

Changing the Game

By Christian Ward

**A [Mid]-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne**

Month of the Goat, 1341 (Summer)

**Module Number: CIT25
Release Date: 08/02/2018**

Travel, Role Play, Combat, Intrigue

One man's gambit puts the Future of the Empire in question.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Fantasy Flight Games. Scenario detail copyright 2018 by the author and Fantasy Flight Games. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without permission.

This module is written for the Legends of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Fourth Edition, originally published by Alderac Entertainment Group.

Please refer to the *Heroes of Rokugan 4: Champions of the Ivory Throne Campaign Primer* for information on how to run official campaign modules. In addition to the basic setting information and house rules for this campaign, it details the various administrative necessities of the living campaign. GM reporting is crucial to players' ability to engage with the setting and to increase their characters' influence.

Adventure Background and Summary

Emperor Toturi X is becoming quickly known as being a man of incredible compassion. That said, his compassion has taken forms that most Samurai would consider incredibly short sighted. His seeming obsession with trying to assist the Gaijin has earned him a nickname said only in quiet circles: The Gaijin Prince.

His latest decision in this vein was made despite the insistence of all of his advisors: Shin-Zhu plans to send aid and build trade with the Senpet of Medinaat-al-Salaam. With only a pair of weeks before the official proclamation is planned to be made, Kazetora is desperate to try and stop his brother from making what he sees to be a terrible mistake. With counsel not working, he has one option left to him: Yoritomo Kaminari.

Kaminari and Shin-Zhu have been friends for many years and were considered inseparable when they spent time together in Balishnimpur. Kazetora knows that Kaminari can stop this... but knows as well that it will cost Kaminari's life to do so. Though Kazetora is loath to cause the death of a legitimately good Samurai, the Empire he is trying to build despite his brother's misguided intention demands that something be done.

However, there are other factions that welcome the strife caused by the Emperor's good intentions. As they catch wind of Kaminari's impending arrival, forces move to ensure that the Mantis Clan Champion does not make it that far...

Upkeep

The events of the modules are certainly of primary importance in the lives of the characters, but many of

them will have been working on a variety of tasks in the times between modules. At the beginning of the module, several things will need to take place (though some are obviously dependent on the actual needs of the PCs at the table).

Character Notes

The GM should take a few minutes to examine the players' character sheets in order to have an idea of the nature of the PCs at the table. It is frequently helpful to have a list of specific mechanics that come up in the course of the module determined at the start of the module so the GM does not have to slow down play to check and see which parts apply to which PC. These can be Advantages, Disadvantages, Schools, Skills, or any other particularly relevant mechanics.

- Noticed, ally, or Sworn Enemy: Yoritomo Kaminari
- Noticed, ally, or Sworn Enemy: Toturi Kazetora

News from the Empire

While the GM is looking over sheets, it's a good time to distribute the first player handout of most modules. The News of the Empire is an overview of the recent events of the Empire in a fashion that shares the ongoing story with the playerbase without requiring a Skill Roll or interfering with the actual plot of the module. Any plot-relevant Rumors will belong in the appropriate section of the module to be learned during play.

Inactivity

At the beginning of this module, all PCs lose one point of Glory. This cannot reduce a PC's Glory Rank to less than their Insight Rank, and the Fame Advantage increases their Insight Rank by one for these purposes.

Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module. The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** is $5+(Taint\ rank*5)$.

Crafting

The Crafting rules are detailed in the Campaign Primer, based largely on the Crafting rules in the core book (page 258). Unless explicitly indicated otherwise, a PC may only make one Crafting Roll per module, and any Void Points or other character resources (spell slots, Luck, etc) spent on the roll do not refresh for the duration of the module. Any successful roll is noted on the provided sheet with the description.

Preparation Techniques

Techniques like the Agasha Shugenja or Yogo Wards do not quite fall under Crafting, but still can benefit from pre-planning and the Upkeep is a good opportunity. However, unlike Crafting, this is not the only time these Techniques may be used during a module – this is just a chance for the GM to remind the players and get it out of the way.

Ronin Survival

Life is difficult for ronin in the Empire at the best of times. PC ronin are no exception to this. At the start of the module, a PC ronin must roll **Hunting (Survival) / Stamina** at a TN of 10. Failure on this roll gives the ronin the Permanent Wound Disadvantage for the duration of the module. Koku may be spent on this roll to gain a Free Raise for every koku spent before the roll is made, or one Free Raise for every two koku spent after the roll is made.

Experience Expenditure

Finally, the players should be given one last chance to spend any experience they wish before the module begins. Unless the module specifically allows it, experience may not be spent during the adventure.

Introduction

The PCs are riding on the *Quiet Storm*, a ship destined for Mantis Isles. They are here on a direct request from Toturi Kazetora, who has requested them specifically to deliver a message to the Mantis Clan Champion, Yoritomo Kaminari and to return upon the letter's receipt. The message is in the form of a perfectly sealed letter. A curious PC might decide they wish to read the letter in advance. They are free to do so, but in this instance, it would be good to inform them that they will be delivering the letter in person, and that the letter was sealed with Kazetora's personal seal. If they are still insistent, this costs them D0 honor. Hand this PC Appendix 1: Letter to Kaminari.

Resealing the letter, if a PC wants to try to do that after having read it, is a difficult task. The letter was sealed with Toturi Kazetora's seal, and short of having a legitimate copy of the seal, restamping it is time consuming and difficult. The PC will need to make a Forgery / Intelligence roll at TN 40 to reseal it successfully.

The trip to the Isle of Silk and Spice has been warm, clear, and uneventful.

As you make your way through the docks, you are met with an army of servants who swiftly move to take any

things that you might be carrying that aren't strictly necessary. As they begin to disperse, a single Mantis Samurai approaches you. He is an older man with a salt and pepper beard, his hair kept in a loose ponytail that does nothing to disguise the steady loss of hair from the top of his head. He offers a low bow to you as you approach, a wide smile on his face. "Ah, the guests who travel on the Quiet Storm! Kaminari-sama will be quite pleased to know that you are here! Please, if you will follow me, Kyuden Gyotei awaits."

As he leads you through the city, Kyuden Gyotei looms in the horizon. It is a large castle, rivaling the Forbidden City itself in size, and the centuries have only allowed for even more additions. It seems like anywhere that gold could be added had this happen, the mon of the Mantis emblazoned on the side such that it could be seen clearly from the sea itself if given the correct approach.

The PCs are taken to lavish rooms within Kyuden Gyotei. Servants are at their beck and call, offering whatever is necessary.

If, at this point, a PC is looking to get the letter to Yoritomo Kaminari, a servant will inform them that he is busy and will meet them in person to receive the letter over dinner. Until then, PCs are encouraged to enjoy the many lavish amenities the Mantis offer.

After a few hours, the PCs are called in for dinner:

You are led into a large room, just off the main court room of Kyuden Gyotei. Inside is an enormous table, easily capable of seating four or five dozen Samurai. The walls are accented Gold, with almost every bit of surface area off the accents covered in some painting or other. Several centerpieces sit on the table: an extremely ornate kama. A Gaijin sword of clear Ivindi origin. Another one with an ornate handle, clearly meant to be held in one hand as the ridiculous cover over the handle makes wielding it properly impossible. Despite the size of the room and number of tables, it is only you and the servants in the room initially. The servants note that the Mantis Champion will join you shortly, and instructed them to provide you with refreshments until he arrives.

