

Test of Loyalty

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

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[Intrigue, Travel, Combat]

An escort mission becomes... complicated.

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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

Seppun Kazetora, the younger brother of the Emperor, has recently been elevated to the position of Imperial Advisor. A great deal of political effort went into this outcome, and representatives from the Crane Clan lent him their support in exchange for arranging a marriage between the Imperial scion and an influential Crane courtier: Doji Hanako, a cousin of the Crane Clan (and Emerald) Champion Doji Makibesu.

Doji Hanako was being courted by Daidoji Morimasa, a veteran defender of the Crane lands currently serving as the daimyo of the Hayako province. Despite his proven ability and his high rank, he was no competition for the younger brother of the Emperor in the eyes of Hanako's family and his suit was summarily rejected. Denied a chance to wed the woman he loves after his years of dedicated service to the clan, Morimasa has decided to prevent the marriage in the only fashion he feels he has left: he has assembled a group of utterly loyal samurai to assassinate the Imperial Advisor.

The PCs will become involved in Kazetora's plots at the Test of the Topaz Champion, and be present when the Imperial Advisor is attacked. Being the unexpected factor in the equation, they should repel the assault without great difficulty, but that leaves Kazetora convinced that his political rival Doji Makibesu has decided to assassinate him. It will be up to the PCs to determine that the motivation behind the attack was personal rather than political and then to apprehend the responsible party. (Though if they choose, they may attempt to shift the blame to a different target.)

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. The following mechanics should be noted, if any of the PCs possess them:

- Sworn Enemy: Ikoma Robun
- Sworn Enemy: Bayushi Akanishin or Ally: Bayushi Akanishin
- Karmic Tie: Toturi Kazetora (renamed, now Seppun)
- Daidoji Scout School
- Makibesu's Countenance or Status on Emerald Magistrate track

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.

Inactivity

Time passes, and though the PCs' deeds will earn them a reputation, the Empire is a large place and lasting fame is a long-term goal not easy to achieve. **Each PC loses 3 points 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 **15**. Failure on this roll causes the PC to gain a point of the Shadowlands Taint. 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 of **20**. 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 Test of the Topaz Champion is usually the first event of the new year, though it was delayed due to the birth of the Imperial Heirs. The additional weeks of training may have benefited the entrants, who put on one of the best demonstrations of skill and prowess in memory. The final iaijutsu round is won by Daidoji Yukiyo, an Iron Warrior-trained underdog prevailing over Tsuruchi Yusuke, the son of the Tsuruchi family daimyo.

The PCs are representing their lords and clans at the Imperial Court at the Test of the Topaz Champion. There is little of immediate political significance happening at the event, with the Emperor in a festive and expansive mood following the birth of his

children. The season's new samurai represent their clans' hopes for the coming year, and a feeling of hope and rebirth is in the air. During the celebrations the night following the unexpected victory of the Iron Warrior-trained Daidoji Yukiyo in an extremely close match over the son of the Tsuruchi family daimyo, it is announced that the Emperor will be heading on to Shiro Daidoji to honor the victor. Most of the Imperial Court make preparations to head back to Otosan Uchi, and the PCs would expect to return to their normal duties, but as they ready themselves for their journeys, they receive a message from the Imperial Advisor requesting a meeting at noon on the day following the finals.

With the Imperial Court and delegations from every clan making preparations for travel, there are several messages being sent by various courtiers. In addition to the note from Seppun Kazetora asking to meet with them, any PC who has **Sworn Enemy: Ikoma Robun** (from *CIT28: Exchange of Hostages*) receives a letter from him. This is Player Handout #2, and has essentially no impact on this module in and of itself – Robun has left to travel back to the Lion lands for his next assignment by the time the message is delivered, and will not be interacting with the PCs in any further manner for this module, but will be returning in the future and wishes to ensure that he is not forgotten.

Like the bulk of the Imperial Court, Seppun Kazetora has had quarters at the nearby Shiro sano Kakita for the duration of the event. It is a hour's ride between the village of Tsuma where the event is held (and the PCs have been staying) and the stronghold of the Kakita family. The PCs are anticipated, and escorted to meet the Imperial Advisor in a sumptuously-appointed meeting room.

Seppun Kazetora wears his attitude of Imperial authority like a second set of clothes, though even he is somewhat relaxed in the bright spring air. Kneeling off to one side of the room is an extraordinarily attractive young Seppun woman dressed in honor, who Kazetora introduces as Seppun Chitose, his guard commander. He exchanges pleasantries with the PCs politely, giving those with whom he has a closer relationship a bit more attention but showing no haste or pressing need. Fine tea and exquisite snacks are served, and he moves casually to the matter at hand.

“It is always enjoyable to converse with samurai of distinction and worth, such as yourselves. I have been taking the opportunity provided by my position as Imperial Advisor to speak with a number of influential leaders of the Empire, that I may better serve my brother. To that end, I have scheduled meetings with

Kakita Yushihiro over the next few days. However, this was somewhat unplanned and I do not have my usual entourage to uphold the dignity of my office. I have taken the liberty of petitioning your lords for your assistance, to stand as my honor guard and companions until I rejoin the Imperial Court.”

This is a relatively simple duty; Kazetora has a dozen Seppun miharu that serve as his bodyguards, but an honor guard provides more prestige and allows him to present a better appearance in court (particularly for the Crane, who are very sensitive to such things). This is not expected to be a dangerous assignment, as the Crane lands are very settled and usually peaceful. There should not be many questions, but Kazetora has no reason to hide anything at this point – he is meeting with the Crane leadership and is making no real secret of that, though the explanation for it if asked is that it is “only natural for an Imperial Advisor to seek counsel from the Emperor’s Left Hand” (which is true but incomplete).

The Emperor and the core of the Imperial Court are moving on to Shiro Daidoji, so Kazetora will require the PCs to assist him for “a few day, no more than a week”, and accompany him to Shiro Daidoji so that he can provide an appropriate appearance there as well. He suggests the PCs coordinate with Chitose if they are concerned about security matters, and prepares to dismiss them after giving a couple of them a quick errand.

“Your service is appreciated. I have arranged for you to be given rooms in Shiro sano Kakita, so you will likely wish to gather your things from wherever you were staying in Tsuma. In the meantime...” He produces a folded and unsealed letter from his kimono. “I should greatly appreciate it if you would deliver this message to my... colleague... Bayushi Akanishin-san, before he departs the village.” With a somewhat edged smile, he hands it over to you.

This is a slightly threatening letter, though rather more subtle than Robun’s. Kazetora will select two PCs to deliver it, ideally at least one of them a dangerous bushi. Characters who have Akanishin as a Sworn Enemy or an Ally are also preferred, as either option can provide a message in its own right without actually having to say anything. PCs from the Scorpion, Owl, or Lion Clans are also prime candidates; failing all of that, just the scariest PCs should be chosen.

It should be noted that letters in Rokugan are not commonly sealed. If a PC wishes to read the letter, the contents are given in Player Handout #3.

If the PCs wish to speak with Chitose to coordinate their efforts, she is polite but somewhat distant. She is more than willing to work with any PC who doesn’t simply try to take over, but has anticipated the logistical issues that could reasonably be expected to occur. Chitose is an extremely level-headed samurai, and generally has the practical matters well in hand.

The PCs taking the message to Akanishin can find him at the Poisoned Water sake house in Tsuma by asking around. The Scorpion courtier is meeting with a small group of ronin at a corner table, and greets the PCs cordially when they approach. The ronin, on the other hand, shrink back slightly as though they want to avoid attention. “Ah, welcome, good afternoon, my friends! Join us for a drink! What can I do for you on this fine day?” Akanishin’s eye glint from behind the small mask that covers the upper half of his face.

