

Exchange of Hostages

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

Month of Bayushi, 1341 (Season)

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[Investigation, Negotiation]

“Taking hostages is integral to the resolution of any battle; it gives the courtiers something to fight about.” – Hida Kuroda

“Hostage negotiations often lead to further aggression. Take as many as you can.”
- Akodo’s *Leadership*

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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

For a bushi, the ultimate glory comes from a heroic death in battle, but there will always be another soldier to take their place. This cannot be said for any but the most militant of the Empire's shugenja, and they are much rarer. As such, it is not uncommon for any priests of the kami who get caught up in war to be taken hostage rather than killed, and used as a bargaining chip in the negotiations to come. The recent skirmish between the Crab and the Lion is no exception.

One such unfortunate shugenja-turned-hostage is Kitsu Suiseiko, a young healer who was dispatched along with a group of scouts to locate a missing squad of Lion infantry. Her squad fell to the same ambush that claimed the missing, leaving her unconscious and surrounded by the dead.

Suiseiko awoke sometime later in a Crab infirmary, where she revealed that she could no longer hear the voices of the kami around her. Believing this to be the result of massive head trauma, the Crab put her in the care of Kaiu Nakasu, a specialist in long-term care and the son of an eccentric engineer named Kaiu Engo.

Over the last several months, Nakasu has developed a strong emotional tie to the young Lion, even to the point of asking his father to include a betrothal to the woman as part of the conditions of her release. Engo, who has always been oddly disappointed that his son was born with the blessing of the kami, had no qualms about the possibility of losing the boy to the Lion, and began the process, only to suddenly withdraw from the proceedings and sequester himself in his castle with his son and their quest.

Almost immediately, Engo began fortifying his holdings hiring peasant laborers from outlying villages who would be replaced with new crews after only a

few days. While most of the people in [this city] just assumed he had finally lost his mind as they had long suspected he might, or was perhaps jealous of the attention the young woman was giving his son, what really happened is much, much darker.

What the Kaiu didn't know, and never thought to check, is that the ambush that claimed Suiseiko was actually a trap laid by the bog hag Hoguseru. Using the chaos of battle as cover, the tainted creature was responsible for the deaths of both the original squad of infantry and Suiseiko's rescue unit. In the time since her placement within the Kaiu household, Hoguseru has subjugated the wills of several of the servants, and began seducing Nakasu. The very day that Engo brought up the subject of betrothal as part of the negotiations, he came home to find Suiseiko in Nakasu's bed, covered in the blood and viscera of Kaiu Engo's only child. Time is running out for the hag's current costume, and she killed Nakasu as a distraction. Engo's interference has ruined this plan, so her only option is to hope someone comes to rescue her before Engo kills her in regenge.

Kaiu Engo has always had a reputation of being somewhat paranoid, and several of the rumors surrounding him suggest that he's filled his house with a number of secret rooms, hidden passages, and even traps designed to keep intruders from finding whatever secrets may be hidden inside. Unknown to all but a select few, Engo doesn't actually live in the house proper. Instead, he has moved his living quarters to a series of chambers built into the mountain adjoining the back of his house.

Finding his son murdered in such a horrendous way tipped the man's already sketchy mental state over the edge, but he was somehow able to render the hag unconscious and imprison Hoguseru in his cavernous hide-away.

The PCs have been in Kuda Mura for the last week, participating and observing the hostage negotiations. Engo's request of a betrothal came as a surprise during today's negotiations. The Lion delegation, lead by [Ikoma someone], refuses to even discuss the matter, and the players will need to find a way to meet with both delegations to find a way to resolve the impasse.

During these discussions, a guard will come and advise the leaders of both parties that there has been a report of screaming coming from Kaiu Engo's residence. All of the servants have been commanded to leave the building, and have very little understanding of why.

It will become apparent that someone will need to gain access to the residence and find out what is going on, though the Lion have suggested that setting the place on fire should force Engo to release Kitsu Suiseiko and turn himself over to them under kidnapping charges.

The PCs, of course, will be the obvious, impartial choices for entering the building, finding out what's going on and negotiating Suiseiko's release. Provided they don't take up the Lion's plan to burn the place down and sort it out later, they will also have to negotiate a number of traps and puzzles before finding the entrance to Engo's refuge. A few of these encounters invite the players to participate by solving puzzles themselves, but there are ways to solve them using the skills of their characters and rolling dice.

Upkeep

Character Notes

It's important to be aware of players with the following skills or spells, but don't ask about them outright. You don't want to spoil the surprise.

- Make a mental note of any shugenja with the spell *By the Light of the Moon* – These players will have a considerable advantage if they think to use it.
- The Engineering skill. Rather than asking for a separate roll for this skill, reduce the TNs for discovering the hidden traps and mechanisms in the house by 5 for a character with one actual (not Void-granted) rank in Engineering, or 10 for 3 or more ranks in the skill.
- Give characters the option of rolling **Defenses / Reflexes** instead of Athletics when attempting to avoid an activated trap. This isn't added into the mod for purposes of clarity, but there will be a reminder at the beginning of **Part Two: The House**.
- **Finally**, if the table is made up of mostly rank 1 and two characters, lower all opposed or trap TNs by 10 and drop all damage rolls from the traps in the house by 1k1.

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 player base 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

Since this mod comes quickly on the heels of MOD CIT027, each PC only loses .1 Glory for inactivity.

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** will vary depending on the time frame. If a character is growing close to being Lost (Shadowlands Taint Rank 4.5+) , it is recommended that the player have another PC ready to replace them.

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 determined by the module. (Difficulties should range from 5-30, possibly higher for High Rank modules). 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

In the months following the Battle of Kuda Mura the Crab and Lion have worked to tie up any loose ends that remain. The death of both clans' champions weighs heavily, as no one expected such a minor conflict to be so costly.

You've been sent to the Crab city of Kuda Mura to oversee one of the few remaining bits of business remaining. A young Lion shugenja, Kitsu Suiseiko, was taken hostage while participating in the search for a missing unit of Lion Infantry. Her unconscious body was found lying among the corpses of nearly a dozen fallen samurai from both clans.

Over the last few days, you've only seen Kitsu Suiseiko a couple of times, as her recovery demands a calm atmosphere, and even the most courteous of negotiations can become heated. Healers from both clans have verified that Suiseiko is in good health, though the trauma she suffered has affected her concentration such that she has difficulty communing with the kami. She spends her days recuperating in her room at Kaiu Engo's residence, under the care of his son, Kaiu Nakasu.

Have the players roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** to get some insight into how the negotiations have been going.

TN 5: Despite ultimately losing the battle, the Lion are trying to extract as much out of these negotiations as possible. The Crab, for their part, are happy to play the "Yes, but we won." card as often as possible.

TN 10: [Information about the Kuni Shugenja that was run out of town by the PCs in Edict of Judgement.] In addition, the Kuni are a small shugenja family, and their services are needed elsewhere.

TN 15: Kaiu Yaeko's decision to place Kitsu Suiseiko in the care of Engo and his son instead of someone trained in the healing arts has been controversial, but Nakasu was able to convince his daimyo that he learned a lot from his mother, and still has her notes regarding massive head wounds.

TN 20: The Lion are looking to recover one of their own shugenja, of course, but are also a means to make up for the large number of soldiers lost in the battle. They aren't looking for a full-on alliance with the Crab, but anything the Crab can offer that would give the Crane and Unicorn a reason to think twice about assuming the Lion have been weakened by this conflict. The Crab, on the other hand, have suffered similar losses, and are looking to extract cooperation

from the Lion, should the hordes to the south rise up before the Crab have had a chance to recover. **TN 25:** Ikoma Robun, a staunch supporter of the former Lion Champion, wants nothing less than a resumption of hostilities, and will goad any of his allies into working towards this goal. For her part, Kaiu Yaeko's personal goals are bound up in making sure these negotiations run as smoothly as possible, and repairing her own reputation.