PCs not familiar with each other should take this time to introduce themselves. It takes only about ten minutes between the PCs arrival and Kaminari's.

An elderly woman enters from a different door from the one you did. She is a woman who was clearly once a bushi from her gait and the scars on her right cheek,

but years of inactivity have clearly taken its toll. Behind her walks a much younger man, the blessings of youth still clear on every feature. He keeps his hair in a perfect topknot and wears perhaps the most subdued kimono you've seen since arriving in the castle.

PCs who have played CIT 01: Lessons Never Forgotten immediately recognize Yoritomo Chijiko, the governor (former governor?) of Toshi no Inazuma. A PC who has not played this mod can learn this with a Lore: Heraldry / intelligence roll of TN 25. Anyone can work out that the male samurai is Yoritomo Kaminari, Champion of the Mantis.

The two bow to you, Kaminari offering a polite, if somewhat shallow bow, while Chijiko bows very low. Kaminari rises first, smiling to you all as he greets you in turn. "Ah, Samurai-sans. I admit, I was not expecting such an eclectic group of visitors in my home. I understand that you have something for me, but before we get on to dinner, there is a mistake that I would see rectified."

His eyes look down to the still bowing Chijiko. "Some of you, if not all of you, were forced to deal with indignities at the hand of my *karo* here, back when she was entrusted to oversee Toshi no Inazuma. Her behavior and absolute lack of decorum represent a stain upon the Mantis clan. I will not see this slight unpunished."

He taps his foot once, and Chijiko's head raises, only very briefly. "This one is humiliated and embarrassed by her absolutely dreadful behavior those years ago. She would ask only that you accept her sincerest apologies for what she thought to be a sincere test."

Whether or not the PCs accept Chijiko's apology is largely immaterial to Kaminari. That the offer was given is his main focus, and once the PCs have responded, he will seat himself and order her to leave.

Kaminari is a man greatly dedicated to decorum, and his behavior here will be no different. Servants come out with food, and he will wait until the meal is finished to ask again over the message the PCs have for him.

Kaminari maintains a veneer of calm about him. He is a charming, friendly sort, and is willing to field any sorts of questions the PCs may have for him while they wait for the proper amount of time to pass.

Eventually, though, one must get to business...

As the servants clear the table, Kaminari studies you with a rather curious expression. "Now then, Samurai-sans. I know that you are here, and I know that you have something that I am supposed to read. But I am afraid I know not what that thing is. Perhaps you would be so kind as to enlighten me?"

Presumably, PCs will hand him the letter. If the letter is unsealed, Kaminari will be too polite to say anything directly, but all PCs will lose L1 glory as he quietly speaks of their improprieties to others.

Kaminari takes the letter, a single eyebrow raising as the sight of Kazetora's seal is shown to him. He is careful in opening it up, but can't quite avoid breaking the seal as he does so. As he reads, he is silent, scanning the pages carefully.

After a few long moments, he sets down the paper and looks to you. "Well then. It seems that I need to arrange travel to Otosan Uchi. I hope you do not mind that I ask you to accompany me. Such dedicated messengers should be recognized for their service, and I simply must be present to inform Toturi-sama of just how important your service was."

Though he is technically asking, Kaminari's tone gives every indication that this is expected of you. A PC can refuse, but doing so will result in a L0 glory loss. Such a PC is out of the mod, and may gain 2 points of XP for good role play, but no more.

Once the PCs have answered, Kaminari will nod and invite them to enjoy the hospitality of his castle. He then takes the letter and makes his leave.

Part One: Leaving the Mantis isles

The next morning, the PCs receive a missive informing them that Yoritomo Kaminari will meet with them in the early afternoon, as he has affairs to finish putting into place before they leave.

Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll. A PC from the local clan may be granted a Free Raise on this roll (or certain Advantages may apply).

- 10: The winds are picking up high. Could be a storm brewing.
- 15: I hear Arashi-dono has found something exciting out in the Sea.
- 20: It must be so exciting for Kaminari to see his friend again! What a boon it must be to count the Emperor as one of your best friends!
- 30: Yoritomo Kaminari's young son is showing a surprising lack of ability with the martial arts.

Once the PCs have had a chance to explore around the city, a servant will find them to inform them that the Mantis Champion is ready for them to leave.

As you make your way down to the docks, the Mantis Champion stands just next to the *Quiet Storm*, studying the ship with an appraising glance. Sitting on a crate nearby is a pretty young woman dressed in mantis green, though a significantly gaudier design and less conservative cut than that of the Mantis Champion. As the two notice you, they move to offer bows and greetings, Kaminari motioning to the woman with a small smile. "Ah, my new friends arrive. Samurai-sans, I would introduce you to Yoritomo Sumira, my wife."

The woman bows to you, politely enough, if not terribly eloquent. "Good day, Samurai-sans! I look forward to sharing the ship with you!"

With little other fanfare, the two Mantis walk the gang plank to the *Quiet Storm*. As the PCs board, they will notice that the ship is significantly fuller than it was when they departed for Kyuden Gyotei. Kaminari will introduce his honor guard to the PCs – more as a sweeping gesture than trying to individually name the twenty extra people that now join the ship.

As the ship begins to set back west, the grand castle of Kyuden Gyotei begins to disappear against the eastern horizon. Yoritomo Sumira does not so much as wait until the isles are out of sight to pull out several bottles of sake, offering refreshments to her husband's honor guard... which invariably means to you as well.

Sumira is not trying to get the PCs particularly drunk, but is simply attempting to keep the mood light around the ship. She will encourage everyone to join in the festivities, and if someone opts to perform for the ship, she will even speak well of them. This will afford such a PC a point of glory, as long as the performance is appropriate (a TN of 15 on any relevant perform check is more than enough). This glory cannot bring the PC's glory over 4.0.

If the PCs wish to speak with the honor guard, they are roughly as one would expect from the Mantis. However, there are some notable exceptions:

- **Tsuruchi Al-Bhim:** While this samurai has clear gaijin origin, he is different in that he clearly is of Senpet descent instead of Ivindi. His skin is altogether too dark to be a normal Rokugani's. Al-Bhim will cheerfully explain to any Samurai who wishes to learn where he came from that he is the Son of a Horiuchi who joined the Clan and was able to take the Unicorn Blood Rites. He has heard many great tales of his father's homeland of Medinaat-Al-Salaam and hopes to be able to visit it with his father some day!
- **Yoritomo Hachi:** A grim, surly man who refuses any drinks that are offered in his direction. Hachi will speak to PCs... for a few moments, but quickly wave them off and ask them to stop bothering him. All in all, the PCs should get a mild sense of him being somewhat suspicious. Indeed, he is the man who reports to the forces that attempt to assassinate Yoritomo Kaminari later in the module.
- **Moshi Natsumi:** Kaminari's Spiritual Advisor. She is a quiet young woman, but will be particularly interested in conversing with any PCs with particular spiritual ties.
- **Yoritomo Sumira:** The wife of the Mantis Champion dotes on her husband, mostly because she does actually care about him. She is more traditionally mantis than her husband, largely here to keep the impression that everything is OK... even though she knows that once they reach Otsan Uchi, she will never see her husband again.
- **Yoritomo Kaminari:** Kaminari is traditional, and somewhat reserved. Where his wife is actively encouraging people to drink and be merry, he is (understandably) more sober and thoughtful

Though some PCs may suspect trouble, the trip back to the mainland is actually very peaceful. PCs may be surprised, however, to find that their path takes them to Moshi lands instead of the Imperial Capitol.

