The Scroll or the Blade

A Supplemental Adventure for Winter's Embrace

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The Scroll or the Blade is an adventure for *Legend of the Five Rings* Role Playing Game. Players should not read material past this point. This supplemental storyline occurs either during or after the events of *Winter's Embrace*. It is useful for Game Masters who wish to give players more tasks to perform during lulls in activity while at Winter Court. It is highly recommended that GMs read through *The Scroll or the Blade* in its entirety to become familiar with the characters and the plot before running it with a group of PCs.

Taking place in the heart of Kyūden Doji, this supplemental adventure centers around an orphaned child of Dragon and Phoenix parents. Although both the Dragon and Phoenix Clans are usually more focused on spiritual matters rather than warfare, their traditionally cordial relationship becomes strained when the child displays powerful elemental affinity.

Both Dragon and Phoenix Clans have faced hardship in recent times, with the Dragon's declining birthrate, and the Phoenix's recent spiritual quandaries. Unfortunately, this desperation has caused them to see the child as a solution to their problems, or at the very least something more tangible to focus their energies on. This creates political unrest at Winter Court and through twisted connections and careful plots the child's temporary guardian, an Imperial cartographer, is manipulated into asking the PCs for help in determining the child's fate.

STORYLINE BACKGROUND

The village of Chisanrū was long-forgotten, hidden among the valleys of the Eastern Dragon provinces, nestled near the borders of both Dragon and Phoenix lands. Unbeknown to its inhabitants, a sacred shrine to Yamakaze lay buried beneath the village.

Years after its establishment, the village became the secret rendezvous location for two samurai; Kitsuki Taiki, a Dragon warrior, and Shiba Miku, a Phoenix shugenja. Over time, the two built a small villa, eventually giving birth to a daughter, Masayo, who possessed an affinity for the elements. Soon after Masayo was born, a minor fortune of the mountain winds, known as Yamakaze, saw Masayo's natural affinity and became enraptured by her. After several years, the relative peace of the villa was shattered when an avalanche roared down from the mountain and killed Taiki and Miku, though Masayo was saved by Yamakaze. The displaced snow blocked Dragon patrol paths, isolating the village further until it fell into obscurity.

Years later, Miya Bunji, an Imperial Herald and mapmaker, was sent to Shiro Miromoto to deliver a pronouncement that the Winter Court would be held at the Esteemed Palaces of the Crane this year. Having several months before needing to present himself at the Court, Bunji devoted his time to mapping the rugged and somewhat treacherous Dragon-Phoenix border region. Not long before he needed to return to Imperial lands, the he found himself in the midst of a severe pre-winter storm, becoming separated from his retinue. Lost and cold, Bunji stumbled through the buffeting winds before happening across a calm clearing. In the center of the small glade sat Masayo, a 12 year old child who was seemingly untroubled by the ferocious storm around her, playing with an invisible friend. Bunji could think of no other explanation than the intervention of the kami, and decided to investigate this strange child further.

Masayo offered Bunji shelter in the village, introducing him to the peasants who had raised her since her parent's passing. The peasants believed Masayo to be a gift from the Fortunes, a claim supported by their bountiful crops and bursting rice silos. Bunji learned the fate of Masayo's parents, and once he reconnected with his contingent of servants and guards, he set about locating the remains of the fallen samurai, buried deep within the crushed villa. What Bunji found as they searched for the bodies troubled him. Within the collapsed rooms were dozens of Phoenix scrolls, and a near Masayo's father lay a shattered blade of Dragon design.

Knowing the child was of samurai heritage and of two Great Clans, Miya Bunji recognized that making a decision about her fate would be difficult. Due in Winter Court in less than a few weeks, and realizing that calling an Emerald Magistrate would extend his stay, he decided instead to ride south with Masayo to seek the assistance of his daimyō, Miya Satoshi.

Once at Winter Court, Bunji presented Masayo to his lord who summoned representatives from the Dragon and Phoenix clans. Upon arrival, both claimed the child for their clan, demanding Satoshi decide the outcome of their dispute. With more urgent matters to attend to, Satoshi returned the responsibility to an alarmed Bunji. Not prepared for such a burden, Bunji turned to his confidant, Shika Yuki, a Deer Clan matchmaker, for guidance.

Storyline Summary

The storyline begins with the PCs acting as guards during a memorial service honoring Masayo's parents. Without warning, a freak winter storm descends upon the temple, trapping the assembly within its walls. In accordance with their duty, the PCs help keep the elements at bay while reassuring attendees, particularly Masayo.

When the storm passes, Miya Bunji approaches the PCs and asks for their assistance in helping him formalize Masayo's adoption. He stresses the need for quick and unbiased action in the hopes to avoid open hostility between the Dragon and Phoenix, both of whom are vying to adopt Masayo.

To calm the waters between the competing adopters, Bunji's friend Shika Yuki, a Deer Clan matchmaker, arranges a kemari tournament which she asks the PCs to participate in so they may learn more about the candidates. The competition is fierce and tempers flare, resulting in a confrontation where the Dragon candidate challenges the Phoenix candidate to a duel, a circumstance which quickly involves the PCs.

Later that evening, mercenary shinobi attempt to kidnap Masayo. An injured Bunji alerts the PCs, who must find the kidnappers or risk Masayo falling into the wrong hands. The situation may lead the PCs to suspect that one of the interested parties may have hired the shinobi rather than risk the decision going against them, or perhaps there is someone else sowing discord between the Clans.

During the final stages of their investigation, the PCs test the child's abilities and discover that Masayo wants Bunji to be her permanent guardian. Shika Yuki supports this decision, citing the potential imbalance the child's powers could have in the hands of either Great Clan. Eventually the PCs must reach a consensus and present their findings in open court. However, their decision may create further disharmony between the Dragon and Phoenix that could no doubt spill over into the proceedings of the Winter Court, and in turn, *Winter's Embrace*.

CHARACTER GOALS

During the Winter Court, the PCs receive a message from their lords explaining the events regarding the discovery of Masayo. It explains that the Dragon and Phoenix are in dispute over the child's adoption, and tension between the two clans is high. Consequently, their clans have asked the PCs to act as guards during a memorial service at the Shinseist temple that rests in the hills above Kyūden Doji.

The letter further explains that an Imperial Herald named Miya Bunji is currently looking for several samurai to assist him in choosing which clan has the strongest claim. Their lords direct the PCs to ingratiate themselves to Bunji to ensure he selects them to assist in his current

predicament. Each clan, including minor ones, also have their own agenda in the matter, and the letter explains their motivations. Privately read an appropriate letter to each player (or give each player a copy of their letter):

Crab

> Honorable Samurai, I know that you understand that the Miya Family has vast quantities of koku at their disposal, and while this might be a crude reason to honor the wishes of an Imperial family, we know that koku wins wars. Once a year the Miya send the Emperor's Blessing, a caravan of artisans and workers to assist afflicted regions of the Empire–aid we so desperately need. Honoring Miya Bunji's wishes to seek what's best for this child could provide us with an opportunity to open a dialog to secure the Miya's favor. Should there be additional services required to solidify that arrangement, you are to willingly offer your assistance.

Crane

> Keen and Gracious Samurai, as you know our clan is busy with the shoring up of political defenses and maintaining our efforts during our hosting of the Winter Court. We would impose upon you to help Miya Bunji in his duty. It would only be honest and prudent of us to ensure that our allies the Phoenix are treated as fairly as possible during this time. By rendering such assistance, the Miya may also favor us with the Emperor's Blessing, a caravan of artisans and workers who assist afflicted regions of the Empire which will help with our current concerns. We expect this matter will be one you treat with due concern.

ADVICE FOR GAME MASTERS

This storyline is set over several days and works well at the end of day 9 through day 11 of *Winter's Embrace*. Each scene occurs sequentially, with tension building higher each encounter until the PCs make their final decision.

Throughout this adventure, red margin sidebars offer additional advice, tie-ins, and references to *Winter's Embrace*. Many of these can be ignored if not playing with that adventure.

ABOUT MIYA SATOSHI

Miya Satoshi is a character in *Winter's Embrace*, but for the purposes of this storyline he is simply Miya Bunji's busy lord. When played with *Winter's Embrace*, however, Miya Satoshi has very intentionally let such an important decision fall to a subordinate; Satoshi is secretly a member of the Kolat and wishes to sow discord amongst the Clans and create instability in the Empire. More information can be found in Miya Satoshi's profile in *Winter's Embrace*.

THE HINOKAMI PROPHECY

The Hinokami Prophecy speaks of a child who comes from the blood of dragons and the force of the elements. The child is destined to become a powerful shugenja, and will one day confront a tremendous creature wreathed in flame, sent to destroy the Dragon and their lands. This prophecy is held in high regard by some, though many consider is a peasant's tale and nothing more.

Dragon

Respected Samurai, the matters in our homelands are grim, but we remain an honorable people. Securing the child Masayo would restore the father and samurai who left us long ago. We understand that others may see our involvement as a conflict of interest, but we can assure them that our honor demands that we will do what's best for Masayo. You are also to keep a watchful eye on the meddling of our opposition, and ensure the process remains transparent. This child is a Dragon by right and we know that all necessary facts and testimony shall prove this and allow her safe return home.

Lion

Honorable Samurai, as custodians of the Emerald Empire's official history it is our duty to be present for and to record the Miya family's decision regarding the placement of the orphaned child, Masayo. Should anything happen that would embarrass the Crane as hosts during this process, the Lion would be amiss if we were to not record such a slight to the Emperor in the official records. Such an incident, however it may occur, may put us in a favorable position with the Imperial families and the Crane may be reminded that the great historians of the Empire are always watching.