"Now, then. I think that this should wrap things up for today," announces Kaiu Yaeko from the far end of the room, where she stands with Ikoma Robun, the head of the Lion delegation. "Does anyone have any pressing business to add?"

"Actually, my lord, if I may?" says an older man, easily recognizable as **Kaiu Engo**, one of the Crab samurai playing host to a captured Lion.

"What?" questions Yaeko clearly surprised. "I mean, of course, Engo-san. What is it?"

"Please forgive my intrusion, Ikoma-sama, but I would like to make an addition to the terms of any agreement. In the weeks since Kitsu-san entered my care, my son has become quite fond of her." A number of the courtiers in the room raise their fans to cover their reactions to this announcement. Kaiu Engo, either not noticing or not caring, continues, "As such, I would like to request that a marriage between the two be added as a condition of these negotiations."

"This is not only highly irregular, Yaeko-san," the Ikoma responds, "but also preposterous! Taking advantage of a guest like this is disgusting!"

"I assure you, Ikoma-sama, nothing like tha-" defends Engo.

"That's enough, Engo-san," interrupts Kaiu Yaeko. "Robun-san, you have my word that nothing untoward has occurred here. In truth, I was considering the addition of a marriage, and this may be ideal. Let us continue this discussion in the morning."

With that, Ikoma Robun bows politely to Kaiu Yaeko, and snaps his fan. As one, the members of the Lion delegation excuse themselves, and depart, followed soon after by the Crab governor and her aids.

Players may recognize Kaiu Yaeko from the mod "Edict of Judgement". While suffering a tremendous loss of face (and status) following the results of that mod, she has been allowed to remain governor of Kuda Province. Part of the reason the PCs are here is that

that she has some experience with how they work, and hopes their presence will give her a chance to recover at least some of the standing she lost before.

Kaiu Engo remains behind, standing quietly next to his son, Kaiu Nakasu, one of the governors many aids. The young man looks crestfallen, and Engo appears confused, as if he is unsure of what to do.

Allow the PCs to make a pair of **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** rolls to determine what they can recall about these two men.

First Roll:

TN 10: Kaiu Engo has a reputation of being a bit paranoid, to the point that he regularly replaces his household staff with peasants from villages at the far reaches of the Crab lands. This has only become more pronounced since the death of his wife ten years ago. Aside from this, his skill as an engineer is well-regarded, and he received a commendation from the former Crab Champion for his work designing siege weaponry for the Wall.

TN 15: Engo has had a couple of run-ins with the Imperial Magistrates. The first was for refusing an Imperial audit of his household expenses, which was resolved when the Magistrate agreed to perform the audit from the governor's residence. This led to the second confrontation, when the auditor insisted on searching Engo's home after finding some inconsistencies in his household expenses. It took several days for the auditor to gain entry, but she left after barely an hour had passed, stating that there was no need to further searching.

TN 20: When Kaiu Engo found out that his son wasn't accepted for training by the Kuni, he took it personally, seeing it as a further sign that his family was being punished for failing to prevent his wife's death.

TN 25: Engo's wife, Kaiu Miko, was a water shugenja who specialized in long-term healing. Her death came about 10 years ago, when a working model of one of Engo's weapon designs suffered a sudden and catastrophic failure just as she entered his workshop. Since then, Engo has rarely produced anything of use to the Crab military, and was somewhat of a surprise that he accepted Kaiu Yaeko's request that he take-in the Kitsu hostage.

Second Roll:

TN 10: Kaiu Nakasu has earned the favor of the governor of Kuda Mura for his administrative ability, which has gone a long way to make up for the embarrassing actions of Kaiu Engo. It is also fairly

apparent that Nakasu has a bit of a crush on Kitsu Suseiko.

TN 20: Nakasu has earned the friendship of a water kami, despite not having official training as a shugenja. The Kuni who tested him as a child have marked this as the result of some lessons taught by his mother. Despite this companion, Nakasu was ultimately determined to have too weak of a connection to the kami to continue training as a priest, and was too timid to take up training as a witch hunter.

TN 25: People that knew Nakasu's mother have hinted that his friendly kami may be the same one that she had befriended herself, and is the only thing of hers that Engo was not able to eliminate after her passing.

If any of the PCs approach him, Engo will anxiously engage them in conversation, avoiding eye contact and wringing his hands. Should no one approach him, he will wait until the PCs decide to leave before rushing after them, and asking for help.

"Forgive me, samurai. I had not intended to break up the discussions this evening, nor to cause offense to the Lion. Would grant me a moment of your time?"

Assuming the PCs agree, continue. If they do not wish to speak to either of the Kaiu for some reason, please move ahead to **Needing a New Fan**.

"As I stated earlier, my son, Nakasu, asked me to enter into betrothal negotiations with the Lion on his behalf. He has spent a great deal of time caring for Kitsu-san, and they appear to be very fond of each other. He knows that this will likely require him to leave the service of the Crab, but he wants to be at the young woman's side as she continues her recovery."

"My skills are better reserved for arbalests and catapults, so I would ask a favor of you. Please speak with Yaeko-sama, and find out what she thinks on the matter. If she's willing to consider it, it may also be useful to find out Ikoma-sama's opinion, as well. Even if they decide to negotiate the betrothal as a separate matter, I would at least like to know that they consider it."

The players may have questions for the two Kaiu men and here are some likely answers. For questions not related to these topics, feel free to come up with something in-line with their personalities as depicted. Additionally, players may attempt a **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Intelligence** TN 15 roll to recall that Shugenja are very important to their clans, both because of their rarity, and their knowledge of clan secrets. They are rarely allowed to marry into other

clans, unless it's to a priest of higher status. In this case, any marriage agreement will result in Kaiu Nakasu becoming a member of the Kitsu family.

Why is this so important to you?

"My son was robbed of his birthright as a child, and I would like this not to be taken from him, as well. It is my hope that marrying someone with a connection to the kami will allow him to reconnect with the teachings of his mother."

What has Kitsu Suiseiko to say about this?

I did ask her opinion on the matter before bringing it up here, and her response was that she would do as her clan demands. She would not be upset if she were to marry my son, but would not go against her clan's wishes.

Why is she not here?

She received a massive blow to the head, and her injuries are not fully healed. Her eyes are particularly sensitive to light, and loud conversations bring on intense headaches. Both parties agreed that it was better for her to remain at our residence.

How do you feel about this, Nakasu?

I'm surprised that my father asked for the betrothal in open court, but I am also glad that he did. I would be honored if the Lion consented for me to join their ranks.

What do you have to offer the Lion, if they agree?

I am well versed in the ways of the Imperial Bureaucracy, and carry a bit of my mother's knowledge. Additionally, the ability to speak with the kami is in my blood, even if it is a small amount, so our children would have a better chance of being blessed by the elements.

What benefit do the Crab gain, if they agree to let you marry out of the clan?

I don't know what the Crab would gain, beyond a spiritual binding to seal the written treaty. I freely admit to being a lesser member of Yaeko-sama's court, so the Crab would not be losing much.

Your friendship with the water kami intrigues me. Can you tell me about it?

Washi? It was friends with my mother, and stayed with me after she died. She taught me some tricks that Washi will do if I ask, but I can't actually make him do spell things, the way Suiseiko-san can. I mean, neither of us can do much right now, but she's improving. Anyway, Washi's more like a very squishy puppy.

Upon hearing it's name, a glob of water about the size of a man's head splorps into existence nearby.

