

Stars Scatter

**A One-Round Mid/High Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido**

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Pillow books tell tales of star-crossed lovers living happily ever after, but love is constantly tested by the heart's one true enemy – itself.

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

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

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

Reminder

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

Adjusting for Party Strength

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

A few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank Three or Lower):

- Use the low-end adjustments for Yogo Sagishi found in the NPC appendix

Adventure Summary and Background

The energetic Usagi Kiritabi has served the Hare Clan since her gempukku at age 16, by combating the schemes of the nefarious Kolat organization. Her first experience with a Kolat agent was in the small fishing village of Uo no Kusai Mura; since then, she has done most of her work along the River of Gold. She has earned both fame and infamy along the river coast stopping organized piracy; fame because of her success record, but infamy because she shows little regard for the rules. She has been arrested by Scorpion magistrates for trespassing on Scorpion property without permission more than once. She has also been marked by the Kolat due to the great financial losses she has cost the organization. She has thus far managed to evade capture or assassination, though she will never forget the close call she had in Yasuki Yashiki (see SoB30: *The Enemy You Deserve*).

Yogo Onkei is a young man plagued with a troubled past. The Yogo curse is strong in his family: as a boy he witnessed the death of his older brother, whom he adored. It is thought that his older brother's death was due to Onkei's curse, giving Onkei the added guilt that he was indirectly responsible for what happened. Today, Yogo Onkei is a junior clan magistrate serving under a magistrate in the Hizoku Scorpion province bordering Hare lands. He has worked with several Hare magistrates, most recently with Usagi Kiritabi on a case involving smugglers from the darker sides of the Yasuki and Daidoji families.

Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei's professional relationship quickly became a personal one: within months they had admitted their love for each other. Onkei received orders to receive additional training in northern Scorpion lands, forcing them apart for most of a season, and they vowed to get married. Since Onkei was busy with his training, Usagi Kiritabi began the process of getting both of their lords' permissions. When Onkei returned from training, they were able to complete arrangements for their marriage: Usagi Kiritabi would be married into the Scorpion Clan, with the ceremony taking place at Shiro Usagi, performed by a Yogo shugenja.

However, Yogo Onkei has a secret that he has kept well hidden from Usagi Kiritabi. As a confused young man filled with guilt and shame over his brother's death, Onkei was recruited by the Kolat. Onkei is an agent of the Lotus Sect, assigned to discredit Usagi Kiritabi. His "training" in northern Scorpion lands was actually spent being interrogated by his superiors about Kiritabi and receiving instructions to kill her. Kiritabi is getting too close to learning Kolat secrets that would represent a danger to the organization and so the Lotus are desperate to be rid of her. She has been too clever for normal assassins and so they intend to use her trust in Yogo Onkei as her undoing.

Onkei is to kill Kiritabi, make it look like self-defense, and then plant fake documents among her possessions to throw the Hare off of the Kolat's trail. Additionally (and unbeknownst to Onkei) the Kolat send a second agent to the wedding to ensure that there is a witness to testify that Yogo Onkei acted in self-defense, and to plant evidence implicating the Hare (forged orders from Usagi Ozaki to kill Yogo Onkei and a forged entry in Usagi Kiritabi's diary agonizing over her secret mission to kill her betrothed).

Onkei is loyal to and fearful of his Kolat masters, but deep inside he is sorry he ever became involved in the conspiracy. He will realize that he is truly in love with Kiritabi, and ultimately botch the assassination by revealing his Kolat ties to Kiritabi. Heartbroken, Kiritabi will attack him and chase him out of Shiro Usagi. The PCs will quickly discover that the bride and groom are missing their own wedding and will be conscripted by an Emerald Magistrate in attendance to find the missing couple. Once the PCs find Kiritabi and Onkei, however, they will find themselves in a conflict of love and duty, especially when Kiritabi and Onkei suggest forsaking their clans.

Note about Shiba Bengo

Shiba Bengo is a PC in the Heroes of Rokugan Campaign. While he is acting in an NPC capacity for the duration of this module, some PCs will nonetheless have developed prior relationships with the character. The GM should do their best to work with these PCs in their interactions with Bengo, but the players should also understand that the GM may not be familiar with Bengo as a PC. Bengo's primary role is to facilitate the plot of the module in his position as an Emerald Magistrate; he models his style after his mentor, Doji Oharu, who took a hands-off approach with investigation, letting his yoriki handle the exploration while he handles the bureaucratic duties of his office. In the unlikely event that one or more of the PCs are also Emerald

Magistrates, it is possible that they may wish to take charge of the module investigation themselves. Bengo will defer to such PCs and will disengage himself from the adventure if this is the case. The GM may have to modify certain scenes in order to adjudicate this difference in how the module plays out.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Ally: Usagi Kiritabi
- Appointment as an Emerald Magistrate, or a position in that organization (such as yoriki).
- Oath of Fealty: Bayushi Kanchou (formerly Bayushi Ichiro) – Hizoku Province
- Bad Omen or Mixed Omen from SoB30: *The Enemy You Deserve*

Introduction: A Long Awaited Reunion

The PCs have been invited to a wedding in Shiro Usagi between a Hare samurai-ko named Usagi Kiritabi and a Scorpion magistrate named Yogo Onkei. The PCs will have different circumstances for how they receive their invitations described as follows:

- All PCs who have Ally: Usagi Kiritabi, even if they have 0 remaining points of Devotion, receive a formal invitation five months before the actual wedding date. These PCs receive Player Handout #1: Wedding Invitation.
- PCs from any clan except for the Scorpion and Hare Clans are instructed to attend by their daimyo. ***“We are trying to grant more recognition to the role that the Minor Clans hold in these challenging times. Please convey our clan’s good will and support to Usagi Ozaki-dono.”*** Specifically, though the Hare Champion himself has remained neutral in the larger Imperial conflicts, the other Hare daimyo have provided a fair amount of support to the Army of the Black Lion. The wedding provides an opportunity to gather information on or negotiate with the Hare in a peaceful fashion.
- Scorpion PCs are asked to attend the wedding to show the Scorpion’s commitment to peaceful relations. This is the first time that a Hare has married into the Scorpion since the Scorpion destroyed Shiro Usagi in 1123. ***“After our annexation of Zakyō Toshi, there have been some***

unseemly rumors regarding our intentions toward the Hare. Ensure that this marriage goes smoothly; we must not be the cause of any incidents. The Hare are still suspicious of the Scorpion even though twenty years have passed since Bayushi Tomaru besieged Shiro Usagi. Bayushi Kanchou, the new daimyo of the Hizoku province, will be the ranking Scorpion attending the wedding. Put yourself at his service if need be.”

- Hare PCs have been invited to the wedding as a matter of course. They have either trained or served with Usagi Kiritabi’s family in some capacity. A marriage into a Major Clan is a big deal, so the Hare want a good showing at this wedding even among their own samurai.
- Ronin PCs who lack an invitation were most likely hired by the Hare to help provide additional security.

Preparing for the Upcoming Nuptials

PCs who are interested in learning more about the bride or groom can attempt to do so; since neither of them is particularly famous, the roll to gain information is relatively difficult. PCs can roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Intelligence** separately for each NPC. The TN to learn about Kiritabi is 40 (30 for Hare PCs). The TN to learn about Yogo Onkei is 45 (40 for Scorpion PCs and 35 for Yogo PCs).

- Usagi Kiritabi, now a full magistrate for the Hare, has had several successes in her relatively short career. During the escalation of the peasant revolt, Kiritabi was responsible for intercepting several smuggling barges along the River of Gold carrying supplies for the Legion of the Crow. These successes, as well as her hands-on attitude and outgoing personality have earned her the respect of many small villages along the river. Her recent work, focusing on the less-glorious drug trade, has been more subdued.
- Yogo Onkei is a Scorpion magistrate, serving most of his time after his gempukku in the Hizoku province as a yoriki, and more recently as a clan magistrate monitoring trade along the River of Gold. He has excelled at working with the merchants that trade there, and has an especially good reputation for cooperation with the magistrates of the Hare.

Less honorable PCs might also wish to know if there are more unsettling facts about Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei. Such PCs can roll **Lore: Underworld / Awareness** at TN 45 separately for each NPC to learn the following rumors:

- Usagi Kiritabi has a bit of a reputation for being a bit too hands-on. Instead of passing on cases to those that would have jurisdiction, she seems to throw herself directly at the problem until it is solved and then presents the full case to the appropriate authorities. This, along with her strange paranoia about the “Kolat” conspiracy, has rubbed many samurai along the River of Gold the wrong way.
- Yogo Onkei is not a terribly refined samurai. He has been known to ‘play kemari’ with certain smugglers in exchange for information. As such, though he has had success in suppressing the illegal trade along the River of Gold, some of the more minor smugglers with Scorpion ties have gone unmolested.

PCs who plan to attend the wedding should roll **Etiquette / Intelligence** at TN 15. On success, the PC knows that in addition to attending the wedding, they need to bring a *goshugi*, or a wedding gift, to present to the couple. PCs who are friends of Usagi Kiritabi should bring a gift worth at least 3 koku and other PCs should bring a gift worth at least 1 koku. Bringing actual money is acceptable as long as it is placed in a nice envelope, which can be bought for less than a bu or made by a PC with at least one Rank of Artisan: Origami. Failure to meet the minimum gift requirement as stated by tradition will cost infringing PCs three points of Glory when they arrive at the wedding, as well as an Honor loss appropriate for a Minor Breach of etiquette (L5R core rulebook, pg 91). While the gift requirement may seem trivial to most PCs, Ascetic PCs and PCs who have meager stipends may have difficulty procuring a proper gift. Such PCs also have the option of expending a Clan or Family Favor or using a point of Devotion on any existing Ally in order to arrange a gift to be sent on the PC’s behalf.

A PC can of course decline to attend the wedding if they received a personal invitation from Usagi Kiritabi. Such PCs are out of the adventure and gain only one experience point. They are still expected to send a *goshugi* or they also face a loss of a point of Glory and Honor each for the slight. PCs who are asked to attend by their respective clans but refuse to attend still earn the 1 experience point but also earn the extreme enmity of their daimyo, costing them a rank of Glory and Honor each and additionally they lose a half rank of Status.

PCs also need to make sure they have proper garb for a wedding. Courtier PCs can be assumed to have the proper attire, but bushi and shugenja PCs who do not own fine court kimonos will need to spend at least a koku to procure one before the wedding. Higher quality court robes can cost up to ten koku depending on how much

embellishment and tailoring the PC wants done. PCs who fail to arrive at the wedding without proper attire lose three points of Glory since the Hare will have to make quick arrangements for them, resulting in a fairly plain kimono that doesn’t fit perfectly.

Traditional Rokugani marriages are arranged by a nakodo, a match-maker that manages a betrothal before the bride and groom even meet each other. Hare marriages, however, are generally different from the Rokugani standard. Any PC who is interested in Hare wedding traditions and who can roll **Lore: Hare Clan / Intelligence** at TN 25 or **Lore: History / Intelligence** at TN 40 will know that the Hare usually marry for love. Affection is established between two individuals and they are allowed to marry with the permission of their daimyo. Where most marriages are a very formal affair with all the traditional rules of court, a Hare bride and groom might actually touch in front of people during the wedding celebration and guests who are not accustomed to this might be uncomfortable. Complaints about such behavior during wedding celebrations are not taken well by the Hare.

Arriving at Shiro Usagi

Shiro Usagi might be better referred to as ‘New Shiro Usagi.’ The castle was destroyed by the Scorpion Clan and the Hare were disbanded about twenty years ago when accusations of maho were leveled at the Minor Clan, but the current Champion Usagi Ozaki cleared the Hare’s name and has spent his life rebuilding Shiro Usagi with financial aid from the Yasuki. Shiro Usagi is a vastly fortified structure for a Minor Clan holding and even after fifteen years there are still construction projects going on to improve the castle.

The town surrounding Shiro Usagi is a moderately sized village of several hundred peasants and a couple dozen samurai residences. The village is surrounded by rice paddies where the peasants labor during the planting and harvesting seasons. Like many Minor Clans, the Hare are very small both in terms of land and population, numbering around a hundred samurai in total, which are mostly split between Shiro Usagi and a couple of villages run by the Ujina family about three hundred miles south down the River of Gold.

When the PCs arrive at Shiro Usagi, they are immediately challenged by a Hare magistrate with a few doshin on hand keeping watch. If the PCs purposely cause trouble, lie, or challenge the magistrate back, they are questioned extensively about their travel history before arriving, the duration of their stay, and their activities during their stay. The magistrate makes it as unpleasant as possible for the PCs while allowing other wedding guests through with a smile and a nod. The PCs

lose a point of Glory as other guests come through the gate and see them being molested by the magistrate on guard. Assuming the PCs are polite and show the magistrate their invitations (or in the case of ronin PCs without invitations, provide an acceptable reason for being in Shiro Usagi), he relaxes somewhat. ***“Ah, guests of Kiritabi-san. She will be expecting you at the Dancing Boar, our largest inn. You may call me Usagi Machida. I mentored Kiritabi when she was training as a magistrate. I look forward to joining you later for the party.”*** Machida offers directions or even an escort by one of his doshin to take the PCs to the Dancing Boar.

Part One: Party at the Dancing Boar

The Dancing Boar is the only inn in the village surrounding Shiro Usagi. As the castle itself is only used for official events, most clan celebrations take place here. From the celebration of a new Hare samurai to the goodbyes after a long life of service, the Dancing Boar is the Hare Clan’s cultural center. As such, the building and its grounds are quite large, almost as large as the castle itself. From the front it appears to be the usual two-story inn. The signboard, a boar wearing a kimono of dark blue and green in mid-step identifies the inn and from within comes the sound of many people talking and laughing.

When the PCs first arrive at the inn, there are several servants waiting at the entrance. They offer a respectful bow and greet the PCs, ***“Samurai-samas, if we may ask for your chop, we will ensure that your arrival will be properly announced. We will also ensure that your baggage is stowed in your rooms. For now, Usagi-sama has provided for a bath to be prepared before the celebration.”*** The servants continue to any PCs who brought a personal invitation from Usagi Kiritabi and any PCs with a Status Rank of 3 or higher: ***“Rooms have been provided for you in the castle. You are welcome to use the bath here at the Dancing Boar while we take your baggage to the castle and prepare your room.”*** If no PC qualifies to stay in the castle, the PC with the highest Glory or Status is invited to stay in the castle with the speech as above. Finally, one of the PCs staying at the castle (chosen at random) is given an additional honor. ***“Sama, you are actually in the room right next to the groom, Yogo Onkei-sama. Please let us know if you ever need anything to ensure your comfort. It is paramount that we treat Yogo Onkei-sama with the best Shiro Usagi has to offer, and that includes happy neighbors.”***

The PCs are announced as they enter the spacious common room. Doors have been opened into the garden at the center of the inn. They will immediately be met by Usagi Kiritabi, dressed not in her usual practical gear but in a white and crimson kimono that accentuates her features. Beside her stands a taller man wearing crimson and black. He wears a similarly colored demon mempo. Although his mask is intimidating, his eyes seem friendly. Kiritabi is the first to speak. ***“Welcome, welcome my friends. I’m so glad that you were able to attend. I would like to introduce my betrothed, Yogo Onkei. He looks imposing, but don’t let that fool you.”***

The man bows, and speaks in a soft voice. ***“It is good to finally meet you. I have heard of your deeds in the Empire, and for someone of my relative station to meet samurai like you is quite an honor.”***

The two of them will speak at some length with the PCs regarding the many events that have occurred since Kiritabi and the PCs last met. If the PCs should ask about what Kiritabi has been up to, she will be quite open.

“After the incident at Yasuki Yashiki, my superiors thought it better to keep me closer to home for a while. I have been cooperating with our Scorpion neighbors in enforcing the trade laws on the River of Gold. That’s how I met Onkei-san.” She smiles brightly first at the PCs, then at Yogo Onkei, who seems to be having trouble keeping his focus on the guests.

Onkei manages a shrug and then says, ***“Yes, well, Kiritabi-san has been instrumental in several cases. She catches them, I arrest them. We make a very good team; at least our superiors think so. It just made sense to seek a more permanent partnership.”***

Kiritabi rolls her eyes but the smile does not leave her face. ***“All business, these Yogo. They just don’t like the ‘I-word’. I understand why, but still; it wouldn’t kill you to say it once in a while.”***

“Er-hrm... Not in front of your guests, Tabi. Anyways, please enjoy yourselves this evening. It is little known what good hosts the Hare are, so you are all in for a treat.” Onkei bows to the PCs, motioning them into the common room.

Should the PCs find a way to ask about Onkei’s curse during the evening (and roll **Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness** at TN 40) Onkei will explain. ***“My older brother died when I was younger as a result of my curse. There was an incident involving farming implements and a peasant. Suffice it to say that even now I do not wish to speak further on the subject.”*** Asked impolitely, he will take offense, ***“It is not proper***

to ask such things, samurai-san. Suffice it to say that I would not be allowed to marry if my curse were not expunged.”

The celebration is a lavish (for a Minor Clan) affair in the common room and garden. There are many toasts given to the bride and groom, to the unity of the Hare and Scorpion, etc. and as a result there is also a good deal of drinking and shouting of “*Kanpai!*” Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei are kept busy greeting other guests as they arrive and milling about the room talking to everyone in the Dancing Boar.

