale symbol resembling a stylized 'Q' has been drawn onto the underside of Ichiro's left arm, above the elbow. Players who can read Senpet recognize this symbol as being pronounced like the Rokugani 'K'. **Lore: Kolat / Intelligence TN 20** or **Lore: Law TN 30** reminds the PC that this is not an uncommon practice among members of that cult, though this particular symbol is rarely seen in Rokugan.

- Searching Bayushi Ichiro's clothing will reveal the following items concealed in his sleeves and other hidden pockets: Two pieces of folded paper, a second tanto, two spare lenses for his spectacles, and a pair of paper fans. One of the folded notes is from Yae requesting a meeting, and the other note is from Kakita Niji simply thanking Ichiro on behalf of their “mutual friend” for his assistance in getting rid of that “pest” during the negotiations in Phoenix lands earlier this year. **Courtier / Intelligence (TN 20)** to remember hearing rumors that (or having witnessed) Yasuki Minoru, the governor of Junkin Province, was poisoned and died during those negotiations. Ichiro himself wasn't in attendance, however. The illiterate eta will destroy these documents in the process of preparing the bodies if the PCs do not prevent it within the first two days.

Interviewing the Servants

Speaking with the servants is a good way to get information that was previously available through eavesdropping in the gardens or other areas. The following is a list of things the servants may have witnessed over the last several days. The players may roll **Investigation / Awareness** at **TN 10**, granting additional information for each increment of 5 above the TN.

- *“Several days ago, I heard Bayushi-sama and Yogo-sama having an argument in the garden. I.. I think it was about Doji Arenji-sama. Yogo-sama was very angry when she left.”*
- *“While I was waiting on Lady Yae-sama, I heard her tell Doji Arenji-sama that she would be asking Boyushi-sama to have Yogo-sama moved to a different court.”*
- *“Yesterday, I saw Doji Arenji-sama and Yogo-sama walking together in the garden, and then I saw Yogo-sama running to her rooms, crying.”*
- *“I was cleaning in the Library the other day, when I saw Bayushi-sama talking to Kakita Niji-sama, saying that if there were further issues with the girl (presumably Ran), she would be relocated. Bayushi-sama must have said something else, because Niji-sama left the Library in a hurry. Isawa-sama was there, perhaps he heard more?”*
- If a PC specifically interviews the kitchen staff: The only people who were in the kitchen other than the staff were Yogo Ran, Kakita Niji, and Kakita Dashi. Ran came to pick up and return her tea set, and Kakita Niji shooed the servants out so that he could talk to Dashi privately. When the servants returned, both men were gone.

Part Four: Lies and Illusions

Shortly after dawn, Kakita Rei returns from Kyuden Kakita with a document signed by Doji Oharu, granting her the ability to investigate the deaths and to compel testimony.

“Doji Oharu-sama apologizes for not being able to handle the investigation personally, but he is on an important mission for Kakita Toshiken-sama,” Rei tells Kakita Niji apologetically, while handing the older hatamoto the scroll granting Rei permission to take over the investigation.

Turning to you, Kakita Rei lays out her plan for the investigation. “I will conduct my interviews in the castle's library. While I handle the official questioning, I would ask you to continue searching for evidence that I might use to direct my questions. Yogo Ran will be interrogated this afternoon, so you might want to speak with her first, while I try to explain things to Yae-sama.”

The Festival and court will be put on hold due to the tragedy, freeing the PCs up to investigate. As before, the day will be divided into Morning, Afternoon, and Evening events, with each PC being able to take only one action during each segment unless otherwise stated. This will likely require them to split up, depending on how much time they think they have.

People of Interest

Yogo Ran – The primary suspect in the murders is being held in a small room inside the local garrison's barracks. The cell has not seen official use in some time, but is surprisingly clean. As the PCs enter the barracks, one of the guards mentions that Isawa Nao has also been taken into custody for interfering in Keishu's investigation.

Yogo Ran looks up as you enter, and it is clear that she has spent most of the night crying. “I... I'm sorry. I've caused... I never meant...” Unable to complete a sentence without being racked by sobs, Ran simply buries her face in her sleeve.