Once the players run out of questions, Engo will look at them blankly, waiting for an answer to his earlier question, but not thinking to ask it again. If the players agree to speak to the delegations on the Kaiu's behalf, proceed to the next section, titled *Tread Lightly*. Should the PCs decline to assist the pair, move ahead to **Needing a New Fan**, near the end of the next section.

Part One: Treading Lightly

There are three actions available to the characters at this point. If they left the court without talking to Kaiu Engo, or turned down his request, then skip ahead to **Needing a New Fan**. If they agreed to help turn the Lion to favor entering betrothal talks, they will need to get a meeting with Ikoma Robun, but may want to meet with Kaiu Yaeko first, in order to get her view on the matter. Another possibility is to split the party among either of these three actions, but they should all end up in the same place before the end of this section.

Side-Stepping the Issue

Getting in to see Yaeko is relatively easy, except for a single or group of Lions unaccompanied by members of another clan. In this case, the Lion character(s) can try to convince Yaeko's hatamoto that they are acting independently of their clan in this matter. Have a PC roll **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness or Intimidate / Awareness TN 20** to be granted access.

"Come in, come in," Kaiu Yaeko calls absently from another room in her apartments. Yaeko enters the room at the same time, having changed into a simple grey kimono instead of the more lavish courtly attire she wore earlier.

"Please, sit," Yaeko says. "And tell me how I may assist you."

After explaining their mission, Yaeko will have the following comments:

On Kaiu Engo

He's a brilliant engineer, but lost his focus after Miko's death. I had hoped that by giving him this responsibility, it would shake him out of his shell.

On Kaiu Nakasu

He is a talented administrator, but I think he is distracted by his lack of spiritual ability. Our Kitsu guest has done remarkably well under his care, and I believe his mother would be proud.

On the Betrothal request

I doubt the Lion will go for it, and I am reluctant to press the matter if they refuse to even consider it. I do think they would be good match, but that decision is really up to the nakodo.

Can you offer anything to help convince the Lion to accept or even consider the betrothal request?

“Tell me why I should risk the rest of my negotiations on this matter, and I will see if it’s worth the effort.”

A single PC will need to succeed at a **Courtier (Manipulation) or Commerce / Awareness roll TN 20** to convince Yaeko to lend her assistance, but other PCs may assist by making the same roll at **TN 10**, and adding their ranks in the relevant skill to the result of the primary speaker’s roll. **Be sure to ask the players making this roll if they want to call raises.** Making the TN earns one Success, plus one for each raise. Success results in the promise of a score of Kaiu-forged spears to be given to the Lion as part of any resulting marriage negotiations. Make note of the total number of successes earned from the roll.

Baring Claws

Unlike speaking to Kaiu Yaeko, Lion PCs have no difficulty getting in to see Ikoma Robun. However, any group who wishes to speak to him without having a Lion PC present must succeed at a **Courtier (Manipulation) or Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness TN 20** roll to get past the diplomat’s security.

Should they succeed, the PCs will be shown into a small parlor adjacent to the diplomat’s apartment. Regardless of their personal status, they will be forced to wait for almost an hour before a servant comes to lead the PCs into a larger room, where Ikoma Robun accepts their bows with an appropriate bow of his own before indicating they should sit.

Once all the guests have settled in, servants come around to offer each of them a choice of sake or tea, and Robun takes this opportunity to pack and light a tobacco pipe. Taking a long drag from the pipe as he glances around the circle of guests, Robun pauses on the PC with the highest status (or highest status non-Lion, if there is one present), exhales, and asks, **“So. What do you want?”**

Once the PCs have explained their reason for being here, Robun confesses, **“I expected as much. Now. Tell me, what do the Lion, and the Kitsu in particular, have to gain from my being willing to bring this matter to their attention?”**

There are several key points that Robun is looking for before he will even consider considering the betrothal request. He will ask probing questions if the PCs don’t mention these topics in their arguments.

What does Kitsu Suiseiko have to say on this matter? Why hasn’t she brought this request to us herself?

Why isn’t Kaiu Yaeko here, trying to convince me?

Once again, what do the Lion have to gain from this arrangement, other than a low level administrator?

After providing the information Robun is seeking, have the primary speaker roll **Courtier (Manipulation) or Lore (Theology) / Awareness roll TN 25, asking if they wish to call raises.** Again, anyone who wishes to assist may make one of the above rolls at **TN 15** to add their total ranks in the relevant skill to the lead PCs roll. If successful, add these successes to those from the earlier roll.

A Dark, Quiet Place

This section should only be used if the PCs come up with this idea themselves. None of the NPCs will suggest it, as they don’t want to disturb her rest. They will even caution against it, should the PCs ask.

However, one or more PCs may decide they want to get Kitsu Suiseiko’s thoughts on the matter straight from the young woman, rather than relying on Engo’s say-so.

Engo’s servants will only let ONE of the PCs in to see her, per the instructions of Kaiu Nakasu (and backed by Kaiu Yaeko, if someone tries to status-bat their way in), and also offer a warning that she can’t socialize for very long without exhausting herself.

The servant leads you through the house, pointing out items of interest in each room. Standing front and center in this room is a tremendous stone fireplace and chimney, surrounded by various tools of the Engineer’s trade. While not a full-on foundry, it appears that Engo spends much of his time working here. Shelves on the walls display dozens of highly detailed metal-works, ranging from lacquered

ornamental fruit to working miniature siege-engine replicas.

As the PC is led through the house, have them make **THREE (3) Investigation (Notice) / Perception** rolls, and record the results. These will become relevant during the events later this evening.

The room adjacent to the front room is set up as a dining area, with a second-floor gallery overlooking the table. To one side is a set of stairs leading up to the balcony and the bedrooms.

After escorting you upstairs, the servant taps quietly on the door to what is apparently Suiseiko's quarters. Entering the room, your first thought is to how small and dim the space is, especially for a guest, but the bandages wrapped around the head of the cute young woman sitting at the edge of her bedroll remind you that this is part of the treatment for her wounds.

"Welcome, [Family]-sama." Suiseiko greets you pleasantly. "I apologize for the lack of space, but Nakasu-san says this room is 'more conducive to the healing process'," her voice taking on an only slightly more masculine tone. "Please, be seated," she smiles. The servant remains in the room with you, pouring tea, and acting as chaperone.

The player probably has questions for her, and she will answer them as honestly as she can. Since the hag has access to some of the poor girl's memories, she can answer truthfully, despite not actually having the experience.

Some possible questions:

What do you remember of your capture? / What happened during the battle?

"I was sent out with a unit of scouts to locate a missing unit and provide healing, if necessary, but as soon as we found them, something hit me from behind. I woke up later in one of the Crab command tents being prodded by a Kuni."

What do you think of Kaiu Engo?

"He is.. driven. I don't have any other way to describe him."

What do you think of Kaiu Nakasu?

He is very kind, and knowledgeable. The Kitsu are no strangers to the art of healing, but we could learn from him.

Do you want to marry Nakasu?

What I want doesn't matter, as you know. I will follow the dictates of my family and clan, but I would not be saddened to spend more time with Nakasu-san.

After about an hour, Kaiu Nakasu knocks lightly on the door. "I apologize for interrupting, [PC]-sama, but I must bring your visit to a close. It is time for me to inspect Suiseiko's progress, and then she must rest."

Once the players have finished their interviews, give them a chance to share information before interrupting their discussion with the next event.

Needing a New Fan

Choosing an appropriate moment, interrupt the conversation and ask the players to roll **Investigation / Perception TN 30**. Anyone who succeeds hears a faint scream coming from somewhere outside of the governor's residence.

A commotion rises outside the room, with Crab guards and Lion diplomats both rushing towards the gate leading from the governor's estate.