Akanishin is going to present a careful, relaxed demeanor, even though he is not actually happy to be interrupted in his business. However, he is quite experienced at being friendly with people that have not yet made up their minds about him.

When the PCs give him the letter, he will make some effort to hide his reaction, but observant PCs may notice how shaken he is by its contents. The PCs may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness**; as a wash of emotions play over him, they will be able to interpret his reaction, depending on how well they roll.

- 15: shocked
- 20: dismayed
- 25: angry
- 30: frightened

Akanishin carefully folds the letter, placing it in the sleeve of his kimono. Inclining his head in a slow nod, he speaks in a toneless voice, “Please convey my assurance to Kazetora-sama that this message has been received. And understood.” If the PCs wish to speak further he will suggest they go about their business, as he will be departing himself shortly. “Perhaps we can speak another time.”

Honor Guard

This section should be resolved fairly quickly. The PCs have very little to actually do for the next three days. They are given very nice guest quarters at Shiro sano Kakita, and largely have free time to spend in the castle as they wish while Kazetora meets with the Kakita family daimyo Kakita Yushihiro and her

advisors. Their immediate duties are limited to escorting him to his meetings, leaving them time to speak with the local samurai, train in the famous dojo of the Kakita Dueling Academy, or simply appreciate the amazing artworks on display in the castle of the greatest artisan family of the Empire.

Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll. Crane PCs are granted a Free Raise on this roll.

- 10: Yukiyo's victory is the major topic of conversation. She is from a relatively low-Status family, the daughter of a quartermaster at Shiro Daidoji. Trained as an Iron Warrior, she nevertheless prevailed over a Kakita Bushi in the early rounds of the duels. She is being seen as something of a local hero, with people expecting great things from her in the future.
- 15: It has been noticed that Seppun Kazetora is speaking with all of the high-ranking Crane he can; he spent most of the Topaz Championship in the company of the Asahina family daimyo, Asahina Riyake.
- 20: Kazetora's interest in the Crane may be related to his recent betrothal to the Crane courtier Doji Hanako. The two were both under consideration to become Imperial Advisor, but the Crane lent him their support and shortly after announced the match between them.
- 25: Some of the court are speaking in a less than flattering fashion about Seppun Chitose being chosen by Kazetora as the commander of his personal guard. She is not known to be a skilled bushi or duelist, which has led to some whispering that her appearance is her principle qualification.
- 30: Few in the Crane wish to acknowledge the growing rivalry between the Crane Champion Doji Makibesu and Seppun Kazetora, but the two have been on opposite sides of several issues in the last few months, and there are indications that neither is pleased with the other's obstructions.

After three days, Kazetora gives the order for his party to travel to Shiro Daidoji. The party consists of Seppun Kazetora, the PCs, Seppun Chitose, twelve miharu, three servants, and four bearers for Kazetora's ornate palanquin.

Part One: Complications

Travel through the Crane lands in spring is generally an enjoyable experience; the Imperial roads are well-kept, the scenery is beautiful, the weather is pleasant.

The pace is slow, set by the Imperial Advisor's ornate wicker palanquin, but the surroundings are pleasant enough to prevent it from being too taxing.

At the pace of Kazetora's palanquin, it takes two days to travel from Shiro sano Kakita to Shiro Daidoji. The Imperial Advisor's party stops for the night at Kosaten Shiro. Though the castle is primarily a military outpost and was quite obviously built to defend the Crane heartlands against the Lion, it is also a major trade hub in peaceful times like these and comfortable accommodations for the group are found with little difficulty.

The party enters the Hayaku Province on their second day on the road; though the sound of thunder in the morning causes some worry for the weather, it remains sunny and clear and altogether pleasant. That evening, only a few hours from the destination, the servant assigned to trot ahead of the party comes trotting back to report that the bridge ahead is gone.

Closer, likely cautious, investigation reveals that the bridge spanning a wide river feeding into the Lake of Sorrows to the west is, indeed, gone. The river is swollen with spring rains and the snowmelt from upstream, nearly a hundred yards across and moving quickly. The broken posts that once supported the arching structure are all that remain.

PCs may roll Investigation (Search) or Engineering / Perception to determine what happened. With a 20, they can tell that the bridge was not washed away by the water in a natural event – the posts are still relatively solid, and their tops are splintered in too regular a fashion. Pieces of the bridge can be seen further downstream, where they've floated to the banks. There is almost no sign of charring or smoke damage, so the bridge was not burned. With a 30, the PC can tell that the pieces have not weathering on them, so the damage is within the last few hours and no more than a day old. Additionally, they can smell a faint hint of Sulphur. Identifying this absolutely requires having any Ranks in the Craft: Explosives Skill, but the odor is reminiscent of fireworks, so the players will likely understand the situation even if their characters do not.

Speaking with the spirits will yield only a little more information – about half a dozen individuals, that the spirits will describe at best as “men of air and fire” caused the damage with “earth that burns”. They do not understand why, or exactly how (gaijin pepper being something outside their understanding). The spirits can inform the PCs that the people who did it left, on the far side of the river.

What Actually Happened: seven Daidoji Scouts under the command of Daidoji Atari, on orders from Daidoji Ashihei, planted carefully-crafted explosives on the bridge and destroyed it when their observers reported that the Imperial Advisor's party had entered the province. They then retreated, having set up the party to have to take a different route – the condition of the river sharply limits where they can make the crossing, so the Daidoji are going to set up an ambush with plenty of time to spare.

Kazetora is somewhat troubled by the unexpected situation, but is unwilling to turn back. “This could be a prelude to something more dangerous, but it could also be nothing more than an attempt to cause me disarray, and the loss of face that arriving before the Imperial Court in an inappropriate fashion would cause.” He will not give up the palanquin, which necessitates finding another crossing to the north, following side roads along the river. (Even if a PC can find a way across the river with Athletics or magic, there is no real way to provide passage for the palanquin bearers; it is best for Kazetora to simply overrule the PCs if the players spend too much time trying to figure out a crossing here.)

However, if the PCs are concerned about the possibility of an ambush, Kazetora will encourage them to prepare themselves however they see fit. “You are providing me with protection as well as company, and it could be considered your duty to be prepared for any situation.” (This is giving them permission to wear their armor and have weapons of war ready to hand.)

Another crossing is found to the north, but the delay results in the party still being on the road after dark. Kazetora, mindful of the dangers, decides to push on through to Shiro Daidoji. Chitose anticipates the group will arrive at the castle around midnight.

The servants unpack and light lanterns to show the way for the group, with one trotting ahead of the group to illuminate the road ahead. The moonless spring night is dark, save for the pools of light around the servants. A mild breeze stirs the air, and a few birds sing out as your party passes through the lightly-wooded countryside.

The PCs roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at a TN of 30. Success allows them to spot a small point of light off the road, as the party comes even with it. If the PC rolls 40+, they notice one on the opposite side of the road as well. If any PC visibly reacts, points, or calls out, they take 5k2 damage from a normal arrow as the fire arrows strike the palanquin.

Fires lance out of the woods around you, and arrows pepper the group. The bearers cry out, and one falls dead – the palanquin thuds to the ground, ablaze from fire arrows. Men clad in dark greens and grays charge out of the shadowed trees, blades in hand.

Initiative is rolled at this point, with any PC that failed the Notice roll being at -20 for the first Round.

There is a full guntai of Deniable Daidoji (basically twenty troops), with the majority of them engaging with the Seppun guards. A few (equal to the number of PCs at the table) break through the outer ring to attack the palanquin and the PCs surrounding it. Two of these have spears in hand, and on their turn will stab them into the palanquin.