PCs will have to wade through a sea of tears to get any coherent answers, but with patience and compassion, eventually Ran's take on last night become clear. After dinner, Ran decided to take Isawa Nao's advice, and attempt to seduce Doji Arenji before Bayushi Ichiro had her reassigned. Taking her tea pot and a selection of Arenji's favorite tea blends, Ran made her way towards

her sensei's apartments. She knocked quietly on the door, but Ichiro was the one who opened it, telling her quite bluntly that the two men were having a private discussion and that her presence was not needed. The young shugenja maintained her composure long enough to return her tea pot to the kitchen, but then ran back to her room. About an hour later, she had a feeling like something had broken inside her chest, and the sudden realization that Arenji-sama had died, and that she was somehow responsible. Players who doubt the truthfulness of her story may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness (TN 10)** to determine that she is telling the truth, as far as she understands it. If they have not spoken to Isawa Nao about the Yogo Curse, Ran can also explain what she means when she says she is somehow responsible for his death, despite claiming innocence of the actual deed

Isawa Nao – (This conversation does not count as an action for the day.) Nao can be located in a cell at the other end of the barracks, and it will be apparent that he has been here for a fair portion of the night as well. One of the guards will explain that the Isawa showed up shortly after Ran was brought in, and demanded to see her. Kakita Keishu refused, and commanded him to return to his quarters, which he likewise refused, stating that he wouldn't leave the barracks until Ran was released. *"... and so she locked me in here." the fire shugenja concludes. "How is Ran? They won't let me talk to her." After confirming the Scorpion's condition, Nao offers to answer any questions you may have.*

Isawa Nao was in his apartment when Ran's scream cut through the castle, alerting everyone to the murders. As soon as he entered her room, Ran threw herself at him, sobbing that Doji Arenji was dead. He knew then that her feelings for Arenji had deepened beyond infatuation, and activated the Yogo family curse. He will go on to explain that the curse won't really allow it's target to willingly set it off, so there is really no way that Yogo Ran could have willingly been responsible. If it is pointed out that it appeared that the Bayushi's blade actually caused the Doji's death, and that she could have easily set out to kill her Scorpion lord with Arenji's death being an unintentional side effect, Nao will nod with understanding. *"It's possible, I suppose, but I honestly don't think Ran has it in her to kill any one."*

What did Bayushi Ichiro and Kakita Niji talk about in the Library the other day?

Ichiro told Niji that he had spoken to Ran, and told her to stop pursuing Arenji, though he seemed angry about it, almost threatening. *"Ichiro leaned in and practically growled, 'Next time, tell your master to do her own*

dirty work.' Based on the conversation they were having, Ichiro was probably referring to Yae, but the way Niji reacted makes me wonder."

When the PCs finish their questioning, one of the guards will point out that the Isawa is free to go whenever he likes, as long as he doesn't interfere with Yogo Ran's questioning. *"I guess I'll be staying here, then," Nao replies bitterly.*

Kakita Niji – (This conversation does not count as an action for the day.) In the morning, Niji is sitting in on Kakita Rei's interview with Kakita Yae, and is unavailable. In the afternoon he will be acting as witness to the interrogation of Yogo Ran, and will be likewise unavailable. There is a slim window to speak with him, however. Between interviews, Niji will summon Dashi to his suite on the second floor of the castle. If he's been given reason to suspect the PCs believe the Kolat are involved in this plot, Niji will attempt to cover his escape by activating the assassin one more time, sending Dashi to kill Yogo Ran.

Kakita Dashi – In the morning, Dashi can be found in the castle kitchen, preparing for the evening meal. He only heard about the murders this morning, and understands why the festival has been interrupted, though he doesn't seem to show any real emotion. Dashi will answer any questions the PCs have as best as he can, though most of the information he carries may only come up after they have interviewed other people. It's entirely possible that no one will think to speak to him until after Ikoma Kouma returns with Dashi's history, which may be too late.

Did you see Ran take the tea service? Did you see her return it? "She did come in well after dinner to make some tea, but this is not unusual. She seemed quite upset when she came back shortly afterwards, however."

