

Treachery and Deceit

**A one-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Champions
of the Emerald Empire (Living Rokugan)**

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A visit to the lands of the Dragonfly becomes complicated when one of you is accused of opium smuggling. Can you clear your name and discover the real culprit? And why is that Scorpion nosing about?

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

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

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

GM's Information

THIS TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

This adventure is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1, 2, or 3 characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 4 or 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table.

All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate. Sometimes, reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Notes on Running this Adventure

There are two simultaneous plots in this module, the primary one involving Tonbo Yuji and his attempt to frame one of the PCs, and the secondary one involving Yogo Aiguchi's search for a traitor from his family. Events in both plotlines will proceed on separate timelines, more-or-less simultaneously. If the PCs choose not to pick up the various plot-hooks, this module can move quite quickly, following the "scripted" actions to a ordained conclusion. The PCs will have to step in and take action in order to divert the script from the programmed outcome.

GM's Handout #1 contains a brief synopsis of how events will proceed without PC intervention.

Like several Living Rokugan adventures, *Treachery and Deceit* does not provide a reason for the PCs to work together. One of the PCs will be framed and must try to clear his (or her) name, but there is nothing forcing the rest of the party to help. In fact, some PCs may find perverse enjoyment or political advantage in furthering the deception.

There are several possible outcomes to this scenario. Guidelines to the most likely endings are provided, but the GM should be prepared to make adjustments for unexpected PC actions.

Adjusting for Party Strength

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

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank One):

- Tomoko is School Rank Two, and has Earth of 3 rather than 4.
- Her apprentices have Earth of 2.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank Two and Three):

- Tomoko is School Rank Four, and has Earth of 5 rather than 4.
- Her apprentices number four rather than two.

Adventure Summary and Background

Tonbo Yuji is a local daimyo of the Dragonfly Clan, the Minor Clan which lies on the southern border of Dragon lands. Yuji was once an ordinary samurai, but managed to distinguish himself in a small battle against the Lion Clan many years ago, the so-called Battle of the Lion's Jaws. During the battle Yuji took command of a Dragonfly squad whose commander had fallen, and managed to "stand in the jaws of the Lion," holding off a massive Lion charge long enough for reinforcements to arrive. Although the battle was ultimately a marginal victory for the Lion, Tonbo Yuji's actions ensured that the Dragonfly earned honor and respect on the battlefield. After the battle, the Dragonfly Clan daimyo, Tonbo Toryu, rewarded Yuji with an

appointment as daimyo of a small province on the new border.

Sadly, although Tonbo Yuji was a skilled warrior, he proved a mediocre peacetime ruler. The governance of his province has been far more than he can handle, driving him to drink, geisha, and finally opium. His weaknesses have brought him into the power of a Lion Clan spymaster, Ikoma Uso.

Uso has visited Yuji many times over the years, masquerading as an honorable Lion paying his respects on a worthy foe. Over time he has insinuated himself into Yuji's life, pretending friendship and concern, and offering "friendly advice" to the baffled Yuji on how to run his province. It was also Uso who arranged for a local geisha, Meiko, to lead Yuji deeper into his opium addiction.

Today, after many years, Tonbo Yuji is a broken man, an opium addict and betrayer of his Clan, helplessly in thrall to his "good friend" Ikoma Uso. Uso finds it child's play to get valuable military and diplomatic information out of Yuji, often simply by strategically interrupting his opium supply from time to time.

The Prodigal Son and the Fallen Scorpion

The second thread in this scenario concerns Tonbo Yuji's adopted son, Tonbo Junta. This young samurai is actually the son of a bushi who perished in the battle of the Lion's Maw. Since he had no family remaining, Tonbo Yuji offered to adopt him as his own, and has raised him as his heir. Junta, now past his gempukku, is an unhappy young man who has watched the province steadily decline over the years. His conflicted feelings toward his adopted father – the man who made him heir to the province, but who is ruining that self-same province through his incompetence – has made him easy prey for the honeyed words of a corrupted Scorpion shugenja-ko, Yogo Tomoko.