Presumably, the PCs will follow the crowd, but if they seem reluctant, Kaiu Yaeko will eventually send a servant to fetch them.

The crowd draws to a halt outside of Kaiu Engo's residence. As you approach, Kaiu Yaeko signals for you to join her and Ikoma Robun under a torii arch at the base of a set of stairs leading to the entrance.

"Sorry to disturb your evening, friends, bu..."

"Now is not the time for pleasantries, Kaiu-san! I demand that Kaiu Engo be made stop this foolishness and release Suiseiko-san immediately!"

"We have no idea what's going on in there, Ikoma-san. I invited these samurai to join us so that we can work together to work this out. I don't want there to be any doubt that this situation was handled correctly."

"NO IDEA?!" Ikoma Robun roars. "Get in there and find out!" he commands, pointing to the house. By the Fortunes, it's no wonder the beasts to the south surprise you people so often!"

Kaiu Yaeko's face reddens, but she shouts for a pair of guards, commanding them to enter the house and escort Kaiu Engo, his son, and Kitsu Suiseiko outside.

The crowd murmurs around you, and a group of Engo's servants huddles together off to one side.

If the players listen closely, they may be able to get some idea of what is happening. Rolling **Investigation / Awareness** may yield the following information:

TN 10: Several people who were nearby when this spectacle began claim to have heard a high-pitched scream coming from the house.

TN 20: Some of the servants are saying that Engo commanded them all to exit the house immediately.

TN 25: You overhear one of the servants saying "... heard the drum. I think he reset the doors."

The two Crab guards hurry up the stairs, then suddenly, they disappear with surprised shouts. Just as quickly, the stairs where the two had been swing back up and into place, concealing the pit once more.

Ikoma Robun turns his annoyed gaze towards Kaiu Yaeko, who pinches the bridge of her nose with one hand while motioning for several more guards to check on the others.

Players who wish to assist may roll **Engineering / Strength TN 15 or Athletics / Strength TN 20** to help lever open the trap door. The two samurai are relatively fine after the 20ft fall, though one of them cradles a broken arm.

"I was afraid of that," Yaeko sighs. "Engo has always been a bit stand-offish, and the protections he built into his residence are part of why I asked him to host our guest."

"Oh yes! He's brilliant!" Robun responds, sarcasm dripping from his voice like venom. "I take it we should expect more of this foolishness inside?"

"Probably, yes."

"Well then, I suggest we warn Engo that he has ten minutes to come out with his son and Kitsu Suiseiko, or we set fire to his house and smoke them out," suggests Robun, impatiently.

"I really don't think that's necessary, Ikoma-san," responds Yaeko, surprisingly calm. "However, I believe that any future moves we make should be as neutral as possible. If we send a purely Crab unit, and something happens to Kitsu-san, you will be suspicious. Likewise, if we send in a unit of only Lion, and something happens to them, or to our people, we risk stepping up hostilities again."

"I still say that setting the place on fire will drive them out much faster than sending someone in."

"What do you think?" Yaeko inquires, ignoring the Lion and turning to you.

PC who overheard the servants talking may be interested in speaking with them before proceeding further. Some questions might be:

What's going on in there?

I don't know. We heard a scream, and then Engo-sama shouted that we should all leave the residence immediately.

Are there any more traps?

Oh yes, but only Engo-sama knows where they all are. I've only been here a few weeks, and he's already changed the pass keys twice.

What did you mean when you said you "heard the drum?"

When Engo-sama puts the house in lockdown, a drum sounds so that we know the house isn't safe to enter.

What pass keys are you talking about?

When the front and rear doors are locked, you have to press the right place on the wall to open it safely. If you make too many mistakes, a secondary lock makes entry almost impossible. This morning it was still set to Rooster, but that may have changed.

Then there's usually a riddle of some sort to open the door leading from the main room to the dining room, where the stairs that lead to the second story are located. I didn't get a chance to see today's riddle before we had to leave.

How things proceed from here is largely up to the PCs. There are four obvious choices, detailed below, but the GM should be prepared to use these as a guide if the PCs try something more creative.

Taking the Hook

Savvy PCs will assume that they are expected to go into the house and face whatever is inside. They aren't wrong, and the rest of the mod assumes they have taken this route. Before moving ahead to Part Two, however, they will have to present their idea to the two negotiators.

Kaiu Yaeko, who had obviously been hoping the PCs would offer to intervene, readily agrees.

Ikoma Robun, being who he is, needs convincing. He's rather enjoying this turn of events, and is merely looking for the right place to drive the wedge that will shatter the negotiations.

PCs will need to declare why they should be allowed to go into the house. **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at TN 30**, with adjustments if the PCs use the following arguments, or something similar:

This is a matter between two clans, and while we are not Emerald Magistrates, we are the closest neutral party. Who knows what can happen before a magistrate arrives? (TN lowered by 5)

Let us try, and if we fail, you can handle it however you like. (TN reduced by 3)

One or more of the players may be Emerald Yoriki or Magistrates, and thus do not have to make this roll to take command of what is clearly under their purview.

Should the PCs fail at this roll, they will get another chance to enter Engo's residence by following one of the remaining paths.

If any PC tries to Intimidate Robun, the TN goes up by 3 for each PC who attempts the Intimidate roll. Failing the **Intimidation / Awareness TN 27** roll by 10 more earns the PC Sworn Enemy (Ikoma Robun), and a +5 TN to all contested rolls against Robun any of the PCs make for the remainder of the mod. See Rewards for additional information.

If there is a Crab PC at the table, but no Lion, Ikoma Hachi will join the group entering the house.

If there is a Lion PC but no Crab PCs at the table, Hiruma Renko will join the group.

If neither clan is represented in the party, neither NPC will accompany the PCs.

This is why we have NPCS

If the PCs don't offer or convince Robun to allow them to enter the house, Kaiu Yaeko will suggest sending in a mixed group of Crab and Lion Samurai. Robun grudgingly accepts this plan, and each of them selects 3 bushi to enter the house and retrieve Kaiu Engo, his son, and Kitsu Suiseiko.

The six bushi approach the house, carefully avoiding the swing-away portion of the stairs. One of the Crab, a large Hida, pounds on the door, demanding entry. After waiting several minutes, he tries to slide open the

door, but it doesn't budge, even after he and one of the larger Lion samurai try to force it together. Another Crab waves them off, then charges the door shoulder first, bursting through with an explosion of splintered wood.

Not long after the group enters the building, loud crashing noises reach the crowd outside, mixed with some rather creative curses. One of the Lion samurai emerges from the ruined front door, quivering with anger and blood running from a large gash in his forehead.

Half of an hour passes before one of the Hiruma comes running out, accompanied by an Ikoma scout.

"Samas!" they shout in unison. "We've found a body," the Hiruma continues.

"We've found most of a body," the Ikoma corrects. "In Kitsu-sama's quarters. We cannot be sure it's her, but.."

"Cannot be sure?!" Ikoma Robun interrupts.

"There's a lot of blood. A LOT, and there's tremendous physica..."

"Enough!" Robun growls, before turning to you. "Don't just stand there, samurai. You are the so-called 'impartial' witnesses, go witness. If I don't have answers within the next hour, hostage negotiations will be the least of your worries!"

Kaiu Yaeko nods in agreement, trying to cover her own frustration. "This is bad, samurai. Go find out what you can and report back."

Following the two scouts, the PCs move through the remains of the front room towards the back of the house, passing through two more sets of ruined doors.

"Careful, samurai," the Hiruma warns. "There are traps all over this house. Matsu Boru stepped on a nightingale floorboard, and that hand-axe over there swung out of the ceiling and just missed splitting his skull."