As the mainland comes ever clearer into view, it is not the brilliance of Otsan Uchi that greets you. Rather, you instead see the outline of Kyuden Moshi. The shrine to the Sun Goddess looms high as you come ever closer, and even from where you are you can see

Samurai moving all around to welcome the Mantis Champion to the city.

PCs might be curious as to what they are doing in Moshi lands, as opposed to the capitol. Any of the Mantis can explain to them that Kaminari was hoping for a chance to meet with his Daimyo before arriving at the capitol.

As in Kyuden Gyotei, Servants are quick to assist the PCs with their things. Kaminari makes his way directly to the castle proper to meet with Moshi Oiko, leaving the PCs to themselves for the remainder of the day.

Amaterasu Seido

Particularly pious PCs may be interested in visiting the Shrine to the Sun Goddess.

As you climb the stairs of the Shrine proper, you are greeted with a splendid sight. The shrine is flooded with light, only the barest of shadows even hinting at encroaching in this space. Standing at the center is a large statue of a beautiful woman dressed in a bright kimono. The statue seems to be looking at you as you approach, holding out a welcoming hand. A few feet away is a smaller statue depicting a man, dressed in heavy armor and carrying a Tetsubo. He is a radiant figure as well, though somehow less than the statue of the woman.

Any PC can recognize the two figures as depictions of Amaterasu, the original Goddess of the Sun, and Hida Yakamo, the now-God of the Sun. The Statue of Yakamo is a relatively recent addition, only having appeared in Amaterasu Seido in the last 50 years, pushed by a movement within the Moshi Family to show greater reverence to the actual Sun that shines in the sky.

After the PCs are finished praying to the shrine or paying whatever respects they have, or if they go looking specifically for the Monks of the Shrine, the following scene will occur for them:

A young woman, dressed in the red and white robes of a Monk of Shinsei, comes forward to greet you, offering a motion of blessing even as she bows low. "Pardon me, [Family]-San, may I have just a moment of your time?" Without really waiting for permission to continue, she speaks regardless. "My name is Izumi, and I am one of the Shrine Maidens. I hope you are well, would you join me for tea?"

Assuming that the PCs do not outright refuse her, Izumi will lead them to the back of the Shrine, where a small tea room has been installed.

Izumi pours tea for the PC(s), acting every bit the gracious host before she gets down to business. If a PC is missing void points, they gain a void point.

Once the tea ceremony is completed, Izumi smiles to you. "Samurai-san, I hope you do not mind if I ask a brief question?" Once she is given permission, she continues. "Amaterasu Seido is of course, a holy site. I have no interest, as you can imagine, in blaspheming against the traditions of my family. But..." a breath, then she continues. "I cannot help but wonder if in our reverence for Amaterasu... do you think we offend Lord Yakamo?"

This is mostly an RP opportunity. While the PCs are not going to change the shrine at this point, it is intended as a chance for pious PCs to begin to think about the issues that the Moshi are seeing currently.

Markets of Moshi Lands

The markets around Moshi lands are more simple than one might expect elsewhere in the lands of the Mantis, but are still no less busy or fine. Samurai and heimin both walk the streets, looking at wares and the like.

A PC interested in purchasing can find anything in the main book at listed price.

Any PC in the market can make Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 25. A PC who succeeds can happen to notice Yoritomo Hachi slipping into an alley in the market. A PC who opts to pursue him should roll Stealth (Shadowing) / Agility at TN 30. A successful PC is able to follow him without being noticed. Otherwise, he notices them, finds a table, and just sits and watches them until they leave.

If a PC is able to sneak in:

Yoritomo Hachi sits in a corner, taking a small sip of sake. Soon, another person sits near him, and the two seem to turn just enough. Hachi's voice is quiet, unable to be easily heard.

The PC can make Investigation / Perception at TN 30. The TN is reduced to 15 if the PC can read lips. Either way, the PC can make out Hachi saying "he's going to the capital."

The PCs and Kaminari will stay on the *Quiet Storm* for the evening. The next morning, the Ship makes it's way south, and the PCs can catch a quick glimpse of Otosan Uchi before continuing south.

The journey to the Tsuruchi lands is fairly quick on the *Quiet Storm*. From Suitengu's sea, the ship travels through the River of the Blind Monk. Once the river opens into Mizu-Umi no Fuko, it is a brief journey south to Aka Mizu Umi. At the end of four days of travel, you find yourself docked at Aka Mizu-Umi's southern tip.

After a final rest at a roadside inn, you find yourselves in the long winding road through the mountain into Kyuden Ashinagabachi. The walk takes a pair of hours to complete, before escaping out into the large valley where the castle stands.

Any PC with 2 or more ranks of battle, or one that can make a TN 15 on a Battle / Intelligence roll, can figure out that this was intentional design. The long, winding nature of the road allows the Tsuruchi to stand above the road shooting arrows at enemies with impunity.

It is evening by the time the PCs get to the castle proper.

Unlike at Kyuden Moshi, Tsuruchi Momotaro is there to greet you and the entourage as you make your way into Kyuden Ashinagabachi. He is a man just reaching the true prime of his life. Tall, lean, and muscular, with an easy smile as he regards his Champion. "Ah! Kaminari-sama, a bird had whispered in my ear that you were on the way... literally." His easy smile seemed to disappear for just a moment as he considered that particular incident. "To what do I owe the pleasure, my Lord?"

Kaminari smiled and shook his head. "Come, my Friend. Let us go and speak of such things somewhere of better comfort. Do you have any of that spiced rum that you like so much?"

The Tsuruchi laughs at the question, nodding and motioning to lead Kaminari, his entourage, and you into the castle proper.

Unlike in Moshi lands, the PCs are given their own rooms this time. Momotaro and Kaminari make their way to have their conversation, and servants lead the PCs to get fed and washed after a long evening.

That night, as Samurai are starting to settle into their rooms for the evening, a loud scream can be heard,

coming from the direction of Yoritomo Kaminari's room. PCs who specified they are going to sleep early should roll investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 20 to notice the scream. If a PC was specifically out of the castle that night, obviously they will not hear the scream.

Assuming at least one of the PCs follows to the scream's source:

As you arrive at Kaminari's room, the door is already open. Stepping inside, the room is in carnage. In the far corner is a shaken Yoritomo Sumira, barely dressed in more than her sleeping robes. Physically, at the least, she is unharmed.

The same cannot be said for Yoritomo Kaminari. He is alert and watchful, eyes snapping to you for a moment, before realizing who you are and softening his eyes. He is dressed in nothing more than his hakama, which means that the stab wound in his shoulder is clear for all to see. Immediately in front of him is the body of a person. The person's clothing is entirely nondescript, a dark blue kimono that shows off as little as possible, though it is now stained red with blood from multiple stab wounds.

Kaminari reaches for the saya of his katana, sheathing it and taking a deep breath. "Good that you are now here, my friends. The guards are moving to get Momotaro-san. This one came through the window," he nodded over to the nearby now-open window. "Thankfully, he will not be getting the drop on anyone else.