Phoenix

Esteemed Samurai, our interest in the child is clear, and her ability to speak directly with the kami makes her an asset we so desperately need. Although our desire for such natural talent is obvious, our behavior in such a matter must be beyond reproach. However, these are desperate times, and although this may be at great costs to you, I trust that you shall do everything possible to assist the herald in reaching a decision in our favor. Should this mean gaining whatever leverage and resources you need to apply pressure to him, you have my blessing to do so.

Scorpion

My loyal vassal, as you know the Scorpion have recently gained an upper hand in the Imperial Court with the appointment of Bayushi Kachiko as the Imperial Advisor. This matter with the child, usually settled by the Crane alone, presents a rare opportunity to examine the affairs of the Dragon and Phoenix. With the Dragon's current troubles, it seems only right that they adopt the child that was born in their lands. If such a decision were to upset the Phoenix and the Crane, it would be a worthy sacrifice in the name of fairness, would it not?

Unicorn

Dear cousin, our Dragon brothers are in need, and we call upon your services to assist them in their desperate hour. Our Dragon neighbors have shown us great respect since our return, certainly more than the other clans have. To further earn their favor would be of great benefit in our goal of earning our rightful place within the Empire, and the eyes of all its people. It is therefore imperative that we assist our allies and ensure the child returns to her Dragon heritage.

Mantis

[PC's name], while we usually deal primarily with the Crab and Crane in matters of trade, the Phoenix have a large coastline and ample natural resources that offer promises of great trade potential. As our relationship with the Crane continues to strain, securing the favor of the Phoenix could provide us with a much-needed commercial lifeline. To further the interests of the Mantis, we ask that you offer any assistance you can to the Phoenix in these trying times.

Imperial Families

Dearest associate, our cousin and friend Miya Bunji has requested your assistance in this most serious of matters. This is a responsibility not taken lightly, and one which can potentially end in war. Your orders are clear – decide the child's fate promptly and as amicably as possible to ensure Miya Bunji can return to his regular duties as soon as possible.

Minor Clans

Honored Samurai, the chance to brush shoulders with members of the Great Clans is an opportunity worthy of our attention. This is a means of lifting our profile, potentially gaining favor with the Emperor, and allowing those who regularly ignore us to see us for our true worth. Offer what services you can and gather whatever secrets you learn to assist the Miya while honoring your Clan in the service of the Imperial Family.

Ryoku's Twisted Web

Shika Yuki recently approached Kakita Ryoku, a powerful Crane courtier, who plays a major role in *Winter's Embrace*, regarding Miya Bunji's dilemma. Ryoku's knowledge of the characters at this stage is thorough and her confidence in the PCs' ability to be discrete is high. To assist her friend, Ryoku offers to arrange for the PCs to act as guards and overseers during the memorial service. She will also suggest to their lords that the PCs would make excellent assistants for Bunji and that they should instruct them to offer their assistance if requested.

A Quick Guide to the Main Actors

Masayo: A gifted child capable of speaking to the kami, Masayo is the daughter of two deceased samurai of both Dragon and Phoenix heritage. She is a pawn in a greater game (page 18).

Miya Bunji: A cartographer and the Imperial Herald of the Miya Family, Bunji is concerned with the well-being of Masayo, but understands any situation involving samurai is bound to have political consequences. Tasked with determining Masayo's fate at the behest of his lord, he fears making the wrong choice not only for the child but also for Rokugan (page 18).

Shika Yuki: An origami master and one of the great matchmakers of the Deer Clan, Yuki has unparalleled knowledge of samurai lineages. With the arrival of Masayo, she senses the tension building between the clans and hopes to help Miya Bunji make the right choice, even if that means sacrificing him, or the PCs, in the process (page 20).

Asako Haruki: Head of the Phoenix delegation and cousin of the Asako daimyō, Haruki is a man who is suffering from tremendous pressure due to the recent spiritual hardships in Phoenix lands. He does all he can to secure Masayo's future, even if it means sacrificing his own romantic desires for Mirumoto Kazuya, and his honor, in the process (page 19).

Isawa Yoshiko: A reserved yet clever shugenja of the Phoenix Clan, Yoshiko has also offered to adopt Masayo. She hides that she is the illegitimate sister of Masayo's mother (page 22).

Kitsuki Tomoyo: Head of the Dragon delegation and the youngest daughter of the Kitsuki daimyō, Tomoyo is a young and dynamic woman, dedicated to her Clan and ready to back up her words with steel. She will do everything honorable in her power to ensure the Dragon can claim the child, although her own past may temper her decision (page 20).

Mirumoto Kazuya: A brash veteran officer of the Dragon Clan who has offered to adopt Masayo, Kazuya is a believer in the Hinokami Prophecy and follower of the Perfect Land Sect. Kazuya believes that Masayo is the child spoken of in the prophecy and that raising such an important child will increase his station. Kazuya is also Asako Haruki's secret lover and the current situation is placing their relationship under immense stress (page 21).

Daidoji Aki: A yōjimbō and kemari adept, Aki is a rising star in the sport as well as a hothead and philanderer, who yearns to be the hero his father was (page 21).

THE TEMPLE AT KYŪDEN DOJI

The Esteemed Palaces of the Crane, also known as Kyūden Doji, stands atop the white cliffs on the eastern shore of Rokugan. However, nestled in the hills behind the grand castle, beyond the surrounding city, and atop a winding staircase, is a Shinseist temple complex.

Comprised of several white and gold buildings with red tiled roofs, each fashioned to hold up to 100 guests, with the main temple large enough to house 250. Ornately carved 12-foot-high heavy wooden doors, fashioned from a single oak tree, welcome guests to the comfortable interior. Spacious and simple, the temple contains polished wooden floors and row after row of kneeling mats before reaching a raised platform that monks use to give their sermons.

Act 1: The Lost Child

In the first Act, the PCs are tasked with acting as guards during memorial service for two fallen samurai. As the evening progresses, a ferocious snow storm hits the temple and the PCs must act to maintain order and keep the attendees safe. Having proven themselves to be quick thinkers, Bunji asks the PCs to help him adjudicate in the adoption of Masayo.

MEETING MASAYO

Shika Yuki, through her connection with Kakita Ryoku, has requested the PCs' assistance through their various lords to help oversee the memorial service at a small temple in the hills that overlooks the Esteemed Palaces of the Crane. Because this service is to be held quickly and with little notice, it is easier for the Crane to agree to delegate such a minor task to lesser samurai rather than stretch their resources thinner. Bunji remains unconvinced of the PCs abilities to assist him, but he has gone along with Yuki's plan. Bunji does not want to leave anything to chance and wishes to learn more about the PCs by approaching them before the service and asking them about their previous exploits. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> As you survey the crowd of Dragon and Phoenix delegates assembling in the temple, you observe a short man with a round face and rosy red cheeks, dressed in fine clothing adorned with the mon of the Imperial Miya family. He smiles when you see him, and approaches.
>
> With him is a young girl no more than 12 years of age. With one hand, she fidgets with her kimono, seemingly uncomfortable with its material, while with the other she keeps a firm grip on a tattered straw-filled doll whose right eye hangs by a thread. The man bows and says, "I am Miya Bunji, the Herald of the Miya family and an Imperial cartographer. This is my ward, Masayo."

After introducing himself and Masayo, Bunji engages each PC in conversation, subtly asking questions about their abilities. Each PC must make a **TN 2 check** using an appropriate skill in which they excel, with a social approach to represent the PCs speaking on a topic upon which they are qualified.

If successful, Bunji is impressed and offers to speak with them later. If they fail, Bunji becomes doubtful of their ability to handle his dilemma, increasing the TN of their next social interaction with him by 1. When speaking with Bunji, the PCs may spend ✿ to sense his unease and worry. If confronted with this, he becomes flustered, suggests that they speak with him later, and excuses himself.

DESPERATE MEASURES

Tempers are brewing and desperation is forming in the minds of each of the interested parties. Nobody wants bloodshed, particularly Bunji, but the perceived safety of the child is paramount to all involved. Consequently, any one of the Clans involved, whether it be Deer, Dragon, Phoenix, or perhaps the Imperial family, may become desperate enough to try to kidnap the child.

The GM should monitor the situation closely at their table to decide which of the options the PCs are leaning towards. They then can use that choice as the Clan who hires the mercenary shinobi, further muddying the waters.

As Bunji and Masayo leaves, the PCs notice a birthmark comprising of several wavy lines on Masayo's neck, just under her right ear. A **TN 3 Theology (Earth) check** lets a PC recall its similarity to the symbol for Yamakaze, Fortune of the Mountain Winds.

WITH HONOR THEY SERVED

The tolling of a single bell announces the commencement of the ceremony. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> As the last rays of sunlight fade over the distant horizon, you survey the congregation. Banners displaying the mons of the Dragon and Phoenix Clans adorn the walls, while at the front two priests and their attendants address the assembly. Seated in the front row are Miya Bunji, Masayo, and a middle-aged woman dressed in the robes of the Deer, its brown and white a stark contrast among the sea of red and green robes. You hear Masayo faintly crying between the monk's chants, as a cold wind whistles through the cracks in the framework.

The priests chant prayers, offering thanks to the kami for allowing Masayo's safe return and highlighting the accomplishments her parents made during their lives. However, because the priests aren't particularly familiar with the deceased samurai, much of their chanting may be a little embellished. As the ceremony progresses, Masayo gradually becomes more emotional, forcing Bunji and Yuki to comfort her.