The palanquin is on fire, and will be damaging Kazetora (as well as the spears). Breaking him out requires accumulating 5 Raises on Strength Rolls (with a base TN of 10) as a Complex Action, allowing multiple PCs to cooperate. Attacking the palanquin is also possible, but requires doing 25 Wounds past the vehicle's Reduction of 20 (halved against heavy chopping weapons like ono or masakari). PCs making these attempts take 3k2 Wounds from the fire (unless they are using weapons with significant reach).

If a PC casts Extinguish, it will snuff out the fires and prevent the enemy from sending more fire arrows out. But it also snuffs out the lanterns being used for illumination, putting the area in darkness. This makes the combatants effectively Blind (suffering -3k3 to ranged attack rolls, -1k1 to melee attack rolls, reducing Water by 2 for movement, and spells cannot target anything more than 5' away); these penalties affect both PCs and enemies.

The combat should not last longer than two Rounds; at the end of the first Round, Kazetora will break out of the palanquin if any PC has tried to help extricate him; between the spears and the fire, he has taken 15 Wounds, putting him at the +5 Wound Penalty. If no one tries to help him, he will die at the end of the third Round. Once out, Kazetora will attack and kill a previously-wounded enemy; if there is still combat, the next Round he uses the Otomo Rank 3 Technique, which causes the attackers to flee.

The Deniable Daidoji are not suicidal; they were not expecting the PCs, and while they will make an effort to accomplish their mission, they will retreat once it becomes clear how dangerous the PCs are (possibly sped along by the Imperial Advisor's intimidation but not necessarily).

Deniable Daidoji

Clad in dark gray, loose-fitting clothing with partial armor and masks that cover their faces, they are armed with daisho and yumi, and move in a well-coordinated manner.

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

Honor 3.5 Status 2.0 Glory 2.0

Initiative: 7k4 **Attack:** 8k3e (Katana
or 9k4e Yumi,
Complex)

Armor TN: 28 **Damage:** 7k2 (Katana
(ashigaru armor) or 5k2 (Yumi)

Reduction: 1

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

School/Rank: Daidoji Scout 3

Techniques: *Surveying the Land:* +1k0 on Stealth and Hunting; +1k1 damage with rural or improvised traps
Scouring the Shadows: +2k0 to attack an unaware foe
Weaken the Resistance: ignore Reduction from armor or School Techniques; +1k0 damage vs opponents with no Reduction

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 3, Hunting (Traps) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Knives 4, Kyujutsu (Yumi) 5, Stealth (Sneaking) 5; Craft: Explosives 3, Defense 2, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu 2, Sincerity 2, Spears 4

Once the fight is over, Kazetora will stagger slightly, singed and cut from the spears, move to the edge of the road, and violently empty his stomach. To anyone who glances his way, he shakily notes, "I have... never been in actual combat before. I have trained, but the difference... I thank you for your assistance."

After the fight, there may be a few clues as to the identity of the attackers. Any prisoners will die (they have poisoned needles fitted into their masks, so when the masks are removed incorrectly they kill them), but there are physical clues to be examined. All of the bodies have a tattoo of the Daidoji mon on their wrist – examining the dead bodies causes a D1 Honor loss, and any PC who touches dead flesh will be considered to have Honor 0 until they are cleansed (there is a torii arch at Shiro Daidoji to do this, so it is not a major issue). The enemies' gear is of decent quality: stealthy clothes in gray and green, scout armor, masks with face paint around the eyes, weapons recognizable with a **Weapon Skill / Perception** roll (TN 20) as of Crane manufacture.

Anyone trying to analyze the tactics utilized by the enemy can roll **Battle** or **Lore: History / Intelligence** at a TN of 40. Daidoji Scout PCs

automatically succeed, and bushi from other Crane Schools reduce the TN to 25. Success allows them to recognize the training and doctrine of the Daidoji Harriers, Crane Clan guerilla fighters that specialize in stealth attacks – and who are only used in defensive operations after a political dispute involving them two centuries ago.

Most of the Seppun received minor injuries in the fighting; Chitose has two arrows in her, but ignores them as she secures the perimeter once again. The bearers are either dead or injured badly enough to be unable to carry the palanquin.

Kazetora is furious and frightened, and his immediate assumption is that the attack is from Makibesu. He orders the group forward with as much speed as possible, leaving behind the wounded.

Once the party leaves the palanquin behind, it only takes a couple of hours to make it to Shiro Daidoji. The guards are surprised at the late arrival, and look for signs of further attack following the party. Servants scurry about to take the party's equipment, stable the horses, and show the samurai to their rooms and baths.

Kazetora, voice tense, asks the PCs to meet him in his suite before they retire for the night.

Part Two: Assumptions

Once the PCs and Kazetora have had an opportunity to clean themselves up (including a ritual cleansing as necessary), they will meet in the Imperial Advisor's suite for a briefing.

Seppun Kazetora is tense and angry, though when you are all assembled in the sitting room of his suite, he takes a breath and make an effort to offer a smile. "If I have not already done so, I thank you all, samurai. I believe that, had you not been there, that attack would have proven lethal. It is a terrible thing to consider, not just that my life is in jeopardy, but that somewhere, someone has engaged in this level of treason."

As a member of the Emperor's family and one of the Emperor's Chosen, an attack on Kazetora is a treasonous matter, as any PC with ranks in Lore: Law is aware. Moreover, such a crime is normally investigated by the Emerald Magistrates. In this case, however, Kazetora is not comfortable with turning to them. He should be tactful if there are any Crane PCs at the table, or if any of the PCs are on the Emerald Magistrate Status track, but he has come to the

conclusion that Doji Makibesu is responsible for the attack.

“It will require a great deal of effort to uncover testimony and proof of the responsible party. I must ask for your assistance in this matter. I know that you are not involved in this plot – you could have simply stepped aside and let me die. In fact, I believe that your presence was the unexpected factor that Maki-the responsible party did not account for. I cannot be as certain of any local authorities, as such an assault must have had powerful backing.”

The PCs may have questions, and he will answer as best he can:

Who do you think did this? “It is no secret that Doji Makibesu and I are political rivals. I suppose I missed the point at which it became a lethal matter, but I have had many matters I have been trying to attend to. The responsible party would have to be influential, cunning, and have a reason to want me dead. All three can be said of Makibesu.”

Why would Makibesu/anyone want you dead? “I have made several enemies, but that happens with anyone involved in politics in the capital. I believe that my first advice to my brother, that he step down, has been difficult for many to accept. I intend no disloyalty by it – I believe it to be in the best interests of the Emperor as well as the Empire, as I do not wish to lose another brother. But the Toturi dynasty was founded on a tradition of service to Rokugan before all else, including the man on the throne.”

What should we be looking for? “A force of this nature does not come from some other Realm; they must be trained, maintained, and ultimately ordered into the field. Finding the survivors, or the immediate superiors of them, will give us a start on the chain that lead to the one responsible.”

What powers are you giving us? “I cannot give you standing as a magistrate or any official title to allow arrests. I can extend my influence to ensure that you will be able to speak with any member of the Imperial Court, or the local court of Daidoji Tsuru, up to the Emperor or Emerald Champion. Someone will have answers, you must find them to ask the questions.”

What if it's not Doji Makibesu? “In that unlikely event, I should very much like to know who **is** responsible, so that the threat can be eliminated and a criminal brought to justice.”