Have the players roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 20**. Successful players can't be sure, but the two scouts are barely controlling their emotions, both men on the verge of laughing over the ridiculousness, before apparently remembering the severity of the situation and leading the PCs towards a set of stairs leading to the second floor.

This path continues in Part Two: The Red Room

This is why we have Ninja

Some of the more stealth-minded samurai may want to scout out the house using unconventional means. It is late evening, just after sunset, so the timing couldn't be better, except for the fact that Ikoma Robun is growing increasingly impatient. With every passing minute, the possibility of the Lion commanding his men to torch Engo's residence grows, without care for any well-intentioned Scorpion who may be creeping around inside.

Here is a list of possible approaches and their outcomes. If a PC comes up with more creative ways of getting into or exploring the house, use these events as examples of what the player should expect. This tactic shouldn't be an automatic fail, but it shouldn't be a cakewalk, either. Ultimately, if the PC seems to be hogging the spotlight, allow them to find the body in the Red Room, and use it as a trigger to have them return to the party with a report.

Approach: The Roof or Windows

The awning over the first floor and the main roof of the house are covered in several counter-measures. The awnings under the second story windows are covered with iron beads strung on greased steel rods similar to an abacus. In order to get close enough for entering the house through one of these windows, the PC must roll **Athletics / Reflexes TN 20**. Failure means the PC is now sliding uncontrollably towards the edge of the roof. They may attempt to catch the edge of the roof (or tuck and roll) with another **Athletics / Reflexes TN 15**, or fall 15 feet to the ground and taking 2k1 damage

These panels line the roof as well. Additionally, there are several trap door panels that open into various spaces within the house. A character on the roof should roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25 or Engineering / Perception TN 20** to locate one of these panels. If they do not see the trap doors, one of them opens directly beneath their feet. A PC who activates a pit trap may attempt to avoid falling by rolling **Raw REF TN 25**.

Where the PC ends up depends on where they were on the roof at the time.

Over the Front of the house

You have the briefest sensation of weightlessness before dropping through the hole that has opened up

beneath you. The fall is suddenly interrupted when you land on a slick wooden plank, sliding towards an open window. In a split second, you are falling towards the ground just in front of the house.

A PC landing in the front yard takes 2k1 damage from the fall.

Over the back of the house

Similar to the trap at the front of the house, except the PC only takes 1k1 damage from the fall, as the wooden slide ejects them from the house directly over a muck pile in the stables. This is a **DX** honor loss.

Over either side of the house, or Center of Roof

Trapdoors in any of these locations open and direct the falling PC over the gallery above the central dining area. Several of the wires used to operate various traps around the house cross through the air just below the ceiling, which may result in the PC taking damage from the wires, but also disabling some of the traps in this area. A PC falling through this area must roll **Athletics / Reflexes TN 20** to avoid getting caught up in the wires and taking 2k2 damage from the wires, and another 2k2 from the fall itself.

This path continues in Part Two: The Dining Room

The windows themselves have the abacus grating around them, but offer a second deterrent. When any weight is applied to the sill, the wooden planks that act as shoots for the trap doors on the roof swing forward, possibly knocking the intruder back off the ledge.

Have any PC who attempts to enter one of the second-story windows roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25** to detect the mechanism before activating it. If they don't see the trigger, a wooden plank swings towards them, requiring an **Athletics / Reflexes roll of TN 40** to avoid being knocked backwards onto the rollers and then off the roof. The PC will take 2k1 damage from the fall.

If a PC manages to get in through a window, their path picks up based on which window they enter.

Approach: Servants' Quarters

As you approach the servants' entrance to the main house, you can make out some unusual details. Twelve cast-iron medallions line the doorframe on one side, each one bearing a raised image from the Rokugani calendar – one for each month of the year. Over the door is an image of a crescent moon.

Entering servants' area is easy, as Engo doesn't have a strong enough connection to his servants to bother putting traps in their quarters. However, the door leading to the main house has the same type of sturdy construction and locking mechanism as the Front door. PCs trying to enter this way must succeed at an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25 or Engineering / Perception TN 20** to discover that they will need to press the appropriate symbol on the door in order to unlock it.

Exceeding the TN by 5 or more also indicates that too many false attempts will probably release a failsafe of some variety.

If the PCs think to talk to the servants gathered outside, one of them will state that the pass key for both front and back doors was Rooster earlier in the day. They are welcome to try and guess the appropriate key. Three failed attempts causing a rumbling noise from above the door as a large steel plate slides into place behind the door.

If the PCs want, they may attempt to force the door open instead, using **Engineering / Strength TN 20 or Athletics / Strength TN25**.

Anyone who forces this door open should make an **Athletics/Reflexes roll at TN 25** to avoid a large steel panel that drops from the space above the door, then immediately falls inward. Getting hit by this panel does 3k3 damage.

This section continues in Part Two: The Dining Room

Only one Guy will remain

The biggest flaw in this plan is that burning a house down falls under the Imperial edict against arson, regardless if the home is full of traps built by a paranoid Kaiu.

Convincing Yaeko to go along with it requires solid reasoning from the PCs. A successful **Lore (Law) / Intelligence TN 25** roll allows the PC to recall several instances where a building being used for illicit reasons has been condemned by local authorities so that fire could be used to drive out its occupants. This is not a necessarily honorable approach, but there is precedent. A player using this argument takes a **DX Honor** loss.

The roll to persuade Yaeko to go this route is **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness TN 30**.

Kaiu Yaeko sighs, and thinks for a long moment. "Fine. Give me time to set up a bucket line, and we will try to smoke them out."

Setting fire to the house is an extreme solution, but if Robun can't get out of these negotiations with a fresh war, at least he'll have destroyed *something* before everything is said and done.

Unfortunately, the fire doesn't drive anyone to leave the dwelling, and the house is eventually engulfed in flame. A number of strange popping sounds echo from inside, and at one point there's a tremendous cacophony of sound, as though several dozen biwa had been struck by tetsubo at the same time, followed by low whistling headed your direction.

PCs must make an **Athletics / Reflexes TN 30** to avoid getting hit by the shrapnel created when hundreds of high-tension wires suddenly snap. The shrapnel does **2k2** damage.

The next morning, Yaeko declares that the smoldering remains of Kaiu Engo's residence have cooled down enough for careful exploration.

Have the players roll either **Investigation (Search) / Perception TN 20 or Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 20**. There are two different results for this roll.

Succeeding at the Search option leads the players to discover the remains of a body near the rear of the building. **Medicine / Intelligence TN 25** suggests that whoever this was has already been dead at the time of the fire. Beating the TN by 10 reveals the body to be that of a male.

PCs who made the Notice roll will find their attention drawn to the only part of the residence still standing; the large stone pillar that was obviously a chimney. Near the top, a rectangular section of stone has come away from the chimney, as though it were a door.

An **Athletics (Climbing) / Strength TN 20** roll is required to reach this door, though of course shugenja and monks may have other ways to make their way up. Securing a rope will reduce the climbing TN to 10.

Once all the PCs have made it to the top of the chimney, proceed to **Part Three: The Safe? Room**.

Part Two: The House

This two-story residence is constructed more like those nearer the Wall, with the outer walls on the first floor built from stone and sturdy wood. A number of small openings provide light to the interior, but are not large enough for a person to pass through. Larger windows have been built into the second story rooms, but these appear to be shuttered. Red clay tiles create an awning over the first floor, though cast iron accents surround the windows themselves.

There is little ornamentation outside the front of the house, but a carefully maintained stone garden rests nearby, the white sand sculpted into waves and spirals around several smooth black granite rocks.

****GM REMINDER****

Players with one rank in Engineering have their TNs for noticing traps reduced by 5, or by 10 if they have 3 or more ranks in the skill.