Meeting the Guests

When visiting a city, whether for business or pleasure, it is customary for a visitor to announce themselves to the local daimyo. Luckily for the PCs, they need not go out of their way to do this. At a large table in the front of the common room of the Dancing Boar, closest to the small stage where a performer is stringing away on her biwa, sits **Usagi Hanshiro**, daimyo of the Usagi province (not to be confused with Usagi Ozaki, who is champion of the entire Hare Clan, which also includes the Ujina lands south of the Usagi province). Sitting with him is a pair of well-groomed Scorpion, a young man with a sigil showing his rank as a daimyo and another man whose age is difficult to distinguish wearing shugenja robes. When the PCs introduce themselves all three express pleasure in meeting the PCs. Usagi Hanshiro wishes the PCs a comfortable and enjoyable stay. The young Scorpion, **Bayushi Kanchou**, introduces himself first as the daimyo of the Hizoku Scorpion province and second as Yogo Onkei’s lord, here to personally welcome Usagi Kiritabi into the Scorpion. The older Scorpion, **Yogo Sagishi**, bows politely to the PCs and self-deprecatingly states that he is only a distant relative of the groom, but has the honor of blessing the marriage and praises Yogo Onkei and Kiritabi as a match many nakodo would dream of making. Since this is the high-ranking table, it would be inappropriate for most of the PCs to actually sit with the daimyo and converse with them throughout the evening, but any PC who has a Status Rank of 5 or higher will be invited to sit with Usagi Hanshiro, Bayushi Kanchou, and Yogo Sagishi. If anyone asks about Usagi Ozaki, Champion of the Hare, Hanshiro will express his champion’s regrets that he had important duties to attend to and was unable to find time to attend the party, but does intend to be there the ceremony the next day.

Two tables near the high-ranking table are filled with what are clearly the families and close friends of the bride and groom. Usagi Kiritabi’s mother and grandparents hold the seats of honor at one table while Yogo Onkei’s mother and grandfather hold the seats of honor at another. If the PCs approach either table, they

will be greeted and introductions are made. **Usagi Haru**, Kiritabi’s mother, was one of the first to swear fealty to Usagi Ozaki when the Hare was reestablished and played a role in Shiro Usagi’s reconstruction. She is pleased with her daughter, who reminds her very much of her late father. **Usagi Hiromi** is Kiritabi’s grandmother, and is a shameless flirt with male PCs. She gets up and dances when she hears a song she likes, but when she is seated she is glad to share stories about the Hare’s history. **Usagi Tsuge** is Hiromi’s husband. He is not nearly as shameless as his wife, but will try and flirt with any attractive female PCs. He is proud of his granddaughter and has only nice things to say about anyone. Also at this table is a shy Fox clan girl named **Kitsune Naishi** who is apparently a good friend of Kiritabi’s and later **Usagi Machida**, the magistrate who met the PCs when they arrived in Shiro Usagi, joins the table as well. At Onkei’s family’s table is **Yogo Yuki**, Onkei’s mother. She is a shy, mousy woman, but as the evening goes on she gets more comfortable and celebrates moderately. She is surprisingly quick with a joke when a conversation starts to dry out. **Yogo Natoru** is Onkei’s grandfather. He is a hard-nosed traditionalist who loudly scoffs at the idea of love in marriage and will tell anyone who listens that his grandson is making a mistake. The rest of the various relatives just do their best to ignore him. Also at this table looking somewhat out-of-place, green amidst all the black and red, is a Dragon magistrate named **Kitsuki Toto**. Toto has the same duty as Kiritabi and Onkei patrolling the northern portion of the River of Gold. He is a good friend of Onkei’s and laughs aloud with Yogo Yuki while gulping down a healthy-sized drink.

Filling out other tables is an eclectic mix of clansmen, including representatives from the Minor Clans (and the Tsuruchi, formerly the Wasp Clan) here to support their Hare ally. A Crab and Crane sit together at one table, and if a PC approaches this table they are quickly greeted by the Crab, who introduces himself as **Yasuki Muta**. He is a fat man with a hearty laugh here on behalf of the Yasuki family to show their thanks to the bride and groom for their work combating piracy along the River of Gold. Also at the table is **Daidoji Shinnin**, a disgruntled-looking courtier sent by the Crane to attend. Shinnin confesses to knowing the bride personally, but seems to be at a loss for compliments about her or the affair. Many PCs may have met Daidoji Shinnin in other modules and may have him as a Sworn Enemy. He will be generally unfriendly to those PCs, though Yasuki Muta makes up for it with his jolly demeanor and good humor. At another table is **Shiba Bengo**, an Emerald Magistrate, his wife **Shiba Hanako**, and **Suzume Akechi**, a Sparrow samurai who never quite seems to stop talking. Bengo, despite also wearing a Suzume mon on his shoulder to show his training, seems put-off by the talkative Sparrow. A PC who converses with this group

and rolls **Investigation (Notice)/Perception** at TN 15 will note that while food is being served Shiba Bengo selects a bean paste bun, wraps it in a cloth and places it in his kimono. His wife frowns a bit, but ignores the spectacle. If the PCs ask him about it, he will seem unperturbed. *“Just an old habit, you never know when you might need just a little extra food.”*

Rumors

Since this is a large social gathering, it is a safe assumption that rumors float around the party. If a PC wishes to listen to or participate in the gossip, they need to roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness**, TN 10. Each increment of 5 by which the PC exceeds the TN garners an additional rumor, as determined by the GM.

- The Crab lands are swept by rumors of an internal rebellion, with at least one of the twelve Great Watchtowers of the Wall taken by the insurgency. Some are calling it an actual civil war, with Crab attacking Crab over a dispute few outside the Clan fully understand. Others point to the relatively bloodless nature of the battles thus far, saying something far more complicated than a simple struggle for power is going on.
- The Lion Clan has been thrust into disarray over the sudden appearance of the ronin calling himself Toturi Daio, the Lost Heir, and his seizing of Toshi Ranbo after his defeat on the Dragon Heart Plain this summer. Those outside the Clan, however, are divided about whether to offer them sympathy for the series of fatal arsons they suffered last summer or attack them over the rumors that a force of Akodo turned traitor and assaulted a unit of Matsu who were investigating smuggling along the Drowned Merchant Road.
- Yoritomo Aramasu, long disappeared from the Empire’s view while researching the threat in the Ivory Kingdoms, has been far more visible in the last couple of years since the invasion of the gaijin city Balishnimpur. He has been a frequent guest in the castles of the Yasuki in particular, although it is also said that he met privately with Shiba Tsukune in the wake of the siege of Shiro Chuda in a fairly successful attempt to mend fences with the Phoenix.
- Resources are flooding into the provinces of the Fox Clan from across the Empire in the wake of the devastation they suffered at the hands of a tattooed madman last summer. It is said that Kitsune Shu-Shen, one of Ryosei’s most trusted advisors, has been meeting with Ide diplomats – though whether she is negotiating the induction of the Kitsune family into the Unicorn, as some suggest, or is simply arranging for trade caravans to make use of

the Fox’s expanded wealth is as yet unknown to the Empire at large.

- Four samurai have been found dead in as many weeks in back alleys of Seawatch Castle Village in the Crane lands. The Daidoji magistrates in the village believe an underground “dueling ring” is responsible for the deaths, but rumors of a creature the locals have begun calling the “Shining Knife Shadow” refuse to go away.
- The war on the Dragon Heart Plain has ground to a halt as the fall moves on to winter. The Crab-Phoenix alliance has claimed large amounts of generally uninhabited territory on the plain, but the Dragon still hold the key castles. It is not clear whether the alliance will hold through the winter, as the Crab find their attention drawn back to the south for internal reasons.
- Kakita Toshiken has announced his intention to hold the Empress’ Winter Court at Pale Oak Castle in the Phoenix lands. As this removes the Empress from the lands of the Lion and instead places her in the hospitality of the Phoenix, many court observers suggest that this is a rebuke of the Lion/Dragon alliance, despite the early support of the Dragon in Toshiken’s “dispute” with Hantei Okucheo over the young empress’ future. This might be tied to the Scorpion’s role in the Lion/Dragon alliance, as Toshiken and Scorpion Champion Bayushi Yojiro are known to be at odds of late.

Hare Traditions

After the PCs have had time to get acquainted, Usagi Kiritabi calls everyone together and invites them to a game. *“It is an Usagi family tradition to hold a challenge for our guests. I wonder if any of you best me at knife throwing.”*

A target has been set up in the garden. The event is simple: throw three knives at the target and try to get a knife as close to the center of the target as possible. This is resolved by making an **Athletics (Throwing) / Agility** roll. The highest single roll among the participants determines the winner of the challenge. Among the NPCs, Shiba Bengo, Kitsuki Toto and Yogo Onkei all participate in the contest, but Kiritabi is easily the superior knife-thrower. A PC must roll at least a 50 in order to beat her and hit the center of the target.

If a PC wins, Kiritabi’s family takes a minute to heckle her for losing, but she takes the defeat well. She smiles. *“It would seem that I have been bested. As a prize for your skill, I give you my favorite knife. It has served me well for many years, and I hope that it will assist you as well.”* The knife she gives the PC is a simple tanto. The wooden handle has several notches in it, but she clearly

took good care of the blade as it is sharp to the touch despite its signs of wear.

After the game finishes and the target is taken back inside, Usagi Hanshiro asks the guests to stay outside and requests anyone still inside the common room to come out into the garden. The Hare all seem to know what's going on but the Scorpion and other guests hardly mask their curiosity. Once all are outside, Usagi Hanshiro addresses the guests. ***“Our clan, although it has only existed for a few generations, has an important tradition regarding marriage. Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei, please come forward with the symbols of your mutual trust.”*** The two of them step forward next to Hanshiro and each pulls a small package from their kimono. Hanshiro continues, ***“We have long fought those that would seek to destroy the Empire through methods of betrayal or dark magic. To show our trust to those that we love, we exchange items that hold deep significance. Usagi Kiritabi, what item did you give your betrothed?”***

Kiritabi bows to Hanshiro. ***“I gave him a sai, passed to me by my grandmother Hiromi, and an heirloom very dear to me.”***

Hanshiro nods his approval and continues, ***“Yogo Onkei, present the item that you received.”*** Onkei unwraps his package and shows the guests its contents, a sai with a red Hare mon emblazoned on it. As he does so, Hanshiro asks ***“Yogo Onkei, having received this important item from Usagi Kiritabi, what item did you present in return?”***

Onkei bows to Hanshiro just as Kiritabi did before him and then answers, ***“I presented the symbol of my position, the jitte of a Scorpion magistrate.”***

Hanshiro nods again. ***“Usagi Kiritabi, present the item that you received.”*** Kiritabi unwraps her package, revealing a jitte with the Scorpion mon on it. ***“Having presented the items, these two have shown the trust they have in each other. They have both kept the items safe and returned them unharmed. Tomorrow the items will belong to the both of them.”*** Hanshiro bows to the guests and concludes the ceremony. ***“Thank you for the attention that you have given me. Enjoy the rest of the evening.”***

As the guests clap politely at the ceremony's conclusion, the PCs can make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll at TN 25 to notice Onkei whisper something in Kiritabi's ear. A PC who notices this and who has the Read Lips Advantage can make a raw **Perception** roll at TN 20 to make out what he is saying: ***“I'll be waiting with some tea once we finish here.***

Don't stay up too late.” Kiritabi smiles somewhat slyly for a brief moment and then returns to her duty of being a gracious hostess.

The party winds down and comes to a close about an hour after the ceremony. By this time most of the older samurai have retired and the younger samurai begin filtering out. The PCs are escorted back to their rooms when they decide to leave.

Part Two: Bump in the Night

After the party, virtually nothing can go right for the betrothed Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei. It is tonight that Onkei is to exact the Kolat's plan to kill Kiritabi and make the act look like self-defense. Yogo Onkei has already convinced Kiritabi to sneak into his room during the night for some pre-wedding 'activities'. It is his plan then to kill her, don the bloodied robe, and plant a false diary that would give any reader the impression that Kiritabi had gone mad from her paranoia about the Kolat, snuck into Onkei's room, and tried to murder her fiancé. What instead happens is that Onkei's conscience gets the best of him, he drops his knife, and he tells Kiritabi that he is a member of the Kolat assigned to kill her and that he couldn't follow through. Kiritabi grabs the knife and attacks him with it, resulting in a struggle that bloodies both of them. Onkei eventually escapes out the window and Kiritabi pursues. The PC in the room next to Onkei's will be witness to part of the event, though the shugenja Yogo Sagishi, also a member of the Kolat conspiracy, will do his best to modify that PC's memory in order to shroud the real truth of what happened.

Tonight will not be a dreamless night for many of the PCs. Take note of any PC who received an omen from the module *The Enemy You Deserve* and which PC was assigned to sleep in the room next to Yogo Onkei's. The PCs with omens will each receive dreams somewhat related to events that occur between Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei during the night. The PC in the room next to Onkei's will be subject to the Kolat's manipulations. Each of these PCs should be pulled to the side and read any relevant sections below.

The Omen Returns

During the night, some or all of the PCs will have dreams. Any PC who received a Bad or Mixed Omen from the module *The Enemy You Deserve* receives the following dream while they sleep:

“You are in a castle somewhere. You have completed a great duty for your lord, and are being rewarded for

your services. You meet with someone secretly, slipping away from the ceremonies. He reveals that he knows much about you; things you thought no one knew but yourself and attempts to blackmail you into betraying your lord.

The dream will end differently based on which omen the PC received. For PCs with a Bad Omen the dream ends as follows: *Your actions are quick! You take a knife in your hand and raise it high! You strike him again and again; he dies by your hand. Tears flow freely from your eyes as though you have never felt a greater sadness in your entire life.* PCs with a Mixed Omen instead see this at the end of their dream: *You recognize the voice of your would-be blackmailer. It is Yogo Onkei. He promises again to use you to destroy your own clan. Your actions are quick! You take a knife in your hand and raise it high! You hear another voice, a woman's. She tells you not to sully yourself with his blood. There is a flash of white, black and red... and Onkei is dead.* When the PC awakens (regardless of which dream they received), they will find a piece of black cloth in their hand, into which is stitched the kanji "Memory" in thread that glows with an odd, otherworldly glimmer. The fabric's ragged edges suggest it was torn violently away – though from what there is no way to know.

A Witness in the Castle

In the middle of the night, Usagi Kiritabi sneaks into Yogo Onkei's room, unaware that she is walking into a trap. Yogo Sagishi keeps watch for Kiritabi to enter Onkei's room and then sneaks into the room next to Onkei's with the intent of casting **Cloud the Mind** upon the PC sleeping within in order to create false memories of what the PC witnesses between Kiritabi and Onkei. When the PC awakens to the commotion, Yogo casts **Wind-Borne Slumbers** on the PC to lull them back to sleep then modifies their memory of hearing the commotion into a full-fledged eyewitness account of Usagi Kiritabi assaulting her fiancé and the PC. The spell **Cloud the Mind** has an unfortunate caveat, however, that requires the caster's Air to overpower the victim's Earth or it does not work, so it is possible for the PC to remember either what they actually experienced, waking and being enchanted back to sleep again, or what was planted into their memory, investigating Onkei's room and being attacked by a crazed Kiritabi.

The PC who has been assigned to the room in the castle next to Yogo Onkei will have their dreams roughly interrupted by a commotion in the room next door. Have the PC roll simple **Earth** (in case this information is relevant, the PC will not have recovered their Void Points from the night before yet). The reason for this roll is not to be disclosed to the PC, but allow them to apply

any bonus to the roll that their character sheet allows for contested element rolls. This is not a Taint check, so any bonuses related strictly to rolls to resist the Shadowlands Taint will not apply. Secretly roll 6k6. This is the simple **Air** roll plus a Void Point expenditure of Yogo Sagishi, who has cast the spell **Cloud the Mind** upon the PC which requires a contested roll to modify the target's memory.

Unmodified Memory

If the PC succeeded at the contested element roll, the PC will hearing sounds coming from the next room. Read the following: *You hear a commotion in the room next to yours. A man and a woman are yelling at each other and objects are being thrown about. You are still groggy from sleep and you are unable to tell what they are saying.*

The PC is not alone in their room, however. Now have them roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** vs. Yogo Sagishi's **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility** as the shugenja attempts to avoid detection (he uses a spell slot to give himself an additional rolled and kept die). If the PC fails, they return to sleep, waking in the morning and remembering nothing but the commotion. If the PC succeeds, they notice a person dressed in tight-fitting black clothing standing in the corner of their room, watching them. They cannot make out the intruder's face. They should make another **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll vs. Yogo Sagishi's **Stealth (Spellcasting) / Agility**. If the PC succeeds, they will notice that this person is casting a spell of some sort. If the PC has at least one rank of Spellcraft, they can make a **Spellcraft / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 to identify the spell as **Wind-Borne Slumbers**. Either way, the PC returns to sleep due to the spell cast upon them. The last thing the PC will remember before falling back to sleep is hearing a man whispering, *"You will serve us well, but you will not remember the service."* Continue to Part Three.

False Memory

If the PC failed the contested element roll, the PC's memory is modified, though there is no way for the PC to know exactly that their memory was modified and there is no known way to restore their memory. The PC will "experience" the following interactions:

You awaken to a commotion in the room next door. A man's voice says "How could you do this? I thought we were in love?" A woman speaks in response, "This is not my choice. Duty is stronger than love." There is a short silence, someone takes a sharp breath and then groans.

It is the middle of the night and the PC's room is dark except for the crack of the hallway lantern light underneath their door. The commotion is coming from the guest room next door, Yogo Onkei's room. Should the PC choose to investigate, they will come across the following scene:

The room has been torn apart. There are tears in the tatami mats and furniture has been tossed about. Standing in the middle of the room is a woman wearing white nightclothes with subtle red highlights. Her attention is focused on a man wearing black, in a fetal position on the floor. You recognize the pathetic figure is the form of Yogo Onkei. As you look, you realize the red highlights on her robe are smeared bloodstains.