What did Niji want to talk to you about? Why did he excuse the servants? "I don't really remember what Niji-sama said last night, to be honest. Usually, the only reason he talks to me is if he disapproves of my menus, so it was probably something minor like that."

At the end of the conversation, a servant will arrive in the kitchen with a message for Dashi from Kakita Niji.

Investigations in Tsuma

Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness or Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness TN 20 rolls to gather testimony or clues, based on where the PCs are asking their questions:

- **The Tranquil Lotus Inn or Kakita's Shrine** – Jujin the monk (or the innkeeper, serving girl, etc) will recount Kakita Dashi's plight: *“He came into town about a year ago, looking for information about himself in the Kakita Academy's records, but there was no mention of him in any of their scrolls. He has been seen pleading with Ikoma Kouma to ask the Lion historians to look through their own records.”* **Lore: History / Intelligence (TN 10):** Much information contained in the Empire's libraries was destroyed during the War Against the Shadow almost a decade ago. The Lion and Crane recently negotiated a sharing of information in an attempt to fill in many of the holes in both sets of records. **Lore: Law / Intelligence (TN 20):** It is not uncommon for a samurai who is convicted of a serious crime or who dies in an exceptionally shameful manner to be stripped from the clan's history. In extreme cases, this could extend to the Imperial Libraries and the historical records of other clans, as well. If the PCs didn't witness the confrontation between the two men earlier in the week, it will take another week for any information to return from the Ikoma historians.
- **Tranquil Lotus, Kakita Dojo, or Garrison** - Several of the older students quietly admit to hearing Kakita Keishu making disparaging comments about the way Kakita Yae and Yogo Ran fuss over flowers in general and Doji Arenji in particular, instead of focusing on the more important duties of governing a province and/or negotiating trade agreements. While this is not direct testimony of any involvement on Keishu's part, it should be obvious that she may not be unbiased in this case.
- **Poisoned Water Sake House (Lore: Underworld / Awareness TN 25, +1 Free Raise per 1 koku in bribes)** - Arenji came around a few weeks ago, asking for information on Bayushi Ichiro, and making vague references to the Kolat. No one has any such information (that they are willing to share), though they do mention seeing Ichiro and Niji meeting in one of the Poisoned Water's private rooms on several occasions.

Late on Day Five

A breathless Ikoma Kouma returns to town with information on Dashi's past. While he is unwilling to confront the Crane, he will provide it to the PCs with the requirement that they not name him as their source. The public records of Dashi's murder case are damning in general (See the Appendix #1: NPCs for more information), though with the recent murder it may well

serve to get their attention. His galloping entrance into Tsuma has not gone unnoticed, however, so the PCs will need to act quickly on this new information.

- Searching Dashi's rooms reveals a written invitation from Niji to meet him in the kitchen one hour after dinner on the evening of the attacks.
- If Niji becomes aware that the investigation is turning towards Dashi, most likely through PCs speaking openly about what they've learned or searching his own rooms, he will look for an opportunity to activate Dashi's inner assassin one last time, ordering Dashi to attack the PCs, and then to kill himself once they are dead.
- If this happens, or if the PCs manage to talk Dashi into letting them look through his belongings, they will find that Dashi is wearing a strange crystal amulet around his neck. PCs with Shikkui's Pendant instantly recognize this as being similar to their own. Dashi explains that he doesn't know where the pendant came from, and that he's had it since he returned to Ningen-do.
- If PCs manage to make a connection to Niji and investigate the hatamoto's quarters, they will find little of use beyond a burnt scrap of parchment in a brazier. There are only fragments available, but the words are obviously written in a mix of gaijin languages (Senpet and another unknown tongue). One series of words are written out in kanji, but the words mean nothing: *Fe Me Ne Lo Bi Sa Ro Ku*. (this is similar to what a PC with Shikkui's pendant may have heard a few nights ago).
- If the PCs find this information before confronting Dashi, and say the words in front of him, he will drop whatever he is doing and attempt to stand, saying **"What do the Masters wish of me?"** In this state, he will answer any questions put to him truthfully and without hesitation. This confession is pretty much the only way to get Niji to submit to being arrested without him issuing a challenge.