When the PCs are finished with questions, Kazetora sighs. “Daidoji Tsuru-san, the family daimyo in whose castle we find ourselves, is a close ally of mine. I had looked forward to speaking with him of less significant matters, but it appears I must send you to him instead. Meet with him in the morning, secure his assistance, and see what insight he can offer into the matter at hand. The Imperial Court will be leaving in three days; this matter must be resolved in that time.” He bows wearily. “Thank you again, and good hunting.”

As the PCs are departing, however, Seppun Chitose catches them in the hall. “Before you depart, I must ask you a favor. Kazetora-sama is, obviously and justifiably upset. I do not wish to confuse the issue, but it is my duty to protect him from himself as much as from external threats. Please do not allow his focus on Makibesu-sama to blind you as it might him. Doji Hanako-sama, Kazetora-sama’s betrothed, is present at this court – I suggest you speak with her when you get a chance, as she is quite familiar with the Crane leadership and may have insights.”

After that, the PCs are able to get enough sleep to recover appropriate Wounds and Void Points.

Most courts, Crane in particular, do not have an early start, so the PCs may sleep in slightly without causing comment. When the PCs do get moving the next day, servants will attend to their needs, and directions to a side garden where Daidoji Tsuru expects to meet them are provided.

Investigation at Shiro Daidoji

The problem that the PCs are tasked with is complicated primarily by the fact that the Imperial Court and the local Crane, naturally enough, assume that the attack is politically motivated. With a figure of as much notoriety as Kazetora, this is understandable, but it does lead to something of a blind spot for most of the interested parties. The Crane in particular are well-motivated to find a suspect other than their Champion

If they attempt to get the lay of the land a bit before meeting with the daimyo (or for when they do so afterward), they may make the usual **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll – Crane PCs or PCs who have Status in the Imperial Court gain a Free Raise on this roll (cumulative). Doing so gets them the names of the most significant NPCs present (Player Handout #4), no matter how well they roll. Further information is below:

- 10: The attack on the Imperial Advisor has claimed the attention of the court. It is already starting to spread that Doji Makibesu has some responsibility for such an assault in his territory...
- 15: Daidoji Yukiyo, the new Topaz Champion, is from this area and her father is still assigned here. She is being made much of as a local hero.
- 20: Doji Makibesu has not willingly left the Emperor's side in some time, and has largely left the affairs of the clan to his daughter and heir Koiso. There is some dissatisfaction over his distraction, while the Crane do acknowledge the benefits gained from his influence.
- 25: There are always ronin near Shiro Daidoji, as the Crane make regular use of wave-men to supplement the Daidoji armies. Interestingly, as soon as the imperial Court arrived, Bayushi Akanishin was seen meeting with more than one band, likely hiring them for some Scorpion plot.
- 30: It is known that the Crane Champion was responsible for bringing the Imperial Court to Shiro Daidoji, though few claim to know why. The most common speculation is that he intended to sway the family daimyo away from the Imperial Advisor's political camp. Some are saying that perhaps it is time he stepped down in favor of his heir, at least as far as his position in the clan is concerned.
- 35: The local provincial daimyo was, until recently, attempting to negotiate a marriage with Doji Hanako, cousin of the Emerald Champion. The talks fell through when her current betrothal was announced.

Shiro Daidoji is a plain castle, far more suited to defense than to hosting an Imperial Court. It is the final fallback position for the Crane armies, the heart of the military defense of the clan, and the site of planning for every military operation enacted by the clan of Doji. What little provision there is for luxury has been put entirely toward the comfort of the Emperor and his highest servants. There are a few ancestral shrines, but no major temples – even the usual Crane shrine to Benten is missing, instead replaced by a structure devoted to Hachiman, the Fortune of Battle. Shiro Daidoji houses one of the finest libraries on military history in the Empire, though the scholars that guard it have hidden the more controversial works while the Emperor's court is in attendance.

There are a few avenues available for potential investigation. The local samurai do not speak openly about the operations of the Harriers, though PCs who ask around about the general military state of the area

may roll **Battle, Investigation, or Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** (TN 25, Crane receive a Free Raise) will learn that a small force was deployed on “maneuvers” into the nearby Osari Mori the day that the Imperial Court arrived. The suspicion is that the family authorities wanted to move the “irregulars” out of the sight of the Imperial guests (and their delicate sensibilities). The specific unit is identified as “Daidoji Atari's guntai”, but the PCs will not learn that the unit's orders were given to them by Daidoji Ashihei unless the roll is 35 or higher.

Other potential leads include looking into the local ronin: Investigation / Awareness (TN 25) or Lore: Underworld / Intelligence (TN 20) lets the PC ask around in the less genteel areas of the city to discover that the main ronin bands in the area are the Gray Spears and the Children of the Carp. Both groups are made up predominantly of former Crane, simply due to convenience, but the PCs learn that neither group is foolhardy enough to take a job targeting an Imperial caravan. A meeting with representatives of the groups can be arranged, but ultimately reveals nothing further.

Meeting with Daidoji Tsuru

Daidoji Tsuru is a burly warrior, scarred and impassive, his deep voice normally gruff with little of the usual Crane refinement. He awaits you on a porch overlooking a rock garden, the design simple and elegant. Tea steams in the cool air of spring, and a weathered hand spreads in welcome. “Konnichi-wa, samurai. Please, join me – and let us skip the prattle, for it seems we have a matter of great importance before us.”

The Daidoji family daimyo is a veteran of many battles, and as a Crane, has some experience in court, but his obvious preference between the two is for the former; the current occupation by the Imperial Court has him slightly on the defensive (much as he would be for any invading force). He speaks little in public, and even in private, his words tend to be straightforward and to the point. Tsuru is a staunch ally of Kazetora, and is not terribly happy with Doji Makibesu's attention being devoted entirely to Imperial duties while leaving the Crane to delegated leadership (not that he is terribly likely to articulate any of that dissatisfaction to the PCs). He was not responsible for the attack, though he could have arranged it.

Tsuru has heard a basic description of the attack, as rumors are already starting to spread, but he will draw out details from the PCs, speaking concisely and to the

point. “There are a few possibilities. There are those who would claim such an act could only be undertaken by ronin, or perhaps bandits who once owed fealty to the Daidoji. There are always ronin near Shiro Daidoji, as we are the most likely of the clan’s families to hire wave-men on behalf of the Crane armies. It is even more likely that this would be an attempt by some enemy, trying to implicate the Crane. But there are too many details that strike too close to home for me to be comforted by easy lies.”

Depending on how the PCs discuss the Harriers, Tsuru will be as delicate as possible regarding them. “The Crane do, like most clans, maintain forces trained specifically for the defense of our lands. The tactics described match field doctrine for those troops, though they are only deployed in time of invasion, and never to lands outside our borders.”

Tsuru has no firm answers to offer, but will narrow the field somewhat:

Tsuru holds a hand up, four thick fingers raised. “Only four samurai could order the attack as you describe it. Myself, Makibesu-dono, Koiso-sama, and Morimasa-san.” As he goes down the list, he lowers a finger for each name. “I did not; I am fond of the Imperial Advisor and would not wish him harm even if he wasn’t a direct servant and brother to the Emperor. Boy’s got a good head on him, when he uses it. This attack sounds nothing like Makibesu-dono. My experience of him is that he is extremely straightforward when it comes to confrontation. Koiso-sama, his daughter, has the authority but not the knowledge. She leaves the immediate decisions for military matters to me, and concerns herself with a larger strategic view. Which I find refreshing, if I’m going to be honest. The local daimyo, Morimasa-san has the knowledge, and samurai who are utterly loyal to him. But I’d have thought he was utterly loyal to the clan. He’s proven himself time after time. And I can’t think of any reason for him to go after Kazetora.”