The woman, Usagi Kiritabi, turns slowly towards you. Tears flow down her cheeks and her eyes are red from crying. Her tears are of sadness, but her eyes are dark and unfeeling. She sighs, "There can be no witnesses."

Roll Initiative for a skirmish. The PC will fight against Usagi Kiritabi (use the stat block for Usagi Kiritabi, Night Assassin below). No matter how loudly the PC shouts or tries to reason with Kiritabi, no one will come to their aid, Kiritabi will not listen, and if they try to find help the surrounding rooms are empty. If the PC is a shugenja, they find that their spells always inexplicably fail. Each Round, Kiritabi will attempt to enter into a grapple and pin the PC, choking them. Once Kiritabi has won three rolls to control the grapple in a row, then on her next action read the following text:

The room grows dim as the samurai-ko chokes the life out of you. As the last of your consciousness fades, you dimly hear the voice of Yogo Onkei exclaiming to Kiritabi, "I won't let you!"

The PC wakes up again in the morning in their bed. They will notice that they will have strange and somewhat painful bruises on their neck, as if they had been strangled. Their room is otherwise exactly as it was when they went to bed (even if they remember moving anything when they were awoken during the night).

Usagi Kiritabi, Night Assassin

This version of Usagi Kiritabi is only present in the modified memory of the samurai affected by **Cloud the Mind**. She is half-delirious from being made to kill her lover and knows there can't be witnesses, so she attacks without mercy. "So it has come to this; enemies on all sides."

Air 4	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 4	Void 3
Reflexes 5		Agility 5	Strength 5	
Honor 5.2		Status 2.0	Glory 1.5	
Initiative: 9k5		Grapple: 10k7+5		

Armor TN: 40 **Damage:** 6k3 (Unarmed)

School/Rank: Usagi Bushi 4

- Add Athletics skill to Armor TN unless in the Full Attack or Center Stance. Water Ring is considered 1 higher for the purposes of Move Actions
- When in the Full Attack or Attack stance she can attack an opponent up to 15 feet away without using a Move Action
- If the 15 foot move is used while in full attack, she may move another 15 feet and attack again.
- Attacks are Simple Actions while unarmed or using knives or weapons with the Samurai keyword

Skills: Athletics (Running, Throwing) 10, Jiujutsu (Grappling) 10, Knives (Sai, Jitte) 7, Craft: Locksmithing 1, Lore: Kolat 3, Lore: Underworld 2, Medicine 2, Sincerity 2, Stealth 4

Advantages / Disadvantages: Daredevil, Hands of Stone / Brash, Obtuse, True Love (Yogo Onkei)

Equipment: sai, blood-stained nightclothes

Special: Kiritabi suffers no Wound Penalties and has a seemingly unlimited number of Wounds, though her body appears to take damage in the form of cuts and bruises.

Unlikely but Possible Events

There are three possible scenarios in which the PC assigned to the room next to Onkei's would not be able to experience the events above in the way it is described.

- If the PC for some reason did not sleep in their room, leaving it empty, Yogo Sagishi will slip into the next possible room to modify someone else's memory. Randomly choose a different PC sleeping in the castle to experience the events of "A Witness in the Castle." If no other PC is available then just skip the section entirely and proceed to Part Three.
- If the PC stays up all night instead of going to sleep (they should provide adequate reason for doing so), begin with a contested **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll vs. Yogo Sagishi's **Stealth / Agility** to determine if the PC notices Yogo Sagishi sneaking into their room. On success, roll Initiative. If the PC wins Initiative, the GM should do their best to adjudicate what happens next, but Yogo Sagishi will do his best to escape without being identified. He will use magic to secure his escape. The PC hears the commotion also going on in Yogo Onkei's room, but if they go to investigate they will find it as described in Part 3. If Yogo Sagishi wins the Initiative or the PC fails to notice Yogo Sagishi's presence, he will cast **Wind-Borne Slumbers** immediately to knock the PC out before they can act. Then proceed with the contested Element roll of the PC's simple **Earth** vs. Yogo Sagishi's simple **Air** (6k6) to determine **Cloud the Mind's**

effectiveness. If the PC wins, proceed to Part 3. If the PC loses, they remember the account from the section “False Memory.” If possible, try to explain to the PC that they cannot remember anyone sneaking into their room at night but if this becomes a source of frustration it is best not to make an argument out of it. A suggestion to avoid this is to roll Investigation and/or Initiative secretly for the PC before telling the PC what they remember transpiring.

- If multiple PCs are in the room, Yogo Sagishi would likely try another room or abandon his effort to create an eyewitness and withdraw to his own room. The GM should use good judgment in determining what would make the most sense for Yogo Sagishi to do in this situation without creating confusion or frustration for the PCs.

Part Three: The Missing Bride and Groom

In the morning, the castle is in uproar since Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei have gone missing. Word of the event quickly escapes the castle and spreads into the village.

Castle PCs

The PCs staying at the castle will be awoken early by a commotion in the hallway and the sound of guards giving orders. If they ask one of the rushing servants or guardsmen what the commotion is about, they’ll receive a quick response but no opportunity to ask questions. ***“It would appear that Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei have gone missing. We are still figuring out what happened. Please remain calm; you’ll be escorted to breakfast soon. We apologize for waking you, samurai-san.”***

Scorpion PCs will be visited in their room personally by Bayushi Kanchou, who hastily inquires, ***“Did you see or hear anything suspicious last night?”*** The young daimyo seethes, his mask being the only thing holding his On together. If the PC “witnessed” Kiritabi attacking Onkei and reports this to Kanchou, his expression darkens. ***“Assaulting my vassal? I will get justice.”*** If the PC reports having heard a commotion and saw someone suspicious in their room, suggesting that they were spellbound to sleep, Kanchou will seem concerned. ***“So they fought, but someone kept you from witnessing the truth.”*** Otherwise, the PC likely knows nothing about what happened, and Kanchou is not particularly interested in hearing about their dreams or in explaining the situation himself besides stating that Yogo Onkei seems to have disappeared overnight. He is disappointed,

but thanks the PCs nonetheless before taking his leave. ***“Get yourself situated; I may require your services later. I have an Emerald Magistrate to confer with.”***

A PC who did not have the pleasure of being awakened by Bayushi Kanchou may be inclined to tell someone what they heard or “saw” the previous night. The servants and/or guards will listen to their story with consternation, promising to take the story to Usagi Hanshiro and Usagi Ozaki. The PC may also try to seek out the Emerald Magistrate Shiba Bengo. The PC will be informed that Bengo left the castle early to get a good seat at the Dancing Boar for breakfast.

Dancing Boar PCs

When the PCs exit their rooms, they quickly encounter many of the other guests up and gossiping about an event that supposedly occurred at the castle – the bride and groom have gone missing. The Sparrow representative Suzume Akechi greedily devours the gossip and starts speculating that they must have run off together in a wild romantic escapade. Most of the other guests at the inn participate moderately in the gossip, but when Shiba Bengo arrives at the Dancing Boar early to wait for breakfast, the guests swarm him looking for information. He does not seem to appreciate the attention he is getting and merely says, ***“I am sure Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei will reveal themselves soon; they struck me as having a flair for the dramatic. I am looking forward to breakfast. The cooks here are quite skilled at whetting my appetite.”***

The commotion subsides after a short time and the PCs at the castle are escorted by servants to the Dancing Boar for breakfast before the wedding festivities begin. All of the other guests are present save for, notably, Bayushi Kanchou and a few of the higher-ranking Scorpion.

If a PC seeks out the Emerald Magistrate Shiba Bengo at breakfast, he greets them and makes small talk about the celebration the night before. ***“I enjoyed the celebration. Where I come from, the wedding celebrations aren’t quite as boisterous, but traditions do vary between clans. Did you rest well?”*** The PC may wish to share anything they witnessed the previous night with Bengo at this time. Before they can finish their story, however, the door to the inn loudly slams open, quieting the room. Bayushi Kanchou strides into the room followed by Usagi Hanshiro and his hatamoto. The room grows silent at the sudden entrance and all eyes are on the daimyo as they cross the room towards Shiba Bengo.

“Shiba Bengo-san, I understand you are an Emerald Magistrate. I wish to make a formal complaint,” Kanchou begins, anger concealed in a trained voice.

Usagi Hanshiro interjects, ***“Actually, we are both here to request your assistance.”***

Bayushi Kanchou snaps open his fan and fans himself vigorously. ***“WE would like to make a formal report then. My vassal Yogo Onkei has disappeared from the castle and I-we want to begin an official investigation into his whereabouts.”***

Bengo stands up, wishes any PCs who have joined him a good morning and gives a nod to his wife, and leaves with the daimyo for a private meeting. If any of the PCs are Emerald Magistrates, the daimyo will ask for their inclusion as well. Once they have all left, the room explodes with speculation, though the families of Yogo Onkei and Usagi Kiritabi throw nasty looks around the room, trying in vain to silence the gossiping guests.

Meeting with the Daimyo

Any Emerald Magistrate PCs and Shiba Bengo are taken to a small meeting room on the second floor of the Dancing Boar. Bayushi Kanchou and Usagi Hanshiro take a moment to find comfortable seats before beginning their report. Kanchou starts off, ***“As you have already heard, my vassal, Yogo Onkei, disappeared from the castle this morning. The circumstances of his disappearance seem to suggest that he did not leave willingly. I, of course, am not making any specific accusations at this time, but Usagi Hanshiro-san has mentioned that his vassal, Usagi Kiritabi has also disappeared.”***

Usagi Hanshiro speaks up. ***“I am concerned as well, and personally tried to find Kiritabi, but was unable to find her. Kanchou-san said that he looked in his vassal’s room, and it was... well... when you see it you will understand why we believe that we require an Emerald Magistrate’s service. There are signs of violence.”***

Shiba Bengo will naturally accept the daimyos’ request to look into the matter and offers to take the lead in the investigation, but if a PC really wants to take the lead, Bengo will defer to the PC. ***“I will allow you to take the lead if that is your wish, but since Bayushi Kanchou has requested my assistance personally, I believe that I should remain part of the investigation if only in a supporting role.”*** Once it has been decided who takes the lead in the investigation, Hanshiro informs the magistrate(s) that they have been granted permission from the champion of the Hare Usagi Ozaki to search the rooms of the missing bride and groom and that the castle employees have been instructed to fully cooperate with the investigation.

The daimyos personally have little to offer information-wise, but if a PC asks if anyone else is missing, Kanchou will mention that he has not yet seen his advisor, Yogo Sagishi. He is not yet prepared to assume Sagishi has also gone missing, but asks the magistrate to tell Sagishi that Kanchou is looking for him if he turns up.

The PCs as Yoriki

Shiba Bengo wastes no time selecting yoriki to aid him in his investigation, seeking out the PCs and asking them to meet with him in his room at the castle. ***“In case we have not met, my name is Shiba Bengo, and among my duties I am an Emerald Magistrate in service to the Daughter of Heaven and the Empire. I have learned that each of you is an acquaintance of the bride Usagi Kiritabi or have experience serving as yoriki before under my mentor Doji Oharu. I have need of yoriki for an investigation into the matter of the missing bride and groom and believe that you will be well-suited to the task.”*** Assuming the PCs agree, he goes on to inform them that he has been given leave to investigate the guests rooms Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei were staying in and to find witnesses if possible. If a PC refuses to assist Bengo or a magistrate PC, they are effectively out of the adventure. Give that PC one experience point.

Investigations

With the PCs now recruited to help investigate the missing Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei, they have a variety of means of gathering clues. The champion of the Hare has given Shiba Bengo (or an Emerald Magistrate PC if applicable) the right to investigate the rooms of any missing persons and the castle servants and samurai of the Hare Clan are at his disposal, and by extension are available to the PCs as well. Wedding guests are not necessarily required to cooperate with the PCs, but most of them are willing to speak about the case as long as the PCs are not threatening or repeatedly bother the same person with questions.

Speaking to the Castle Servants

Most samurai give little regard to castle servants, treating them as though they are invisible, and the servants are generally glad for it. As a result, servants often see or hear things that no one else does, and this occasion is no exception. Some servants were up all night preparing the outside of the castle for the wedding ceremony, and others were in the castle doing nightly chores.

If the PCs seek out any servants that were responsible for cleaning the hallways and ask about guests in general that were active overnight, have them roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** to briefly interrogate the

various servants. The PCs can learn the following at their respective TNs:

- **TN 15** Usagi Tsuge, the bride's grandfather, got up well into the night and passed various servants as he went for a stroll through the hall and around the castle.
- **TN 20** Kitsuki Toto had great trouble sleeping and asked an experienced manservant named Tsuma multiple times for a fresh pillow, to open a window, and other various small chores all throughout the night, but refused any offer of food or drink to help soothe him to sleep.
- **TN 25** Yogo Yuki, the groom's mother, summoned a servant girl named Kiki into her room shortly after she retired and demanded a cup of cold distilled water. Kiki didn't know what distilled meant but she brought her a cold glass of water. Yuki yelled at her for bringing her "disgusting water" but drank it anyway.
- **TN 25** A young male servant with little education and a weak patchy beard named Haku saw Usagi Kiritabi come out of her room. *"I didn't know her name, samurai-sama, but I can tell you that I saw a pretty young samurai come out of the bride's room last night. I asked her if I could get her some tea or a fresh pillow, but she just put her finger to her mouth and said 'no thanks, but please do me a little favor and pretend you didn't see me.' She had a big grin on her face like she was really happy about something."* He can confirm that Kiritabi was alone if asked.
- **TN 30** The manservant Tsuma (the same as above) noted that Yogo Sagishi was not in his room when he made his morning rounds to awaken the guests. He thought nothing of it, figuring the priest just got up early. Clever PCs will note that Tsuma was in the hall almost constantly thanks to Kitsuki Toto, so Tsuma not seeing Yogo Sagishi leave his room is actually more suspicious than the servant realizes.

If the PCs seek out servants that were up during the night setting up for the wedding ceremony and ask them about guests that were active overnight, inquiries will mostly be met with grumbles that the servants were kept very busy setting up and didn't have time nor was it their business to watch for samurai who were out of bed. If the PCs roll **Investigation / Awareness** well enough though, they might be able to find a couple of perceptive servants with information they can use. Refer to the TNs next to each piece of information for how difficult it is to acquire:

- **TN 20** Usagi Tsuge was out walking around and watched the servants work for a short time. None of the servants spoke to him and he stayed well out of the way.

- **TN 25** Yasuki Muta spent a short time nearby the ceremony grounds and appeared as though he were waiting for someone, but eventually went inside looking frustrated.
- **TN 35 (and the PCs have to promise not to get report them for slacking off)** A pair of male servants named Ryo and Shu were shirking their duties and were hanging out a ways away from the castle sharing a smoking pipe. They saw three people all run past them. It was dark and they couldn't really make out faces, but they were pretty sure that the first samurai was a man, the second was a woman, and they aren't sure about the third. The first and second were both wearing nightclothes but the third was wearing some tight black garb that made him or her difficult to see. In fact, only Shu even claims to have seen the third person. The second one was chasing the first. The third one came out a number of minutes later. They also noted that the second samurai they saw appeared to be crying and had a knife or dagger clutched in her hand. If pressed about why they didn't mention their story earlier the servants will beg for forgiveness, claiming that they were minding their own business and that servants are told to stay out of samurai's way no matter what they see.

Speaking to the other Guests

The PCs will doubtfully be surprised when they find that the other guests have little or nothing to contribute to their investigations. There is a general sense of panic amongst the samurai in Shiro Usagi. Some of the Hare are already whispering that the Scorpion will raze the castle again if something isn't done.

If the PCs seek out Yogo Sagishi, the priest for Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei's wedding, they will find him strangely absent. Likewise, if the PCs ask around trying to find him, they will find that no one else has seen the shugenja since last night. If none of the PCs think to seek him out, then at some point while PCs are talking to other guests Bayushi Kanchou should approach them and ask if they have seen Yogo Sagishi. He has not concluded yet that Sagishi has gone missing with Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei yet, but he is beginning to suspect it.

Usagi Kiritabi's family and her friend Kitsune Naishi are all afraid for her given that the immediate evidence clearly indicts her for assaulting her fiancé in the middle of the night. None of them wish to speak ill of her, but her mother, grandmother, and Kitsune Naishi all will admit that she has impulsive tendencies and a shoot-first-ask-questions-later attitude. Her mother and grandparents suspect there must have been some sort of foul play by Yogo Onkei to give her reason to attack him,

but they have no idea what that might be. Her grandfather, Usagi Tsuge, took a stroll in the middle of the night but claims he did not see or hear anything odd happening during his walk.

Yogo Onkei's mother is of course worried about her son's well-being but is not being belligerent about it. She lets Bayushi Kanchou and her father make the threats and complaints and she handles the situation calmly, or so she'd like everyone to believe. In truth she is epileptic and the stress is overwhelming so she confines herself to her room so that no one can witness her seizures.

Yogo Onkei's grandfather Yogo Natoru is irate. He blames the Hare for their negligence in controlling their samurai and even goes as far as suggesting that this is some sort of sick revenge that Usagi Ozaki is taking out on the Scorpion. If the PCs argue with him he also threatens them, telling them that he will use 'a lifetime's worth of favors' to ensure that the PCs and Shiba Bengo go down with the entire Hare clan if his grandson isn't found.' He is blowing smoke but gullible PCs might find this threat stressful.

Usagi Machida and Kitsuki Toto are experienced magistrates and so they are mostly resistant to the general panic, preferring to let testimony and evidence tell the story of what happened. If the PCs need advice then one or both of them might be able to provide an idea that might help the PCs look in the right direction. In particular Machida is interested in gathering the testimony of the castle servants, as his experience has taught him that servants see and know much more than their samurai superiors give them credit for. Kitsuki Toto, with his controversial training in the Kitsuki Method, is interested in physical evidence and believes that a close search of Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei's rooms might reveal a lot of information regarding Kiritabi's intent for entering her fiancé's room. He even considers the possibility of a third party being involved who may have been interested in shattering the wedding and pinning the blame upon either the Scorpion or the Hare. If it becomes public knowledge that Yogo Sagishi is also missing he is especially interested in looking into this conjecture, suggesting that a search of Yogo Sagishi's room might turn up additional clues.