Seated on the left is the Dragon delegation, including Kitsuki Tomoyo and Mirumoto Kazuya, while on the right is the Phoenix delegation, including Asako Haruki and Isawa Yoshiko. There are approximately 60 attendees at the ceremony. Other than the PCs and the Crane attendants, Bunji and Yuki are the only individuals not from the Dragon or Phoenix.

During the service, it is the PCs' duty to monitor the congregation and keep both parties calm. The increasing tension is almost palpable, and the PCs must be on guard for any sign of open hostility.

A Storm of Portents

During the service, the winds outside begin to intensify. Towards its conclusion, Masayo becomes distraught, her cries echoing through the chamber. Bunji attempts to console her without success. PCs may make a **TN 4 Theology**, **Seafaring**, or **Sentiment (Void 2, Earth 5) check** to discern that the change in weather correlates with the child's outbursts.

The winds continue to increase to a fever pitch until suddenly the temple doors blast open, sending snow and debris into the hall. It quickly becomes apparent that a severe winter storm has descended upon the temple. The Crane attendants rush about to help secure the building by barricading windows and doors. Asako Haruki and Kitsuki Tomoyo attempt to calm their delegations, but as frightened attendees begin to panic, many turn to the PCs for guidance.

GMs should treat this scene as a single intrigue. As guards and overseers, the PCs must select any one of the objectives in **Table 1–1: Objectives at the Temple**. PCs may attempt as many objectives as they wish during the storm, represented in-game by 4 rounds of intrigue, or 2 hours narratively.

Consoling Masayo

Masayo clings to Bunji, refusing to let go of her guardian. The PCs have an option here should they realize the connection Masayo has to the storm. PCs can approach Bunji and Masayo and can attempt to calm her down. This has a profound effect on the scene and presents a great opportunity for roleplaying. If the PCs successfully console Masayo by reaching the required Momentum for that objective, the required Momentum for Calming Attendees and Reinforcing the Temple each reduces by two as the storm dissipates. Because of this, it is possible that the PCs have already accumulated the required number of Momentum for one or both of these objectives, in which case those objectives are now complete.

Shika Yuki's Impressions

Yuki senses great peril surrounding Masayo and wants to gain a sense of the connections between her and the PCs. Her intention is to invite them to breakfast and use that as an opportunity to size them up and determine their motivations. If she detects no ill-intent towards the child, she offers them her counsel, realizing that having the PCs as allies is better than them working against her, especially as she wishes to have Bunji adopt Masayo instead of either the Dragon or Phoenix.

Social Interactions

More social PCs may wish to converse with some of the congregation, particularly the key NPCs, while keeping things calm. This is a good opportunity to investigate NPCs' motivations, strengths, and weaknesses. Each NPC discusses their positions openly if a PC successfully engages them, during which they reveal any of the facts mentioned in **Table 1–2: Clan Claims**. PCs may spend ✿✿ to learn one additional of the claims on Masayo made by each Clan.

During any of the exchanges, the one thing that becomes clear is that both the Dragon and Phoenix remain adamant that each has a legitimate claim to the child's heritage, even though there is little evidence to support either claim.

TROUBLED CHILD

Although Masayo's parents died so early in her life, she has very clear memories of them. Though Masayo is very self-aware for a child of her age, the stress and strain of the circumstances surrounding her rescue is taking its toll. From the way she was taken away from her peasant family for a reason she does not quite understand, to the realization of how important her parents were, recent happenings have left her confused and mournful.

Though Miya Bunji was the man who took her from her village, she trusts him. Bunji speaks to her with genuine care, and Yamakaze seems soothed by his presence. Masayo can sense Bunji is suffering, (though she does not know why), and wishes to help him. His gentle nature and kind eyes remind her of her own father, drawing her to his side. Masayo secretly wishes Bunji will adopt her, rather than a stranger, a fact she keeps well-hidden until the end of Act 2.

Table 1–1: Objectives at the Temple

OBJECTIVE	DIFFICULTY	MOMENTUM REQUIRED
Calming Attendees	**TN 3 Courtesy (Earth 2, Fire 4) check** or a **TN 3 Command (Earth 2, Fire 4) check**	4
Consoling Masayo	**TN 3 Sentiment (Water 2, Air 4) check** or a **TN 4 Theology (Void 3, Air 3, Earth 5) check**	4
Reinforcing the Temple	**TN 3 Labor (Fire 2, Air 4) check** or a **TN 2 Fitness (Earth 2, Void 4)** check	4

THE DEER CLAN

The Deer seek societal balance. When the great clans are equal in power, they strive to outdo each other, but do not dare go to war. Competition is the essence of progress. Oneness and harmony are impossible ideals in a world where diversity and conflict are unavoidable. Therefore, when the Deer observe that one clan is strong and another weak, they use deception to make them equal. They are social engineers, optimizing the Empire for prosperity. The matchmakers mingle with high society to collect information and manipulate the Court, while their shinobi carry out secret missions in the shadows. They destroy and save people, all for the sake of balance.

Storm Effects

The ferocious storm causes all present to be somewhat on edge and unprepared for social interactions. All social checks (except those listed on **Table 1–1: Objectives at the Temple** on page 7) increase their TN by 1.

Frayed Passions

At the end of Round 2, Mirumoto Kazuya and Isawa Yoshiko, the parental candidates, start arguing about their intentions for Masayo, which causes the child's cries to escalate and the weather to intensify in turn. The PCs need to separate the two or risk an incident among the chaos of the situation.

Calming the parties requires some social finesse, requiring a successful **TN 3 Courtesy** or **Command check (Fire 4, Air 2)**. Success allows the PCs to separate the two without further incident. The PCs must forfeit honor equal to their honor rank to decline to intervene in the argument.

Failure increases the TN of all checks by 1 for the rest of the encounter, including consoling Masayo. If the PCs are successful, they gain 1 honor for exemplifying the Bushidō tenant of Rei (Compassion) for helping Kazuya and Yoshiko save face. Success does not generate Momentum towards completing the intrigue.

A Request for Assistance

Even if the PCs fail, Masayo eventually cries herself out and falls into a deep sleep. The storm subsides, allowing the assembly to return to their accommodations. Bunji speaks with each of the PCs, together if possible, before departing, to offer his thanks for their service, even if they were unsuccessful. The PCs notice that Bunji is alone, although Masayo is not far away, currently under the care of Shika Yuki. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> "I am sure you are aware of my current dilemma by now, as I am sure by morning the entire Court will know. As you have witnessed, the tensions between the Dragon and Phoenix are high. I'm led to believe you are up to the challenge of what lies before me, and I was hoping to impose upon you further. I would like to meet with you in a more private setting with my associate Shika Yuki for breakfast by the lake. Is this agreeable?"

The PCs may have questions about the overall situation, but Bunji is exhausted and promises to discuss everything with the PCs in the morning.

Table 1–2: Clan Claims

CLAN	CLAIM
Phoenix	Prior to her disappearance, Shiba Miku was a Phoenix shugenja. Records exist of her birthmark which consists of three wavy lines. This matches the birthmark found on Masayo's neck.
Phoenix	"There is a precedence for talented shugenja to join the Phoenix, even though a heritable connection exists with other clans."
Phoenix	Existing maps show the village of Chisanrū was formerly a part of Phoenix lands, and Phoenix scrolls were found at the destroyed villa that Masayo came from.
Dragon	The katana recovered by Bunji is an old Dragon design, its blade etched with murals of an epic battle in the mountains, its hilt adorned with the markings of the Kitsuki family mon.
Dragon	Historical documents exist showing the foundation of the Chisanrū village and its position within Dragon borders.
Dragon	The teachings of the Hinokami Prophecy speak of a child of two families who joins the Dragon Clan, her destiny to defeat a massive creature that will threaten Dragon holdings. The Dragon believe Masayo is this child.

BREAKFAST BY THE LAKE'S EDGE

When the PCs arrive on the northern shore of the lake the next morning, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> The lake is still and clear, and a heavy snowfall blankets the area in white. Just ahead, a finely crafted gazebo overlooks the water. Inside, Bunji, Yuki, and Masayo sit before a delicious assortment of foods, and Bunji waves as you approach, beckoning you to join them. Yuki offers you a gentle smile as you enter, but returns to her meticulous work on an origami creature. Masayo sits next to her, too engrossed in Yuki's folding to notice you.

Yuki is of the Deer Clan, and a **TN 2 Government (Earth) check** reminds the PCs that the Deer are a minor clan that seeks to maintain balance by connecting like-minded individuals and ensuring the protection of those relationships (see page 8 for the **The Deer Clan** sidebar). Once the PCs are seated, Yuki quickly completes her origami which is a representation of the clan animal of the PC who impressed Bunji the most (see page 6). She then offers it as a gift to the PC and smiles. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> Miya Bunji seems tense as you make yourselves comfortable. Yuki softly says, "Please, partake of this generous meal prepared for us by our gracious Crane hosts." As you begin eating she speaks again. "I have seen this moment for many weeks now, and I am glad you chose to join us. I will not waste your time. I have seen that Bunji may benefit from your expertise in regards to the child's placement. Are you willing to aid him?"

The PCs may wish to ask Bunji, Yuki, and perhaps even Masayo questions. Masayo is very shy and unwilling to offer much in the way of answers, particularly in regards to her own desires. Bunji and Yuki offer up what information they know about the two parental candidates, and examples of what they might say can be taken from **Table 1–2: Clan Claims**.