The PCs should have enough information to know what is going on, but without a confession from Dashi and/or Niji, they don't have enough testimony to arrest both men. If they explain to Dashi what happened in his previous life and why he was sentenced to die, he will be so overcome with guilt that he will accept punishment for his crimes a second time, even if he is unsure about his role in this more recent crime. Dashi will be arrested and sentenced to death once more, but this time he is given the option to meet Emma-O via honorable seppuku rather than hanging. Kakita Niji will disappear in the night.

If the PCs choose to confront Dashi in an extremely public fashion (the entire table visiting him in his chambers after speaking with Keishu or Niji), then Niji

will eavesdrop on the conversation with *Secrets on the Wind*, and then trigger Dashi using *Echoes on the Breeze*. This is a tactic of last resort, but should eliminate the only real link to Niji.

If the PCs suggest that Niji was also involved without having any testimony beyond the scraps of circumstantial evidence, he will refuse any such claims, and challenge anyone who refutes his sincerity to prove it with their honor. Kakita Keishu has no doubts about her father's innocence, and will act as his champion in the duel.

If the PCs do get the confession from Dashi the Assassin (having triggered his sleeper conditioning with the key phrase), Keishu will have no choice but to arrest her father. He will try to resist questioning, but he will eventually crack under the weight of shaming his daughter and breaking her heart, offering the following confession: *“Yes, yes. Fine. I had the men killed, and tried to make it look like the simpering Scorpion girl had done it in a fit of jealousy. She is an embarrassment to the court and to her clan, but Yae-sama is too kindhearted and refused to send her away. I knew that something drastic had to be done to keep further shame from being piled onto the province before Toshio-sama takes over as governor.”* PCs may attempt to roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** versus Niji's **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness**, with success revealing that this is mostly true, but that there is more to his motive than simply wanting to destroy the political career of a young woman and remove a political rival.

He will refuse (or is unable) to name his superiors in the Kolat, even under threat of torture. Disgusted, Keishu will order her own father to be hanged for his treachery.

Conclusion

Once the investigation is over, and those responsible have been dealt with, Yae insists that her court goes on, even though she seems to be merely going through the motions, and stops showing up for the evening dinners after a couple of days. Any PC who has not already presented their art to the court may do so now. Once everyone is done, they may make the appropriate Artisan or Craft check. The PC who rolls highest gains an additional .1 Glory, as well as a netsuke from Kakita Rei in the shape of a small lantern.

On the last day of the Court, Kakita Toshio arrives just in time for dinner, and thanks the PCs for keeping his mother safe in the face of the Kolat threat. He also

announces that he will be taking over the governance of Takuetsu Province. His mother joins him in thanking the PCs for their kindness and compassion, and announces that she has decided to retire.

Once Yogo Ran has been cleared of the murders (if, in fact, that is the case), Isawa Nao will approach the PCs and thank them for vindicating his friend, and present them with some unusual information. If Ran is convicted of the crime, he will not speak to the PCs at all.

“While I was imprisoned, I tried to ask the Earth kami to check on Ran's condition, and was overwhelmed by the sheer number of kami that responded to my call. Their eagerness to help caused a small earthquake, and caused me to set aside my initial request and ask them why so many spirits were gathered there, and was unable to receive an answer that wasn't something akin to a shrug followed by, ‘I want to be here when the others get here.’ I really don't know what that means.” If a PC noticed an increase in Elemental Kami at any of the other locations and mention it to Nao, his brow will furrow with concern. *“It is troubling, whatever the reason, and I believe I will be staying in Tsuma until I find out why the kami are gathering here.”* PCs who offer to help are met with a startled look that could be panic, or contempt, or a mix of both, before Nao responds. *“I appreciate the offer, but cannot ask you to place my curiosity above your duty to your Lord. I would be happy, however, to send you details of what I uncover, and would be happy to hear your insights or opinions of my findings. If I find anything truly worth a deeper look, I will send for your aid right away.”*

Finally, if a PC returned Fuyumasha or managed to defeat Jujin in a duel, he will allow that character to take on the task of awakening the sleeping spirit within the blade. The sword is a Kakita Blade (like those granted by the Sacred Weapon Advantage), and some other abilities that cannot be discovered until the blade's bearer has met certain conditions. These will be detailed on the cert, so encourage the PCs to contact the Campaign Admin as soon as possible with their choice of the three available blades: The katana *Haruhae* or *Akibannin*, or *Natsutaishi*, a wakizashi.