Daidoji Shinnin can be found in his room at the castle, packing his belongings in a hurry. He will converse with PCs that have not earned his enmity in the past (PCs may have the Disadvantage Sworn Enemy: Daidoji Shinnin from the module *Under Cover of Night*). ***“Every time that woman Usagi Kiritabi appears in my life, something bad happens. I don't even know why I accepted the invitation. Did you know that my sister died because of her, that I was disgraced because of***

her, and that I was nearly framed for providing the murder weapon to assassinate her once already? I'm leaving and I'm never coming within a hundred miles of Usagi Kiritabi ever again. Good riddance if they never find her.” After his rant, the PCs might ask Shinnin about his whereabouts the previous evening. ***“I turned in after the party last night. I was supposed to have met that Yasuki fellow to discuss some business late last night but forgot about it. My servant Chi can tell you I slept through the night.”***

Suzume Akechi is very interested in what's going on and openly participates in spreading the rumor that Usagi Ozaki had planned all along to cause problems for the Scorpion. He lacks any useful information, however and doesn't know the bride or the groom personally.

Yasuki Muta has dropped his jovial persona from the previous evening and seems completely disinterested in the proceedings at all. He quickly becomes annoyed if the PCs question him. If they ask Yasuki Muta about whether he was outside when the incident happened (they may have heard such a rumor from the servants) Muta insists that what he does during his time is none of the PCs' business. (In truth, he was waiting for Daidoji Shinnin so that they could talk business but the absent-minded Shinnin forgot about it and went to sleep).

None of the guests or family members will consent to searches of their rooms, taking insult at the very notion that they might have some part in ruining the wedding. The Hare will not override any protests for fear of causing further insult to its guests, even Hare clan samurai guests. At Kitsuki Toto's recommendation, Onkei's and Kiritabi's rooms have not been disturbed beyond brief searches right after the two were discovered to be missing – Yogo Sagishi's room, however, has been cleaned by the servants by the time the PCs examine it (if they do so).

Yogo Onkei's Room

Yogo Onkei's room, which was to double as a 'wedding suite' the following night, is a small bedroom with a connecting sitting room. The sitting room has a table with a door leading to the hallway and another door leading to a small patio that is surrounded by a small garden. A few ceramic pieces painted red and white sit in decorative places in both rooms.

The table in the sitting room is overturned and has several gashes in its surface, the wood chipped and rough. The bedroom is torn apart. There are tears in the tatami mats covering the floor and some furniture and clothing is tossed asunder. The window is open, and there is a bloody handprint on the sill. The pillows are

scattered about the floor. One is ripped and near it in a heap is a bundle of dark cloth. The cloth is stained with blood and is ripped in several places. The internal walls are also slit in a few places and the doors separating the bedroom and the sitting room are smashed outward into the sitting room. Yogo Onkei's daisho lies uselessly on the floor.

If the PCs actually make an effort to search the room, they will not have to look hard to find a couple of other notable tidbits. Have the PCs roll **Investigation (Search) / Perception** at TN 30. If they succeed, they will note that some of the ceramic pieces have not only red paint on them, but small spatters of blood as well – although there is no other blood nearby. Hitting a TN 45 allows the searching PC to detect very faint signs that larger bloodstains on the table have been wiped away, but the drops of blood on the ceramic were not likewise removed. If they make at least a 20, they find a small piece of paper crumpled up into a ball hidden amongst the mess. If the PCs uncrumple the paper they will see that it contains a short cryptic message: *"The deed must be done tonight."* The paper lacks any seal or signature, and lacks enough kami to be able to commune with it or cast the spell **Reflections of Pan Ku** upon it. Even if they fail the Investigation roll entirely, the PCs will find a piece of bloody clothing with a Scorpion mon on it and a red and white mask that has been split in two as they move items and furniture around while searching the room.

The Kami of this place is disturbed, especially the normally jovial kami of Air. If asked what happened they respond quickly. *"Love and hatred, they are so close and so far. Both have love, one has hate, one has sorrow. They love, then they fight, then they leave. Hatred and love pursues love and sorrow."* The kami of Earth can provide slightly less cryptic information, though the PCs will need to call at least two Raises for Clarity in order to circumvent Yogo Sagishi's magical efforts to confuse the Earth. *"A being of balanced elements was unmoving, but alert. A being of Air and Water entered while Night's Fire was high in the sky. The beings were in harmony, but then the balanced being drew Fire and wept Water. The beings fought, then they left, into the Air."* A third Raise for clarity will tell the PCs that the balanced being was a man wearing black and the being of Water and Air was a woman wearing white. There is not enough Fire or Water kami in the room to be able to commune with.

Usagi Kiritabi's Room

Usagi Kiritabi's room is simple and practical, not unlike Usagi Kiritabi herself. It contains a futon, a wardrobe, a writing desk, a woven rug on the floor and a single piece of pottery in the corner of the room with a decorative

plant inside of it. Her clothes from the day before are tossed in a messy pile next to the plant and hanging on to a beam in the ceiling is a beautiful white kimono, likely the kimono she intended to wear to her wedding ceremony. Her daisho and a bag filled with five small knives sits next to the pile of clothing. Various personal effects are hastily arranged on top of the writing desk, including some makeup and a decorative hairpiece. Grey ash crumbles in an incense burner near the bedroll and an untouched cup of water sits next to it. The room smells vaguely of the star anise in the incense burner.

If the PCs wish to search the room thoroughly, they need to make an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll at TN 35, or 25 for any PC who specifically mentions searching the wardrobe. Alternatively the spell **By the Light of the Moon** will reveal a hidden object inside of the wardrobe.

In the wardrobe, hidden inside the pocket of a nightgown, the PCs will find a little book about the size of the palm of their hand. A quick glance tells the PCs that this book appears to be Usagi Kiritabi's personal diary. Thumbing through the pages, the PCs quickly learn based on written dates at the tops of the pages that she did not write in it very often, only about once every month or so. The diary goes back years, its earliest entries detailing when she served as an apprentice magistrate under Usagi Machida. Somewhere in the middle of the book, she makes mention of an incident in a village called Uo no Kusai Mura, where she claims to have found evidence of the existence of a conspiracy called the Kolat, which was thought to have been wiped out. The pages start to chronicle her investigations along the River of Gold, where she reveals that her work stopping piracy was actually a mission to uncover and expose more evidence of the Kolat with the intent of finding a way to cripple the conspiracy. She seems to gain a bit of paranoia, jotting down thoughts that she has been targeted for assassination at least once, in Yasuki Yashiki (this entry might even contain the names of any of the PCs who have played the module *The Enemy You Deserve*). Diligent details of her work give way to the drivel of an infatuated girl after she meets Yogo Onkei. After several pages of details of events involving Yogo Onkei that should not be read aloud, there is a page reflecting both happiness and sadness. Onkei had to leave Kiritabi for a season for special training but promised to marry her upon his return. The pages turn into accounts of her attempts to get her lord's permission to marry a Yogo, of which it appears it took at least a dozen before he was convinced. Finally Yogo Onkei returned from his training and Kiritabi was delighted to hear that he had secured permission from his own lord to wed her. She makes only small updates to the diary until an entry dated about a month ago. Give the players

Player Handout #2: The Last Page. If the PCs cast the spell **Reflections of Pan Ku** upon the diary, they will see an image of Usagi Kiritabi writing in it.

Clever PCs may suspect that the last page is a forgery, and if they possess the investigative skills to back up this suspicion (by rolling **Investigation / Perception** at TN 30) they will find out that it is a forgery indeed. The handwriting on the last page doesn't quite match the rounded strokes of a feminine writer.

The spirits in Usagi Kiritabi's room have little useful information to offer. The Earth spirits in the room and the Fire spirits in the incense burner have seen nothing worth their attention. The Air spirits can only offer the PCs that *"The one in the room was filled with many strong emotions, but mostly anxiety, fear, and happiness"* (which emotion was greatest they cannot offer). If the PCs commune with the water in the cup and ask for an account of Kiritabi's movements, the Water spirits can vaguely show that she lay in bed for a while then got up and left the room. The water is too small to paint a clear picture of her face or any small movements that she makes. If the PCs ask if anyone else entered the room, and call two Raises for clarity, the Water will show a dark form enter through a window and cross the room, soon leaving the water's sight. The form is not seen leaving.

Yogo Sagishi's Room

While it is not readily apparent at first, Yogo Sagishi is missing as well. In their panic surrounding the disappearance of the bride and groom, most of the guests, with the exception of Bayushi Kanchou, have not even noticed that the priest has also gone missing. If the PCs realize this and mention it to Shiba Bengo, he will report the third missing guest to the Hare and Bayushi Kanchou, who give Bengo (and by extension the PCs) permission to search Sagishi's room as well.

Yogo Sagishi's room is much like the PCs', containing only a futon to sleep on, a simple writing desk, a wardrobe, and some simple decorations. The room is neatly arranged and sparsely populated with Yogo Sagishi's belongings. In fact if it weren't for a few neatly folded changes of clothes in the wardrobe and a bag against the wall containing a few nondescript items, one would not even realize that anyone was sleeping in the room (the bed was used, but by this time the servant Tsuma has made it up, in case the PCs are curious). If the PCs search for anything unusual in the room and roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at TN 10, they will notice only one thing somewhat out of place. Atop the writing desk is a black and red sake cup, sitting upside-down. If a PC picks it up or turns it over, a white

translucent bird suddenly flies out from inside of it. While flying in circles around the PC that found it, it whispers a quiet message, *"I have gone to save the groom. Find them, find me."* The form of the bird then smudges, disappearing into the air. A successful **Spellcraft / Intelligence** roll at TN 10 will recognize the bird as the manifestation of the spell **Legacy of Kaze no Kami**, a simple Air spell taught to shugenja who are first learning to grasp their powers.

A PC shugenja can commune with the spirits in the room if they wish. The Air kami will be very pleased with the joke if the PCs have found the bird in the cup. They will seem to stifle giggles if it hasn't been found yet. If the PCs ask where Yogo Sagishi went, they will answer. *"Our sisters helped him to play a trick, and he left this place with all of his things. He told us a secret, so we liked to help him."* If asked about his secret, the Air kami titter and laugh. *"You must trade us a secret in return for a secret. It's only fair."* If the shugenja tells the Air kami a secret relating to an Advantage or Disadvantage worth at least five points (Allies gained by keeping a secret count, but they must sacrifice that Ally Advantage) the PC gains a Free Raise next time they cast an Air spell during the module and learns the secret the Air kami hold. *"The man serves two masters: "Cloud and Scorpion."* The Air kami know nothing about the meaning of the secret, as they are only concerned with the fact that it is a secret, not its usefulness. There are no Fire or Water kami in the room to commune with. The Earth in the room can only offer that *"The being of Air cloaked itself in its element and left our presence"* sometime during the night (a Raise for clarity will help determine that the being is a man and another Raise for clarity will cause the Earth to describe the man in detail, covered in black including his face).

If the PCs learned the secret held by the Kami of Air in Yogo Sagishi's room, they may be wondering what it means. PCs in certain organizations or with certain Lore Skills may be able to venture a few guesses as to what the "Cloud" is that Yogo Sagishi serves. PCs who are members of the Kolat or who have at least 3 Ranks of Lore: Kolat may be familiar with a branch of the conspiracy called the Cloud. Brotherhood Monk PCs and PCs with at least 3 Ranks of Lore: Theology may have heard of a branch of the Brotherhood of Shinsei devoted to Osano-Wo called the Dark Cloud. PCs with 3 or more Ranks of Lore: Air, Lore: Spirit Realms or Lore: Elements may know that Cloud could refer to many different supernatural or spiritual things, including the City of White Clouds or a mystical tattoo that allows one to communicate with spirits in other realms. There is no way to know for sure if any of these are what the secret refers to.

Presenting the Evidence

Once the PCs have at least searched Yogo Onkei and Usagi Kiritabi's rooms, have found Usagi Kiritabi's diary, and are convinced that they have learned all that they believe they are going to learn, they should meet with Shiba Bengo and present everything they found. Even if the PCs suggest that the last page of the diary is a forgery, and even if Bengo suspects it himself, he will insist on showing it to the Hare and Bayushi Kanchou, believing that it may at the very least serve as a stepping stone to the real truth. Once the PCs have delivered their full report to Shiba Bengo, he leaves to arrange a meeting with the daimyo.

The PCs are soon called to a private meeting with Usagi Ozaki, the Champion of the Hare, in his private sitting room in the castle. None of the usual niceties are observed and the champion has a grave look on his face. Also present is the Emerald Magistrate Shiba Bengo and Bayushi Kanchou, Yogo Onkei's young lord.

Usagi Ozaki begins, *"So magistrate, these are the yoriki that have uncovered my apparent plot to murder a single Yogo of no apparent significance in penance for the destruction of my clan these many years ago?"*

Shiba Bengo's brow furls, noting the sarcasm in the Hare Clan Champion's voice. *"Yes, Usagi-sama, and it would seem that Usagi Kiritabi intended to carry out that wish, if last night's events transpired as they appear to have on the surface. Do you deny the evidence against you?"*

Usagi Ozaki's face darkens. *"I have wished no harm on the Yogo boy, nor do I seek vengeance against the Scorpion clan. I put the past behind me when I rebuilt Shiro Usagi, stone by stone, with mine and my followers' bare hands. I cannot deny that the words are written in my vassal's diary, but I gave no command to kill the Yogo boy, nor did I command that he should one day be killed at my whim."*

Bayushi Kanchou, his face expressionless underneath the mask, inquires, *"What then, Usagi-san, would you have us believe? I came here for a wedding, not to discuss whether you want to take revenge on the Scorpion for something that happened a long time ago."*

Ozaki turns on the Scorpion. *"You are too young to know what you speak of, Bayushi-san. Your clan wiped out the Hare on false grounds, grounds that took many years to wipe the stains off from and start the Hare clan anew. It may have been a long time ago, but no matter how many days pass, I still remember it as though it happened only yesterday."*

Kanchou raises an eyebrow. *"So you do desire revenge? As you say I am young, I had no part in any of what you're angry about, yet it is my vassal that you have tried to murder and you mean to make an example out of me. Is that it?"*

Ozaki's grimace deepens. *"No, I was merely pointing out that what happened is not to be taken lightly. Rest assured I reached an age where I have learned forgiveness is far more desirable than revenge. I did not put Kiritabi up to this, nor do I believe that what we have seen is any indication of what really happened."*

Bengo clears his throat. *"Even so, Usagi-dono, the circumstances speak loudly against you. Usagi Kiritabi will eventually be found, and she will confess the truth under an Emerald Magistrate's questioning. If you gave this order, it would be better to confess it now, while I have power to choose what happens next. If it is determined later that you gave the order to kill Yogo Onkei, you may have the entire Scorpion Clan at your door demanding justice."*

Kanchou looks at the magistrate and at Ozaki, his eyes emanating contempt. *"You should not need to trouble yourself with all that work, magistrate-san. I know what I have seen, and while I was not yet born into this world the last time Shiro Usagi was sacked, I may yet live to see it done again if word of these events reaches my champion and does not contain a fulfilling conclusion. I will make you an offer, Usagi-san. Confess that you gave the order to kill my vassal. If he is found and returned to me alive, the seppuku of Usagi Kiritabi and a written apology from you to my champion will help me convince my superiors to forgive the Hare for its impulses. Otherwise, I will not return home without seeing the head lifted from your shoulders or without witnessing your seppuku. You will pay for my vassal's life with your own; in penance for the embarrassment you've caused my house."*

Ozaki growls in defense, *"I confess to no crime. I will stake my life on the innocence of myself and Kiritabi."*

Bayushi Kanchou stands up, his expression still impossible to determine under the mask. *"Very well, Ozaki-san. We will duel at sunset, with this Emerald Magistrate as our witness."*

Shiba Bengo interrupts the daimyo, *"My lords, may I offer a more peaceful solution? I would rather not see any unnecessary bloodshed today, so I would request a chance to determine the truth with testimony before it must come to a duel. If I can beg your pardons, I believe that the key to this investigation will be finding our*

missing bride and groom and hearing their stories. If we still cannot come to a clear conclusion after that, then I will accede to your request to witness your duel.”

The daimyo break eye contact with each other and seem to agree. Kanchou gives a short bow to the magistrate. *“I will give you until this evening to find our lost sheep, magistrate-san. I am leaving tomorrow morning with either the truth or Ozaki-san’s head, though they are likely to be the same thing. I leave it in your capable hands.”*

Shiba Bengo bows. *“I thank you, my lords. I have little time to find the bride and groom, so I would beg your pardons and request that you excuse me and my yoriki to continue with our investigations.”*

“Go on, Shiba-san. I trust you will deliver a report exonerating me and my vassal Kiritabi of any wrongdoing by sundown.” Ozaki says, ending the conversation.