An Invitation to Play

During breakfast Yuki mentions that both Mirumoto Kazuya and Isawa Yoshiko have agreed to participate in a kemari tournament she is hosting later that morning. She hopes it can ease tension and cause cooler heads to prevail. She asks the PCs to join them, particularly if they have already built some rapport with the delegates. Bunji also expresses his excitement at the opportunity for all interested parties to get to know each other and break the ice.

Act 2: Those Who Take

In Act 2, the characters take part in a kemari tournament arranged by Shika Yuki on Miya Bunji's behalf to help the parental candidates relieve their frustrations. Unfortunately, the opposite occurs, with the Dragon candidate challenging the Phoenix candidate to a duel. The PCs must intervene, potentially championing themselves in the process.

KEMARI

Kemari is a game played throughout Rokugan by children and samurai alike. The game initially involves a group of eight individuals who bounce and kick a leather-bound ball or sack about using their feet, knees, shoulders and head. Participants always keep their arms folded behind their backs and form a circle of players. A referee bounces the ball in the center of the group, and the first participant to move forward bounces the ball to a fellow participant. Individuals then attempt to keep the ball in the air for as long as possible.

Allowing a ball to fall to the ground causes the failing participant to immediately be eliminated from the competition. One by one, participants leave the circle until there are only two remaining. The two then jostle for first place, with the winner and runner up moving onto the next round of a competition. Competition is fierce, with participants often resorting to disparaging remarks to put their competition off balance.

Played regularly in full courtly regalia, Kemari is a test of skill and wits, and often results in shameful displays of bad sportsmanship and rudeness. Participants find that maintaining one's dignity during a game is as much a challenge as keeping the ball in the air, which acts as a subtle metaphor for the duplicity of life as a samurai.

After finalizing arrangements for the duel, the unthinkable occurs when assailants kidnap Masayo. Here the PCs learn of a third party, and suspect foul play from one of the Clans. Eventually the PCs must test Masayo and her suitability for gempuku, at which time the PCs' patience uncover a revelation that may turn their efforts on its head.

GAMES WE PLAY

A kemari competition provides the characters with the opportunity to flex their muscles and allows them to witness the increasing tension between the Dragon and the Phoenix. Yuki greets the PCs upon arrival, and formally introduces each of them to the competitors. The GM may wish to include one or more NPCs from *Winter's Embrace* as participants or observers, such as Ikoma Rumiko or Susano-O no Izen.

Bunji is also in attendance with Masayo and sits in a nearby podium, quietly explaining the rules and nuances of the game to her. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> The courtyard of the main palace appears tranquil, but the snow dappled branches of barren cherry blossom trees act as a stark contrast to the tension that hangs in the air. A small stage has been erected at the northern end of the courtyard, and several judges mill about while waiting for the participants to assemble.

The Roguish Kemari Champion

One of the participants in attendance is a brash young man full of bravado, the current Kemari Champion of Winter Court, Daidoji Aki. The young man engages each PC, offering advice on how to play the sport, though this appears more as a play by play of his greatest accomplishments than anything useful. Aki is unaware of why the PCs are involved in the tournament, and feigns disinterest if the PCs share any information with him. During any conversations, he appears somewhat distracted.

PCs that speak with Aki may make appropriate social checks to learn more about him and his exploits. If PCs use the Air approach, they may spend ✿✿ to notice Aki's attention focuses on Isawa Yoshiko as she prepares for the competition. Any additional Air ✿ spent during this scene reveals Aki's romantic interest in Yoshiko, and he asks if the PCs would introduce them.

Aki uses his Tactics of Kemari ability (page 21) to great effect in the lead up to the tournament and any subsequent rounds. Yoshiko, however, is on her best behavior, and if introduced to Aki, she uses the chance to get to know the PCs and their intentions, mostly ignoring Aki's advances.

TOURNAMENT RUMORS

During the tournament, the PCs may come across the following rumors pertaining to the storyline or the wider Winter Court:

- A powerful oni possesses the child Masayo, and the Crane have requested the Crab delegation to send one of their Witch Hunters to expel the creature. (False)
- Shika Yuki and her Deer Clan assistants never received an invitation to attend Winter Court this year, instead receiving a personal invitation from Kakita Ryoku. (True)
- During the summer, Asako Haruki has been arranging secret meetings with Mirumoto Kazuya. (True)
- Daidoji Aki is married, and his wife is currently pregnant with their third child. Aki has also sired several children with various other women in recent years. (True)
- One of the Phoenix delegation is not who they say they are. Would you believe that there is some suggestion they were born out of wedlock? (True)
- Did you hear that the Dragon delegates called an emergency meeting last night with Miya Bunji, but didn't invite the Phoenix? (True)
- Asako Haruki is a close friend of the Imperial Herald Miya Satoshi. The two were heard arguing about the child last night. Do the Miya favor the Phoenix? (The argument is true)
- Since his family's passing, Miya Bunji's resources are dwindling. He's certainly not above taking a bribe, and the Dragon delegation can offer him much in the way of jade that can he can use to trade with the Crab for a profit. (False)

Table 1–3: Kemari Tournament Results

NPC	ROUND 1 (TN 2)	ROUND 2 (TN 3)	ROUND 3 (TN 4)
Asako Haruki	Success with 1 bonus ◯, and 1 ✲	Success with 0 bonus ◯	Knocked out
Daidoji Aki	Success with 2 bonus ◯, and 2 ✲	Success with 2 bonus ◯, and 1 ✲	Success with 1 bonus ◯, and 1 ✲
Isawa Yoshiko	Success with 2 bonus ◯, and 2 ✲	Success with 2 bonus ◯, and 1 ✲	Success with 1 bonus ◯
Kitsuki Tomoyo	Success with 1 bonus ◯	Success with 0 bonus ◯, and 1 ✲	Success with 0 bonus ◯
Mirumoto Kazuya	Success with 2 bonus ◯	Success with 1 bonus ◯	Success with 0 bonus ◯, and 1 ✲

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Eventually the lead referee, an elderly monk named Shinpa, calls all the participants to assemble, and explains the rules of the game. Although there are numerous participants in the competition, the only contestants that participate mechanically are those listed in **Table 1–3: Kemari Tournament Results**.

With a better understanding of the situation and what's at stake, the PCs can use their participation in the tournament to observe and interact with each of the NPCs. The competition between any Dragon and Phoenix is fierce.

During the first round, each participant in the tournament makes a competitive **TN 2 Fitness** or **Games check (Fire 1, Water 1, Void 3)**. On each subsequent round, the TN of the check increases by 1. Characters who fail the check, and the character who receives the fewest bonus successes, drop out of the competition. After the universal tie breaker rule (PCs before NPCs), if there is still a tie, the character with the highest status wins.

GMs can roll the checks for each NPC individually using their relevant statistics located in the Appendix or can instead use **Table 1–3: Kemari Tournament Results** to save time. Each round lists the results of the NPCs dice roll. The GM has each participating player make their own check, and then compares their results to the table.

Running the Tournament

While kemari tournaments are typically held in groups of 8 participants, the GM can ignore this in favor of including all PCs and NPCs in one group, even if the total is more or less than 8. **Table 1–3: Kemari Tournament Results** shows the scores for each NPC participant, as well as their ✲ rolled for us in any abilities.

At the end of the tournament, GMs can refer to page 17 for information on rewards for winning.

An Inappropriate Remark

During the tournament, a heated exchange occurs between Daidoji Aki and Kitsuki Tomoyo. If the PCs approach, they learn that Aki made a disparaging comment about the way the Dragon raise their children. Aki meant it only to rile his competition, but the comment appears to have hit a nerve, likely because of the declining birthrate of the Dragon in recent years. PCs who wish to intervene may attempt to calm Tomoyo, and in doing so must succeed on a **TN 3 Command** or **Courtesy check (Air 1, Earth 5)**. If the PCs do not step in, the situation escalates until guards arrive, leaving Bunji, who is the primary host of the tournament, to look as though he cannot control his guests. This puts even more pressure on Bunji to keep things calm between the Dragon and Phoenix. If the PCs are unable to calm Tomoyo down, the Dragon's outburst puts their clam at a disadvantage if in the final court intrigue scene (see **Act 3: Those Who Receive** on page 16).

RIGHTEOUS CHALLENGE

At the end of the final round, the situation reaches its breaking point when Mirumoto Kazuya accuses Isawa Yoshiko of cheating. He claims the Phoenix interfered in one of his maneuvers, which forced him out of the competition. The argument quickly escalates, and at the height of the outburst, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> Mirumoto Kazuya is furious, visibly shaking with rage. Tomoyo moves to console him, but her words seem ineffectual. Suddenly Kazuya bursts forward, pointing towards Yoshiko and yelling, "I know who you are, shugenja. You wear a wakizashi like it belongs to you, but you are nothing more than a charlatan. You think you can fool everyone here, but I know your

STRIFE

This scenario does not track the strife of the NPC contestants, although PCs need to track any they accumulate. At the end of round two, when Daidoji Aki and Kitsuki Tomoyo argue, the GM should consider Tomoyo to have unmasked. At the end of round 3, Mirumoto Kazuya, targeted by both Daidoji Aki and Isawa Yoshiko, also unmasks, resulting in his shameful outburst. Should PCs wish to cause strife to any of the other contestants during the tournament, each NPC begins with strife equal to half their composure.

> deception, your shame. I challenge you to a duel to first blood, so we may settle this dispute, or all shall believe me when I call you a liar and cheat!"

The duel is purely to save face, but Kazuya takes the matter very seriously and demands compensation for Yoshiko's alleged actions. Yoshiko is visibly shocked at the outburst and immediately looks to Asako Haruki for guidance. Haruki bows his head in shame, for it is he who let Kazuya know of the shugenja's claim that she is the illegitimate sister of Shiba Miku, Masayo's mother. Yoshiko pleads ignorance and appears quite scared of the Dragon's overreaction. She knows that although she is a skilled shugenja, she is no match for Kazuya in a duel.