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.

If the PC dedicated at least 5 morning and evening time slots to working on their project, they may make an additional Crafting roll.

Experience Points

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Playing through the adventure: | 1XP |
| Good roleplaying: | +1XP |
| Proving Yogo Ran's innocence: | +1XP |
| Proving Dashi was the Assassin: | +1XP |
| Proving Niji was behind the plot: | +1XP |
| Total Possible Experience: | 5XP |

Honor

If a player was challenged to a duel by Niji and accepted, that PC gains .1 Honor, and an additional .1 honor if they win.

PCs who never doubted Yogo Ran's innocence are vindicated, and gain .1 Honor.

Glory

Any PC whose Ikebana was chosen as the centerpiece of the evening's dinner gains .1 Glory (once per PC.)

Uncovering the Kolat sleeper agent, Kakita Dashi, earns the PCs .1 Glory.

The PC whos artisitic presentation was the overall winner gains an additional .1 Glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

If Yogo Ran was vindicated, she will become an Ally with 1 Influence and 2 Devotion.

If Dashi is uncovered, but Niji gets away, the PCs gain a Crane Favor.

If both Dashi and Niji are discovered, the PCs gain Kakita Toshio as an Ally with 2 Influence and 2 devotion, for their assistance clearing his province of blasphemy.

If the PC is an Emerald Yoriki or Apprentice Emerald Magistrate, they gain an additional .1 Positional Status if they uncover Kakita Niji's involvement AND bring him to justice.

If the PC defended Mirumoto Kejiko during the vision, they gain her as an Ally (1 Influence, 1 Devotion).

Module Tracking Sheets

A PC who lost a Destiny Point to the spirits at the Haunted Spring should make a note on their sheet.

The PC who had the best Artistic presentation gains "Rei's Lantern" - a small silver netsuke in the shape of a lantern.

PCs who were awarded one of the Sleeping Blades should contact Admin to receive their cert.

GM Reporting

Was Niji's involvement discovered?

Did Niji challenge anyone to a duel, and what was the outcome?

Did anyone beat Jujin in a duel?

Was any PC given one of the sleeping blades to carry?

If so, which PC and which sword did they choose?

Did Kejiko hear her brother's entire message?

GM must report this information BEFORE (9/12/13) for it to have storyline effect.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Bayushi Ichiro – Provincial Daimyo and Kolat Spy (Bayushi Bushi 5, Status 6.0, Honor 1.7, Glory 6.4)

Ichiro is plain-spoken and puts a great deal of respect in those who are willing to get their hands dirty to achieve their goals. He believes that the role of the Scorpion is to keep the rest of the Empire honest, and dismisses those among his Clan that feel the Underhand should be an open palm offering friendship, rather than a grasping fist promising punishment. Compounding his rough exterior is his adherence to the teachings of the Kolat and their distrust in the machinations of the Celestial Heavens. Ichiro had not declared support for either the returned Hantei or the young heir of Toturi, but he has recently come out as a supporter of Okucheo, becoming a patron of the former emperor's 'Owls. This was done on the order of his Masters in the Kolat, to give them an insight into the workings of Okucheo's fledgeling organization. Unknown to him, however, there is a split within the Kolat leadership, and he has been targeted for elimination by an upstart faction who wishes to take a more active role in the future of Rokugan and the Toturi Dynasty. They see his support of Okucheo to be an act of disloyalty to the Kolat cause, not realizing Ichiro's true mission or intent.