Players may choose to roll Defense / Reflexes instead of Athletics / Reflexes in order to avoid damage from traps. This does not include rolls to avoid falling damage.

The Front Door

As expected with this style of architecture, the main entrance to the house is a sliding wooden door set into the stone outer wall. Above and along the right side of the door are several medallions of cast iron. The medallion above the door currently shows the crescent of the waning moon.

A player who came this way earlier and rolled a 25 or better on the first of the requested Investigation (Notice) rolls will recall that this was an icon of Lord Sun earlier in the day.

To the right of the door are 12 more images representing the months of a Rokugani year. It is currently locked.

PCs trying to enter this way must succeed at an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25 or Engineering / Perception TN 20** to discover that they will need to press the appropriate symbol on the door in order to unlock it.

Exceeding the TN by 5 or more also indicates that too many false attempts will probably release a failsafe of some variety.

If the PCs think to talk to the servants gathered outside, one of them will state that the pass key for both front and back doors was Rooster earlier in the day. They are welcome to try and guess the appropriate key. Three failed attempts causing a rumbling noise from above the door as a large steel plate slides into place behind the door.

If the PCs want, they may attempt to force the door open instead, using **Engineering / Strength TN 20 or Athletics / Strength TN25**.

Anyone who forces this door open should make an **Athletics / Reflexes roll at TN 25** to avoid a large steel panel that drops from the space above the door, then immediately falls inward. Getting hit by this panel does 3k3 damage.

****By the Light of the Moon****

The locking mechanism and failsafe panels of the door are visible, and an Engineering / Intelligence TN 20 roll determine that Rooster is the correct medallion to press

The Main Room

The focus of the left half of this room is an enormous fireplace surrounded by the tools of Engo's trade. To the right, shelves line the walls, each displaying a number of intricate metal works, from fruit-shaped jewelry boxes to miniature working siege engine replicas.

One corner of the room contains a small shrine to Kaiu Miko, Engo's fallen wife. Among her personal relics here is a wall hanging depicting a wave crashing against the lighthouse overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay

The door leading from this room to the next is locked, with a strangely shaped keyhole located about waist high.

****By the Light of the Moon****

Left half of the room: The locking mechanism for the door leading to the next room and the stairs secreted away inside the chimney leading upstairs and down to the basement. Wires have been hidden inside each of the wood-and-paper wall sections in this room. Fifteen zeni baked into the bricks lining the fireplace.

Right half of the room: Approximately a dozen concealed compartments inside the various boxes and models, each containing either a key, a zeni, or a small stone. Thirty-seven tea cups hidden behind the wall panels. Two dozen metal pins have been woven into the tapestry above Miko's shrine, forming the kanji for "weakness."

Have anyone poking around in this room roll **Investigation (Search) / Perception**. What they find is based on the strength of their roll.

TN 10: There is a wall hanging just to the right of the door that displays the following haiku:

*Beetle builds a house
Layers of clay, sand, and grass
Children safe inside*

TN 15: Several of the random boxes on the wall contain keys that look like they may fit the lock in the door.

TN 20: The door leading to the next room is a typical sliding door of wood covered in paper. Pushing through the door should be easy, except for the barely visible wires inside the panel. A quick survey of the room reveals these wires probably exist throughout the house.

If the PCs try to force or cut through this door, the same kind of steel-plate failsafe falls into place, requiring any PCs making the attempt to make an **Athletics / Reflexes TN 25** roll to avoid the panel or take 3k3 damage.

Deciphering Engo's haiku is essential to finding the key to the locked door. The key is hidden inside one of the ornamental boxes in the shelves on the wall. Some of the more interesting boxes include:

A miniature replica of this house, with an inlay of slivered jade decorating the first-floor exterior.

A cast iron watermelon that has been brushed with bright green paint.

A replica of a section of the Wall that opens to reveal a small compartment, as well as showing some passages within the wall itself.

A miniature set of crab-inspired heavy armor on an articulated armature. There is just enough space inside the chest plate for something to be hidden. (PCs with 3 or more ranks in Engineering can determine that this figure can be manipulated to look like an actual crab.)

An ornate brass beetle, with wings that open when you press down on its head, revealing a secret compartment.

The correct key is in the **watermelon**, which opens to reveal a clay-red center, sand-white rind, and grass-green outer rind.

If the PCs seem stumped, have them roll **Artisan (Pottery) / Intelligence TN 15** or another relevant skill to remind them that because of the large deposits of iron in this area, most clay is a rust red color.

A player can roll **Craft (Blacksmith) / Intelligence TN 15** to recall that the Kaiu blacksmiths often use a fine white sand as flux for forge-welding wrought iron.

The Dining Room

This room is sparsely decorated, with the only furniture being a low table that appears long enough to seat 10 people. No cushions surround the table, however, so it is unlikely that the family takes any of their meals here. Doors lead to the kitchen, main room, and servant's quarters, as well as a set of stairs leading up to the balconies that overlook this area. A small drum is fixed above the servant's entrance, with some sort of mechanical arm controlling the mallet.

PCs entering this room from somewhere other than the Main Room can easily unlock the door to that room by turning a handle on the door.

****By the Light of the Moon****

The locking mechanism for the back door to the house and the pulley system that operates the warning drum above the door.

An Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25 in this room reveals a dark liquid seeping through the ceiling above the far corner and staining the wall below a crimson red.

The Kitchen

The coals in the hearth were covered when the servants were ordered to leave the premises, but other than that everything has been left where it was. Partially chopped vegetables, fish left on skewers but uncooked, and bowls containing sauces in various stages of preparation clutter the counters and low tables.

This is a high traffic area of the house, and placing any hidden defenses here could result in a catastrophic fire. Have the PCs roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception anyway**, then sigh and tell them they don't find anything of interest.

By the Light of the Moon

Several caches of sweets, probably placed here by various servants over the years.

The Stairs

Two flights of stairs separated by a short landing lead up to the second-floor balconies that overlook the dining room.

A player that visited Suiseiko earlier and rolled a result of 40 or better on their second attempt is able to recall that the step just below the landing was a little loose when they came this way before.

If no one made the earlier roll, have the first PC headed up the stairs roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 40**.

Success allows this player to warn the others of the apparent danger from walking on this step. While failing this roll means they must roll **Athletics / Reflexes TN 25** to avoid the dai-tsuchi swinging down from a compartment in the ceiling, doing **5k5** damage. If the first player is missed by the large hammer, the second player must also make the **Athletics / Reflexes roll at TN 20** or be hit for **5k5**. Similarly, if the first two players avoid getting nailed, the third one must roll **Athletics Reflexes TN 20** or take **4k4** Damage.

By the Light of the Moon

The trigger mechanism is easily visible, but the hammer itself is out of range until the PC makes it to the landing. The inside of the hidden stairwell in the chimney is still visible.

The Gallery

This area is basically a U-shaped balcony overlooking the dining area. To the left is the entrance to Kitsu Suiseiko's room, with the corridor continuing around a corner to Nakasu's room. To the right, the hallway leads to Kaiu Engo's room.

PCs who visited Suiseiko earlier and rolled a 25 or higher on their **third Investigation** roll recall there being a nightingale panel in the floor just outside of her room. Depressing this panel now releases a swinging hand axe, allowing the PCs to pass safely.

If no one spotted it earlier, have the lead PC make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25** to spot the trap now. Failing the roll means they must roll **Athletics / Reflexes TN 20** or take **3k3** damage.

Success at the **Investigation** roll above also reveals a trail of blood leading from Suiseiko's room back to Engo's.

By the Light of the Moon

The trigger mechanism for the swinging axe is visible. There is also a trapdoor built into the ceiling over the dining area.

The Red Room

Regardless of how the PCs arrive at this location, anyone who enters it must make a check against **Fear 1**.