Yoshiko has little option but to accept the challenge or seek a champion to act in her stead. She knows that she is of no use to Masayo without her honor, but is aware of the PCs' involvement in the investigation and that they hold sway over Miya Bunji. Her intention is to make them sympathetic to her cause, and so she turns to the PC with the highest Martial Arts (Melee) rank, who has a status lower than hers (34) and is not a Dragon, appealing to them to be her champion.

Refusing to be Champion

Turning down such a request would be a major breach of the Bushidō tenet of Honor, and a PC must forfeit honor equal to double their honor rank to do so.

If none of the PCs accept Yoshiko's request, Daidoji Aki steps forward to act in their stead. Several high-ranking Crane watch on in disgust and talk about the PCs refusal for the next several days.

Another Time, Another Place

Running the duel is a simple affair, and Mirumoto Kazuya demands the use of the katana. As mentioned in his outburst, the duel is to first blood. Kazuya is an honorable sort and allows his opponent to yield if they wish to back down. Stressed and hoping a regulated duel will make less of a scene, Bunji declares the challenge valid and that it shall occur just past midday in the main pavilion. The GM should use the one-roll duel rules found on page 261 of the core rulebook if Kazuya is fighting Aki, but may also use this rule if they wish to resolve PC versus NPC combat more quickly.

The Duel

The duel takes place a few hours past midday. If a PC agreed to be Yoshiko's champion, she greets them before the duel and offers a short prayer for their service. Afterwards, she offers the information she has learned about Kazuya's affair with Haruki, a confession she hopes the PCs can use to end the duel.

Many onlookers attend the duel and are keen to see the results. Should Kazuya win, he demands an apology and her admission as to her heritage as agreed (see page 22 for Yoshiko's secret). Should Kazuya lose, he apologizes for his outburst. Yoshiko stops short of asking Kazuya to admit to his affair with Asako Haruki, knowing the admission places additional political strain

on her lord. A PC who fights and loses receives honor equal to their honor rank and a PC who wins receives glory equal to their glory rank.

KIDNAPPED!

In this scene, several armed shinobi sneak into the Imperial guesthouses and attack Miya Bunji, wounding him and kidnapping Masayo. The mercenaries drug the child to keep her drowsy and steal away into the winding paths of the walled-in compound. A chase ensues, and if the PCs don't catch up to the assailants and rescue Masayo, Bunji and the PCs will surely face dire consequences.

The Imperial Guesthouses

After the events of the tournament and subsequent duel, Bunji invites the PCs and Yuki to dinner at the Imperial guesthouse to discuss their strategies for the following day. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> You arrive at Bunji's chambers at the same time as Shika Yuki. As she offers a greeting, you hear a loud yell and the sound of something crashing to the ground. The door before you thrusts open with a gust of wind, and Bunji staggers through, slumping against a wall, fresh blood smearing down the wood from a gash in his arm. He grits his teeth in obvious pain, and shouts "Masayo! They've taken her! Towards the western wall!"

If the PCs wish to pursue the attackers, they will need to make a series of checks to attempt to catch up to them. The chase scene happens over the course of three rounds.

During the first round, PCs will need to make a **TN 2 Fitness check (Water 1, Fire 1, Earth 3)** to determine initiative and catch sight of the assailants. If a PC succeeds, they begin the chase at Range 4 of the shinobi. For every two bonus successes the distance decreases by 1 range band. If a PC fails, they begin the chase at Range 5 instead.

Should the PCs hold back to tend to Bunji's wounds, they must make a **TN 2 Medicine (Earth) check** to stem the bleeding. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> While you tend to Bunji's wounds, you hear him curse for the first time. He shakes his head and attempts to straighten himself before saying, "There were too many, figures clothed in black with their faces covered. They sneaked up behind me while I was penning a letter, but they weren't expecting this old mapmaker to fight so well! I managed to kill one, but the others overwhelmed me and escaped with Masayo. Quickly! Don't mind my wounds, save the child, please!"

If some or all of the PCs stay behind to heal Bunji's injuries and then attempt to chase down the shinobi, those PCs begin at Range 6 of the shinobi.

Each round during the shinobi's turn, they move 3 range bands away from the PCs. If no PC has caught up to the shinobi by the end of the third round, the assailants disappear with Masayo in tow.

If the PCs are able to catch up to the shinobi, a fight ensues. For a standard group of 4 rank 2 PCs, there are 3 Mercenary Shinobi (page 14). For a different group size and composition, see **Gauging an Encounter** on page 310 of the core rulebook. If the PCs capture or subdue the shinobi, they resist all attempts to interrogate them. The shinobi attempt to take their own lives or escape by any means possible. If the shinobi incapacitate the PCs, they continue to flee as they have no reason to kill the PCs if they can still complete their mission.

A Convenient Ploy

If the shinobi reach the Imperial guesthouse walls, or the PCs choose not to chase after them, the attackers flee into the city streets to make their way to the rendezvous with their employers. Depending on who the GM chose to be the culprits (see **Desperate Measures** on page 6), that group miraculously returns with Masayo in the morning, claiming they found several shinobi trying to sneak her out of Kyūden Doji. The mercenaries escaped, but Masayo was taken to a healer and is safe. Whichever faction returns with Masayo will receive a bonus in the upcoming court intrigue that will determine the child's fate (see **Act 3: Those Who Take** on page 16).

If the GM wishes to extend this adventure further, they can also give PCs an opportunity to investigate and discover a safe house where Masayo is being held after the chase in concluded, possibly discovering evidence as to who hired the shinobi in the first place and adding even more drama to the game.

Mercenary Shinobi

MINION — CONFLICT RANK: 3 3

While the use of shinobi has been outlawed by the Emperor, these specialized assassins and spies are still secretly employed by most Clans. However, if such information were brought to light it would bring great dishonor and consequences down upon the heads of those who would so boldly disobey the Son of Heaven.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
35	HONOR	ENDURANCE	11
20	GLORY	COMPOSURE	10
04	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - SHREWD	VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 0 | MARTIAL 3 | SCHOLAR 1 | SOCIAL 1 | TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Killer Instinct: Martial; *Mental*

Deadly Silent: Martial; *Physical, Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Heartless: Social; *Physical, Spiritual*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Kyoketsu Shoge: Range 0–2, Damage 2, Deadliness 3, Concealable, Forbidden, Snaring

Shinobigatana: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/6, Ceremonial, Concealable, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Worn traveler's clothes (Physical 2, Mundane), straw hat, sorted knives, caltrops, vials, handful of zeni.

ABILITIES

FANG OF THE WOLF

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

FLOWING WATER STRIKE

As an Attack and Movement action using a readied weapon, a Mercenary Shinobi may make a **TN 3 Martial Arts (Water)** check using the appropriate skill for that readied weapon, targeting one character at range 0-2.

Effects: On a success, the target suffers 3 physical damage and suffers the Bleeding condition. The target must resist with a **TN 4 Fitness check (Earth 2, Fire 5)**; if they fail, increase the damage they suffer by the Shinobi's weapon's base damage.

Bunji's Confession

The following scene involves the PCs trying to determine which clan Masayo might be better suited for and any other information that could inform her placement with a family. Depending on how the PCs do, they may gain an advantage in the final scene and may be able to sway Bunji's lord, Miya Satoshi, towards their preference.

Preparing for Court

After events of the previous day, a sore and tired Bunji requests the PCs meet him at his office at midday. When they arrive, they find Yuki attempting to console a frustrated and upset Bunji. As they enter, Yuki excuses herself to allow the PCs some privacy. Read or paraphrase the following:

> As Yuki takes her leave and quietly closes the door behind her, Bunji dabs his face as he turns to you. His arm is wrapped in bandages and he has a dark bruise across his temple. He looks at you and takes a deep breath. In the course of a moment he seems to age years, a tiredness settling around his eyes. You see stacks of parchment strewn across his desk and notice stains on the smooth wooden floor where servants attempted to clean up blood from both Bunji and the mercenary he killed. "Samurai, welcome back," Bunji says with a tired, half-smile, "it seems as though we may be able to speak without being interrupted this time."

Bunji explains to the PCs that he is due to present his decision before his lord, Miya Satoshi, as well as the Dragon and Phoenix representatives this evening. He requests that the PCs help him ensure that Masayo is ready for her gempuku, and attempt to gauge whether she may be better suited for one clan over the other through a series of tests, while Bunji goes over documents relating to the land Masayo's village resides on.

If the PCs agree, Bunji explains that this process of testing Masayo prior to her gempuku is irregular given her age, but both the Dragon and Phoenix have requested this of him, both clans hoping an impartial judge may tip the scales in their favor. Things are further complicated by the fact that Masayo has received no proper education, and has instead only been given a peasant's education. Furthermore, he desires to know Masayo's preference between the two clans but cannot ask for fear of upsetting her. As the PCs converse with him, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> "I would test her myself, but I fear I have become too close to the situation." Bunji rubs the bridge of his nose and lets out a deep, sorrowful sigh.

> "Masayo…she reminds me of my child, lost to a tsunami that crushed the northern coast last year. She...Nanako... was traveling with my wife Hanae…" Bunji trails off and looks away, attempting to compose himself. He straightens his shoulders, clears his throat, and continues, "Masayo is a bright and sweet child, and she will make a thoughtful and compassionate samurai. I only hope that she is raised by someone who truly cares for the unique and special person that she is."