Doji Arenji – Ikebana Sensei (Kakita Artisan 5, Status 4.0, Honor 7.3, Glory 4.8)

Doji Arenji is a handsome man and a talented sensei. He is deeply respectful of his position, and that of his current sponsor, Kakita Yae. Arenji knows that she is interested in him romantically, and is not adverse to her attention. He has kept an appropriate distance from Yae, biding his time until she hands over her duties as governor-regent to her son. PCs who ask him about his relationship with Yae (or Yogo Ran) will be politely asked to mind their own business. In addition to his teaching duties, Arenji has accepted an invitation from Kakita Yoshi to join the Kakita daimyo's fledgeling artisan society, the Nightingales. He knows that Yoshi has an ulterior motive in creating this group, but is not averse to using his artistic influence to build cultural allies among the clans. Finally, Doji Arenji received a letter from an old friend in the Emerald Magistrates, asking him to keep an eye out for suspicious activity that might be related to the Kolat. Arenji's contact suspects Bayushi Ichiro may be involved in the criminal blasphemy, but has not provided any indication of why.

Questions players may ask Arenji:

What is going on with you and Kakita Yae/Yogo Ran? *“Yae is a dear friend, and while I enjoy the time we are able to spend together, her duty prohibits any deeper involvement. Perhaps things will be different once her son takes his place as daimyo. Ran is a beautiful girl, with a great deal of talent and potential, but she is still just a girl. When her abilities blossom, she will be a flower for the Empire to marvel at, but she has much to learn first.”*

Kakita Dashi – Twice-cursed Sleeper

Kakita Dashi was sentenced to die 300 years ago for the deaths of two Crane magistrates and their yoriki, in addition to the slaying of his own wife and children. The problem is, Dashi had no memory of doing so then, and now has no memory of who he was before he wound up in Meido, beyond his name. Dashi was the victim of a cruel Kolat plot to eliminate a meddlesome pair of magistrates that had disrupted several long-planned operations. He was captured on the road to a Winter Court that he had not actually been invited to attend, and spent several months undergoing extreme mental and spiritual reprogramming. When he was eventually released, Dashi had no idea that he was carrying a merciless assassin inside his own body. Once the task of eliminating the magistrates was complete, he was ordered to murder his own family, snapping out of his trance to find them dead at his feet and his clothing soaked with their blood. The testimony against him was overwhelming, and he was sentenced to hang. Upon his death, he awoke in Meido, with no memory of his previous life and waited for Emma-O to decide his fate. When he saw the chance to return to Ningen-do through Oblivion's Gate, he leapt at the opportunity to find out what had happened to him. Unfortunately, his name was stricken from the Crane records, and the only people who can tell him who he is are the last people he would think to turn to - the Ikoma Historians, or the Kolat themselves. Dashi spends his time in Tsuma meditating at the various shrines, hoping to gain the blessings of one of his ancestors and their guidance in uncovering his past. Sadly, he will not get the answers he seeks before the sleeper within him is awakened once more. He has taken service with Yae as much out of a lack of anywhere else to go as anything else; he does have some talent for organizing courtly events and will be the one planning the elaborate dinners the guests will enjoy through the Festival.

If a player expresses a willingness to help him uncover the truth of his past, he will gladly accept the assistance, though the answers will probably not arrive until it is too late.

Kakita Niji – High-placed Kolat Agent (Asahina Shugenja 5, Status 5.0, Honor 2.8/Perceived Honor 6.8, Glory 2.4)
Kakita Niji has been serving the lords of Takuetsu Province for three generations, subtly influencing their decisions based on the will of his true Masters. Following the War Against the Shadow, Niji found himself cut off from the Kolat's guidance, and waited patiently for some news. While he waited, he saw the province fall into disarray under Yae's leadership, and began to slowly take over more and more of the governor-regent's duties. Finally, the milky crystal he kept secreted away in his quarters began to pulse, indicating that one of the Masters wished to speak with him once more. Niji has received new orders, and a new weapon that he will not hesitate to aim at whatever target his Masters wish, so long as his years of patience are rewarded.

Special: Niji has possession of a gaijin amulet that renders the wearer invisible to the kami. This is what prevents Dashi from being visible in the teapot without the benefit of the spell Niji cast to frame Ran. He will reclaim it from his patsy, however, by wearing it himself, it is possible that he could be identified as the mysterious image in the water.

Answers to potential questions (prior to Day 5):

- Do you know have any idea what may be causing the elemental disruption that is keeping work on the Kaede's shrine from moving forward?