If a PC wants to heal Kaminari's wound, he will consent to this. He has taken 7 wounds, and is not poisoned despite what some may fear.

Investigating the Crime

It is entirely possible that PCs will want to work out what had happened: where the person came from and the like.

What Actually Happened: Thanks to Yoritomo Hachi, forces with interests in allowing the Emperor's plans to move forward determined that Kaminari's presence would damage... and maybe even stop... the Emperor's declaration. As such, they have hire assassins to stop Kaminari from making his way to Otosan Uchi. Their communication is incredibly efficient (using various forms of magic), and this man was hired from an agent in Beiden. Of course, the assassin himself knows nothing of the motivations of

his employer, only that he was paid incredibly handsomely for this job.

The Window/Castle:

It is not hard to find where the assassin came from: there is still a rope hanging from the balcony on the floor just above Kaminari's room. A PC might be interested in following the rope to see where the path might lead from there. Assuming they want to use the rope to do so, the PC must roll Athletics (Climbing) / Strength at TN 15 (bonuses for having a rope are already figured into this roll). Succeeding gets them onto the balcony. If they fail, however, they must roll raw reflexes at TN 15 to catch onto the window's ledge. Should they fail this roll, the PC will plummet to the ground. Such a PC takes 10k10+10 damage from the fall. If they survive this, they must choose to suffer either the permanent wound or the lame advantage, as the damage done to their bodies is great enough that simple wound treatment cannot help them.

A PC might also simply wish to be led to that balcony. This is not difficult: any of the servants may do so.

Either way, once the PCs are led there, they find that the balcony is at the end of a series of hallways. These hallways are somewhat ill-used and dusty, which means there are some indications of where people have moved recently within them. A PC trying to follow the assassin's tracks may be able to do so, but it will still be somewhat difficult, requiring a Hunting (Tracking) / Perception roll at TN 25. This TN increases to 35 if a PC was escorted up to the balcony, as the extra rustling of dust causes some confusion. PCs may substitute Hunting (Tracking) with Investigation (Search), but the TN goes up by 5.

Assuming a PC succeeds, they will find themselves at the servant's quarters. It is easy enough to find a servant to speak to, though the servants themselves are somewhat limited in the questions they can answer. They are cooperative and honest, having no reason to lie to Clan Samurai.

Things the PCs can learn about the assassin from the peasants:

- The man started working for the castle only about two or three days ago. The peasants did think it was somewhat odd, but occasionally servants are left at castles to as parts of new assignments, so they didn't feel it was their place to question.
- Yes, he does have quarters here. We can show you them, even!

- He largely kept to himself. He was not rude, per se, but he seemed very focused on getting the lay of the land. We can't blame someone for wanting to get acclimated to a new castle quickly!
- He was the only servant to come off this particular caravan.
- The Caravan? Well, it came from the main road, of course! All the Caravans come from there. I heard that most of them then go to Beiden or Ryoko Owari, but I've never been to either.

Though the PCs may try to search his quarters, there is not much to glean. They are kept immaculate, and at the moment are clearly packed up for travel. Though one might expect to find a large sum of koku, it seems that the assassin did not bring more than a couple of koku with him.

The Body:

Some PCs may wish to investigate the body. This will ultimately require having the body moved or doing it themselves. An eta will take some time to collect, unless a PC is insistent on moving the body themselves (remind PCs that it is dishonorable to touch dead flesh). If a PC is moving the body themselves, they suffer a D-1 honor loss.

However they begin moving the body, have the PCs roll Investigation (Search) / Perception. The PCs can learn the following information:

- TN 5: This person is definitely dead.
- TN 10 (A PC with 3 or more ranks of Kenjutsu automatically gets this): The cuts that killed this person were incredibly skilled and clean. They were slain with two clean slashes.
- TN 15: The person is certainly male, though the robes are specifically designed to obscure as many details as possible.
- TN 20: He carried more than one knife on him (the knife he attempted to use is on the floor near where the body was slain).
- TN 25: Tucked away in a sleeve is a small note. It is in simple white paper and simply reads "Yoritomo Kaminari cannot reach the capitol."

If the PCs want to examine any of the knives, they can roll Investigation (Search) / Perception at TN 30. PCs with 1 or more rank of Craft: Weaponsmithing get a free raise for every rank of the skill that they have. If

they succeed, they will notice that the knife lacks a maker's mark, which is rather unusual for any weapon, but especially one's like knives. It is otherwise an unremarkable knife, albeit one of surprisingly good quality.

Yoritomo Sumira

Some PCs may be less interested in investigating the crime, and might instead be more interested in checking in on Yoritomo Sumira. Sumira is very much shaken, though physically she is unharmed.

If PCs ask for her take on what happened:

"We were preparing for our night's sleep, in the usual manner that we do." Her cheeks take a hint of flush. "I was just starting to drift to sleep. And then... it all happened so fast. My husband started to move in alarm... I heard him grunt in pain. Then I saw... that..." she motions towards the body "it had caught my husband in the shoulder. I didn't mean to scream, I just..." she took a breath, "I feared that he might have poisoned my husband. In that moment I was not as strong as I must be for my husband. Kaminari-kun was able to push him off and grab Nobori Raiu. The rest... I think you can guess."

If a PC wants to provide her with comfort, she will accept whatever placations they deign to provide. Unfortunately, she does not know anything more about what had happened.

Ultimately, this investigation will largely dead end for the PCs. The one suspect in the assassination is dead, and there is no one else in the castle who was sent to assist him. Though PCs might suspect Hachi, Hachi did not hire any of the assassins, and will truthfully say so if someone tries to question him.

Part Two: Getting to the Capitol

Once the PCs are finished investigating, Tsuruchi Momotaro will appear in Kaminari's room, awake and alarmed. Kaminari will calm him and advise that they find a private room to convene in. Notably, the PCs are invited to attend this meeting. Any PCs investigating the servant's quarters will have a servant find them and bring them to the room.

Once it is certain that you are alone save Momotaro's most trusted guards, Kaminari wastes no time in speaking. "You have seen what has happened here

today, Samurai-sans. An attempt on my life has been made. It is difficult to gather precisely why I was targeted... but it is clear that someone does not wish me to see my friend... my Emperor..."

Kaminari will open the door to some discussion. He is, in this moment, less interested in *who* does not want him to get to the capitol and more interested in *how* to ensure they fail. GMs should have Kaminari guide the PCs into thinking in that direction. If a PC notes that members of the entourage may be compromised, Kaminari will agree: there was a reason he only invited the PCs and Momotaro.

Eventually, the PCs *should* come to the conclusion that traveling overland is the best way to get to the capitol.

Kaminari hesitates... but nods. "You are correct, of course. They will be expecting us to make haste on the *Quiet Storm*. They won't likely be looking for a small party of Samurai traveling with a Tsuruchi." Kaminari frowned, but looks to Momotaro, who nods. "That settles it, then. We will send the *Quiet Storm* ahead with my Sumira-chan and someone acting as me. There should be... plenty... willing to keep up such a charade." He nods to Momotaro. "I will leave it to you, my friend, to choose someone you can trust. As for you," he looks to all of you. "We will need to determine an ideal route."