After the conversation has ended, if any of the PCs are Hare, Usagi Ozaki asks that they stay behind and privately meet with him. He first asks the PC if they have heard of the Kolat. If the PC has not, he begins. *“The Hare clan has, as part of its duties, a very important job monitoring the movements of a heretical conspiracy called the Kolat. This conspiracy seeks to control the Empire from underground. They are clever and resourceful, and most of the rest of the Empire thinks it either never existed or is dead.”* He continues (or if the PC already knows about the Kolat, starts here), *Kiritabi has spent the past few years doing jobs for me to combat the threat this conspiracy represents. She has been targeted for assassination at least once before. I believe they may be behind this too. While it is possible that Bayushi Kanchou-san may be acting on orders from the Scorpion to discredit me, I have a difficult time believing they have any interest in doing so, which leaves me with my only other enemy as the most likely culprit. If you are able to find Kiritabi, be careful. Yogo Onkei or anyone else might be a member of the Kolat, and they will say anything to you, anything, to fool you into showing your back to them. Be careful, and bring Kiritabi back home safely.”*

Similarly, Bayushi Kanchou will meet with any Scorpion PCs. *“I don’t know if Ozaki is lying or if his vassal is just out of her mind, but I want Onkei home safely. If you find him alive, bring him back. If you find the Hare girl first, either gain her cooperation or kill her. I have no reputation as a daimyo yet, and I will not begin what I hope to be a long career by looking like I will let a Minor Clan walk all over me. I believe that my father’s man, Yogo Sagishi, has already begun*

searching for Onkei and the girl. If I am mistaken however and he is also a victim in this, try to bring him back too. He was an important advisor to my father and I don’t want to lose him.”

After the meeting, if a curious PC wishes to know why they met with Usagi Ozaki instead of Usagi Hanshiro, they will learn that Ozaki became personally involved due to the discovery of the diary. He dismissed Usagi Hanshiro to handle his other duties while he familiarized himself with the situation.

Part 4: Searching the Nearby Villages

The PCs only have a matter of hours to find Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei, but there have been few clues thus far for the PCs to try and determine where they went. If the PCs talked to the servants Ryo and Shu, they at least have the knowledge that the last time anyone in or around the castle saw them, they were running towards the northern end of the village. Otherwise help comes in the form of Usagi Machida, who finds Shiba Bengo and the PCs and informs them that one of his doshin just reported that a disturbance had occurred last night around some peasant huts on the north side of Shiro Usagi, and the disturbance might have Kiritabi’s and Onkei’s names written all over it. He offers to have the doshin take the PCs to the peasant huts.

North Shiro Usagi

Usagi Machida’s doshin will guide the PCs to the north edge of Shiro Usagi where several farmers’ huts stand. In a relatively confined area, there appears to be signs of a struggle. Crockery has been smashed against a wall, a window is broken, and several holes and dents can be found on the sides of the huts within the area.

Questioning the Peasants

Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei had a loud fight, and so there were witnesses. The peasants were awoken by the samurai fighting, but one particularly brave and somewhat foolish young man named Boshi was thrown through a window when he tried to intervene. The peasants did not alert the doshin right away because they were taking care of Boshi’s wounds and by the time they stabilized the young man’s bleeding Kiritabi and Onkei were gone, so they resolved to wait until morning to wake up the samurai.

Boshi can be found inside the hut with the broken window. His left eye is purple and swollen and both of his arms and one leg are crudely wrapped with cloth. He smiles when he sees the PCs, revealing that he may have

lost one of his front teeth in the scuffle as well. His wounds have stopped bleeding but he's clearly not going to be helping out in the fields until he's recovered somewhat. If a PC wants to help, an action that would cause him to recover at least 15 Wounds would get him back into a functional state, earning his and his family's gratitude and a point of Honor to the Good Samaritan PC.

The peasants can recall hearing two people fighting, a man and a woman. There was shouting, but the peasants were too alarmed and bewildered to remember anything they were saying. Boshi, however, can tell a more complete story. ***“When I heard the shouting, I went outside and saw a man and a woman both wearing nightclothes. The man was difficult to see since he was wearing black but a white cloth on his face made it easier to see him. The woman was wearing all white and had a knife. I didn't realize they were samurai at first and tried to get between them to get them to stop fighting, but the woman punched me hard right in the face, making me dizzy. I guess that the man ran away at that point, because the woman shouted angrily at me, picked me up with the strength of an ox, and hurled me through my window before she ran off herself.”***

If the PCs ask Boshi what Kiritabi and Onkei were yelling about, he clams up a little bit, knowing that it is improper for a peasant to listen to samurai. If a PC helped to heal him though, or a PC convinces him to talk with one of the Sincerity, Courtier, or Intimidation skills paired with the Awareness trait at TN 20, he will tell the PCs what he heard. ***“The woman was shouting that she could not believe what the man had done, something about being an agent. The man said that she wouldn't understand and to leave him alone. Even though she had the knife she wasn't using it. Until I ran between them they had just been grappling with each other.”*** If the PCs ask him where they ran to, Boshi admits that he is not entirely sure, but if they kept going in the direction he saw them run, they would eventually reach Gilded Ferry Village within a couple of hours at a walking pace.

Magical Investigations

The kami have little to offer that the peasants cannot tell the PCs. Earth can confirm Boshi's story, explaining that two loud beings fought here and then ran off. The Air will tell the same story, but instead of referring to Kiritabi and Onkei as “beings” they refer to the pair as “anger and fear.” If the PCs speak to the Air, the kami faintly rattle a piece of broken pottery pushed into the dirt. Any PC can hear the rattling with a Raw Perception roll at TN 20 and spot the pottery. The PCs might also notice the pottery on their own if they are investigating the area and roll **Investigation (Search)/Perception** at TN 30. There is nothing outwardly unusual about the

pottery, but if the PCs pick it up, a white translucent bird similar to the one they may have found in Yogo Sagishi's room appears and flies around the PC that picked up the pottery, whispering the words, ***“Tell the samurai that follow that that I need their help. I believe they are going to Gilded Ferry Village.”*** If the PCs ask the Earth or Air who placed the spell on the piece of pottery, the response they receive will be a short description of a tall person in black. The Earth will describe the person as a being of Air and the Air will describe the person as “calm, yet weary.” There is not enough Water or Fire in the immediate area to be helpful to the PCs.

Moving Onward

It is possible that the PCs may have discovered the scene of where Kiritabi managed to catch up to Onkei and fight with him before reporting their castle investigations to Shiba Bengo and the subsequent meeting with the daimyo. This is likely to happen if the PCs talked to the castle servants and got a clue about where the pair ran to after their fight in Onkei's guest room. If this is the case, Bengo will not wish to leave Shiro Usagi until he has at least reported to the daimyo first. He would prefer the PCs finish their investigations in Shiro Usagi before chasing the trail, but if the PCs are particularly willful about not wanting to wait he will allow them to go on ahead while he reports what has been found to the daimyo. If this occurs, he will leave the group and catch up with them in the next village after a time.

More likely, the PCs will have reached this point after meeting with Usagi Ozaki and Bayushi Kanchou. If this is the case, Shiba Bengo is ready and willing to leave Shiro Usagi to hunt down the missing couple right away, though he encourages the PCs to gather any weapons or important items they may need before leaving the village.

Gilded Ferry Village

Gilded Ferry Village is named after the rope ferry crossing the River of Gold that services one of the lesser used roads between Scorpion and Hare Lands. The village is sparsely populated, containing less than a hundred villagers, and serves mostly as a stopover point for travelers going between Hare and Scorpion lands.

The PCs can ask around for information relating to their search. It will be quite easy to find witnesses who saw Usagi Kiritabi, Yogo Onkei, and Yogo Sagishi, especially since the “mad folk running around in nightclothes” is the source of gossip in the village at present. If the PCs ask any of the villagers if anyone recently passed through, they receive an answer of ***“A couple of people came through town earlier this morning. They looked ridiculous wearing nothing but***

nightclothes and one had a white scarf tied over his face. There was a samurai, too, a Scorpion I think. They all visited the inn before they left."

Should the PCs wish to investigate the inn, they a villager will point it out to them. The "inn" looks more like a peasant hut with an extension built on to it to house a guest or two for a night, but for a village of this size having an inn at all is a relatively rare occurrence. The innkeeper, a callused man in his thirties named Hodo, will greet the PCs at the door. *"Welcome samurai-samas to my inn. Can I serve you a hot meal or perhaps you'd like to stay the night? I apologize that accommodations are humble and scarce, but if you need space I will be happy to find alternative sleeping arrangements for my family tonight and you can take the entire building."*

Presumably the PCs will explain the reason for their visit. The innkeeper frowns as he recalls the events from the morning. *"I had met the man and the woman in nightclothes before. I think they are magistrates for their respective clans. They have passed through Gilded Ferry village several times in recent past. They are Usagi Kiritabi-sama and Yogo Onkei-sama, yes?"*

When the PCs affirm, he continues. *"I could scarcely recognize them, but Yogo-sama reminded me of whom he was. Why else would I serve him breakfast without asking him for payment first? I thought he was good for it."*

If pressed for an order of events, Hodo explains as best as he can. *"My daughter was out front, sweeping the path when Yogo Onkei-sama came walking up. He looked exhausted. She immediately brought him inside and I served him some breakfast. I didn't ask why he was here in that state. I considered it none my business, samurai-samas. Soon after, another samurai walked in. He seemed to recognize Yogo Onkei-sama and the two of them had a conversation."*

If asked what they spoke about, the innkeeper shakes his head. *"Eavesdropping is very rude, samurai-samas. Besides, they were speaking very quietly so they would have known if I was listening in."*

If asked about body language instead, the innkeeper will answer, *"Yogo Onkei-sama seemed tired and nervous when the other samurai first entered. The other samurai seemed relatively calm, though perhaps a bit angry. I was told to leave them alone after I tried to offer the new samurai some tea so I didn't see anything else until later."*

If asked to describe the other samurai, Hodo thinks for a moment. *"He was wearing all black, not a kimono,*

more like a gi maybe. He had his wakizashi with him, but I don't remember seeing a katana. I guess he was a Scorpion too, because he was wearing a mask that covered his entire face."

If he is allowed or asked to continue his story, he will. *"The other samurai left through the back door after they spoke for about half an hour. Yogo Onkei-sama didn't seem nervous any more. That's when Usagi Kiritabi-sama came in. She was also wearing nightclothes. I could not imagine what was going on, but I made it my business not to make it my business. She was upset. Yogo Onkei-sama held up both of his hands and asked her if she could talk calmly about something. She sat down and I brought her some breakfast and they talked for a while. She was pretty loud at the beginning, but he seemed to be calming her down."*

If asked what they talked about, the innkeeper will be hesitant. *"I do not wish to be rude, samurai-samas. It was an intimate conversation. Some of the things she said, I don't think that I should repeat."* If pressed with an appropriate social roll at TN 20 he will accede to the PCs' request. *"She said that she should have listened to her elders. That she still loved him, but that it couldn't work and that she had her duty to the empire. I couldn't hear what he said but she seemed to stiffen. She asked him to repeat himself, and to look her in the eye while he did. He repeated whatever it was and she asked him 'What do you mean, he is waiting for us?' Yogo Onkei-sama hushed her, and they spoke more quietly after that. I couldn't hear what they said. Soon after, they both left after promising that I would be paid for the breakfast. They left together; I think they headed for the ferry."*

Magical Investigations

The PCs may wish to head immediately to the ferry, but there are a few pieces of information they can garner through magical investigation if they wish. There are Earth and Air spirits present in the inn. If the Earth kami are called upon, the spirits will be able to more or less corroborate anything the innkeeper told them. If the Air kami are called upon, they will describe emotions more accurately than the Earth kami are able to. *"Love and sorrow entered, partook of water and earth. Anger and determination entered and unbalanced love and sorrow. Sorrow was replaced with determination, then anger and determination left. Then, one filled with love, hate, determination, and sorrow entered and confronted love and determination. Sorrow began to disappear, and then hate as well. The two became one in soul and left this place."*

The Rope Ferry

When the PCs head to the ferry, they will see it returning across the River of Gold. The ferryman is making his way slowly across the current. He frowns when he spots the PCs. *“Another group? Third one today; what’s all this fuss about?”* Once he arrives on the PCs side, presumably they will ask to be ferried across to Scorpion Lands. He frowns and asks the PCs to show their travel papers and shows the PCs a badge indicating that he is a doshin. Shiba Bengo or another Emerald Magistrate should be able to provide travel papers, but if for some reason the PCs cannot provide them he will turn them away and refuse to ferry them across the river.

If the PCs ask about the groups that arrived before them and ask about their travel papers, he eyes them suspiciously before answering, *“The first one’s papers were in order. I work with the second two.”* If pressed he will confess, *“Ok, so they didn’t have travel papers. But they’re magistrates, samurai-sama. They helped me out when those bandits were making me give them part of my fee. They said they had to leave in a hurry, so their travel papers got left behind. Based on how they were dressed, it must have been a real big hurry.”* He cackles a bit as he recalls seeing the pair of samurai dressed in nothing but pajamas.

The fee to cross the river is 2 zeni per PC, 5 zeni per horse. Shiba Bengo will take care of the expenses, but if the PCs wish pay their own way he won’t object.

The PCs of course don’t have to have the ferryman help them cross, especially if they don’t wish to listen to his work song during the entire trip or they refused or were unable to provide writs of passage. The doshin will be angry, but knows better than to pick a fight with a group of samurai if the PCs simply demand he let them commandeer the ferry or jump in the water to attempt to swim across. Worse yet the PCs can even threaten the ferryman into taking them across without payment or travel papers, but doing so should come with a modest Honor penalty. If the PCs commandeer the ferry, someone has to work it across the rope. Doing so requires an **Athletics / Stamina** roll at TN 25. Failure means the PC becomes exhausted and is unable to get the boat all the way across. Another PC can finish the job, but the failing PC will lose a point of Glory for the display of weakness. Swimming across the river is a risky feat. To successfully swim across, a PC needs to successfully roll **Athletics (Swimming) / Stamina** at TN 30. Failure means the PC becomes exhausted and is carried away by the current. The current is too fast for another PC to try and swim after the fallen PC and bring them back to the group, but the GM should reward quick and clever efforts to retrieve the PC before they wash away. They will eventually wash up on shore safely, but

they are effectively out of the adventure until the PCs return to Shiro Usagi.

Once the PCs have crossed the river, they will find themselves in Scorpion lands. A road leads into a thick forest overhung by foliage from the surrounding trees.

Part Five: Three Trails

Prior to the PCs crossing the river, Yogo Sagishi crossed first followed by Yogo Onkei and Usagi Kiritabi. Yogo Onkei and Yogo Sagishi made an agreement that Onkei would lead Kiritabi here, to the woods, and then Sagishi would help Onkei assassinate her and clean up the mess that’s been made so far. What Sagishi did not expect, however, was that Onkei had betrayed him and warned Kiritabi about Sagishi. When Sagishi appeared to help Onkei, Onkei turned on him and he and Kiritabi attacked the shugenja. Sagishi managed to escape the struggle into the woods, but Onkei and Kiritabi were in hot pursuit. Now all three of them are separated and lost and are trying to find each other. Sagishi is no assassin, but he knows that if the other two get back to civilization they could expose him as a Kolat agent, or worse, Onkei might tell the Hare everything he knows. He has cast a powerful illusion on himself to give the appearance that he is Yogo Onkei. The intent is to find Kiritabi and lure her into a false sense of security, kill her, and deal with Onkei next. When the PCs arrive in the forest, however, everyone’s plans take unexpected turns.

When the PCs reach the other side of the River of Gold, they have now entered Scorpion lands. The path is still infrequently traveled, and if the PCs ask the ferryman what lies ahead he will tell them that the road passes through a forest. On the other side of the woods is the famed city of Ryoko Owari. After the PCs have traveled a short distance and the road is engulfed by the forest, have them roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at TN 30. On success, they will notice faint signs of a struggle that occurred on the path. There are bits of torn white and black fabric and dirt has been kicked up. If none of the PCs notice this, Shiba Bengo will and stops the group to point it out.

If the PCs want to try and determine more about the struggle, they may roll **Battle / Perception** at TN 25 to determine that three people fought here but appear to have separated in the struggle. If the PCs want to try to deduce which direction the fighters went in, they may roll **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception**. PCs that manage to roll a 20 or higher will identify a trail of broken plants and footprints leading into the forest. PCs able to roll at least a 30 will find two other, lighter, sets of tracks as well. A PC with a high dice roll of 40 or higher will also

note that on one of the sets of lighter tracks, there are small white fibers of cloth left on the occasional leaf. All three sets of tracks go in the same direction only a short time and then separate as they go deeper into the woods.

The PCs will need to choose a path to follow. Should they choose the heavy tracks, resolve the “Heavy Trail” scenario. If they choose one of the two lighter tracks, resolve the “Light Trails” scenario.

Should the PCs wish to split up, Shiba Bengo will be against it. *“We should stick together, that way we’ll be ready to deal with whatever we find. If we split up, there may be dire consequences both for us and for those we are searching for.”* If the PCs insist, he will allow the PCs to do what they want grudgingly. He will go with the largest group of PCs or the group that asks for him to accompany them. See the “Multiple Paths” section at the end of Part 5 to determine how to deal with this situation.

Heavy Trail

The forest becomes denser as the PCs proceed deeper. It is clear how people could easily get separated even when trying to travel close together. After about fifteen minutes of following the trail, the PCs find a man. He looks ridiculous, wearing torn-up black pajamas and a crude white mask over his face fashioned out of some thin cloth. It is Yogo Onkei. When he first spots the group, he is wary, but relaxes a little when he realizes it’s the PCs. He greets them in a low voice. *“You were at the celebration last night. Thank goodness help has finally arrived.”* The PCs will doubtlessly have questions for him. Below is a list of questions the PCs will likely ask him and how he answers:

- **What are you doing here?** Onkei furrows his brow. *“It is a long tale, samurai-sans, and this is not the place or the time for that. I am trying to find Kiritabi before Sagishi does.”*
- **Where is Usagi Kiritabi?** Onkei does not know but is actively searching for her. If the PCs ask if she is trying to kill him, he answers somewhat cryptically. *“I gave her much reason to, but no. At this point we’re trying to both get out of here alive.”*
- **Where is Yogo Sagishi?** Onkei continues to look around warily. *“I don’t know.”*
- **Will you come back to Shiro Usagi?** Onkei shakes his head. *“No, and especially not until I’ve found Kiritabi.”*
- A PC may relate the events they remember from the violent memory of the previous night Yogo Sagishi instilled into them. If they do, Onkei is perplexed. *“That isn’t how it happened at all. The argument was entirely confined to my room and she ran after*

me when I left. There is no way she laid a hand on you.”