PCs may make a **TN 1 Sentiment (Earth 2) check** to pick up that Bunji may wish to raise Masayo himself. If a PC probes this further, Bunji shifts uncomfortably and dodges the question. If the PCs ask Bunji outright where he thinks Masayo should go, he answers simply, and somewhat sadly, that he is still compiling information and the PCs' tests will help him make his decision. After a short time Bunji asks if the PCs are ready to see Masayo and leads them to a small dōjō down a long corridor from his office.

Testing the Winds

As the PCs enter the dōjō, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> The small dōjō is a private room used exclusively for the Imperial families during their stay at Kyūden Doji. Training mats line the walls along with finely crafted wooden weapons and various other training equipment. A table stands at one side, adorned with several papers and writing implements. Sitting in the middle of the room is Masayo, her legs crossed, her eyes focused on a small whirlwind twirling about in front of her. Suddenly she notices your arrival, and the apparition dissipates.

Bunji introduces each of the PCs to Masayo and explains their presence. He then excuses himself, so the PCs may conduct their tests. The PCs may now formally speak with Masayo and gauge her talents in a range of areas, specifically knowledge, prowess, and wisdom. The PCs, especially shugenja, may also wish to test Masayo on her ability with invocations.

The PCs conduct the interview as a 3 round intrigue, using the **Discern Someone's Qualities** social objective (see page 255 of the core rulebook). The TN of each check, however, remains hidden, therefore providing the PCs with a single Void Point for each check. The number of Momentum required to complete the test is 5.

Each round, the PCs must choose which of Masayo's Ring attributes they wish to test. The number of that attribute is the TN for the check. Each check, however, increases the TN by 1 as Masayo becomes fatigued and frustrated. Shugenja who test Masayo on her Void Ring may reduce the TN by 1 to a minimum of 1.

Masayo is aware of what is going on, is frustrated, and does not want to cooperate. PCs who use Earth or Fire as their approach increase the TN of any checks by 1, and PCs who use a Void reduce the TN of any checks by 1 to a minimum of 1.

Masayo is undisciplined and prone to anger, and so the PCs must proceed with caution, or else risk her invoking Yamakaze like she did at the temple. Failing a check results in Masayo using her **Accidentally Unleashed** ability, which affects any PC in the room.

If one or more of the PCs complete the **Discern Someone's Qualities** social objective those PCs gain an advantage in the upcoming court intrigue (see **Act 3: Those Who Receive** on page 16). Any PCs who fail are unable to determine any substantially useful information based on the tests, and receive no mechanical benefit in the final scene.

Discovering Yamakaze

If any PC is able to discover that the Yamakaze, the Fortune of the Mountain Winds, is bonded to Masayo, they gain an advantage in the upcoming court intrigue, as the presence of a Fortune is seen as a divine message (see **Act 3: Those Who Receive** on page 16). This also applies if they learn of Yamakaze earlier.

Solving a Problem Like Masayo

During the interview, the PCs can ask Masayo about her life before her arrival at Kyūden Doji. Her memories of the incident with her parents are hazy, as are those of the kidnapping, but what is clear to her is that her parents cared for her deeply, as she cared for them. While talented in her communion with the kami, she is unfamiliar with the politics of the clans, and lacks any formal discipline.

The PCs may spend ✿ on any successful test to learn what Masayo truly wants. Should any PC do this, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> "That man. Bunji-san. He has been nice to me since he found me, and although he took me from my family in the village, he worries about me. I don't know what it's about, but since arriving at the castle, he's been really upset. I think I would like to stay with him to look after him like he looks after me. But they won't let me do that, will they?"

Depending on what answer the PCs give Masayo, she may react poorly. Though she is oddly perceptive for her age, she is still just a child. If the PCs tell Masayo that she cannot stay with Bunji, a window bursts open and

Masayo's **Accidentally Unleashed** ability activates (see page 17). To calm Masayo down, the PCs must make a **TN 4 Sentiment (Void 3, Fire 5, Earth 5) check**. Every time a PC fails to reassure Masayo, each PC suffers 1 additional supernatural damage as the winds cause objects to fly in every direction and the wrath of Yamakaze is unleashed.

If the PCs consult Yuki after the test and tell her of Masayo's confession, Yuki admits that she has seen that Miya Bunji would be an excellent father for Masayo, and that it may be the best choice overall in order to avoid tensions rising further between the Dragon and the Phoenix.

Decisions, Decisions

The PCs have a range of options to choose from including the Dragon, Phoenix, and Bunji, although numerous other options exist. The Dragon have a strong argument given Masayo's home village lies within Dragon lands, but the Dragon's choice of guardian indicates that Masayo may suffer in the long term through the exploitation of her powers.

The Phoenix are also a strong choice, since Masayo's blood relation, Isawa Yoshiko, can raise her, though the scandal around Yoshiko's parentage threatens to lose the Phoenix face. Choosing either of these formidable clans could leave either party with a sour taste in their mouth and a grudge to bear.

The matter is further complicated when Masayo expresses her desire to be raised by Miya Bunji, an idea supported by Shika Yuki and the Deer Clan. Should this be the PCs' choice, both the Dragon and Phoenix feel they have lost face. Fortunately, the Imperial Miya family remain supported by the Emperor, and if any retaliation occurs, it is likely to be subtle at best. The most likely consequence is that the PCs will have a harder time during the remaining months of Winter Court when interacting with either clan.

Other options include finding middle ground such as allowing the adoption of Masayo by the Miya family while agreeing to marry her to another clan later. Players may come up with interesting or strange solutions, and it's up to the GM whether such solutions work.

Act 3: Those Who Receive

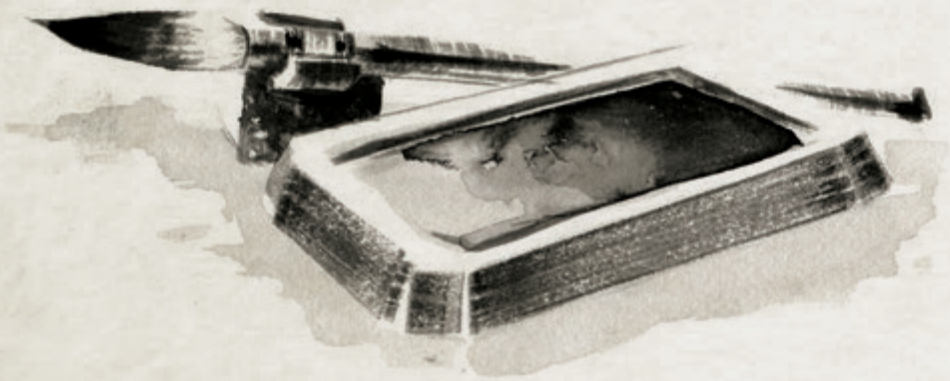
In this final act, the PCs must attend court in the company of Bunji and Masayo to speak in front of the Imperial Herald Miya Satoshi, the Dragon representative Kitsuki Tomoyo, and the Phoenix representative Asako Haruki. Given the high-profile nature of the case, the court is filled with numerous Winter Court attendees—some attend to support their clan, while others are simply present to see the spectacle. The GM may wish to have some NPCs from *Winter's Embrace* be present here, such as Doji Hatsuhina, Asahina Takako, Kakita Ryoku, or Otomo Koryusai.

Miya Satoshi calls the special assembly to order and asks the PCs to present their findings along with their final decision regarding Masayo's fate. Any choice will be accepted with sufficient explanation, though the PCs must weigh the consequences of revealing any information they have accumulated. The PCs are free to pick the clan they want to support based on personal preferences, impressions throughout the storyline, or whatever they feel is best. Unfortunately, their standing does present a problem and those with a status of lower than 75 must stake glory equal to their glory rank to be apart of the following intrigue.

SEMBLANCE OF ORDER

The presentation of the case is an intrigue, with PCs using the **Appeal to a Person or Group** social objective (page 255 of the core rulebook) to convince the court of the fairness, impartiality, and integrity of their investigation. The number of Momentum required is equal to Miya Satoshi's focus of 6.

Tomoyo or Haruki, or both, also participate in the case by pursuing the **Discredit Someone** social objective (page 255-256 of the core rulebook) if they feel the PCs are not going to come down on their side. Similarly, if the PCs have sided with a clan, or Bunji, that clan's representative or Bunji can provide skilled assistance to one of the PCs checks per round (see **Assistance** on page 26 of the core rulebook).



PCs may choose to oppose one another during this presentation, with one or more PCs taking a different stance than the rest of the group. If this is the case, each group is working separately to complete their social objective and both Tomoyo and Haruki participate in the intrigue.

A Minor Setback

Throughout this adventure the PCs had several opportunities to either earn an advantage in this final scene or keep others from gaining advantages. The results from those encounters are listed here.

- If Isawa Yoshiko's champion lost during the duel with Mirumoto Kazuya (see page 12), Asako Haruki increases the TN of all checks he makes during this scene by 1.
- During the kemari tournament, if the PCs were unable to calm Kitsuki Tomoyo down or simply chose not to, then Kitsuki Tomoyo increases the TN of all checks she makes during this scene by 1.
- During the chase scene if the shinobi successfully escaped, the party responsible for hiring the mercenaries decreases the TN of all checks they make during this scene by 1 to a minimum of 1 for returning Masayo and pulling off their under-handed trick.
- If the shinobi successfully escaped, but one or more PCs found Masayo before she was miraculously returned, unharmed, in the morning, then those PCs decrease the TN of all checks by 1 to a minimum of 1 during this scene and the group that hired the shinobi get no benefit.
- If one or more PCs completed the **Discern Someone's Qualities** social objective when testing Masayo, then those PCs roll one additional ■ on all checks made during this scene.
- If one or more PCs discovered the Fortune Yamakaze is bonded to Masayo, then those PCs automatically gain 1 Momentum towards their objective.