Tsuru does not know about Morimasa’s suit for Hanako’s hand, as the matter had not progressed far enough to involve the family daimyo.

In any event, Tsuru will offer the PCs whatever assistance he can provide. “Find something to go on, some proof, some testimony. You have my authority to investigate, but I’m not assigning you a magistrate in case there is some issue I’m missing. Find the survivors, or where they came from, or who ordered the attack, and I’ll make sure it gets taken care of.”

Meeting with Doji Hanako

Hanako is a pretty Crane courtier in her mid-twenties, experienced in the courts and with a little bit more of an edge than most Doji Courtiers prefer to use. She has spent her time reinforcing wavering allies or punishing courtiers who work against the Crane, and her close kinship with the Emerald Champion led her to be considered as a potential Imperial Advisor last year. The negotiations around that process led to her betrothal to Seppun Kazetora, which led to the current situation.

When the PCs meet with her, she is somewhat stressed over dealing with the fallout of the attack. Kazetora is already spreading rumors about Makibesu’s involvement, and this obviously puts her in an awkward position. She will greet the PCs politely, with a warm, “Greetings, samurai, and welcome to Shiro Daidoji. I understand I owe you thanks for your valiant defense of my betrothed. The Crane also owe you a great debt, that you prevented such a tragedy in our lands. Whatever I can do to be of assistance to you, please, merely ask.”

Hanako will answer whatever questions she is asked to the best of her ability, though she is prone to the same flaw of logic as Kazetora. Their experience in the courts makes it difficult for them to view the attack as anything but a politically-motivated assassination attempt, and because the Crane would be badly damaged in the courts if the attack had succeeded, she cannot imagine any Crane being responsible.

However, if the PCs ask for non-political motivations, or seek to confirm the rumor about her relationship with Morimasa, she will slowly nod and admit, “The daimyo of this province, Daidoji Morimasa-sama, had engaged a nakodo to seek my hand in marriage some time ago. The negotiations were set aside when I was betrothed to Kazetora. I do not think Morimasa-sama took it well, but it is hard to imagine him going to this extreme.” Hanako is fond of Morimasa, though not in love with him, and is genuinely distressed at the thought that he might be responsible.

Hanako knows Morimasa very well, describing him as a dedicated servant of the clan who has proved himself on the field of battle on several occasions. She knows Ashihei, Morimasa’s hatamoto, less well, but understands that they were stationed together during their military career and that Morimasa saved Ashihei’s life more than once. Given Morimasa’s ability to instill loyalty in his followers, she would almost be eager to accept that Ashihei took this on himself without Morimasa’s knowledge.

Beyond that, Hanako can suggest the PCs speak with Doji Koiso for additional political support in the Crane; while Makibesu is almost certainly too busy to meet with them, Koiso has been effectively running the clan for a few years now. She can confirm the rumor about Bayushi Akanishin hiring ronin, though she does not know why, and that his actions fit in the timeline.

Daidoji Yukiyo

At some point after the PCs have begun their investigation, they will be approached by the new Topaz Champion – ideally at a meal time or at some point when all of them are together.

The Topaz Champion is, to all appearances, a painfully determined young woman; there is, however, a certain set to her shoulders that indicate she may be feeling some stress from the attention her victory has earned her. “I hope that I may trouble you for a few moments, samurai-sama. I have, for good or for ill, acquired some attention with my victory that I was not really prepared for. There are people saying that Doji Makibesu-dono will be offering me a position as an Emerald Magistrate – but he has not yet done so. Seppun Kazetora-sama, on the other hand, has already offered to take me on as a member of his personal guard. Both options are more than I could ever had hoped for, but I am not certain the best course of action. You have worked with Kazetora-sama, you surely know what kind of superior he would be. Tell me, please, what do you think I should do?”

Yukiyo is out of her depth; while skilled with a blade and somewhat comfortable in the courts, she is more than a little overwhelmed to have come to the attention of two such powerful figures. She is afraid that she is going to be little more than a pawn between them, but is genuinely eager to be a credit to her family. She is not ambitious for the sake of gaining power, but an opportunity like either of the options before her is enough to sway any young samurai with visions of glory.

This scene is primarily to give the PCs an opportunity to roleplay with a younger samurai seeking guidance – however, as Yukiyo is a local samurai, she has some contacts that may be of use to the situation. For example, if the PCs have identified Daidoji Atari from looking into the local bushi, she can tell them that he reports directly to Daidoji Ashihei. Her father is the local quartermaster, so a practical approach would be to have her track down the source of the weapons and equipment utilized by the attackers (again, leading to Ashihei). If the players are having a difficult time

moving forward, Yukiyo can serve to further the investigation.

Doji Makibesu

The Emerald Champion can only be met by a Crane PC with Status of 3 or higher, a PC on the Emerald Magistrate track, or a PC with “Makibesu’s Countenance”. Even in these cases, the meeting will take place in a side room off the main court chamber, where the Emperor can be seen on the dais at all times by Makibesu.

The Emerald Champion is approaching fifty, but remains a handsome man; a tall, lean warrior with a courtier’s natural grace in the courts. Makibesu’s demeanor, however, is generally one of exhaustion. The current strain of the rumors implicating him in the attack on Kazetora is taking its toll, on top of the crucial responsibilities he feels toward his fallen Emperor and friend’s son. In general, he views the current Emperor and Kazetora as something close to family (if family in need of guidance and protection), and is deeply offended at the idea that he could be behind an attack upon one of them.

“While there has, regrettably, been some disagreement between Kazetora and myself recently, I certainly do not want him dead. If I did, a duel would resolve the situation far more cleanly and definitely, without any of this whispering or slander. I cannot set aside my duties to the Emperor, no matter how some may wish otherwise, and I will do everything in my power to ensure his safety.”

Makibesu will gladly entertain the notion that some subordinate misunderstood the situation and sought to remove a political foe on his behalf without consulting him, but admits it would be nothing but speculation. He will do nothing to impede the PCs’ investigation, believing that it will ultimately be to his benefit for a relatively impartial group to clear him of the crime – but at the same time, he will not offer any tangible assistance, to avoid the appearance of influencing it. He is confident that he will be exonerated, as he is, in fact, innocent.

Other Guests

Doji Koiso

The Crane Champion’s eldest child is his daughter Koiso. In her mid-twenties, Koiso has been making the day-to-day decisions for the clan while her father has been focused on his Imperial duties since the

death of the last Emperor. She cannot believe her father is responsible for the attack; she views Kazetora and the Emperor as family, having largely grown up with Kazetora and Torizawa (the eldest brother, now deceased). Koiso knows how hard the death of Toturi IX hit Makibesu, and is doing what she can to be of service to her clan and her father while he recovers.

Koiso leaves most military decisions to Daidoji Tsuru, providing a general strategic-level guidance but trusting to the experienced warrior to manage the Crane armies. She suspects the harriers are around but does not (want to) know for sure – such forces are well outside her comfort zone

Anything Koiso can do to assist the PCs in clearing her father's name will be done. As, effectively, acting Clan Champion, she can provide them with authority to take a suspect into custody and will do so if they present her with a solid case. She is hesitant to act too overtly out of the same fear of appearing to condone a coverup that Makibesu has, but is willing to move if the PCs have good reason.

Bayushi Akanishin

The Scorpion courtier is guilty of nothing but malice in this instance. Having been threatened by Kazetora, he has some motivation to wish the Imperial Advisor ill, but taking the step to assassination is an extreme he would be unwilling to countenance as far too risky.