“There was a tainted sword brought to Kakita's shrine several months ago, but that wasn't the first time we had noticed an imbalance. We originally wanted to build the Chrysanthemum Shrine closer to the pool where the Golden Lotus flowers grow, but the water kami in the area were too unsettled.”

- Why do you continue to work for Yae?
“Glory does not come from recognition or reward, but from the work that is being recognized.” **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** vs Niji's **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** to see through his dodge, and realize he has ulterior motives. Pressing him on the matter will elicit a strongly indignant response and a challenge. (Keishu will act as champion for her father.)

Kakita Keishu – Provincial Magistrate

Kakita Keishu is unaware of her father's true allegiance, blinded by her pride in his accomplishments and anger at the lack of recognition from his superiors within the Crane. Her duties are limited primarily to keeping peace within the province, but the relatively peaceful nature of the local people means she spends most of her time here in Tsuma, breaking up the occasional bar fight and helping train the garrison with Tsubarashi. She blames Yae for her father's lack of advancement, and quietly works to undercut the daimyo's support among the samurai stationed at Tsuma. PCs who privately discuss Yae's lack of involvement in the daily operations of her province will get an earful, including a wish for a major scandal that would discredit not only Yae, but also her son, Kakita Toshio, leaving the position of Provincial Daimyo open for a more qualified leader.

If the time comes that a PC levels charges against Kakita Niji, and the PCs do not have sufficient evidence to have him arrested, Keishu will take on the duty of being her father's champion.

Kakita Rei – Apprentice Emerald Magistrate

Answers to Potential Questions:

- Why is she here?
Kakita Rei was originally sent to Tsuma to represent her daimyo's interests in the area; specifically, to locate talented duelists for possible recruitment by the Kenshinzen, but is preparing to move her belongings to Kyuden Kakita. There she and her husband will begin serving Kakita Yoshi, Daimyo of the Kakita Family.

After the events of Day 5: Rei will leave for Kyuden Kakita to petition her superiors among the Emerald Magistrates to take an interest in the case.

Isawa Nao – Bitter Isawa Shugenja

Isawa Nao is a lesson in contradictions. He is a talented Fire Shugenja and has a keen tactical mind, but prefers to keep himself locked away in study and spell research. He has sworn an oath to the Isawa family, but still wears the mask that he chose when he and his brother decided to honor the sacrifice of their Scorpion parents, even though a different mask could cover the massive burn scars covering the right side of his face.

As a result of the elemental turmoil surrounding the death of the Oracle of Void, Nao has difficulty speaking to the earth kami, and they become agitated if he is nearby when they are called upon (Elemental Imbalance: Earth).

Mirumoto Kejiko – Dragon Guest (Mirumoto Bushi 3, Status 2.0, Honor 5.2, Glory 3.4)

Mirumoto Kejiko volunteered to travel to Tsuma on behalf of the Dragon Clan to take part an effort to create a series of kata that would end the rivalry between the students of Kakita and the followers of Niten. She will gladly face off against challengers from any clan that wishes to test her stance, however. Kejiko's reason for volunteering was not all together unselfish. Mirumoto Yanagi, Kejiko's brother, vanished during the events surrounding the Topaz Championship, and she wishes to find out once and for all what happened to him. Should any PC mention having traveled in Kousoku no Chigiri and returning, the suddenly fierce young woman will demand to hear every detail, hoping for any indication her brother is still out there somewhere, alive and looking for a way home.

Yogo Ran – Love-struck Returned Spirit (Soshi Shugenja 2, Status 1.5, Honor 4.1, Glory 2.2)

Yogo Ran died young and fairly recently, during the Scorpion Clan's banishment to the Burning Sands. Prior to this, she had been the childhood friend of Yogo Boukken and his twin brother, Nao. During the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, Ran saw many of her cousins leaving their places in the Spirit Realms and returning to assist the deeply wounded Empire rebuild, and decided to offer service to the Scorpion once more. While she does not fully understand what happened to cause the tremendous rift between the two shugenja, she considers them both her friends, and has agreed to marry Boukken as a means of reaffirming his acceptance back into the Scorpion Clan.