There are two main routes the PCs can take from the main road: either they can route up through Scorpion and Lion lands, taking Beiden pass and heading east, or they can travel east and north to Kyuden Doji, then head up through Crane lands. While Kaminari has no preference of either, he can note the following as PCs debate:

- Either way, they will need to secure travel papers, and it would be wise to not have any papers that carry Momotaro or Kaminari's chop.
- Beiden is very well patrolled, but it would be difficult to maintain any sort of anonymity, meaning that if the pass is being watched, they would very likely be exposed coming off the path.
- Traveling up past Kyuden Doji can be done more subtly, as the city itself can be bypassed. However, Crane lands will not be as tightly patrolled right now as Lion and Scorpion lands are, which means that assassins have more freedom of movement within those provinces.

The paths that the PCs take are, ultimately, up to them. Kaminari is not as familiar with the provinces outside of Mantis lands as the PCs might be, and at this point he trusts them enough to allow them to council him on the matter.

What about Hachi?

Some PCs may at this point be (rightly) suspicious of Yoritomo Hachi. Kaminari will listen to their concerns and agree that it is suspicious... but will also note that he will be stuck on the ship with little ways to communicate with someone if he is part of some form of conspiracy. If PCs are insistent that he must be removed, Kaminari will consent to having him stay in Kyuden Ashinigabachi under the watch of Momotaro's magistrates.

Let's Take the Boat!

Some PCs might be insistent that the boat is the best way to go. Kaminari will do his best to dissuade them, reminding them that while they might be ambushed on the road, they will be expected to attempt to reach the capitol via boat, and that it is not unlikely that the boat will face the most difficult challenges.

If the PCs insist on this anyway, adjust Kaminari's questions at the end of Part Two to fit the new setting. The ambush will still occur, but will involve two ships surrounding the ship. The PCs will face the same number of ambushers, but the ambushers will all be rank 3 with Simple Action Attacks.

Travel Papers?

Once the PCs have determined where they are going, the matter of travel papers will come up. PCs will need to have some form of travel papers to travel through other clan's lands, and the only magistrate in the area does not have the authority to provide them.

- If traveling up past Kyuden Doji, a PC can request for travel papers, though with some difficulty. The City and castle are right on the border between Mantis and Crane lands, and it is not terribly surprising for the occasional samurai to come out of Mantis lands into the city. A PC will need to make an etiquette (bureaucracy) / Awareness roll at TN 25 to get the papers quickly. This check can be reduced to 20 if the PC mentions Kaminari by name... but means that the PCs will be **Ambushed** about a day out of Kyuden Doji.

- Beiden is easy enough to travel through, and even fairly easy to get papers for. Bayushi Tenno will simply write the papers for the PCs with no questions asked. He will also provide a sealed letter and tell them to present it to the magistrate at Kenson Gakka. If a PC does not have a scorpion ally or obligation, he will simply ask that the Samurai... remember... his offering to them. The key issue here will be attempting not to be recognized while in the cities proper and through the paths. Attempting to take a stealthy approach through the pass takes a cooperative (one PC rolls, and all PCs give that PC a bonus equal to their stealth roll on the roll) stealth (Shadowing) / Agility roll at TN 30. There is no honor loss for rolling stealth in this situation, as the PCs are simply trying to blend in with the crowd, not do anything specifically dishonorable. If the PCs fail, they are **Ambushed** about a day out of Kenson Gakka.

Ambushed?

If the PCs trigger either of the ambushed conditions:

About midday, you notice that the roads have conspicuously begun to thin around you. Where the guard rotations have typically been reasonably constant, you haven't seen a bushi outside of your party for several minutes now.

Have the PCs roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 20. PCs who fail this roll suffer a -20 in the first round of initiative.

Popping out from cover in the ditches are several men in dark, form fitting clothes. Their faces are obscured by dark cloth, completely hiding them from view. The swiftly draw straight blades and move to attack...

There are a number of ambushers equal to combat capable PCs +1. This counts all Bushi, any shugenja with spells that have functional use in combat, and any courtier with 5 or more ranks in a weapon skill, or 4 ranks or more in agility or reflexes and 3 ranks in a weapon skill. The ambushers are trying to remove any witnesses, and will attack the PCs evenly, with one going after Kaminari. They are being paid by someone with a great deal of coin, but are not so brave. Once the battle is clearly out of their favor, they will attempt to flee.

Any PC who succeeded at the Investigation roll will have one Action that they may take in response. Any action that involves picking up or trying to intercept the pot directly will require Athletics / Reflexes at TN 25. If the PC succeeds, they are able to get to the pot before it catches in the inn and can throw it back out if they so choose. Whether they succeed or fail, they take 2k2 damage from the flames catching and burning them. Extinguish can also be used to simply quiet the flames.

If no PC is able to react in time, the flames quickly begin to catch in the building. The PCs have 2 rounds to escape the inn before they begin taking 1k1 wounds every round from the fire and smoke. A PC can still cast extinguish here if they wish to clear the flames.

If the PCs run out, the assassins are waiting on them, and each PC will take a single attack (with no raises) as they escape the building. If, however, the PCs end the flames, the assassins will charge into the building once they realize the building is not going up, starting initiative at this point.

There are a number of ambushers equal to combat capable PCs +1. This counts all Bushi, any shugenja with spells that have functional use in combat, and any courtier with 5 or more ranks in a weapon skill, or 4 ranks or more in agility or reflexes and 3 ranks in a weapon skill. The ambushers are trying to remove any witnesses, and will attack the PCs evenly, with one going after Kaminari. These enemies are more dedicated to the cause than the other assassins, and will fight to the death. Once they hit the crippled or down rank, or if they are in a grapple they clearly cannot escape from, they will kill themselves, either by slitting their own throats or biting out their own tongues if they can't reach a weapon.

If most PCs are mostly rank 1, the assassins have no void points, and will not call raises under any circumstances. If the PCs are mostly rank 3, then one of the assassins is noticeably more skilled than the others (He has simple action attacks, but is otherwise mechanically similar to the others).

Ambushing Assassin

Hired Murderer

School/Rank: None / Insight Rank 3

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: 20 (25 in armor) **Reduction:** 3

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

Attack: 9k4 (Ninjato, Complex)

Damage: 8k2 (Ninjato)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 2

Strength

4

Honor: 0.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: Kenjutsu (Ninjato) 5, Stealth 5, Athletics 5, Jujutsu 2

Camping

Kaminari is not the happiest at the decision to rough it, but will not outwardly complain about one more day out of the pleasantries of civilization. It is of little consequence to find a small wooded area, better defensible than sitting out in the fields. Kaminari helps set up the camp quietly, collecting wood for a small fire.

Dinner is a quiet affair, at least for Kaminari himself. He seems somehow... older... after only a few days, his expression grim and serious. As soon as the last bit of rice is eaten, he looks at each of you in turn. "Samurai-sans. Since we left my home, I have been... mulling... something. As the Lord of the Mantis, I have had few friends and many subjects. It has been my great Fortune to consider Toturi Shin-Zhu... Toturi X one of my best friends. Before I became a Champion and he our Son of Heaven, we spent many idealist's days in Balishnimpur imagining how we would make Rokugan a better place."

There is a brief smile, a fond memory slipping into his mind and escaping just as swiftly. "He never expected to become what is today. And I fear that this lack of preparation means that his idealism has not been tempered with the pragmatism that a Lord must understand and carry. I have learned that my Emperor seeks to do something that... fits with his idealism. I travel to the Capitol to advise him out of this path. I hope that I will be able to make him see the pragmatism that a Lord must learn, so that he might be able to temper his own Compassion. But..."