However, his meeting with ronin is suspicious and if he is confronted on it, he will resist sharing the reason for it. PCs may roll Courtier (Manipulation) or Intimidation (Control) / Awareness to pressure him – this has a base TN of 30, reduced by 10 for Scorpion PCs and increased by 5 for Owl PCs. Success gets him to admit that he is hiring forces to handle minor military or security matters for the Scorpion Clan in order to free up more of the Scorpion military for the coming war with the Owl. “Simply a samurai going about my duties.”

Akanishin is the next best suspect, so if the PCs wish to bring charges against him for the attack, they may do so as detailed in Part Three.

Other NPCs

There are many courtiers around, even in the reduced Imperial Court present at Shiro Daidoji. These NPCs are not fully-detailed, but can provide contact points if the players wish a more specific name to associate their answers with. In general, they can provide the

information available in the Rumors section, filtered through the lens of their clans' interests.

For the most part, the non-Crane members of the court are titillated by the idea of scandal involving the Emerald Champion; no one is willing to slander Makibesu outright, fearing the inevitable challenge to such an act, but the very thought is too engaging to avoid discussion.

The political alliances among the clans right now do allow any Great Clan PC to at least speak with a courtier allied to their clan. The current alliances at this time are Crab/Phoenix, Crane/Mantis/Owl, Dragon/Lion/Scorpion, with the Unicorn having no allies.

- Emperor Toturi X (unavailable for audience)
- Seppun Kurama, Seppun family daimyo; he oversees the Seppun miharu but has already started leaving the majority of the family's political affairs to Kazetora
- Doji Naoya, son of Doji Makibesu; a typically pampered and arrogant Crane courtier, with responsibilities involving dealing with other clans (and, generally, enjoying the luxuries and privileges of his position to the fullest)
- Kitsuki Tanare, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court and cousin of the Empress; somewhat self-important courtier, less of a magistrate than most Kitsuki but still has the typical respect for law and order – he views the
- Asako Hinoko, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court; she is a socially-focused Loremaster, and quite interested in the future possibilities of the clan's new alliance with the Crab
- Tsuruchi Aitsuro, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court; he is one of the advisors and sensei to the Tsuruchi Topaz finalist; his focus is on ensuring the Emerald Champion and the Tsuruchi maintain a good relationship
- Ide Eiko, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court; her focus is on arranging the Imperial Embassy to the Burning Sands – officially sanctioned last year, a great deal of work remains

Part Three: Accusations

Eventually the PCs should get the information that someone in the provincial daimyo's office (whether Morimasa or Ashihei) was involved in the attack. The provincial daimyo is not in the castle, having largely turned it over to the Imperial Court, but can be tracked down to the estate of Daidoji Ashihei.

When the PCs arrive, they will be greeted by the guards, who show them to a sword rack by the door. The most appropriate action (though obviously the least tactically appealing) is to leave their swords at the gate; doing so earns the PC an H10 Honor gain. The next best option is to place their swords on the left side of their obi, making them harder to draw but indicating a certain amount of peaceful intent toward their host. Failure to do even that earns the PC a D3 Honor loss. Wearing armor or carrying anything other than the daisho not only warns the Daidoji that something is about to happen, but causes the PC to lose an additional D1 Honor.

Morimasa and Ashihei have been conferring to decide what to do about the failed attack. The remaining Harriers are not present, but they received a report roughly the same time Kazetora's party arrived, and are trying to manage the consequences of Morimasa's ill-considered orders.

As long as the PCs have Daidoji Tsuru or Doji Koiso supporting them, they can essentially force their way in to speak with Morimasa – his guards, unaware of their lord's crimes, will respond to a credible demonstration of authority from either Crane leader (a letter with their seal, for example).

Morimasa proves to be a tall, powerfully-built Iron Warrior in his late prime, with Ashihei a lean, silent presence at his side. The guilty Crane are not welcoming, but hear the PCs out. If the PCs wish to elicit a confession, they may attempt a Courtier (Manipulation) or Sincerity / Awareness roll at a TN of 50 – with a success, Morimasa makes no denial or justification for his actions, but bows his head and asks Ashihei to stand as his second.

If the PCs cannot convince him to surrender (highly likely), he will make another poor decision and order his guards to attack. There are two Daidoji Guards, who will be visibly confused at their lord's command – a PC may take a Complex Action to roll Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at a TN of 30, or Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness at a TN of 20, to reduce their Honor Ranks by 2 (and thus, their Wound Points). Success by 20 or more will convince the guards to stand down.

Note that if the PCs have their swords on the left side as per propriety, they may not use the Kenjutsu or Iaijutsu Mastery Abilities to ready their weapons as a Free Action.

Morimasa should fight until he is incapacitated, showing no real restraint, while Ashihei is trying to

retreat with the daimyo. If Morimasa is dropped before the Harrier, Ashihei will simply try to run.

Daidoji Morimasa

Enraged Daimyo

Air 3 Earth 4 Fire 4 Water 5 Void 4
 Reflexes 4
 Honor 4.1 Status 6.0 Glory 7.8

Initiative: 10k4+8

Attack: 10k5e-5
 (Katana, Simple in
 Attack Stance)

Armor TN: 25 (31 with
 fan)

Damage: 9k2m
 (Katana)

Reduction: 0 (no armor)

Wounds: 21 (+0), 30 (+3), 39 (+5), 48 (+10), 57 (+15), 66 (+20), 75 (Down, +40), 84 (Out), 85+ (Dead)

School/Rank: Daidoji Iron Warrior 5 (Insight Rank 6)

Techniques: *The Force of Honor:* +1 Wound per Wound Rank; +1k0 to attack rolls while in the Attack Stance.

The Shield of Faith: Guard Maneuver benefits last for an additional Round and the Armor TN bonus of the Guard Maneuver is increased by 5.

Strike Beneath the Veil: Simple Action melee attacks while in the Attack Stance.

Vigilance of Mind: May spend a Void Point during the Reactions Stage to get +2k1 attack and damage against an opponent who has attempted to strike him or target of his Guard Maneuver during the Round.

To Tread on the Sword: May spend two Void Points as a Free Action when someone declares an action against the target of Guard Maneuver to become the target of the action instead

Skills: Battle 8, Defense 6, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 4, Spears (Yari) 6; Athletics 5, Courtier 2, Etiquette 4, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 3, Investigation 5, Jiujutsu 4, Sincerity 2, Stealth 4, War Fan 5

Mastery Abilities: +8 Initiative, ready swords as a Free Action, +1k0 and 9s explode on sword damage, ignore off-hand penalty for war fan

Advantages/Disadvantages: Leadership, Strength of the Earth / Jealousy

Daidoji Ashihei

Master Harrier

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 4 Void 4
 Reflexes 5 Agility 5
 Honor 3.1 Status 5.0 Glory 4.3

Initiative: 10k6+6

Attack: 10k6e (Katana
 or Yumi, Simple)

Armor TN: 43

Damage: 8k2m
(Katana) or 7k3 (Yumi,
fleshcutters)

Reduction: 3 (Light Armor)

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

School/Rank: Daidoji Scout 4/Daidoji Harrier 3

Techniques: *Surveying the Land:* +1k0 on Stealth and Hunting; +1k1 damage with rural or improvised traps
Scouring the Shadows: +2k0 to attack an unaware foe
Weaken the Resistance: ignore Reduction from armor or School Techniques; +1k0 damage vs opponents with no Reduction

Strike and Move: Simple Action attacks with katana, wakizashi, knife, or bow; +2k1 damage with traps

Move Like Shadows: half Honor loss for dishonorable actions on behalf of the Crane, +1k1 rural trap damage

Iron Feather: add Stealth to Armor TN

Unforgiving Steel: a target damaged by a rural trap or hit when surprised or unaware is Dazed and may not recover from it until after the next Reactions stage, and the TN to recover is increased by +5