Satoshi's Conclusion

If one or more PCs succeeds in their objective, Miya Satoshi commends them for their thoroughness and unbiased evaluation. If one or more PCs were competing for separate goals, then the PC with the highest status is the one that convinces Satoshi of their position. If one or more PCs are tied for highest status, then the PC with the highest honor is selected. The assembly subsequently holds Bunji in high regard for having the foresight to utilize the PCs' services and Miya Satoshi promotes him for his efforts.

If the PCs fail, it brings dishonor to Bunji and the forfeiture of any glory the PCs staked. Furthermore, Miya Satoshi delays a final judgment, which leads to an increase in tension between the Dragon and Phoenix. Satoshi also arranges for Masayo's removal from Bunji's care, which results in Bunji committing seppuku rather than face the continued wrath of his lord and the loss of Masayo.

Needs of the Few

When Masayo is given over to whichever parent the PCs decided upon, the PCs who argued for that parent gain the **Support of [The Dragon Clan]**, **Support of [The Phoenix Clan]**, or **Support of [The Miya Family]** advantage (see page 110 in the core rulebook). The PCs can also count on the support of whichever individuals who benefited from the decision, which can assist them in future adventures.

If Bunji was suitably impressed with the characters, even if he did not get the chance to adopt Masayo, he assists them with arranging an audience with Miya Satoshi, the Master of Ceremonies, during the events of *Winter's Embrace* if they do not gain an audience with him by assisting Asahina Takako in that adventure.

If the characters manage to handle the whole affair quietly, they earn the thanks of the Crane Clan and obtain a boon during their stay in Winter Court. This may take the form of an attendant, a piece of equipment vital to their current needs, or some other small favor.

Player Rewards

With the storyline over, the GM should reward each player for their character's actions and successes:

- 1 XP: Succeeding in keeping the temple secure and/or calming the service attendees.
- 1 XP: Winning at least 1 round of the Kemari Tournament.
- 1 XP and 5 glory: Winning the whole Kemari Tournament.
- 1 XP: Defeating the Mercenary Shinobi.
- 1 XP and honor equal to their honor rank: Convincing the court that Miya Bunji is the best choice for Masayo.
- 1 XP: Reaching a decision where either the Dragon or Phoenix were satisfied.
- 2 XP and glory equal to two times their glory rank: Reaching a decision where both Dragon and Phoenix are satisfied.

A HAPPIER ENDING

If the GM and players are uncomfortable with themes of ritual suicide, Bunji can instead leave his station to become a member of a monastery.

Being a monk is seen as a honorable act, so becoming one in the wake of dishonor is thought to balance the karmic scales, as long as one does so with good intentions.

MASAYO'S STATUS

Because Masayo is a child and has not completed her gempuku, her status is effectively zero. This has different implications than it might for a hinin or gaijin; Masayo does belong in the Celestial Order, she just has no real standing in that regard until she completes her gempuku and takes her place as a samurai.

Appendix: Non-Player Characters

The convoluted situation with the adoption of Masayo has many individuals working with specific agendas, some conflicting, while others complimentary. The following is a list of NPCs that play important roles in this adventure.

Masayo, Orphaned Child

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 1 / 2

Masayo is a child of 12 years possessing a profound connection to the kami. Her gifts are undisciplined and lacking focus. Raised by the peasants of her village from a young age, she is ignorant of the ways of a samurai. She is frightened and far from the home she knows and the people she loves, and has brought with her Yamakaze, the Fortune of the Mountain Winds. The Fortune has become tied to Masayo and the bond is so strong that Masayo may not even be aware of what invokes Yamakaze. On top of that, Masayo is so attuned to the elements around her that just her stress and fear in agitates any kami nearby, causing furniture to move, water to flow strangely, and other phenomenon to occur.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
38	HONOR	ENDURANCE	7
40	GLORY	COMPOSURE	5
*	STATUS	FOCUS	4
+1, +1, –1	DEMEANOR - DETACHED	VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 0	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Blessed Lineage: Social; *Spiritual*

DISADVANTAGES

Easily Frightened: Martial; *Mental*

Mysterious Protector: Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Gear (equipped): Traveling clothes (Physical 2, Durable, Mundane, Subtle), straw bear

ABILITIES

ACCIDENTALLY UNLEASHED

If Masayo loses her temper or becomes scared, or otherwise becomes Compromised, she must make a **TN 2 Theology (Air) check** targeting all characters within range 0–2. If successful, a gust of wind rushes through the area. All targets within range suffer 1 supernatural damage plus 1 per bonus success (to a maximum of 3). Until calmed with a **TN 2 Sentiment (Void 1, Earth 3, Fire 3) check** or rendered unconscious, targets in the area continue to suffer 1 supernatural damage per round.

Miya Bunji, Imperial Cartographer

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 5 / 7

Miya Bunji is a respected Herald of the Miya Family and a skilled cartographer. He often spends many months away from his home, charting areas of the Empire that are difficult to access. He has personally found several swaths of fertile land tucked away in obscure places, which has put him in favorable graces with his lord, Miya Satoshi, and has brought glory to his family. Unfortunately for Bunji, while he was away last year his wife Hanae and his daughter Nanako were lost to a tsunami that crushed the northern coast of the Crane Lands.

To cope with his tremendous loss, Bunji threw himself into his work. He began choosing more dangerous terrain to map and became reckless in his travels. While mapping the rugged border between the Phoenix and Dragon lands, Bunji became trapped in a severe pre-winter storm, even though he had been warned about the mountain's wrath. Lost and without his horse, Bunji thought he would surely die, and welcomed the opportunity to see his wife and daughter again in another life. It was then that the winds parted and he found himself in a clearing with a young girl who he briefly mistook for his lost Nanako.

Bunji learned that the girl's name was Masayo, and through a series of circumstances is now at the Winter Court, assigned by his lord to determine the best place for the child. Over the long weeks of travel Bunji has come to care for Masayo, seeing the bright and kind young woman she is. Though Bunji's heart longs to save her from the politics of the clans, he must also do what is best for Rokugan.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
65	HONOR	ENDURANCE	14
55	GLORY	COMPOSURE	16
45	STATUS	FOCUS	5
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - SHREWD	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 2	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 3	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 3

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Famously Honest: Social; *Interpersonal, Mental*	**Traumatic Loss:** Social; *Interpersonal, Mental*
Superb Spatial Reasoning: Scholar; Material, *Mental*	

FAVORED WEAPONS

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Concealable, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Extravagant robes (Physical 1, Ceremonial, Resplendent), calligraphy set, scroll cases filled with Imperial maps, personal chop

ABILITIES

THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

As a Support action, Bunji may make a **TN 3 Government (Water) check** to determine the best course of action. On a success, he may choose himself or a different target who may add a kept ■ set to ◐ ◑ to their next check. If he succeeds, Bunji may spend ✲ ✲+ from this check to provide the same benefit to another target.

Asako Haruki, Secretive Phoenix Diplomat

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 4 8

Knowing a life of privilege and plenty, Haruki is the head of the Phoenix delegation at Winter Court and the cousin of the Asako daimyō. He is optimistic to the point of arrogance, and he believes that Masayo offers hope to the Phoenix considering the recent difficulties they have had communing with the kami. He would stop at nothing to secure her normally, but the man standing as her potential parent is his longtime lover, Mirumoto Kazuya. Because of the rising tensions over Masayo, the relationship between Kazuya and Haruki has become strained. Each has a duty to their clan to secure the child, and no possible answer in Haruki's mind and to the fighting between the clans. Because of rising tempers, Haruki and Kazuya are able to see one another less and less, and any hope for their relationship to flourish is beginning to look bleak. Not wishing to face Kazuya's anger and competitive nature, Haruki has elected for Isawa Yoshiko to act as the Phoenix candidate and plans to blame her if they fail to secure Masayo.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
60	HONOR	ENDURANCE	9
50	GLORY	COMPOSURE	15
62	STATUS	FOCUS	7
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · SHREWD	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 3	MARTIAL 0	SCHOLAR 3	SOCIAL 4	TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Excellent Liar: Social; *Interpersonal*	**Fear of Failure:** Martial; *Mental*
Patience: Scholar; *Mental*	**Dark Secret:** Social; *Interpersonal*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Concealable, Razor-Edged

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

ABILITIES

WHISPERING WINDS

Once per session as a Scheme action, Haruki may make a **Courtesy (Air) check** targeting one character in the scene. The TN is equal to 6 minus the target's glory rank (to a minimum of 1). If successful, Haruki learns a rumor about the target. Haruki may spend ✲ ✲ to learn one of the target's advantages or disadvantages of the target's choice.

FANNING THE FLAMES

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

> Fire ✲+: One target gains the Dazed condition.