A scene of utter horror spreads in front of you, as the mangled remains of a naked human lies on a ruined bedroll, covered in blood and gore. In this position, it is impossible to tell if the body is male or female.

The players in the room may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** or **Medicine / Perception** to try and learn more about what happened here.

While they are rolling, select a random player to make a Raw Stamina TN 20 roll, instead. This PC suddenly feels a tremendous pressure in their chest, as though their lungs were rapidly filling with fluid. If they fail the roll, they take 2k2 damage, and must roll a second time. This continues until the PC either succeeds at the roll or falls unconscious. When they succeed at the roll, they take another 2k1 damage, but immediately cough up roughly a gallon of water.

Search results.

TN 10: (Investigation only) – There are two blood-splattered kimono on the floor nearby. One is the deep blue-gray commonly worn by the Crab, and the other is more of a beige color with orange accents.

TN 10: (Medicine only) It is readily apparent that this person's lungs have burst.

TN 15: Based on the way the blood splattering appears, most of the blood in the room belongs to this person.

TN 20: A second set of splatter patterns suggest another person on the bed was struck before being dragged away.

Someone who is willing to find a way to move the remains around (chopsticks, a bit of bamboo, whatever) can easily determine that this person was once male.

By the Light of the Moon

A mechanism designed to push anyone who tries to enter this room through a window back out. There is

also a trapdoor in the ceiling near the window. The two mechanisms together seem designed to funnel someone from the roof to the ground outside.

If someone in the room mentions Washi, the familiar blob will make itself visible, bouncing happily in the pool of viscera in the center of the bed. Previously, Washi was so clear as to be nearly invisible, but now there are visible black streaks swirling inside the blob.

PCs with Lore Shadowlands or Lore Maho can readily confirm that Washi has become a kansens, although a relatively weak one, as these things go. Touching it with a bit of jade of any type or doing 20 pts of damage will get rid of it. Washi will try to drown another PC if the players don't get rid of it fast enough.

A shugenja may try to convince Washi to show them what happened in the room. All Washi will show them are images of Nakasu and Suiseiko sitting in this bed, together. Instead of answering a second question, or if asked to reveal how the person in the bed died, Washi will instead try to fill someone else's lungs with water, the way it did earlier.

Nakasu's Room

There is another pendulum trap in the ceiling near the door to this room, but it has been disabled by Nakasu. Players who roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25** can spot this trap, but it will not activate if the connected floor space is depressed.

Kaiu Nakasu's room is tidy and relatively uncluttered. A waist-high table along one wall holds an unusual assortment of powders and herbs, as well as a bundle of bandages soaking in a bowl of water with a medicinal smell

PCs who do a more thorough search of the room should **roll Investigation (Search) / Perception** to find the following:

TN 10 – In a writing desk near the window rests Nakasu's journal. Today's entry mentions how embarrassed he felt at his father's courtly faux pas. Going back several weeks you find the original entry describing the young man's excitement at being given a chance to practice his mother's teachings. Over time, his entries become a mix of wistful musings and concern that the young woman's head wound is taking too long to heal.

TN 20 - You dig through a pile of crumpled paper. The first couple you read are obviously attempts at flattering haiku, but show an unsettling lack of an understanding of metaphor.

TN 25 – Tucked in a shelf under the work bench is a niche containing the working notes of Kaiu Miko. A player who finds and keeps these should add "Miko's Notes" to their record sheet.

**** By the Light of the Moon ****

Same results as the Investigation notes listed above, as well as the trap mechanism just outside the door.

Engo's Room

The door to Kaiu Engo's room opens surprising easily, especially after everything else you've come to expect from this house. His personal quarters are much like him – orderly, functional, and a little bit odd. The large chimney from the fireplace downstairs extends from floor to ceiling here, with a small shrine to Fukurokujin nearby.

PCs who spotted the blood trail leading to this room are able to follow it to the chimney, where it disappears into the stone.

An **Engineering / Intelligence TN 15** roll suggests that there is likely a mechanism to open a hidden door in the rock chimney.

Allow anyone in the room to make an **Investigation (Search) / Perception TN 15 roll**. The only things here worthy of attention are the blood trail and the shrine. Somewhat oddly, the room looks like it is rarely even slept in. **TN 20** reveals a packet of Jade powder in Engo's writing desk.

****By the Light of the Moon****

A packet of Jade powder hidden in a writing desk. The opening mechanism for the secret door leading to the hidden stairs. The inner workings of the puzzle-lock. Reduce the TNs to solve the puzzle by 5.

PCs checking out the shrine should be given Player Hand Out 4 – Engo's puzzle.

What looks to be a small Go board rests in the center of the shrine, next to a cup full of steel rods of various shapes. The white stones on the board are fixed in place, and have a groove running along the diameter of the stone. A groove creating a 90-degree angle is pressed into the black stones, which rotate freely. Looking closely at the steel rods, they appear to have been designed to fit together.

Players may attempt the following rolls to help figure out how this puzzle works. If they are actively interested in solving the puzzle, offer them the TN 10 rolls below to get them started. However, not all

players like puzzle-solving of this sort, so allow them to roll their way to a solution.

Games (Puzzles) / Intelligence or Engineering / Intelligence.

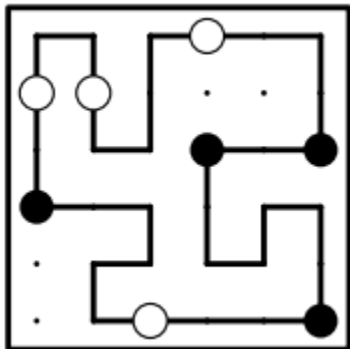
TN 10 (Puzzles only) – This looks like a type of logic puzzle called Masyu. The goal is to create a loop through all of the stones on the board while observing a particular set of rules.

TN 10 (Engineering) – Solving the puzzle will likely leave the rotating stones in a position that leaves the hidden panel unlocked.

TN 15: It may not even be necessary to solve the puzzle in full, as long as the black stones end up facing the correct direction. The stone in the lower right corner is obviously 180 degrees off.

Third Roll, TN 15 – (Puzzles) – reveal the answer below. If players succeed at solving the puzzle, Fukurokujin smiles upon them, and decreases the TNs for all Intelligence rolls by 5 for the remainder of the mod.

Third Roll, TN 15 – (Engineering) – You know, if someone were to simply rip this board out of the shrine with sufficient strength, it will probably trigger the door release (going this route makes Fukurokujin a bit peevisish, and he increases the TNs of all Intelligence rolls by 5 for the remainder of the mod)



Once the puzzle has been solved, a section of the stone chimney opens, revealing a set of stairs leading down.

Part Three: The Safe? Room

The stairs down are steep quite narrow as you descend to what would normally be the first floor, and continue downward, until you are about 15 feet underground. A tunnel widens out from here, and lamps offer dim light. Shelves are set into the wall, packed with barrels of grain and dried foodstuffs. Two larger barrels can

be seen at the edge of the lamplight, providing cover for the two servants who are intently watching something further down the passage.

PCs may be attempting to be stealthy; have them roll Stealth / Agility against the following TNs:

Servants – TN 12

Kaiu Engo – TN 23

Kitsu Suiseiko – TN 30

The servants will call out to the PCs if they are heard approaching, or if they don't make an attempt at stealth. "Please, samurai-samas, he's gone crazy!"

If Engo hears the PCs approach, he makes a motion with his hammer towards a corner of the room that the PCs can't see. You hear him speak, but his voice is too low to hear.

If Suiseiko hears them coming, she screams "HELP!! He's a mad man! Help!"