Skills: Athletics 7, Craft: Explosives 5, Hunting (Traps) 6, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Knives 5, Kyujutsu (Yumi) 7, Stealth (Sneaking) 8; Battle 6, Etiquette 2, Investigation (Notice) 4, Jiujutsu 3, Spears 4

Mastery Abilities: ignore Terrain movement penalties, ready swords as a Free Action, +1k0 and 9s explode on sword damage, no movement penalties for Stealth, +6 Initiative, ready bow as Simple Action, Strength of bows increased by 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Silent / Antisocial I

Daidoji Guards

Just Regular Guys Doin' Their Jobs

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 2 Water 3 Void 2

Honor 7.2* Agility 3
Status 2.0 Glory 2.1

Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 9k3e-5
(Katana, Complex)

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

Reduction: 5 (heavy armor)

Wounds: 18 (+0), 27 (+3), 36 (+5), 45 (+10), 54 (+15), 63 (+20), 72 (Down, +40), 81 (Down), 82+ (Dead)

(if Dishonored) 16 (+0), 23 (+3), 30 (+5), 37 (+10), 44 (+15), 51 (+20), 58 (Down, +40), 65 (Down), 66+ (Dead)

School/Rank: Daidoji Iron Warrior 2

Techniques: *The Force of Honor:* +3 Wounds at each Wound Rank, +1k0 to attack rolls while in the Attack Stance.

The Shield of Faith: Guard Maneuver benefits last for an additional Round and the Armor TN bonus of the Guard Maneuver is increased by 5.

Skills: Battle 3, Defense 4, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 2; Athletics 3, Etiquette 2, Jiujutsu 2, Horsemanship 1, Hunting 1, Spears 4

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 sword damage, ready sword as Free Action

On the Other Hand...

The PCs may attempt to place the blame for the attack on Bayushi Akanishin. Doing so will involve giving false testimony, in all likelihood, and require Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness (TN 35) to get the Daidoji daimyo's approval, but overall, the Crane will be much happier blaming everything on a random Scorpion plot.

Tracking Akanishin down to a run-down warehouse in the commercial area of the city involves simply taking the time to manage it. There, he is meeting with a handful of ronin he hopes to hire as guards for a caravan to the Burning Sands in a few months' time.

When confronted, he will approach the situation with bitter humor. "Of course, it's all the Scorpion's fault! Why bother with logic or rationality when you have a convenient scapegoat?" Tossing a heavy bag of gold to the ronin, he orders, "I'll double this if I make it out of here, boys."

The Ronin Hirelings, will fight to defend his escape, but are not interested in dying and will retreat if the situation appears too dire. There are as many of them as there are PCs at the table.

Bayushi Akanishin

Red Herring

Air 3 Earth 2 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 3

Awareness 5 Willpower 4
Honor 2.2 Status 4.0 Glory 4.3

Initiative: **Attack:** 8k4
(wakizashi, Complex)

Armor TN: 25 (with fan) **Damage:** 6k2
(wakizashi)

Reduction: 0

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

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 4

Techniques: *Weakness is My Strength:* Free Raise on Contested Social Rolls for every 3 points of Mental or Social Disadvantages the other possesses, to a max of

5. Free Raise when using the Courtier skill to spread gossip; does not need to Raise in order to conceal the source of that gossip.

Shallow Waters: Learn a target's lowest Mental Trait and its Rank, and their lowest Social Skill that has at least one Rank (GM pick in tie) by conversing with them for a few minutes, and succeeding at a Contested Roll of Investigation /Awareness against their Etiquette / Awareness. May spend a Void point to also learn their next lowest Mental Trait and next lowest Social Skill.

Secrets Are Birthmarks: Learn a Mental or Social Disadvantage of target by speaking with them for a few minutes, and succeeding at a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness against their Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness. If they have no such Disadvantages, this will instead reveal one Mental or Social Advantage. (Note this will only reveal the rulebook title of the Advantage / Disadvantage, not the specific nature of it.) If the roll succeeded in revealing a Disadvantage, with the GM's permission you may take a 2-point Blackmail Advantage against this individual, for no cost in Experience Points.

Scrutiny's Sweet Sting: Any time you make a Contested Social Skill Roll against someone on whom you have Blackmail, his dice cannot explode. In addition, any time you make a Contested Social Skill Roll against someone, regardless of whether you have Blackmail on them or not, you may spend a Void point to force them to use a mental Trait of your choice (instead of the normal Trait used for the roll).

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation) 6, Etiquette (Conversation) 4, Investigation 4, Perform: Storytelling 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 6, Temptation 3; Acting 3, Games: Go 4, Kenjutsu 4, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 2, Lore: Underworld 4, Sleight of Hand 5, Stealth 4, War Fans 3

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 on Contested Courtier Rolls, +5 to Contested Sincerity Rolls, +1k0 sword damage

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (several), Benten's Blessing, Crafty / Sworn Enemy (Heichi Rokitsu, others)

Ronin Hirelings

Thugs For Sale or Rent

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 3	Void 2
Reflexes		Agility 3		
3				
Honor 4.5		Status 0		Glory 0

Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 8k3e (Katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 24 **Damage:** 7k2 (Katana)
Reduction: 0

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+0), 33 (+5), 39 (+10), 45 (+15), 51 (Down, +35), 57 (Out), 58+ (Dead)

School/Rank: Simplified Ronin Warrior 2

Techniques: *Strength of my Father:* ignore 5 points of Wound Penalty

Never Yield: +4 Armor TN

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 2, Hunting 4, Intimidation 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Knives 4, Kyujutsu 3; Battle 2, Investigation 1, Jiujutsu 3, Lore: Underworld 3

Mastery Abilities: Free Action ready sword, +1k0 sword damage

Conclusion

When the PCs return to the castle, they will find that the rumors about the attack on Kazetora are coming to a head. Few of the Crane wish to lend them credence, but the subject is too enticing for the Imperial Court to just ignore.

With a suspect in custody or slain in fighting, the successful conclusion to the case will calm things down slightly. However, the challenge to Makibesu's leadership remains. If a PC wishes to get involved in the Crane politics, they can support the proposal brought forward by Seppun Kazetora that Doji Makibesu step down as Crane Champion in favor of his daughter officially taking the position. This is entirely optional, and does require a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 25. Doing so earns Makibesu's ire but Kazetora's gratitude, and is enough to tip the scales.

Kazetora still looks bad for having spread rumors about the Emerald Champion he did not have the power to prove. (Mechanically, he gains some Infamy.) Makibesu is cleared officially, though no one believes for a minute he will forget.

When all is said and done, the PCs should have earned the gratitude of the Emperor, and he makes an effort to demonstrate that before the full court:

Before the Imperial Court departs to return to Otosan Uchi, the Emperor has you summoned to join him on the dais for a final address in Shiro Daidoji. "Know that these honorable samurai have brought the party responsible for an attack upon my brother to justice. They are true servants of the Toturi Dynasty, and they have my thanks." The Emperor bows to you, and the room responds with a deep kowtow in your honor.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 EXP
Good Roleplaying:	+1 EXP
Defended Kazetora in the attack:	+1 EXP
Found someone to blame for the attack:	+1 EXP
Total Possible Experience:	4 EXP

Favors

If Seppun Kazetora survives the module, the PCs gain a Favor.

If the PCs find someone to place the blame on for the attack, the PCs gain another Favor.

It is not possible to earn more than two Favors in this (or any) module.

Honor

If the PCs bring charges against Daidoji Morimasa, they gain H8 Honor.