Kitsuki Tomoyo, Regimented Dragon Warrior

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 7 / 5

The head of the Dragon delegation and the youngest daughter of the Kitsuki daimyō, Tomoyo is a young and dynamic woman who is dedicated to her clan, and ready to back up her words with steel. Tomoyo is at Winter Court to fight, both politically and physically. If her time allows, she is eager to show off her prowess as a duelist to anyone who shows interest. She is impulsive and strongly believes that Masayo may be the child described in the Hinokami Prophecy, a story that she holds dear to her heart and one she was raised listening to. Her intention is to quickly end this stalemate and sees no other solution except for the return of the child to her home in the Dragon lands. What is not known to most is that Tomoyo is herself an orphan, adopted by the Kitsuki daimyō at birth, a fact that allows Tomoyo be in a unique position to empathize with Masayo.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
45	HONOR	ENDURANCE	14
50	GLORY	COMPOSURE	10
68	STATUS	FOCUS	5
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - GRUFF	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Tested in War: Martial; *Mental, Physical*

Sworn to Bushidō: Social; *Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Hot Tempered: Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS

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

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

ABILITIES

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH

When Tomoyo makes an initiative roll during an intrigue scene, she may spend ✿✿ to choose a known objective that a friendly target is going to attempt and reduces the momentum required to complete that task by 1.

STRIKING AS FIRE

When performing an Attack action (Fire) check, Tomoyo may spend ✿ to increase the severity of any critical strike dealt as part of this attack by 2 per ✿ spent this way.

Shika Yuki, Deer Clan Matchmaker

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 3 / 7

An origami master and matchmaker of the Deer Clan, Yuki has unparalleled knowledge of samurai lineages. She gained insight many months ago that a great imbalance lay on the horizon; her only hint was that she must be at the Winter Court. What took her by surprise was when her lifelong friend Miya Bunji approached her with his current dilemma. She assured Bunji that she would help him, but did not reveal the strong connection she sensed between Bunji and Masayo.

Yuki is kind but measured, using words carefully to convey as few of her secrets as possible. She is fully aware of the ramifications should the Dragon or Phoenix adopt Masayo, and may seek assistance from her speardancers should the situation deteriorate. Not wanting to interfere, however, she monitors the situation until she feels the time is right to reveal her vision. She is an ally and close friend to Kakita Ryoku, to whom she owes a debt of gratitude since she was instrumental in raising her standing in the Imperial Court.

Yuki accepts any decision the PCs make, but expresses her concerns nonetheless. If the final decision is to give the child to anyone but Bunji, she may contact her speardancer colleagues to discreetly monitor Masayo's movements. This may present further roleplaying opportunities involving the Deer Clan as they attempt to rectify the situation the PCs have created.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
40	HONOR	ENDURANCE	10
35	GLORY	COMPOSURE	16
45	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - SHREWD	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 4	MARTIAL 0	SCHOLAR 3	SOCIAL 4	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Origami Master: Artisan; *Physical*

Traces of Ancestry: Scholar; *Mental, Spiritual*

DISADVANTAGES

Obligated (Kakita Ryoku): Social; *Mental*

Overly Cautious: Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Concealable, Razor-Edged

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

ABILITIES

SECRETS ON THE WIND

As a Scheme action, Yuki may make a **TN 3 Theology (Air)** check targeting one position at range 0. If she succeeds, she can eavesdrop on the chosen position within 4 range bands. This effect persists for twenty-four hours or until she designates a new area for eavesdropping. While in effect, Yuki may spend an action to hear anything said at that moment in the designated area.

THE TIES THAT BIND

As an action, Yuki may make a **TN 3 Sentiment (Void) check** targeting one character. If she succeeds, she learns of another character whom would be a particularly inauspicious match for her target, and one likely future consequence of their relationship. Yuki may spend ✿✿ to learn of one more likely future consequence of that relationship.

Daidoji Aki, Agile Crane Yōjimbō

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 7 5

As a rising star in the sport of kemari, Aki is equally well-known as a philanderer, often heard recounting his 'victories' to any who are willing to listen to his sordid tales. Playful and overly-friendly, his sophistication is a hit among the upper echelons of nobility, a trait that often finds him in hot water, particularly with the partners of his conquests. As the kemari Winter Court Champion for the last four years, he hopes to continue his winning streak. He is happy to offer his thoughts on any crisis, personal or political, especially if he can use it to put his competition off their game.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
37	HONOR	ENDURANCE	12
55	GLORY	COMPOSURE	14
40	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2 DEMEANOR · AMBITIOUS		VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 3	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Kemari Champion: Martial; *Physical*	**Irresistible Flirtation:** Social; *Interpersonal*

FAVORED WEAPONS

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

Gear (equipped): Plain robes (Physical 1, Mundane), wakizashi, knife, hair ribbon.

Gear (other): Concealed armor (Physical 2, Concealable)

ABILITIES

TACTICS OF KEMARI

Prior to a round of kemari, Aki may make a **TN 2 Sentiment (Air) check** targeting a single character. If he succeeds, Aki may choose one of the target's disadvantages. The target applies that disadvantage to their next check, and receives 3 strife if they fail.

SWORN PROTECTOR

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

Mirumoto Kazuya, Brash Dragon Captain

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 6 4

A veteran officer of the Dragon Clan, Kazuya offered to adopt Masayo in the hope of elevating his status and becoming part of history as the father figure to the child of the Hinokami Prophecy. He is also the lover of the lead Phoenix delegate Asako Haruki, which given the current situation leaves his relationship with the Dragon in jeopardy.

Volatile and easily influenced, Kazuya has gained an interest in the Perfect Land Sect—a fact of which his lover is aware. Haruki has tried desperately to sway him from this path, which is the only reason Kazuya hasn't embraced their beliefs completely. Should Kazuya gain control of Masayo, and his relationship with Haruki deteriorate, there is no telling what he could do with the child's power, nor what devastation the Perfect Land Sect could cause. Kazuya is arrogant and knows the Dragon have the strongest claim and refuses to hear anything to the contrary. His love for Asako Haruki is strong, but his faith in the prophecy is stronger.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
55	HONOR	ENDURANCE	16
60	GLORY	COMPOSURE	10
50	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2 DEMEANOR · ASSERTIVE		VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Masterful Fighter: Martial; *Physical*	**Dark Secret (*Perfect Land Sect*):** Social; *Interpersonal*
Veteran's Instincts: Martial; *Mental, Spiritual*	

FAVORED WEAPONS

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

Gear (equipped): Ceremonial clothes (Physical 1, Ceremonial, Resplendent), wakizashi, knife, love letter from Asako Haruki

Isawa Yoshiko, Cunning Phoenix Shugenja

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 3 7

Yoshiko is a reserved yet clever shugenja who is always looking to stay one step ahead of any competitors. She chooses to rely on her knowledge of clan politics and law to sway the decision toward the Phoenix, though she willingly offers the PCs help if given the opportunity, so long as she believes it might work in the Phoenix's favor.

Delegated as the Phoenix representative to adopt Masayo, Yoshiko is struggling to keep an embarrassing secret hidden. Yoshiko was born out of wedlock, and the shame of her parents resulted in her being given to the Isawa to avoid the political backlash of her father and mother's inappropriate relationship. Yoshiko knows who her parents were, a fact she overheard at a young age from her caretakers. It was not until shortly before the memorial service that she heard her mother's name again when speaking of Shiba Miku, Masayo's mother. Yoshiko realized that Miku must be her half sister, and Masayo is her niece by blood. Such a familial bond could have a dramatic effect on the proceedings, either embarrassing and disqualifying Yoshiko from the adoption because she has no proof, or by strengthening the Phoenix's claim on the child.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
60	HONOR	ENDURANCE	10
45	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
34	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - COMPASSIONATE	VIGILANCE	3

ARTISAN 3 | MARTIAL 0 | SCHOLAR 4 | SOCIAL 2 | TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Mystical Knowledge: Scholar; *Mental*	**Shamed Upbringing:** Social; *Interpersonal*
Quick Study: Scholar; *Martial, Mental*	

FAVORED WEAPONS

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Concealable, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Sanctified robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 3, Ceremonial), scroll satchel, various trinkets and offerings for the spirits.

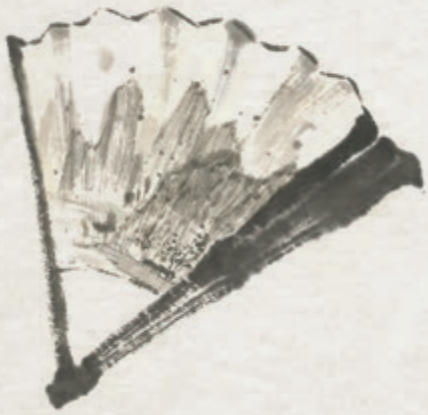
ABILITIES

PATH TO INNER PEACE

As a Support action, Yoshiko may make a **TN 2 Theology (Water) check** targeting herself or another character at range 0–2. If she succeeds, the target removes 4 fatigue plus 1 for each bonus success. A target can only benefit from this ability once per scene.

> **:** Yoshiko may also remove strife from her target equal to her bonus successes.

> **+:** Yoshiko may remove one of the following conditions from her target for every she spends this way: Bleeding, Dazed, Disoriented, or Lightly Wounded.



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Legend of the Five Rings ROLEPLAYING

THE SCROLL OR THE BLADE

Unravel the tension between the Phoenix and Dragon at this year's Winter Court...

Every Winter Court is filled with intrigue, schemes, and deadly political games, but this year feels particularly tense. While the Crane grin and bear the presence of the rowdy Mantis Clan, something is amiss between the normally peaceful Dragon and Phoenix. The discovery of a young orphaned girl, Masayo, who is the child of a Phoenix and Dragon and has a massive affinity for the kami, is causing tensions to rise as both clans seek to claim her as their own.

A supplemental storyline for *Winter's Embrace, The Scroll or the Blade* expands upon that adventure by showcasing how even small decisions can have a dramatic impact on relatively peaceful clans. This storyline for the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game* offers players and GMs who are venturing into the political warzone of the Winter Court an opportunity to make powerful new allies, and enemies which may have long-lasting reprecussions in their future adventures.

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