There is a deep breath, then he continues. "I cannot decide if it is better of me to come to him as his Vassal. To present myself as the Champion of the Mantis, his advisor... of if I must come to him as Yoritomo Kaminari. His friend and confidant." His head tilted to the PCs. "You have more experience than I at the act of being vassals. I would ask what you might do in my position."

Kaminari is, ultimately, looking for confirmation that his decision to Kanshi is right and proper, or if there is perhaps another path. While his Death is ultimately guaranteed, how he dies is every bit as important as to whether or not it happens.

How the PCs respond is up to them, but they should be weighing the cost of duty vs. friendship, and which one might be of more value to the Emperor. Kaminari will expect to hear from every PC. If all of the PCs argue one way or the other, then that is the path that will be taken.

If there is disagreement, however, then the PCs will need to determine which path is ultimately taken. Have Kaminari encourage debate between the PCs. If they cannot come up to a consensus, each side will select a PC to roll Courtier (Manipulation) or Sincerity (Honesty or Deceit) / Awareness. The rolling PC gains a bonus to this roll equal to the relevant skill of all other PCs on their side (do not tell this to the PC until they have determined the roll they are making). The side that wins the roll is the one whose argument is ultimately more convincing to Kaminari.

Immediately after this occurs, have the PCs roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 25. PCs with Wary gain their bonus to this roll. Any PC who fails is at -20 to their initiative for the first round of combat.

As the conversation dies, a whistling sound can be heard. Streaking just by Kaminari's face is an arrow, that buries itself in a nearby tree. Kaminari, in his alarm, reaches to his sword as several men begin rushing into clear view.

There are a number of ambushers equal to combat capable PCs +1. This counts all Bushi, any shugenja with spells that have functional use in combat, and any courtier with 5 or more ranks in a weapon skill, or 4 ranks or more in agility or reflexes and 3 ranks in a weapon skill. The ambushers are trying to remove any witnesses, and will attack the PCs evenly, with one going after Kaminari. These enemies are more dedicated to the cause than the other assassins, and will fight to the death. Once they hit the crippled or down rank, or if they are in a grapple they clearly cannot escape from, they will kill themselves, either by slitting their own throats or biting out their own tongues if they can't reach a weapon. Two of the assassins have bows instead of ninjato.

If most PCs are mostly rank 1, the assassins have no void points, and will not call raises under any circumstances. If the PCs are mostly rank 3, then one of the assassins is noticeably more skilled than the others (He has simple action attacks, but is otherwise mechanically similar to the others).

Ambushing Assassin

Hired Murderer

School/Rank: None / Insight Rank 3

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: 20 (25 in armor) **Reduction:** 3

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

Attack: 9k4 (Ninjato or Yumi, Complex)

Damage: 8k2 (Ninjato) / 6k2 (Yumi)

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

Honor: 0.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: Kenjutsu (Ninjato) 5, Stealth 5, Athletics 5, Kyujutsu 5

Once the combat has finished, the PCs may wish to question any survivors. Unlike the previous assassins, however, these ones do not have any such notes like the previous. Outside of their clothing and weapons, these men have nothing on them, and refuse to speak even under threat of torture.

Despite the option that the PCs choose:

Kaminari's blade glistens with the blood of dead assassins, and he looks to you with purpose in his eyes. "We rest now. Set watches. In the morning, we prove their failure complete."

Part Three: Courtly Sacrifice

Your arrival in the Imperial City is surprisingly quiet. Normally, such an arrival would be met with great fanfare and parades. And yet, here in Otosan Uchi, it is almost as if your arrival was every bit as plain as if the Mantis Clan Champion had not appeared.

Kaminari leads you close to the Forbidden City. Instead of arriving there, however, you find yourself at the Tanuki's Inn. The smiling Kincho the Tenth bows with an exaggerated flourish, motioning you inside. "Samurai-samas! Please, be welcome and at ease in my humble inn. The *incomparable* Toturi Kazetora awaits you in the main meeting room. He has taken to informing me that there is no hurry, if you feel the need to clean the dirt of the road off before you meet with him."

Kaminari nods slowly, his expression becoming serious as stone. "Yes, as you say, Kincho-san. We should take our time before meeting with Kazetora-san." He turns to you and bow. "We should not keep the imperial prince waiting for too long, but neither

should we meet him in a state unfit for his station. Take an hour to prepare, if it pleases.”

Kaminari will find his quarters and take the time to rest. PCs may do whatever they wish with that hour. If they feel so inclined, a PC who wants to can even go ahead and meet with Kazetora if they wish, though he won't bring up anything of great importance without Kaminari in the room.

If PCs are interested, they can hear some local rumors while they are here. As normal, the rumors can be obtained with Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness:

- 10: The Emperor has a big announcement tomorrow! He has been so rarely seen lately, surely this will be a memorable proclamation indeed!
- 15: Did you hear about Otomo Ayane-sama? I hear she is getting in very good with the Elemental Council.
- 20: The *Quiet Storm* was attacked, I hear! The very Ship of the Mantis Champion! He was not on the ship at the time, thank the Heavens, and whoever it was apparently fled under the might of the Mantis Champion's entourage. Thank the Heavens that Yoritomo Sumira-sama was unharmed!

As you gather in the common room, Kaminari steps down from his room. He is dressed now in fine court clothes that are absolutely gaudy compared to what you have become accustomed to. He takes a breath and nods to you all, motioning towards the meeting room. One might be mistaken in thinking that he was preparing for a battle.

Toturi Kazetora is seated alone in the room, several sake cups and bottles set up next to various cushions. He is a young man, barely passing his twenties now. Like the Mantis Champion, he is dressed in an almost audacious court kimono, giving him an impression of just being a cut above even the most fine Samurai. “Samurai-sans,” Kazetora rises and offers a polite bow to all assembled, dipping just a bit more as he regards Yoritomo Kaminari. “This one is glad to see you all here healthy and whole.”

Kaminari himself bows just a bit lower than strictly necessary, the stone expression allowing itself to give way to a slight smile. “Kazetora-san. It has been too long has it not? Since your brother's coronation, as I recall.”

“Indeed,” the Toturi nodded. “Too long indeed. I see you have returned with my esteemed friends. I hope that the trip with them were pleasant. I have found them to be... quite pleasant companions in our previous dealings.”

Kaminari nodded, “I am thankful for their assistance. There were... unexpected problems, you will understand. I might not have made it here safely without their assistance.”

Dinner with Kazetora is surprisingly tense. Kaminari is quiet, but polite, not offering more than very basic banter. If PCs ask if anything is wrong, he will shake his head and simply state that he is contemplating something.

Kazetora, on the other hand, will be perfectly cordial, asking about the journey. He will be legitimately shocked if the PCs mention the assassination attempts. Even if PCs are very suspicious, there is no roll necessary to realize he is not lying. He had nothing to do with those assassination attempts.

After dinner has concluded, Kazetora bids the PCs leave.