If the PCs bring charges against Bayushi Akanishin when they know he was not involved, they lose H3 Honor.

The GM may grant up to 2 extra points of Honor to a PC for actions not detailed in the module, though no PC should gain more than 2 points in this fashion.

Glory

If the PCs gain the Emperor's approval for finding the guilty party, they gain G10 Glory.

Allies and Enemies

If the PCs actively support the proposition that Makibesu step down as Clan Champion in favor of his daughter, they gain Sworn Enemy: Doji Makibesu and Ally: Seppun Kazetora (Influence 5/Devotion 1); if they already had Kazetora as an Ally, his Devotion increases by 1.

GM Reporting

- 1) Did Kazetora survive?
- 2) Was Morimasa accused?
- 3) Was Morimasa killed by the PCs?
- 4) Was Akanishin accused?
- 5) Did Kazetora's petition to have Makibesu step down receive support?

GM must report this information BEFORE 11/9/2019 for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Toturi Kazetora

Air 4 Earth 2 Fire 4 Water 2 Void 4
Awareness Willpower Intelligence Perception
6 4 5 4
Honor 6.3 Status 9.0 Glory 5.6

Initiative: 10k4+5

Attack: 9k4e

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 6k2

School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 5

Techniques: *The Voice of Heaven:* does not lose Honor for using Intimidation (Control); may make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness vs Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness when in conversation with a member of a Clan to provoke disagreement between them and a member of another Clan

Destiny Has No Secrets: (if contacts available) may spend Void to make a Courtier / Awareness roll at TN 25 to learn one piece of critically useful information

My Master's Voice: against Honor Rank 1.0+ samurai, may take Complex Action to make Contested Intimidation (Control) / Willpower vs target's Etiquette (Courtesy) / Willpower (target gets Free Raise if they sincerely believe they are acting honorably); success means target cannot take actions that would directly attack, obstruct, or threaten courtier or allies

The Emperor's Protection: any time in debate, may spend Void to make Contested Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness vs Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness to force them to concede or lose 5 points of Honor

The Virtues of Command: +5k0 on Contested Social Skill Rolls against those that revere Imperial authority

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 8, Defense 5, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Courtesy) 6, Intimidation (Control) 7, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Sincerity (Deceit, Honesty) 6

Battle 5, Games: Go 4, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 4, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu (Wakizashi) 5, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 5, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 2, Temptation (Bribery) 4

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 on Contested Rolls with Courtier or Etiquette, +13 Insight, +5 to Contested Rolls with Investigation, Intimidation, or Sincerity, +5 Initiative, +1k0 sword damage, ready sword as Free Action,

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Irreproachable, Leadership / Contrary, Overconfident

Seppun Chitose

An extremely attractive young woman in her mid-twenties, Chitose was selected by Kazetora to be the commander of his guard because she is extremely practical and level-headed. Her calm demeanor and logistical expertise make her an excellent leader for a journey of any length, despite her unremarkable skill with combat.

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 3
Willpower 4 Intelligence 4
Honor 7.2 Status 4.0 Glory 2.1

Initiative: 6k3

Attack: 7k3e (Katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 7k2 (Katana)

Reduction: 3 (Light Armor)

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out), 58 (Dead)

School/Rank: Seppun Guardsman 3

Techniques: *Never in Darkness:* +3k0 to resist Social Skill Roll to tempt away from duty; +1k1 to Investigation to detect ambush or surprise attack

The Clouds Part: may spend a Void Point to add +7 to attack and damage rolls until next Turn

Sun's Light Reveals: may spend a Void Point as a Free Action to roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 25 to see through all illusions or disguises, whether magical or mundane. If in presence of Emperor, his immediate family, or high-ranking Imperial officer, do not need to spend the Void

Skills: Battle 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 3; Athletics 2, Commerce 1, Engineering 1, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 2, Jiujutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 2, Medicine 2, Sincerity 3, War Fans 2

Advantages/Disadvantage: Balance, Benten's Blessing, Clear Thinker / Unlucky

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Samurai of Rokugan,

It has been quite an active spring this year indeed! And as the wheel turns, we are blessed with good tidings from around the Empire!

Shinjo Hazumi has miraculously recovered and resumed control of the clan. She has thanked Moto Sartaq for his exemplary service during her period of incapacitation and declared a renewed focus on foreign magics that might threaten the empire in the future. With the Unicorn having committed to avoiding war with the Dragon, it seems that the northwest, at least, has calmed for the time being.

The same cannot be said within the Owl lands, however. The Scorpion have begun their incursions in earnest, engaging with the First Heichi Army in several minor engagements. The Owl, for their part, seem to be stalling for time while Owl Courtiers try to calm the situation. Unfortunately for the Owl, going against the Scorpion in court is fraught with peril, and word is a couple of Owl Courtiers have committed seppuku for various failures in dealing with experienced scorpion Diplomats.

We should end on good news, though, yes? I am happy to bring to the Courts that Toturi X and his wife have announced the birth of Twins! Young Ichiro and Ichiko are both very healthy young children, and the Astrologers already have very optimistic things to say about their divined destinies.

Blessings of the Summer Upon us all.

Otomo Yusuke

Player Handout #2: Letter from Ikoma Robun

To my worthy and renowned adversary,

Honor demands much from samurai, and it calls upon me to find some method of gaining satisfaction for the insults delivered unto me at your hands. It also demands you be informed that I have petitioned my lord Ikoma Shabiko, righteous daimyo of the Ikoma family and just arbiter of disputes in the court on behalf of the Lion Clan, for permission to issue a challenge unto you for a duel to the death, that our conflict be resolved in a fashion appropriate to samurai of our station.

I am aggrieved to inform you, however, that my lord, in his wisdom, has seen fit to deny this request.

I can only imagine that our discord will continue until such time as it is brought to an end by the fulfillment of our destiny as samurai. I assure you that my dismay at the fact that our respective ends will likely be brought about by less ideal opponents is a measure of the respect I hold for you – a respect only equaled by the animosity kindled by your ill-fashioned deeds at our last meeting.

Your cordial disputant,

Ikoma Robun

Player Handout #3: Letter from Kazetora to Akanishin

To the esteemed Bayushi Akanishin -

The scholarship of the Scorpion is known throughout the Empire, and your efforts in discovering facts beyond the realm of common knowledge have been noted as significant even among your clan. I envy your resources, and your lord is served well by your dedication in pursuing the wisdom of Fukurokujin.

Ultimately, however, simple discovery can easily be overshadowed by how one chooses to share the fruits of their labors. I caution you to take care in how you educate the samurai of the realm in the future, so that revelations which may cause consternation will not bring unfortunate consequences down upon you.

All due regards,

Seppun Kazetora
Imperial Advisor

Player Handout #4: Samurai Present at the Court in Shiro Daidoji

The following samurai can be found at Shiro Daidoji (this is not a comprehensive list, but represents the most influential courtiers present):

- Emperor Toturi X (unavailable for audience)
- Seppun Kurama, Seppun family daimyo
- Doji Makibesu, Emerald Champion and Crane Clan Champion (unavailable for most audiences)
- Doji Koiso, daughter and heir of Doji Makibesu
- Doji Naoya, son of Doji Makibesu
- Daidoji Tsuru, Daidoji family daimyo
- Daidoji Morimasa, Provincial Daimyo of the Hayako Province (the local province)
- Doji Hanako, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court
- Kitsuki Tanare, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court and cousin of the Empress
- Asako Hinoko, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court
- Tsuruchi Aitsuro, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court
- Bayushi Akanishin, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court
- Ide Eiko, courtier assigned to the Imperial Court