The long and short of it is that Onkei is not in a mood to talk right now and will only answer questions that he can give a short response to, but will be grateful if the PCs are willing to help him find Kiritabi. He will promise to tell the PCs everything that happened once Kiritabi has been found. He will not return willingly to Shiro Usagi at this point, but that does not mean the PCs aren’t free to try to beat him to unconsciousness and drag him back with them. This is an option; Yogo Onkei will do his best to escape the PCs if he can, but if cornered he is skilled in Jujutsu and will fight.

If the PCs agree to assist in finding Kiritabi (Bengo will be for this action since finding all of the missing parties will help wrap up his case), Onkei will lead them through the brush, warning the PCs to be wary of finding Yogo Sagishi. *“He wants to kill Kiritabi. I would do anything to keep that from happening.”* If the PCs ask why, he lies. *“He thinks she has broken my mind and turned me from my clan. He means to ‘save’ me in a sense.”* If the PCs notice he is lying and call him on it, he is extremely hesitant about talking further. *“If you don’t trust me, you should go back to Shiro Usagi.”* If a PC argues that an Emerald Magistrate is trying to get to the bottom of the situation he replies coolly. *“Despite what you may think, Kiritabi wishes no harm upon me, and as you can see I am alive and well. It is up to my daimyo at this point to punish me for running out on him. That should settle the matter for the magistrate.”*

Onkei leads the PCs through the brush for about fifteen minutes (or a PC can lead; it does not matter at this point). Emboldened by the PCs’ presence, he begins calling out her name while the group tries to find her. Have the PCs roll **Hunting (Tracking)/Perception**. The group eventually comes across an unfortunate sight – Kiritabi is lying on the ground facedown, barefoot and still in her white nightclothes. A sai protrudes from her back. A PC who rolls **Investigation (Notice)/Perception** at TN 25 notes that the sai’s handle has a Hare mon on it and is probably Kiritabi’s own weapon.

“You’ve returned. Have you come to show these samurai your work, Sagishi-san?” Onkei says. Have the PCs roll **Raw Perception** at TN 15 to realize that the Yogo Onkei they’ve spent the last twenty minutes or so with is not where Onkei’s voice came from.

Yogo Onkei walks out from the woods, looking disdainfully at the PCs, but with utter loathing at the Onkei standing in front of them. The new Onkei points

at Kiritabi's limp body. ***"You killed her. YOU KILLED HER!"*** he shouts angrily.

"I... what? I didn't do this, you did this!" the closer Onkei replies, approaching the motionless body of Usagi Kiritabi. His eyes exhibit confusion and anger.

"Stay away. I'm not letting you touch her again." The new Onkei says, walking closer. The two begin circling each other, eyeing each other warily.

Usagi Kiritabi's body shudders for a moment and emits a weak cough. She murmurs something quietly, but what she says is impossible to hear. One of the Onkeis growls, ***"She's still alive? Is this a taunt?"*** The other answers, not taking his eyes off of his twin, ***"I'll deal with you and then I'll save her."*** It's difficult to tell which Onkei said which quote, but if a PC is paying close attention they may roll **Raw Perception** at TN 20 to recognize that it was the Onkei originally with the PCs who said the first quote and the new Onkei who said the second.

After six Rounds' worth of time, the faceoff will come to a head. The PCs have that much time to try and piece the situation together and take their own action. The GM may call for Initiative rolls, but it is suggested that such action should wait unless the PCs actually wish to start a skirmish.

PC Actions

The PCs are likely thoroughly confused at this point. This is understandable and expected. One of the Yogo Onkeis is actually Yogo Sagishi, who has cleverly disguised himself as Onkei using Air magic. The illusion is so elaborate that there is no way to tell from physical appearance any difference between the two men (unless the PCs pulled the masks off of both of them, since Sagishi doesn't know what Onkei's face looks like in order to replicate it, but since the PCs don't know either it won't help them very much). If the PCs wish to make Perception-based checks to visually tell the difference between the two men, allow them, but no matter how high they roll, they will be unable to distinguish between them.

Clever PCs will realize that magic is at work. A PC who has at least one rank of Spellcraft can roll **Spellcraft/Intelligence** at TN 30 to recall that there is a spell that is capable of perfectly obscuring a person's appearance called **Mask of Wind**. The spell lasts a very long time and no action taken by or against one under the effects of the spell will break the illusion.

There are ways to distinguish which Onkei is which. The GM should adjudicate any measures the PCs take, but

below is a general set of guidelines that may help with determining the results of PC actions:

- Yogo Sagishi's illusion is perfect, but it does not disguise his voice. Sagishi is doing his best to impersonate Onkei. If a PC thinks to distinguish them based on their voices, let them roll **Investigation (Interrogation)/Perception** at TN 30. The PC may apply the Precise Memory Advantage to the roll if they have conversed with Onkei before. Success means the PC can distinguish the two men based on their voices.
- The **Commune** spell or any spell or technique that dispels illusions can be used to reveal which Onkei is actually Yogo Sagishi. The Air spirits are very amused with Sagishi's "joke" and don't want to give away the trick – it will take four Raises for Clarity to get the Air to tell the PC which Onkei is actually Yogo Sagishi. If Commune is cast without enough Raises for Clarity, the Air spirits just snicker and won't answer.
- The PCs may try interacting with the men. They are extremely focused on each other, but whenever one tries to answer, the other throws a punch, preventing them from interacting enough to fully answer all but simple yes or no questions.
- The PCs may physically involve themselves, attacking one or both Onkeis. This actually may be the most fail-safe way of determining the difference between the two. If Yogo Sagishi is knocked unconscious, the illusion will vanish, revealing his true visage. He would rather not risk this, however, and if he is attacked, he will try to escape and avoid capture. See the section entitled "Yogo Sagishi and Combat" for guidelines on Sagishi's behavior during a skirmish.

The PCs have another problem to deal with as well. Usagi Kiritabi lies on the ground, breathing her last breaths. Blood seeps through the knife wound but its flow is weakening. See the section titled "Saving Kiritabi" if the PCs wish to try and help her. If they are able to save her life, then three Rounds later she finds the strength to point at one of the Onkeis. ***"He is my Onkei. I feel him in my soul,"*** she weakly whispers before drifting into unconsciousness. Yogo Sagishi curses and will attempt to escape after his identity has been revealed.

Aftermath

If after six Rounds the PCs have not gotten involved, the issue will resolve itself. Have the PCs, Onkei and Sagishi roll initiative. ***"This is for Kiritabi and the Scorpion!"*** One of the Onkeis – the real one – lunges hard at the other on his action but misses. In one swift motion, the

other Onkei – who is of course actually Sagishi – pulls the sai from Kiritabi’s back (or possibly off of the ground where it sits next to the PC that is healing Kiritabi – no a PC using Medicine cannot reasonably grip the knife while bandaging Kiritabi) and drives it upward into Onkei’s throat, killing him instantly. (He delays if necessary to get the opportunity to grab the sai.) The surviving Onkei begins to shimmer, the magic concealing his identity wavering as Sagishi’s concentration falters. Although the image stabilizes at once, the moment should be enough to clue in any PCs who haven’t yet figured out what’s happening. Resolve the “Yogo Sagishi and Combat” section as Sagishi begins his preparations to escape.

If the PCs are unable to save Kiritabi and Sagishi is still free, the shugenja prepares to make his escape. Proceed to the “Yogo Sagishi and Combat” section.

If the PCs drove off, killed, or captured Yogo Sagishi, Onkei is alive, and Kiritabi was healed, proceed to Part Six: Wrapping up the Investigation. Kiritabi regains consciousness after a few minutes and Onkei will carry her on his back.

Light Trails

If the PCs choose to take one of the lighter trails, they need to pick which of the two to follow. If they choose to follow the trail marked by white cloth fibers, they may eventually find Usagi Kiritabi. The other trail leads to Yogo Sagishi, who has used illusory magic to disguise himself as Yogo Onkei (hereby referred to as Yogo “Onkei” to avoid the GM accidentally reading aloud the wrong name and giving Sagishi’s identity away). If the PCs are unable to distinguish between the two trails then randomly choose which of the two samurai’s trails they take. Either way, the PCs must roll **Hunting (Tracking)/Perception** at TN 30 to follow the trail. If they fail the roll, they get off track and wind up on Yogo Onkei’s trail (go back and start at the section titled “Heavy Trail”).

The forest becomes denser as the PCs proceed deeper. It is clear how people could easily get separated even when trying to travel close together.

Finding Yogo “Onkei”

After about fifteen minutes of following the trail, the PCs find a man. He looks ridiculous, wearing torn-up black pajamas and a crude white mask over his face fashioned out of some thin cloth. It appears to be Yogo Onkei. When he first spots the group, he is wary, but relaxes a little when he realizes it’s the PCs. He greets them in a low voice. *“I didn’t know that Bayushi Kanchou-sama would send others.”* The PCs will doubtlessly have

questions for him. Below is a list of questions the PCs will likely ask him and how he answers:

- **What are you doing here?** “Onkei” furrows his brow. *“At first I feared for my life, but now I want justice. Not against Kiritabi, but against Ozaki.”*
- **Where is Usagi Kiritabi?** “Onkei” does not know but is actively searching for her. If the PCs ask if she is trying to kill him, he will give the following answer. *“Not any longer. We spoke in the village. She is going to disregard her orders and testify against Usagi Ozaki. When Yogo Sagishi showed up in the woods, she panicked thinking that I was betraying her. I just need to explain.”* If the PCs further question why Kiritabi would need to panic, he replies somewhat sarcastically, *“Find me a hare that does not leap away at the first sign of danger.”*
- **Where is Yogo Sagishi?** “Onkei” continues to look around worriedly. *“He is in these woods too, trying to find me so we can resolve this issue.”*
- **Will you come back to Shiro Usagi?** “Onkei” nods his head. *“Once our business is done here, I believe that we will all need to return to offer testimony, yes?”*
- **What are you going to testify about?** “Onkei” will continue focusing on the search, but will answer briefly. *“Ozaki commanded Kiritabi to kill me and make it look like I was an agent of some Scorpion plot against the Hare.”*
- A PC may relate the events they remember from the violent memory of the previous night Yogo Sagishi instilled into them. If they do, “Onkei” seems troubled. *“Yes, a terrible event. I apologize for Kiritabi’s actions, she was following her duty. Please forgive her. I am glad that you are mostly unharmed.”*

The answers are all lies of course since this Yogo “Onkei” is a fake. He is purposely misleading them about the facts of what happened since Onkei and Kiritabi’s disappearance. PCs suspicious of his answers may roll **Investigation (Interrogation)/Awareness** against his **Sincerity (Deceit)/Awareness** of 10k5. Should any of them challenge him on his words, he will shake his head. *“I am sorry if you don’t believe me. Maybe if I wasn’t so distracted looking for my MISSING FIANCE I would be better able to answer to your liking.”*

If a PC suspects “Onkei”’s identity, they can attempt to verify this via visual inspection or by comparing his voice to what they remember Onkei’s voice sounds like. The visual inspection will be useless, as the spell **Mask of Wind** perfectly copies Onkei’s appearance. However, listening to his voice may give the PCs a chance to discover the ruse. PCs who have conversed with the real

Onkei before can roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** at TN 40 to realize his voice doesn't sound quite like they remember. The Precise Memory Advantage may be applied to this roll.

If the PCs are particularly clever and figure out that "Onkei" is not who he says he is and pick a fight, he will attempt to escape. See "Yogo Sagishi and Combat" for details on how Yogo Sagishi acts during a skirmish. The PCs will still come across Usagi Kiritabi in the next scene.

Finding Usagi Kiritabi

After about fifteen minutes of following the trail, the PCs find a woman. She looks very out of place in this forest, barefoot and wearing a white nightgown that would be flattering if it weren't wrinkled, ripped in several places and covered in both blood and mud stains. A knife protrudes from a makeshift holster cut into the hip of the nightgown. She turns quickly to face the PCs, her hand straying to the knife, but that fades and she gives the PCs a tired smile as she relaxes. *"I'm glad you have come, samurai-sans. We haven't much time."* The PC will doubtlessly have questions for her as they continue their search through the forest. Below is a list of questions the PCs will likely ask her and how she answers:

- **What are you doing here?** Kiritabi considers her answer carefully as she continues her search. *"It is a long tale. I think it would be better if Onkei was present for the telling, so that you may have a better grasp of what happened from the both of us."*
- **Where is Yogo Onkei?** Kiritabi does not know but is actively searching for him. If the PCs ask if she is trying to kill him, she denies it vehemently. *"What? No, I was trying to arrest him. What would give you that idea?"*
- **We're here to arrest you.** If the PCs mention the evidence found in her room, she will seem incredulous. *"Usagi Ozaki-dono ordered me to kill my husband-to-be on the night before our wedding you say? There were no such orders."* If the PCs relate the false memory, she will be astonished. *"I don't know where or how you got that idea. I did not lay a hand on you last night; I never even saw you! I was angry, yes, but I didn't set out to kill anyone."* If the PCs insist that is what happened, she will seem puzzled. *"Not to accuse you of lying, because I believe that you believe what you saw, but I think you are mistaken. If you want corroboration of my story, we need to find Onkei."*
- **Where is Yogo Sagishi?** Kiritabi continues to look around worriedly. *"He is in these woods. He is trying to kill Onkei and me, and I can't let that*

happen." If the PCs ask why Sagishi would be trying to kill Kiritabi and Onkei, she replies, *"Help me find Onkei. It would be best if we can both answer your questions."* She will not budge on this partially because she does not want to admit to the PCs that she knows her betrothed is a member of the Kolat and additionally because the story would take a lot of time and she is in a hurry to find Onkei before Sagishi does.

- **Will you come back to Shiro Usagi?** Kiritabi nods her head. *"Yes, but not without Onkei."*

Kiritabi is telling the truth, although hiding a detail. The PCs can make **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** rolls against her **Sincerity / Awareness** of 6k4 to determine that she is telling the truth, but not all of it. If confronted about this fact, she will grit her teeth before replying, *"There are some facts that we must deal with when Onkei is present. They are his to present, not mine."*

Another Lost and Found

Presumably, the PCs will want to continue their forest search regardless of whether they are now traveling with Yogo "Onkei" or Usagi Kiritabi. Give the PCs some time to decide what to do next, whether they want to backtrack, press forward, or stay put. Regardless of what they choose to do, after a short while someone will find them. If a PC is keeping watch, let them roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at TN 20 to notice that someone seems to have noticed them and is approaching.

If Usagi Kiritabi is with the PCs, read the following: *There is a rustle of brush as someone clears their way to come face to face with the group. The person is clad in ripped black pajamas and wears a white cloth over his face. It is undeniably the form of Yogo Onkei, and Kiritabi seems to have noticed as well.*

If Yogo "Onkei" is with the PCs, instead read this section: *There is a rustle of brush as someone clears their way to come face to face with the group. She wears a white nightgown that would have been flattering if it weren't wrinkled, ripped up and covered with dried tears, mud stains, and blood stains. A knife protrudes from the left side where she cut a hole in her nightgown to hold it. It is undeniably the form of Usagi Kiritabi. Yogo Onkei seems to have noticed as well.*

"Tabi, thank goodness it's you," "Onkei" says, approaching. Kiritabi bounds toward "Onkei", literally skipping with delight. *"Kei!"* she exclaims and then jumps on to him, nearly knocking him over. *"I thought maybe he'd found you first,"* she cries. He quiets her with a simple *"shhh"* and holds her in an embrace.

The scene is touching, but something is very wrong with it and the PCs will only have a short window of opportunity to notice it before it is too late. As “Onkei” embraces her tighter, his hand slides toward her side where the knife protrudes from. PCs who are paying attention may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** vs. Yogo Sagishi’s **Sleight of Hand / Agility** of 6k4. If there are more than 4 PCs he will spend an Air spell slot to increase his roll by 1k1. Any PC who sees this has a chance to push him away or otherwise intervene if they act immediately; they will not be surprised in the subsequent combat.

Have the PCs roll initiative. Anyone who succeeded on the contested **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll rolls normally – all others suffer a -20 penalty to their initiative on the first round of combat. On his first action, “Onkei” steals the knife and jams it deep into Kiritabi’s back. Her eyes widen with fear and shock. He growls triumphantly, *“How the tables turn,”* and then drops her to the ground. See the section “Saving Kiritabi” if a PC wishes to try and save her life and the section “Yogo Sagishi and Combat” for guidelines on how the shugenja acts during a skirmish. If the PCs do not attack immediately, “Onkei” will try and stall them with words, holding his illusory guise, disillusioned and driven to desperation by the woman who chased him for hours trying to kill him, all the while buying time for him to cast a getaway spell and costing Kiritabi her final seconds to live. PCs suspicious of Onkei’s identity can roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** against his **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** to see through his lies. Give the PCs two Free Raises on this roll since they saw him stab or at least attempt to stab Kiritabi. If he can stall the PCs for three Rounds’ worth of time, he casts **Summon Fog** just as if he were in combat (he will use an extra spell slot to eliminate the visible signs of casting the spell, preventing the PCs from noticing that he spent time preparing to cast it).

Where is the Real Yogo Onkei?