“Your role in these matters have been a greater assistance than I can begin to describe, my friends. Now, if you do not mind, Kaminari-san and I need to talk about some matters of importance. However, I would not see your contributions go without the proper recognition. As such, you will be joining me tomorrow when the Imperial Court convenes as my Honor Guard. Your brilliant work with Kaminari-san certainly proves you worthy of the honor.” His tone leaves no room for declining his offer, and indeed he does not wait for a response before continuing. “You will find tailors outside waiting for you. They will make sure you are properly dressed for the occasion.” He will nod to you, then return his attention to Kaminari.

Indeed, as soon as the PCs leave the room, an army of tailors and attendants will lead them away to get them properly fitted.

The next morning, Kazetora will appear at the Tanuki's Inn, waiting expectantly for the PCs. After making sure everyone is properly fed, he leads the way to the Imperial Capital.

The doors to the Forbidden City stand tall above you as you walk towards to Imperial Palace. Unlike previous times you might have entered, the Seppun

Guards don't so much as give you a passing glance. The presence of Toturi Kazetora speaks more volumes than any travel papers ever could.

Kazetora leads you expertly to the main Court Chamber. As he is announced, and each of you by name after, Courtiers from every clan turn their heads, all bowing low as Kazetora moves into the room. His hand moves in an easy motion, and every courtier rises, though their eyes seem to draw immediately to you.

The Imperial Court, as one might expect, is full of Courtiers. Every single one of them has their eyes on the PCs, and if time allows, it is absolutely permissible to give PCs a chance to meet and interact with some of the major players of the Empire. See Appendix 2: The Imperial Court for a small list of NPCs available in the Court.

If the PCs are looking for Yoritomo Kaminari, he is not yet present. Curious PCs may ask Kazetora about this, but Kazetora will only tell them that Kaminari will make his appearance when the time comes.

The door nearest the dais opens, and every courtier drops to their knees almost reflexively, kowtowing before anyone has even entered the room. The first man to enter is an elder man dressed in both the powder blue of the Crane, his kataginu representing the Emerald office with brilliant green. Doji Makibesu looks out into the crowd impassively for several long moments, before turning his head and nodding.

The next person to come out is a man who could not be older than his twenty-fifth year. The young Emperor is a quiet man by nature, clearly nervous in the presence of so many experienced courtiers and politicians. Nevertheless, he offers his best face that he can, hands nervously held behind his back. The katana at his hip has a fine hilt, the Saya evoking an image of waves.

"Rise, my Subjects," Toturi X speaks with a voice of forced calm. He pauses for a long moment, then continues. "I have made no secret of my wish for our Empire to give to those less fortunate. What I announce today is only the most recent of such opportunities."

His eyes close, just a moment, then he continues. "While we have enjoyed such great blessings, there have been others who have suffered. We have dismissed those who have suffered for too long, and I

would see us use our blessings to help them. As such, I..."

What happens next depends on the conversation that the PCs had with Kaminari.

If the PCs convinced him to come as a vassal:

Before the Emperor can continue, the main doors to the court chamber open again. Despite a protesting adviser, Yoritomo Kaminari walks slowly into the Court Chamber, eyes intent on the Dais.

Have the PCs roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 20. If they succeed, they will note that there is a certain... twinge of pain in every step. He is hiding it very well, but it is very clearly there.

As the Mantis Champion bows, Toturi X smiles. "Kaminari-san! My friend! Please, rise. I did not know you would be coming. You are just in time for my proclamation."

"My Lord," Kaminari's voice is slow, carefully even as he speaks. "I know of your proclamation. I stand here hoping that I can beg your reconsideration." Kaminari's eyes meet with the Toturi's. "I know what you stand to announce. And I must ask you... no, I must plead. Do not command your subjects to assist Medinaat-Al-Salaam." His voice waivers slightly at the end. "We have seen the consequences of our interference so many times. To do so is to court the death of Samurai and Senpet both."

Toturi X frowns. "Kaminari-san..."

"My Lord," Kaminari speaks again. "I am the Champion of the Mantis. I have followed the traditions of our Empire, knowing that such put my own followers into a position of having a Lord they could not understand. But my Clan's mandate demands us to interact with the Gaijin more than any other. Please. I only speak knowing what is True."

"Kaminari-san," Toturi X's voice finds a sureness that had been previously absent. "I ask that you remember the conversations we once had in Balishnimpur. We had hoped to make things better for the Ivindi, remember? Now, that I am in such a position, should I not try to do the same for others in need? Is that not Compassion?"

"I remember," Kaminari whispers, dropping to his knees. A hint of red clearly begins to push through his kimono. "And I had expected that... perhaps... this

reasoning would not reach you.” His hands shakily reach to his kimono, beginning ever so slowly to pull back at fabric. “I cannot,” his voice becomes shaky, every word a pain to escape his lips. “I cannot bear to see my friend make these errors. But as a Samurai, I cannot bear to see my Emperor ignore the lessons of history.” Blood is now hitting the floor as his wound is now exposed. “And thus, my Lord, I hope that those who take my place...” he coughed, but his eyes remain firm. “...will see an Emperor more willing to listen.” His last words spoken, he collapses. His eyes still staring up towards the dais even as his head hits the floor.

The Emperor stands shocked, staring wordlessly at the body of the Mantis Champion. Doji Makibesu is quick where the Emperor is slow, quickly motioning the Emperor back through that same door the two entered through.

Meanwhile, in his chosen corner of the Court, Toturi Kazetora’s face is as stone.

If, however, the PCs convinced him to come as a friend.

Before the Emperor can continue, the main doors to the court chamber open again. Yoritomo Kaminari strides into the Court Chamber, his pace bringing him in front of the Dais in mere seconds.

Have the PCs roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 35. Any PC who succeeds catches a small glint of something clearly metal hidden in one of Kaminari’s sleeves.

As the Mantis Champion bows, Toturi X smiles. “Kaminari-san! My friend! Please, rise. I did not know you would be coming. You are just in time for my proclamation.”

“Shin-Zhu-sama...” Kaminari’s voice is calm and even. “My friend.” His eyes moved briefly to Kazetora, then returned to his Emperor. “Your brother has informed me of what you seek to do.”

If any PCs are looking at Kazetora, they will notice a very brief look of surprise.

“Perfect!” The Emperor is almost too excited at this revelation, a smile unable to be hidden from his face. “My brother has some concerns, I know, but I’m sure you talked some sense into him, right?”

Kaminari shakes his head slowly. “My Friend... you have always been a man of great Compassion. It is part of why I have always admired you. But this action goes to far. Surely the resource constraints of our Empire have been shown to you? Can our people prosper if we send all that we have extra to the Senpet? Will the Lion and Crane be able to tolerate even more erosion of the Empire they serve? It is a wonder indeed that they tolerate Balishnimpur.”

There are several nervous rustles about the Court, but the Toturi merely shakes his head. “You know I cannot ignore the plight of those in need, my friend. Am I to just leave the Senpet to suffer? To die?”

Kaminari sighs. “You always see those who suffer loudly. And yet you miss those we have here... those who suffer in silence.” There is a sudden flash, and a tanto is now in the Mantis Champion’s hands. Cries of alarm break out, and Seppun swiftly move to stand between Kaminari and the Emperor.

But Kaminari does not step forward to meet his Emperor. Instead, he drops to his knees, staring at his Emperor as the tanto presses into his belly. “I had thought to greet you as friend. I hoped that you would hear the words of the one who dreamt those dreams with you. But you do not listen, and I can no longer present my Kanshi as tradition demands. So I will do so now, and can ask only that my Emperor’s blade complete the Task.”