Even though she has committed to marrying someone else, Ran has developed deep feelings for Doji Arenji, a talented man who shares her interests and has been a welcome mentor for the young woman. She is responsible for most of the rumors surrounding Arenji and Kakita Yae, knowing that the possibility of scandal would make the honorable sensei keep his distance from Yae. She knows that it is dangerous for her to become too emotionally involved with anyone, due to her family's curse, but cannot help the way she feels. Ran is also responsible for Isawa Nao's invitation to Yae's court, having decided that the bitter young man needed some time away from the dusty Isawa Libraries.

Appendix #2: NPC Stats

Jujin – monk at the Shrine to Kakita

Jujin's background is described in the "Tea with Jujin" encounter. These stats represent his current abilities, reduced by age and grief.

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 5
Honor 5.3 Status 2.0 Glory 0.8
Initiative: 10k4+12 **Attack:** 9k4 (katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 25 (35 in Center Stance) **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 3/Kenshinzen 3

Techniques: *The Way of the Crane:* +12 to all Initiative rolls. +1k1+3 to attack and Focus rolls while assuming the Center Stance. This bonus also applies during the Combat Round following one in which he assumed the Center Stance.

Speed of Lightning: +2k0 to attack rolls against those with lower Initiative.

First and Last Strike: May Strike first in a duel if he wins the Iaijutsu/Void roll by a difference of 3 or higher. Gains a Free Raise on Strike for each additional margin of 3 instead of 5.

Drawing the Void: +10 to Armor TN while in Center Stance

Kakita's Strength: 9s explode on Assessment

A Single Moment: if Jujin makes only one attack in a Turn, any opponent hit is Stunned until the beginning of next Turn

Skills: Athletics 3, Craft: Weaponsmithing 6, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu (Focus) 6, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 5, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: Theology (Ancestors) 5, Meditation 5, Sincerity 4, Spears 4, Tea Ceremony 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance / Lost Love

Kakita Dashi – Twice-cursed Sleeper

Air 4 Earth 2 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 3
Honor 5.4 Status 2.2 Glory 1.6
Initiative: 7k4+10 **Attack:** 9k5 (Katana, Simple)

Armor TN: 25 (35) **Damage:** 8k2 (Katana)

Reduction: 0 (10)

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

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 3

Techniques: *The Way of the Crane:* +10 to all Initiative rolls. +1k1+3 to all attack and Focus rolls while assuming the Center Stance. This bonus also

applies during the Combat Round following one in which he assumed the Center Stance.

Speed of Lightning: +2k0 to attack rolls against those with lower Initiative.

First and Last Strike: May Strike first in a duel if he wins the Iaijutsu/Void roll by a difference of 3 or higher. Gains a Free Raise on Strike for each additional margin of 3 instead of 5.

Skills: Artisan: Ikebana 3, Athletics 4, Craft: Cooking 4, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 2, Sincerity 2, Tea Ceremony 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Soul of Artistry, Touch of Meido / Dark Secret, Kolat Sleeper

Special: When "triggered" as a Kolat sleeper, his physical Traits all increase by 2, he gains Reduction 10, and suffers no Wound Penalties or the effects of any Condition other than Grappled. Additionally, he may make melee attacks as a Simple Action, and can take 80 Wounds before he dies. However, he may not use Techniques or Void.

Kakita Keishu – Provincial Magistrate

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 3
Honor 6.1 Status 4.0 Perception 4 Glory 3.9
Initiative: 8k4+10 **Attack:** 8k3 (Katana, Simple)

Armor TN: 25 **Damage:** 7k2 (Katana)

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

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 4

Techniques: *The Way of the Crane:* +12 to all Initiative rolls. +1k1+4 to attack and Focus rolls while assuming the Center Stance. This bonus also applies during the Combat Round following one in which assumed the Center Stance.

Speed of Lightning: +2k0 to attack rolls against those with lower Initiative.

First and Last Strike: May Strike first in a duel she if wins the Iaijutsu/Void roll by a difference of 3 or higher. Gains a Free Raise on Strike for each additional margin of 3 instead of 5.

One Strike, Two Cuts: Simple Action attacks while using weapons with the Samurai keyword.

Skills: Artisan: Ikebana 2, Athletics 2, Courtier 4, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 2, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 2