Yogo Onkei is still lost in the woods, and his fate is largely dependent on how the PCs deal with Yogo Sagishi. If Kiritabi is alive she will insist on finding Onkei before returning to Shiro Usagi, and Shiba Bengo is inclined to agree with her. If the PCs retrace their steps to the road and follow the heavy trail, they will find Yogo Onkei. If Yogo Sagishi managed to get away from the PCs safely, he will find Onkei first and slay him (even if they drove him off before finding Kiritabi first). The PCs will only find his corpse, and Sagishi will be long gone. If, however, the PCs managed to kill, capture, or at least reduce Sagishi to the Injured (+15) Wound Rank before he gets away, they will find Onkei alive, and he will be legitimately happy to be rescued, especially if Kiritabi is

with the PCs safe and sound. If the PCs do not backtrack and Onkei has met the conditions for survival, he will instead catch up to the PCs before they cross the River of Gold again on the way back to Shiro Usagi. Proceed to Part Six if both Yogo Onkei and Usagi Kiritabi survive Part Five. If only one returns with the PCs alive, skip to the Conclusion section “Love Lost.” If they both died, skip instead to the Conclusion section “Returning to Shiro Usagi.”

Saving Kiritabi

There is a chance that Usagi Kiritabi will end up with a knife in her back during this scenario. If this occurs, she will die within six Rounds if not saved by a PC.

Observing her and rolling **Medicine (Anatomy) / Perception** at TN 25 will cause a PC to conclude that she will die within a minute if the knife is left in her back, but she will die even faster if it is removed. The only way to save her, however, is to remove it and quickly stop the bleeding. There is ONE chance to save her life. The PC who wishes to attempt it must remove the dagger and then immediately roll **Medicine (Wound Treatment) / Intelligence** at TN 30. If a PC made the diagnosis roll but does not have access to a Medicine Kit, they may instead cast **Path to Inner Peace** with 4 Raises to stabilize her. Alternatively the Water spell **Regrow the Wound** can save her since it will heal internal injuries, but only if it is used immediately after removing the knife from her back. Unless backed up by specific and precise medical knowledge and casting finesse, **Path to Inner Peace** will not be a powerful enough remedy on its own to save her life. If treatment is successful, Kiritabi’s life is saved. She will return to full consciousness (the Down Rank) within ten minutes. If treatment fails, Kiritabi dies of her wounds three Rounds later. Her last words are whispered to the PC that is treating her. *“I hope I can find him in the next life.”*

Yogo Sagishi and Combat

Yogo Sagishi has climbed the ranks of the Kolat because he is clever, not foolish. He therefore knows better than to think he stands a chance in combat against a group of fully armed samurai such as the PCs. He will prioritize escape if at all possible, using spells to ensure he is not caught or followed.

By the time the PCs have reached this point, Yogo Sagishi has expended some of his spells. He expended three spell slots and a Void Point in Shiro Usagi and additionally used one more spell slot to disguise himself as Yogo Onkei. Assume that by the time he has entered combat that he has used 4 Air spell slots and a Void Point, leaving him with 1 Air slot and 3 Void Points (his Void spell slots are untouched, however). Depending on

the PCs' actions, he may have used at least one more spell slot during Part 5 leading up to combat. Take this into consideration when determining how many spell usages Sagishi has left.

In combat, if Sagishi has not been prevented from casting spells, he will cast **Summon Fog**, attempting the action in a single Round, to coalesce the area in a 50' radius in thick fog. He then immediately spends an Earth spell slot to give himself perfect vision, eliminating the penalty from the fog for himself. Anyone unable to negate this penalty will suffer from the effects of being blind until they leave the area or the fog dissipates. He uses his Free Move Action to move away from the PCs. On his next turn he uses his entire action to run, and once the PCs are out of sight he casts **Seeking the Way** to hide his tracks and create a false trail (this illusion can be overcome by a skilled tracker able to beat Sagishi in a contested roll using **Hunting / Perception** versus Sagishi's **Spellcraft / Air**, or if the PCs have a way to track his scent). If he is out of Air slots he will instead use **Speed of the Waterfall** to hasten his pace.

If Sagishi is forced to fight, he focuses on defense until he finds an opening to escape. He will use **Striking the Storm** to raise his TN to be Hit or if he is low on Air slots he will use **Fires of Purity** and **Shining Light** to slow down the PCs.

If Yogo Sagishi becomes truly desperate (i.e. the PCs have stopped attacking him with the intent of capturing the shugenja), he has a risky maneuver he will attempt. He will use a Void spell slot to attempt to cast **Slayer's Knives**, using the Stealth (Spellcasting) skill to hide his action from the PCs. If he has Void spell slots to spare he will use another to increase his Stealth roll result by 1k1. Once enough Rounds have passed that he can reasonably meet the TN to cast the spell, he will spend a Void Point if possible to aid the casting attempt and hit the PCs with everything he's got. If he's able to disable the PCs, he will attempt escape.

It is possible to capture Yogo Sagishi alive by taking him to the Down or Out Wound Ranks. He will yield if reduced to the Hurt Wound Rank or lower, hoping to get the PCs to stay their weapons. He will attempt to cast **Slayer's Knives** as described above if he fools them. His maneuver can be seen through if a suspicious PC rolls their **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** successfully against his **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness**, which he may spend an Air or Void slot to enhance if he has one to spare. If the PCs successfully take Sagishi prisoner, he will outright refuse to answer any questions for any reason – they will have to drag him back to Shiro Usagi to be questioned by his daimyo. In fact it is best to

keep him unconscious so that he is unable to attempt to escape the PCs' grasp.

Multiple Paths

If the PCs are insistent on splitting the party, use this section as a guideline for how to deal with the split group. Take each group aside to run them separately. Resolve the "Light Trails" scenario first. If there is one group for each of the possible "Light Trails" NPCs, then the groups will find each other as the "Another Lost and Found" section is reached. Continue resolving the scenario for this group until Yogo Sagishi has been killed, captured, or escaped. Next, if there is a group following the "Heavy Trails" scenario, then resolve it to the point where the PCs find Yogo Onkei and press further into the woods. If Yogo Sagishi got away from the "Light Trails" group, then the "Heavy Trails" group will come across his tracks, which they can notice with an **Investigation (Notice)/Perception** roll at TN 20. To follow the trail, the group must roll **Hunting/Perception** vs. Yogo Sagishi's **Spellcraft/Air** (or if Sagishi was unable to cast **Seeking the Way**, they only need to beat a TN of 20). On success, they find Yogo Sagishi in the woods as he stops to catch his breath. Keep in mind he is still disguised as Yogo Onkei, so the group will need to figure out what to do with the sudden discovery of a second Yogo Onkei. If the "Light Trails" group pursued Yogo Sagishi, lost him, and attempted to track him, then the PCs will all converge upon one another as they are following Sagishi's trail. Otherwise, the separated groups are almost guaranteed to find each other on the path back to the River of Gold where the ferryman waits to take the PCs back across.

Part Six: Wrapping up the Investigation

If Usagi Kiritabi or Yogo Onkei lost their life in the forest and the other survived, skip straight to the conclusion section "Love Lost." If both died, the PCs have no choice but to go back with nothing but the knowledge of what happened in the forest. Proceed to the conclusion section "Returning to Shiro Usagi."

If the PCs managed to get Kiritabi and Onkei out of the forest alive, Bengo will call for a break before crossing the river back to Hare lands. *"There is still much to resolve before I can make my report to Usagi Ozaki and Bayushi Kanchou. In the interest of thoroughness, and an opportunity to rest our feet, you have much to account for, my friends."* Bengo sits down on the ground, inviting the rest of the group to do the same. This is also an opportunity for any injured PCs or NPCs to bandage their wounds.

Bengo leaves the questioning up to the PCs, preferring in the style of his mentor to take a back seat and observe. The PCs will doubtlessly have questions for Kiritabi and Onkei. Below is how the pair will react to certain lines of questioning:

- **What happened in Shiro Usagi?** Kiritabi is the first one to speak, *"I snuck into Onkei's room for... well you'll understand if I don't elaborate on that part. He reached into the closet and brought out a small bundle. I thought it was night-clothes, but it was a knife. He then said something that I'll never forget."* Onkei resumes the story. *"I was supposed to kill her, and I had hoped to just get it over with, but I saw her, really understood her at that moment and I couldn't go through with it. I told her what my mission was and that I had no intention of fulfilling it."*
- **What was Onkei's mission?** *"He said that he was supposed to kill me in a struggle, claiming self-defense, and that documents would be found amongst my belongings implicating me in plotting his murder."* Kiritabi's expression isn't one of anger, just of exhaustion. *"I was angry, really angry. I couldn't believe what he had told me, and so we fought. I may have tried to do to him what he was ordered to do to me."*
- **Why was Onkei trying to kill Kiritabi?** Kiritabi says nothing, gripping the torn hem of her robe tightly. Onkei replies, *"Yogo Sagishi was blackmailing me."* Onkei is lying; the PCs may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** vs. Onkei's **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** roll of 6k3 with emphasis to see through the lie. If pressed, Onkei becomes uncomfortable. Kiritabi begs the PCs. *"Please don't make him answer that."*
- **Why would Kiritabi be targeted for assassination?** Kiritabi replies, *"While combating privateering along the River of Gold these past years, I have made powerful enemies, the kind that makes you have to sleep with one eye open."* If the PCs have played *The Enemy You Deserve* and mention the events of that module, she nods in affirmation. *"The events are very likely related."* If the PCs suggest the Kolat is behind the attempt, she agrees, *"Yes, I count them among my enemies. I have been fighting them for a long time. This was their doing."*
- **What was Yogo Sagishi's role in this?** Onkei answers, *"He was making sure my mission was*

completed, even going as far as offering his help to me when I made it to Gilded Ferry Village."

- **Did Usagi Ozaki instruct Kiritabi to kill Onkei?** Usagi Kiritabi appears perplexed at this question. *"My lord was initially against the marriage, but he suggested nothing of the sort. My lord Ozaki would never ask me to do something like that."*
- **Did Bayushi Kanchou instruct Onkei to kill Kiritabi?** Yogo Onkei grimaces under his makeshift mask. *"I hope that my actions have not caused my lord to be scrutinized. My lord Kanchou, at least to my knowledge, was not involved in the least. He knew nothing about any of this."*
- **Is Onkei a willing Kolat agent?** If the PCs are blunt enough to ask this question, both of their expressions darken. *"It is too late to lie about it. Until recently I was. I had my reasons for being involved, but they went too far. I will never go back."* He and Kiritabi lock eyes. She just whispers. *"Please don't take him away."*

Taking Action

The PCs will ultimately need to decide what they wish to do with Kiritabi and Onkei. If they pressed Onkei about his affiliation with the Kolat, they may be deeply suspicious of him. Such suspicions are well-founded and are shared by Shiba Bengo. Some PCs may even wish to arrest Onkei or even kill him. If any PCs are members of the Kolat themselves it is in their best interests to not let Onkei or even Kiritabi live.

If the PCs ask Shiba Bengo what he believes they should do, he will merely reply, *"This is a difficult situation, samurai-sans. Whatever happens, I must tell the truth once we return. I will not endanger my office by keeping secrets of what transpires here. As my yoriki, I am trusting you to decide what is right, and I will take what action is deemed necessary by my duties."*

If the PCs wish to kill or arrest Onkei, Kiritabi pleads with them. *"Please, if you would only reconsider. Onkei is not one of them anymore."* The decision is not up to her though, and if the PCs decide to arrest him anyway, there is nothing she can do about it. If asked to swear to abandoning the conspiracy, Onkei will agree. *"I swear on my soul, my sole purpose from this moment forward will be to destroy the Kolat conspiracy. I will never again cooperate willingly or unwillingly with the conspiracy unless doing so would be to further the aim of destroying it."* He is telling the unadulterated truth; there is no hesitation or anything held back. If the PCs

decide to arrest him anyway, he will not go quietly. He will fight with his bare hands and try to escape if possible. If Kiritabi is healthy enough to fight she will try to aid him if possible, blocking the PCs' path. This, of course, constitutes aiding the escape of a wanted criminal and admitted agent of the Kolat, an act with serious consequences. In this instance, the fight continues for no more than three Rounds; at the end of the third Round, if Onkei has not been subdued or escaped, he surrenders as he realizes the risks Kiritabi is taking on his behalf. On the other hand, if he escapes, Kiritabi continues to delay the PCs as best she can until a total of three Rounds have passed, then she too tries to flee. Should Onkei escape and Kiritabi fail to do so, Bengo arrests her and demands her seppuku.

If the PCs instead suggest that the pair return to Shiro Usagi with them, they are less pleased about the idea than the PCs might expect. Yogo Onkei says, ***"I have thought this through already. I cannot return to the Scorpion. Although you may understand what happened, they will not. The people that sent me after Kiritabi will return to 'reward' my failure. It is better that I live as a free wave-man than to be bound to the ones that forced me to do this thing."***

The PCs will be unable to convince him to willingly return to Shiro Usagi, and appeals to Kiritabi will fall on deaf ears. She knows that Onkei will not be safe if he returns. If the PCs appeal to Shiba Bengo to tell him to return, he replies, ***"It is Onkei-san's business if he no longer wishes to bear the mon of the Scorpion. It is not my place to stop him, nor does it fall under my office if the Scorpion clan chooses to brand him a traitor and hunt him down. That is between him and the Scorpion."***

Onkei continues. ***"One would usually commit seppuku before becoming ronin. I am full of sin, samurai-sans. Regret of action, Desire for revenge, Fear of failure. Until these are purged, I must continue living. I must take my leave. Please accept my heartfelt apologies for any trouble that I've caused in Shiro Usagi. Kiritabi..."***

"You're not leaving alone." Kiritabi interrupts. ***"I'm going with you."***

"You can't come with me. We can't be seen together after this." Onkei's eyes flash.

Kiritabi exclaims, ***"I have just as much reason to leave with you as you have for leaving! What they've done to you, what they've done to me, we'll never be able to rest as long as we are within the confines of our clans."***

"But you'll be safe in Shiro Usagi. Surely Usagi Ozaki-sama will understand when you tell him what happened and will keep watch over you. Nothing could hurt me more than if something happened to you. Please go home." Tears start to well up in Onkei's eyes.

Kiritabi's eyes fill with tears as well. ***"My feelings are the same. If we go together we can watch over each other, and we'll never have to wonder if we'll ever see each other again."*** She turns to the PCs. ***"Please, you all see it my way right?"***

Onkei turns to the PCs as well. ***"Samurai-sans, if you are her friends and honorable samurai, you will convince her to go home. Please..."*** His voice cracks as though a battle rages on inside of him between his heart and his senses.

It will be up to the PCs now to convince Kiritabi whether she should return with them to Shiro Usagi or to leave with Onkei. If the PCs seem split, try to let them resolve the conflict among themselves, but if a roll must be made to decide what the PCs ultimately suggest, have them roll **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** as a Contested Roll against each other. PCs who are Allies with Kiritabi get a bonus Free Raise added to their roll since she will trust the words of her friends over the words of strangers.

Once the PCs have made their suggestion, the couple will accept the PCs' advice. Onkei makes one additional request of the PCs before he or they leave. ***"Please marry Kiritabi and me, if any of you know the blessings. Today is our wedding day and I intend to make and keep my vows."*** Kiritabi smiles and nods in agreement. If any of the PCs has at least 3 Ranks of Lore: Theology, they will be able to perform the marriage rites for the couple. Kiritabi and Onkei would prefer a shugenja does it if possible. If none of the PCs are willing or able, Shiba Bengo will volunteer to give a simple ceremony, though he apologizes that he does not know the proper traditional rites. Kiritabi and the ronin formerly known as Yogo Onkei will accept whatever they are offered.

Conclusion

If the PCs allow Onkei to leave as a ronin, there is a wedding between him and Kiritabi to take place before the PCs return to Shiro Usagi. Otherwise skip to the scene titled 'Returning to Shiro Usagi.'

The Wedding

If one of the PCs or Shiba Bengo volunteers to officiate the wedding, the couple will take a few minutes to clean themselves up, washing their wounds and faces in a

nearby stream. They meet again with the PCs in the clearing.

A passerby would not expect to be walking past a wedding. No one is dressed for the occasion, there are no decorations, and there are very few guests. The bride wears a torn white nightgown. The groom's nightclothes are in no better condition. He wears a mask crudely fashioned from torn cloth from his bride's makeshift wedding dress. Despite their dismal appearance, you would not find a happier couple for miles around. They look deeply into each other's eyes as they await their ceremony.

Shiba Bengo Officiates

If the PCs leave the conducting of the ceremony to Shiba Bengo, he spends some time quietly thinking under a tree while the bride and groom prepare themselves. When the couple is ready, Bengo stands and gives his speech nervously but solemnly:

"Amongst my ancestors, the traditions have been long set. They are simple, but have deep significance." Bengo produces a cloth-wrapped package from his kimono. He unwraps the cloth, revealing a bean paste bun from the reception the night before. *"First is the sharing of food. We give thanks to Ebisu and Daikoku, who have blessed us with this meal. May they grant these two their blessings in the future."* Bengo breaks the bun into pieces, giving a piece to every person present.

Bengo places the now empty cloth back into his kimono. *"Second is the sharing of stories by the couple. Through these stories we show the blessings of Hotei and Bishamon. May they also grant these two their blessings."*

Onkei shares a brief story about an evening on the river that they shared while on duty, finishing with, *"I think I knew then what my path would be."*

Kiritabi tells the story of the day they first met, concluding it with, *"He seemed guarded, but I learned that was just a mask."*

Bengo nods, *"Third is the sharing of advice from the friends of the couple. Through this we grant them the blessings of Fukurokujin and Jurojin that they may bless them with their wisdom, and through that wisdom, grant them longevity."* Each of the PCs is now given the opportunity to offer advice to the couple. This can be any sort of advice at all; it is up to each PC to decide what sort of advice to offer.