If no one hears them approach, one of the peasants will utter a yelp as the PCs move past them. Should someone ask one of the peasants what happened, she says that Kaiu-sama entered Suiseiko's room looking for his son, and grew enraged. There was a scream, and Engo shouted for all of the servants to leave the house immediately. They saw him carrying their lady over his shoulder, so we followed him here.

Kaiu Engo sits against the far wall, breathing heavily, a mallet resting in his lap. Both his hammer and the arm holding it are splattered with blood.

A PC that continues into the room sees more shelves, these full of books, and a bedroll in one corner. Huddled in that corner is Kitsu Suiseiko, wrapped in a blanket and bleeding from an open wound in her head.

"Samurai!" Suiseiko gasps. "Please, save me!"

"She killed my son." The man says in a low grumble.

When someone responds, he says again, "SHE Killed my SON!" standing now, with a vice-like grip on his iron mallet.

It's probably time for initiative. Engo will fight until either he or Suiseiko is dead. Suiseiko will remain huddled in her corner until someone attacks her or Engo has fallen. If a player gets close enough for her to touch, however, she will attempt to infect them with her claw or bite attack. Once she begins fighting, she

will also fight until death. If she can't get a replacement skin soon, her disguise will fail during the trip to dragon lands.

The two servants will attack the party with knives, though their allegiance is unclear.

Enraged Engo

Recently-Tainted Madman

School/Rank: Kaiu Engineer 5

Initiative: 8k3

Armor TN: 25 **Reduction:** 5

Wounds: 76 (Dead)

Attack: 7k4 (Mallet, Complex)

Damage: 7k3+6 (Mallet)

Air	Earth	Fire	Water	Void
3	3	4	STR	2
			6 (3)	

Honor: 1.3 **Status:** 4.0 **Glory:** 4.3 **Taint:** 3.7

Primary Skills: Jiu-jutsu 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth / Shadowlands Taint

Special Mechanics: Tainted Strength: Engo ignores wound penalties, and his strength is increased by 3.

Suiseiko / Hoguseru

Naked Kitsu / powered-down Bog Hag. Because she has used her Greater Shadowlands power to disguise her Taint.

School/Rank: Kitsu Shugenja 1 / bog hag

Initiative: 5k3+3

Armor TN: 20 **Reduction:** 0

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), x57(Out)

Attack: 5k3 claws

Damage: 5k1 (Claws)

Air	Earth	Fire	Water	Void
3	3	3	2 (3 str)	-

Primary Skills: Sincerity (deceit) 4,

Special Mechanics: Disease – if the Bog Hag does damage with her claws, roll 1k1. A result of 1 or 2 means the target has contracted a Wasting Disease and must roll Raw Stamina TN 15 or immediately lose 1 point of Stamina.

Two Enthralled Peasants – The peasants have earth 2 (10/14/18/22/26/30/34/38). Their only action is to try and grab a PC that gets too close to Engo. They roll 5k3 to attack and 4k2 to try and maintain a grapple.

Conclusion

Depending on how the players leave the house, they may have several different options available to them.

They may have slain the beasts. May have decided that they are not prepared to deal with an enraged Kaiu and/or a bog hag, they may retreat to safety and send in the Crab to do what Crab do.

Either way, Kaiu Yaeko looks both surprised and ashamed at the news of yet another of her vassals having fallen under the sway of the Taint. If any player suggests that perhaps these events combined should

How do the PCs report what they find? Do they leave space for Yaeko to save face, or offer to be her second after yet another failure?

Do they convince the Ikoma to cut his losses and return home without causing further trouble?

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: 1

Good Roleplaying: 1

Finding Nakasu OR solving the Masyu puzzle: 1

Finding Engo and Suiseiko without burning down the house: 1

Total Possible Experience: 4

Favors

Finding out what became of Engo and Suiseiko: 1 Favor.

A PC who contracted Wasting Disease can spend 1 favor to remove the Wasting Disease. A PC who contracts the disease and does not die painfully over several weeks.

Honor

There is no inherent honor gain.

Glory – G3

Discovering what came of Nakasu or Engo: G4 glory

Allies and Enemies

A PC who is even mildly rude to Ikoma Robun earns him as a sworn enemy (5).

Other Awards/Penalties

This information will commonly be recorded on the player's mod sheet, and can include Advantages being

purchasable or Disadvantages being gained as well as other specific effects or one-use benefits.

GM Reporting

- 1) Was Yaeko convinced to seppuku?
- 2) Did Robun agree to leave?

- 3) Did anyone recover Miko's Notes?

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

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Honored Samurai!

Finally, war has come to an end and the Samurai of the Lion return home. The gambit to delay engagement to Kuda Mura where they could force the Crab to stand and fight was bold. And costly for both. But it was the Crab who stood firm, and though they gave up ground, it can still be said that Kuda Mura has never fallen to any enemy.

This victory came at high cost to both clans, though. One of course must note the heavy losses that both Crab and Lion alike took. But perhaps the worst losses for both was when Akodo Shakato and Hida Oturi met in personal combat. With their honor guard standing back, they each stood against each other... and both of their blows rang true.

The Lion have not announced, officially, who the new Clan Champion of the Lion will be, but one must presume that Akodo Shuhan, the son of Shakato, will take the mantle. On the side of the Crab, Hida Oturi's children are all too young to take the mantle, with but one old enough to even have started training in the Hida traditions. In the interim, the three daimyo of the Yasuki, Hiruma, and Kaiu have opted to split responsibilities as opposed to declaring a formal regent. Oturi's wife, Arumi, is also stepping up to assist where she can.

Of course, the war is not the only thing to have come out of this summer. I wish I could say that it was a joy to announce Toturi Kazetora as the Imperial Advisor... but there have been complications. Kazetora's first offer of advice, offered in the middle of open court, was that our Beloved Emperor, Toturi X retire and allow another to take the mantle of Regent. Such a suggestion borders on blasphemy, of course, but it is this one's concern that Toturi-dono might be taking Kazetora's suggestion seriously!

There is but one thing that is for certain. We now live in interesting times.

-Otomo Yusuke

Player Handout #2: List of NPCs

Kaiu Engo – Paranoid engineer, and father of Kaiu Nakasu. Engo is a brilliant engineer and craftsman, but keeps largely to himself. He has a strong distrust for the Imperial bureaucracy, and has had several run-ins with the local tax collectors. Why Engo agreed to host a young Lion shugenja is unknown, though some suggest that it has something to do with his son.

Kaiu Nakasu – Failed shugenja, son of Kaiu Engo. Nakasu is kind, if a bit shy. As a child, he gained the attention of a water spirit, and this led to the young Crab being tested for training as a shugenja. Unfortunately for the young boy, his talent with the kami was proven to be rather weak, and he lacked his father's mechanical know-how, so Nakasu was sent to train with the Yasuki, instead. Infatuated with Kitsu Suiseiko.

Ikoma Robun – Lead negotiator for the Lion delegation. Quick-tempered and terse, with a history of making even the simplest negotiations costly for the other party. Wears a white band around one arm, with the recently-deceased Lion Champion's mon embroidered in gold thread.

Kaiu Yaeko – Governor of Kuda Province, and lead diplomat for the Crab in this negotiation. Tall, but not large in the Crab sense. The fallout from the horrific actions of one of her retainers has cost Yaeko a great deal of standing in the courts, and this reversal is visibly weighing upon her. Eager to make sure the negotiations run smoothly.

Kitsu Suiseiko – Wounded shugenja. Her head injuries leave her sensitive to lizxoght and noise, as well as having greatly weakened her abilities, but these are expected to return once Suiseiko is completely healed.

Player Handout #3: Haiku Puzzle

**Beetle builds his house
Layers of clay, sand, and grass
Children safe inside**

Player Handout #4: Engo's Puzzle