Murmurs ruffle throughout the Imperial Court. Toturi X hesitates a moment, looking to Makibesu. The Crane nods, and in a single movement, the Seppun move away from Kaminari and Shin-Zhu. The Emperor’s blade is drawn, and as he holds the blade high, the kanji for “Jinshin” can be seen clearly.

“I am sorry, my Friend,” Kaminari speaks in a soft voice. “But I cannot live in an Empire led by a man who blinds himself to history, even history so recent.” The tanto enters Kaminari’s belly, moving from left to right. The second cut begins, and Kaminari’s face is as stone, not even so much as moving when the third comes moments later. The moment lingers. Shin-Zhu’s blade shakes in his hands. But he makes no movement to take his friend’s head.

“Kaminari...” The Toturi’s words come as a whisper. “I can’t...”

“My Emperor!” Doji Makibesu’s voice cuts through. A moment after, Kaminari’s lets out a soft cry of pain. The combination of the two seem to awaken Shin-Zhu from his hesitation, and he slices down. The cut is late,

but it does its job. As the body of Kaminari slumps down, the sword is raised. Blood runs down the blade, covering the etched kanji... 'Kindness.' It's name now forever marked, the blade's first life taken that of the Emperor's oldest friend and most loyal vassal.

The Seppun and Makibesu move swiftly after, escorting the young Emperor from the Court Chamber. Whispers raise soon after, the shock of the moment giving way to rumor and hearsay.

In his corner of the chamber, Kazetora is every bit as surprised as the rest.

Conclusion

The Clan Champion of the Mantis is dead. News swiftly arrives throughout the Empire, and the Mantis are quick to declare Yoritomo Arashi as co-regent along with Kaminari's Widow.

The Emperor quietly retracts his proclamation, noting that the death of his friend has given him much to consider.

In quiet corners, a different name begins to whisper in reference to the young Emperor. Though none would say so publicly, the question of whether the Gaijin Prince is truly fit to rule permeates throughout the Empire.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 XP
Good Roleplaying:	1 XP
Kaminari makes it to Ootosan Uchi	2 XP

Total Possible Experience:

Favors

For making it to Ootosan Uchi with Kaminari, the PCs gain one favor.

For acting as Kazetora's Honor Guard, the PCs gain an additional favor.

Honor

Escorting Kaminari to Ootosan Uchi safely: H9.

Providing Kaminari with honest advice: H6.

Glory

Safely escorting Kaminari to Ootosan Uchi: G6.

Being part of Kazetora's Honor Guard in the Imperial Court: G10.

Allies and Enemies

If a PC opened Kazetora's letter and could not hide it from Arashi: They gain Sworn Enemy: Toturi Kazetora (5). If they had him as an ally or noticed, they erase either from their sheet.

Other Awards/Penalties

If a Player opened Kazetora's letter as above and has the cert "Kazetora's Strings," they lose a rank of status, as well as any benefits from the cert. They do not lose the Major Obligation to Kazetora.

GM Reporting

- 1) Did Kaminari arrive safely in Ootosan Uchi?
- 2) Did the PCs report suspicions about Hachi to Kaminari?
- 3) Did Kaminari commit traditional kanshi, or seppuku on the floor of the court?

The GM must report this information by (date three months after release) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

If any NPCs require statblocks not listed elsewhere in the module

Yoritomo Kaminari

Mantis Clan Champion

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3

Initiative: 7k4

Armor TN: 28 (33 in armor) **Reduction:** 0

Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 53 (+15), 60 (+20), 68(Down, +40), 76 (Out)

Attack: 10k4 (Katana, Simple)

Damage: XkY+Z (Weapon)

Air 3 Earth Fire 4 Water 3 Void 3
4

Reflexes
4

Strength
4

Honor: 7.9 Status: 8.0 Glory: 7.1

Primary Skills: Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Sailing 5, Courtier 4, Lore: Mantis 5, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 4, Commerce 7

Advantages/Disadvantages: Seven Fortune's Blessing (Daikoku), Great Destiny / Idealistic
Special Mechanics: *Celestial Sword of the Mantis:* 3k3 katana. Can call down a lightning bolt to deal a 6k6 lightning bolt on a target as a complex action. (Only used if absolutely necessary)

Appendix #2: Guests of the Imperial Court

Otomo Kazuko (Status 9.0, Glory 5.1): Outwardly one of the friendliest women in the Empire, Otomo Kazuko is no doubt one of the deadliest as well. The wrong word to the wrong person... and there are few that Kazuko could not have on their knees. She is indeed curious as to why the Emperor's intrepid young brother has invited these Samurai.

Matsu Kurohimi (Status 9.1, Glory 8.3): The third daughter of the late Matsu Mochiko, Matsu Kurohimi is well known for being a patient, calculating woman. She is not liable to approach the PCs directly, but is not above getting the PC bushi into the idea of Legion service.

Kitsuki Hisako (Status 4.5, Glory 4.1): A proven magistrate, Hisako is not particularly comfortable in her temporary role in the Imperial Court. She may well, though, be interested in meeting Samurai of a lawful persuasion..

Bayushi Akinishin (Status 4.0, Glory 5.1): clever with both his hands and his words, Akinishin is welcome in most of the Empire's courts. He can always be counted upon to provide a pleasant diversion, whether it be an engaging game of go or sharing one of his vast trove of amusing anecdotes.

Gencon notation: There are others of the Imperial Court, of course, but these are the 4 that are most notable. In the event that there is time enough for Court interactions, feel free to add as you might like.

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Honored Samurai,

War has come to the Emerald Empire. But, one confesses... it has not been the conflict one might have expected it to be. Where one might have expected the Crab to meet the Lion on the field, early reports have suggested that this has rarely, if at all, been the case. Instead, it seems that the Crab have been intentionally attempting to avoid the conflict as much as is reasonably possible. Instead of a proper battle, the Crab have constantly retreated and regrouped, not allowing the Lion a chance for regular engagement. The Lion are moving west now. A curious move, as there are very few crab forces in that direction.

On to more positive moves. The Empress's pregnancy progresses very well! The shugenja in charge have been very optimistic that the pregnancy will go with no complications at all. This is exceptional news in what is quickly proving to be dire times.

If there is more new on the warfront, you will hear it from me first.

-Otomo Yusuke

Player Handout #2: The Letter from Kazetora

“Yoritomo Kaminari-san,

We have never been friends, and I hope that impresses upon you the importance of this letter I write to you. You are friends to my brother, and as such I pray you will be able to talk some sense into him where I have failed to be able to do so. As such, I must tell you of the going-ons outside the Court.

Your Brother has gotten it into his head that we might be able to afford to provide support and aid to Medinaat-Al-Salaam. I believe I need not explain to you why supporting a Gaijin city is not only not feasible, but dangerously irresponsible. Alas, my brother, he is stubborn, as I am certain you already know.

If you believe in the protection of our way of life, I beg you come to the Capitol before my brother introduces his plan. He is still arguing the details with Makibesu and myself, but I fear that we only have a pair of weeks before he presents the proposal. He is stubborn, and I am unsure that simple reason will reach him.

We may need prepare a grave before this is over.

Honor to the Empire,

Toturi Kazetora