After everyone has shared their wisdom, Shiba Bengo pauses for a moment, looking first to Onkei, then to Kiritabi, before continuing, *"Now finally, swear your oaths of fealty to each other before Benten that she may know the bonds that tie you together."*

Kiritabi makes her oath of fealty: *"Onkei, although I guess you aren't Onkei anymore,"* she begins, laughing a little. *"On this day, before these witnesses, I swear my soul to you. Although my duty is to the empire, know that my soul remains with you. I ask Benten to help me to remember the feelings that we have for each other right now, even when we are far apart."*

Onkei gives his oath of fealty in return: *"Kiritabi, on this day, before these witnesses, I swear my soul to you. Although I make it my duty to purge the empire of those that would tear it, and us, apart my soul remains with you. I pledge that my purpose will be to work towards the day that we can be together without worry or care in this life and the next."*

Bengo concludes the ceremony, *"With these oaths given, may it be known that these two are joined before the Heavens. None may force them to break these oaths without incurring the wrath of those present and the Fortunes themselves."*

PC Officiates

If one of the PCs is giving the ceremony, let this be a role-play opportunity for them. Let the PC give their own blessings for the couple. Other PCs might even wish to contribute to the ceremony if they wish. When the PCs have finished blessing the marriage, have the officiating PC roll **Lore: Theology / Awareness** at TN 50. If the GM believes the PC made a particularly good effort or was heartfelt and passionate, feel free to award up to two Free Raises on the roll, and any contributing PC may add their ranks of Lore: Theology as a static bonus to the roll at the GM's discretion as well. If the roll succeeds, then just as the officiating PC completes the ceremony, the clearing suddenly feels warmer and brighter, as though the Fortunes heard his or her prayers and are giving their own blessing to the couple. Give the officiating PC the *Blessed by the Fortune of Marriage* cert.

Goodbyes

With the marriage ceremony completed, Kiritabi suddenly throws herself on her husband, pulling up his mask and giving him a passionate kiss that would make a Hida blush. The kiss continues until Shiba Bengo clears his throat. They let go of each other, grinning ear to ear. The ronin formerly known as Onkei shrugs his shoulders and pulls his mask back down.

If Kiritabi will be returning with the PCs, the goodbye is bittersweet. *“Goodbye, Kiritabi-chan,”* the ronin formerly known as Onkei says. *“I love you. I can’t promise that I will be able to see you soon, but you will always be in my heart.”* Kiritabi smiles playfully before thrusting her knife, the one with the Usagi mon carved into the handle, into her husband’s hand. *“I love you too, you filthy uncivilized ronin.”* A laugh escapes their mouths, and then the ronin formerly known as Onkei slips into the woods towards some unknown destination. Kiritabi’s smile retreats into a serious look. *“I guess we better go back. I have a lot of explaining to do. Thanks for coming to find me. I can only imagine what my sensei or family would have done if they’d seen me like that.”*

If Kiritabi leaves with her husband, she gives a bow of gratitude to the PCs before giving them her knife with the Usagi mon carved into the handle. *“Please express my sincerest apology to Usagi Ozaki-dono that I was not a loyal and faithful samurai. And tell my family... well, they know me. Tell them not to worry.”* The pair thanks the PCs one more time, and then they watch from the clearing as the PCs depart back to Shiro Usagi. Bengo flatly remarks, *“Explaining all of this to Usagi Ozaki-sama and Bayushi Kanchou-sama is going to be messy. We best consider how we deliver the news.”*

As a final note, if the PCs are curious about what Onkei and possibly Kiritabi will call themselves now that they are ronin, they will reply that they have not given thought to that yet. They’ll listen to any suggestions that the PCs might offer but won’t make a final decision in the context of this adventure.

Love Lost

If either Yogo Onkei or Usagi Kiritabi loses their life in the forest but the other survives, the survivor sullenly allows the PCs to escort them back to Shiro Usagi. If possible, they will wish to bring their betrothed’s body back with the group, going so far as to wrap them up with whatever materials are on hand and personally carrying them.

If Usagi Kiritabi is the survivor, she is barely able to stifle crying as she answers the questions the PCs might have for her on the journey back. She will admit that she attacked Onkei in his bedroom, but wishes she hadn’t and blames herself for his death. She does not wish to reveal why she attacked him and requests that Shiba Bengo allow her to explain in the presence of her daimyo in Shiro Usagi. Bengo will agree to her request. In fact, she will not be forthcoming with information about why she attacked Onkei or why Yogo Sagishi was after them at all, deferring each time to the magistrate.

If Yogo Onkei is the survivor, the PCs will be unable to see most of his face underneath his makeshift mask but his eyes are rife with grief. He answers any questions the PCs might have for him with a trained voice, blocking out his emotions. He will defend Kiritabi’s actions in Shiro Usagi, insisting that it was his fault, but if asked why he will simply respond, *“it was a personal matter between me and my betrothed.”* If asked about Yogo Sagishi’s involvement, he lies. *“He was trying to protect me from Kiritabi. He did not understand the circumstances but I cannot blame him for putting his clansman first when he thought I was in trouble.”* The only way he will admit his or Sagishi’s involvement in the Kolat is if the PCs manage to bluff him into it – most easily done by claiming that Kiritabi told them as such. If they can convince him with a contested roll of their **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** vs. his **Investigation / Perception** of 7k4, he will reluctantly admit his involvement in the organization and will submit himself to arrest if the PCs wish – if Sagishi got away he knows he will actually be safer under a magistrate’s protection since the organization will almost assuredly get word from Sagishi about Onkei’s betrayal.

Returning to Shiro Usagi

When the PCs return to Shiro Usagi, Shiba Bengo excuses himself to make his report to Usagi Ozaki and Bayushi Kanchou, taking Kiritabi or Onkei with him if one or both of them are in the group. Unfortunately for the PCs, this means that they are wide open for Kiritabi and Onkei’s families and the other guests to swarm them and demand an explanation for what happened. The PCs need to try to calm the mob however they can or else try to avoid them. Avoiding the mob requires an **Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness** roll at TN 30 else they are forced into conversation. Trying to calm the mob requires a **Sincerity / Awareness** roll at TN 40 (give a Free Raise if the PCs role-play the attempt). Only one PC may make the Sincerity roll, but assisting PCs can add their ranks of Sincerity as a static bonus to the roll. Failure to appease them causes members of both families to start throwing insults and accusations at one another, the PCs, Shiba Bengo, and the daimyos. The PCs lose 4 points of Glory.

Shiba Bengo meets with the PCs later to discuss the results of his meeting with Bayushi Kanchou and Usagi Ozaki.

- The daimyo were perplexed at Yogo Sagishi’s actions. Even if the PCs associated Sagishi with the Kolat, Bayushi Kanchou was aggressive. Sagishi’s fate will be determined by the daimyo. If the PCs

arrested Onkei or Kiritabi, the daimyos' reactions are similar.

- If Kiritabi and Onkei were married and Kiritabi returned with the PCs, Bengo explains that it took a great deal of explaining to get Bayushi Kanchou to believe Yogo Sagishi's betrayal and further explanation about Yogo Onkei's decision to become a ronin. It was even harder to convince Kanchou to relent on demands for Kiritabi to commit seppuku, but he was successful. He expresses that Usagi Ozaki is thankful for the PCs' help in bringing his vassal home and extends Kiritabi's thanks as well. He notes aloud that the affair will probably come back to haunt the Hare Clan when the Scorpion inevitably spread news about the wedding but that is thankfully not his or the PCs' problem to deal with.
- If Kiritabi and Onkei were married and Kiritabi did not return with the PCs, Bengo explains that neither daimyo was very happy with him for finding one of their vassals is dead or missing and letting the other two go ronin but that Usagi Ozaki was surprisingly understanding of the whole affair, even predicting that Kiritabi will reappear someday in the near future. Bayushi Kanchou had some choice words for the magistrate, though.
- If Usagi Kiritabi or Yogo Onkei returns alone because the other died, they had to put aside their grief for a time in order to explain what happened to the daimyo. Bengo explains that the daimyo seemed sympathetic but there will still probably be harsh punishment for embarrassing them.
- If both Kiritabi and Onkei died, neither daimyo is happy. Bengo tells the PCs that he was accused of being reckless. Bayushi Kanchou was particularly furious, promising that the Emerald Magistrate and the PCs would be unwelcome in his province.
- If Kiritabi aided Onkei's escape but could not escape herself, she refuses to admit what she knows about Onkei's true loyalties and is convicted instead of interfering with an Emerald Magistrate's investigation. Bengo's report is still enough to blacken Onkei's name, but Kiritabi manages to keep the worst of it out of her confession. Her seppuku happens privately, with no one save Usagi Ozaki present to witness it.
- If the PCs returned without ever finding Kiritabi or Onkei, Bengo tells them that the daimyo were not pleased with him and that their duel will commence in the future. Yogo Sagishi eventually reappears in

Shiro Usagi, admitting tiredly that he was also unable to find the pair.

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.

Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Usagi Kiritabi survives the adventure or is required to commit seppuku :	+1XP
Yogo Sagishi is killed or taken prisoner:	+1XP
Total Possible Experience:	4XP

Honor, Glory, Status, and Allies

If Kiritabi and Onkei were married and Kiritabi did not return with the PCs, the PCs gain both of them as Allies with 2 Devotion points and 0 Influence points. PCs who are already allies with Kiritabi instead increase the devotion on their existing Ally Advantage by 1 and reduce her Influence to 0. The PCs lose a number of points of Honor equal to twice their current Honor Rank for encouraging Kiritabi to forsake her clan. PCs who actively opposed Kiritabi becoming ronin should not receive this penalty (being passive and not speaking does not count as active opposition).

If the PCs brought Kiritabi back to Shiro Usagi safely, they gain a favor from the Hare Clan and a point of Glory, regardless of her final fate. If she and Onkei were married, the PCs gain her as an Ally with 1 point of Devotion and 1 point of Influence. PCs who are already allies with Kiritabi instead increase their existing Devotion by 1. If the PCs arrested Onkei (or they tried to but he escaped), they gain Usagi Kiritabi as a Sworn Enemy and lose the Ally Advantage if they had it. If the PCs killed Onkei for any reason, they gain both Usagi Kiritabi and Bayushi Kanchou as Sworn Enemies.

If Onkei returns to Shiro Usagi without being arrested, the PCs gain a favor from the Scorpion Clan and a point of Glory. If Kiritabi commits seppuku or the PCs kill her for some other reason, they gain Yogo Onkei as a Sworn Enemy.

If both Kiritabi and Onkei were killed, even if the PCs managed to arrest Yogo Sagishi in the process, the daimyo are incensed. The PCs lose three points of Glory.

If Yogo Sagishi escaped, the Glory loss is increased to five points.

A PC who administers the marriage between Usagi Kiritabi and Yogo Onkei gains three points of Honor. They may also receive the *Blessed by the Fortune of Marriage* cert if they qualified for it.

GM Reporting

- What happened to Yogo Onkei and Usagi Kiritabi?
- If either Onkei or Kiritabi went ronin, do the PCs have a suggestion for a new name?
- Did Yogo Sagishi escape or was he killed or captured?
- Did one of the PCs qualify for the *Blessed by the Fortune of Marriage* cert?

GM must report this information BEFORE 02/20/2015 for it to have storyline effect.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Usagi Kiritabi, Hare Enforcer

Ever since an attempt on her life in Yasuki Yashiki, Usagi Kiritabi seems to have calmed down some. Although she is largely the same person, she seems to study those that she meets for the first time before acting. Usagi Kiritabi is a compact woman with her dark hair in a maiden's foxtail and dressed practically in her Clan's red and white. She usually carries at least five knives with her at all times in addition to her daisho, and favors the knives to the katana. She is moderately attractive in an athletic fashion, but her obvious lack of sophistication seems to have pushed back her engagement for some time. The close business relationship that she held with Yogo Onkei has turned to something more, surprising them both. Kiritabi doesn't seem to care though; she knows now that no matter where she goes, she has someone to watch her back. *"Yes, I know your papers are in order. I'm going to take a look anyways."*

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3

Honor 5.2

Status 2.0

Glory 1.5

Initiative: 8k4

Attack: 10k3 (Jitte)

Armor TN: 32

Damage: 4k1 (Jitte)

School/Rank: Usagi Bushi 4

- Add Athletics skill to Armor TN unless in the Full Attack of Center Stance. Water Ring is considered 1 higher for the purposes of Move Actions.
- Attacks are Simple Actions while unarmed or using knives or weapons with the Samurai keyword.
- When in the Full Attack or Attack stance you can attack an opponent up to 15' away without using a Move Action. If this technique is used while in the Full Attack stance, your second attack may be performed against another opponent within 15'.

Skills: Athletics (Running, Throwing) 7, Commerce 2, Craft: Locksmithing 1, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Hunting 2, Iajutsu 2, Investigation 3, Jujutsu 5, Kenjutsu 3, Knives (Sai, Jitte) 7, Lore: Kolat 3, Lore: Underworld 2, Medicine 2, Sincerity 2, Stealth 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Forbidden Knowledge (Kolat), Daredevil, Kharmic Tie (Yogo Onkei) 2/Brash, Obtuse, True Love (Yogo Onkei)

Equipment: tattered nightclothes, sai

Yogo Onkei, Scorpion Magistrate

Yogo Onkei is not at all what one would expect from a Scorpion. He is neither beautiful nor graceful, but intimidating and purposeful; both traits that serve him well as a clan magistrate. He is a stocky man who normally hides his face behind a demon mempo, but for most of the adventure he wears a simple white cloth over the lower part of his face. He has served as a clan magistrate in one capacity or another since his

gempukku. His involvement in the Kolat conspiracy came after a personal search for a resolution from the Yogo Curse. With the promise of the eventual separation of the supernatural from his life, Onkei has performed several small tasks for the conspiracy over his career. He never expected to fall for anyone, let alone a Hare, but his curse still held strong sway even as he has tried to avoid it. *"Love is more dangerous than steel, more precious than gold."*

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3
Reflexes 4 Agility 4
Honor 4.0 Status 3.0 Glory 2.0

Initiative: 8k4+5

Attack: 10k4 (Unarmed)

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 6k3 (Unarmed)

School/Rank: Soshi Magistrate 4

- Gain a +1k0 bonus to the Intimidation skill, or +2k0 against someone with a lower Status Rank. Gain a +1k0 damage bonus with melee attacks.
- May recover from prone with an Athletics/Agility roll at TN 20 as a Free Action. Gain a +1k1 bonus to rolls made to control a grapple.
- Once per opponent per skirmish, you may make a Called Shot for three Raises on a melee attack that blinds a foe until the Reactions stage of the following Round.
- Melee attacks (including unarmed attacks) are Simple Actions.

Skills: Athletics (Running) 3, Battle 5, Commerce 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Intimidation (Control) 5, Investigation 3, Jujutsu (Grappling, Martial Arts) 7, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Kolat 1, Lore: Underworld 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Forbidden Knowledge (Kolat), Hands of Stone, Kharmic Tie (Usagi Kiritabi) 3/Dark Secret (Kolat Agent), True Love (Usagi Kiritabi)

Equipment: black pajamas, tattered mask

Shiba Bengo, Emerald Magistrate

Shiba Bengo is an Emerald Magistrate of the Phoenix Clan. Having married into the Phoenix Clan from the Sparrow, he has a wide variety of training. Shiba Bengo is a middle aged man, his skin weathered as if he had spent a lot of time in the sun. His features are more like a peasant than a samurai, although there are still hints of an ancient Crane ancestry present. He wears his daisho on his right side, his right arm tucked inside his kimono. He has risen quickly, first in his old clan and now in the Emerald Magistrates, giving him a reputation of ambition and competence. However, having dueled one of his former superiors in the Sparrow, he also has the reputation of stubbornly doing what he thinks is right. *"If you're expecting a story, I'm afraid you will be sorely disappointed, or perhaps not."*

Air 3 Earth 4 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 5

Player Handout #1: Wedding Invitation



You are cordially invited to the Yome-iri between the honorable Usagi Kiritabi and the noble Yogo Onkei, on the seventh day of the month of Bayushi, in the year eleven forty-three of the Isawa Calender.

The ceremony will be hosted by the distinguished Usagi Hanshiro and conducted by a spiritual guide nominated by the renowned Bayushi Kanchou.

Pre-wedding ceremonies will take place at the Dancing Boar on the previous evening. Additional reception to follow the ceremony.



Player Handout #2: The Last Page

I have been naïve it seems. I thought that there would be a future for Onkei and myself, but now I am forced to make a choice no one should ever have to make. I love him dearly and want to spend my life with him, but my lord Ozaki has other plans. His hatred of the Scorpion is deep; I have heard him say it many times. He has told me that I am to kill Onkei and that I must prepare myself for when I receive a letter containing the order to carry out the deed.

I feel trapped. I cannot tell my love that my lord intends to kill him, but I also cannot tell my lord that I will not kill in the name of his quarrel with the Scorpion. If I break off the engagement my lord will suspect I am against him, and I will not have the love of my Onkei or my clan. I don't believe I have the resolve to perform the three cuts, and even if I did what would Onkei make of it? He would think that I did not love him and would rather die than marry him. I could not even leave him a letter explaining my action. Onkei would never forgive my lord and would do something stupid like get killed in a duel over me. Worse yet, our clans might even go to war.

I think that for now the best I can do is pretend that nothing is wrong, and pray every day to the Fortunes that either my lord will change his mind or that his order will never come. If it does, I'll be forced to betray one of the two things I hold closest to me – my love or my clan.

The story of the Yogo curse is that the Yogo are doomed to betray the one they love the most. Did the stories have it backwards?