Tomoko is a former member of the Kuroiban, the Scorpion Black Watch, their *maho*-hunting organization. She betrayed her oaths and fell to the temptations of *maho* herself. She seduced Tonbo Junta a year ago and plans to become his concubine (and power behind the throne) once he replaces his father. To that end, she has convinced him that these lands actually belonged to his own family. "Your claim to the land is legitimate, Junta-kun," she whispers to him. "It is your incompetent foster-father who is the interloper."

Tonbo Junta is determined to restore “his” lands, and is prepared to do almost anything to that end. He knows that the Scorpion Clan is hunting for his beloved Tomoko, but does not know why (she has never revealed her true identity). Blinded by his infatuation, he fully believes that he is doing what is just and right, and sees no dishonor in his actions.

Tomoko’s activities have not been quite as secret as she had hoped, however. Another member of the Scorpion Black Watch, Yogo Aiguchi, has tracked her to this province. It is Aiguchi’s arrival (along with the PCs) which will trigger the events of this scenario.

Player’s Introduction

The scenario begins with the PCs traveling through the border lands of the Dragonfly. It is up to the players why their characters are passing through this region – perhaps they have business in the neighboring Lion or Dragon territories.

Give the PCs a chance to describe and introduce themselves and get into character before moving to the scene:

Lady Sun has begun her descent into night, turning the evening sky a lovely crimson. You have traveled a great distance and ache from your exertions. As you enter a large village, looking forward to rest, food, and a bath, you inquire for the inn.

A villager obediently points you toward the blackened ruins of a building, from which smoke still curls slowly.

The town is named Taro no Mura (“Village of Plump Sons”), and is home to about 600 people. The PCs can see a small castle on a nearby hill. They can also clearly see that the town is in decline. The road is rutted and washed out in places, many buildings are clearly in need of repair, and scrub brush has been allowed to encroach on the rice paddies. A group of gloomy-looking villagers is slowly putting out the last of the fire and beginning to tear down the ruins, salvaging what wood they can.

The fire which destroyed the Inn of the Turning Leaf (the scorched signboard still lies by the road) was entirely accidental, caused by a drunken ronin who knocked over a candle in his room late last night. The vagabond wisely fled town when the fire broke out, leaving everyone mystified as to its cause. Many villagers regard it as simply another in a long line of evils inflicted by the Fortunes.

If the PCs look around or speak with anyone, they can learn/notice the following:

- The fire started late last night (around two in the morning, gaijin time). Luckily, the guests and most of the employees managed to make it out. The innkeeper, however, lost his youngest son, and is away with the village eta arranging for the funeral.
- The villagers who are tearing down the ruins are being supervised by the town carpenter, a tough middle-aged man named Chotsu. If Chotsu notices the PCs, he will tell them that his lord (“Tonbo Yuji-sama”) has instructed him that all samurai travelers will be given lodging and hospitality at the castle, Shiro Senshi (Warrior’s Castle).
- If the PCs speak with the village headman, a wizened fifty-year-old named Gon, he will tell them the same thing.
- Since the instructions are to offer all samurai hospitality at the castle, ronin are included in the invitation (a typical oversight on Yuji’s part).
- If the party inquires, no other such fires or unusual occurrences have happened.
- If the PCs ask about the condition of the village, the peasants will be frightened (they don’t want to be caught bad-mouthing their daimyo) and will try to find all sorts of ways to say that nothing is Lord Tonbo Yuji’s fault, he is a fine lord who does his best, and so forth and so on. The PCs will not need any rolls to read between the lines and realize that the poor conditions here are probably the daimyo’s fault.
- A truly suspicious party might *Commune* with the spirits around the fire to learn how it started. It will require two Raises to summon a Fire spirit which remembers (very happily) being released from that boring candle and allowed to play all around the room. The spirit can describe the ronin who knocked over the candle. Questioning the villagers will confirm that the ronin left the village before dawn.

Yogo Aiguchi

While the PCs are asking around and figuring out what to do, a young man rides up on a sturdy Rokugani pony. He is dressed in garments of Scorpion red-and-black, and wears a wooden mempo (mask) over the upper half of his face. He inquires about the Inn, then

frowns, pulls a scroll out of his belt-pouch, and mutters a quick incantation, summoning the spirits of Fire.

This is Yogo Aiguchi, a Scorpion Clan magistrate and an investigator for the Black Watch. He interrogates the spirits about the cause of the fire, but is unable to gain a clear answer.

If the PCs approach or speak with Aiguchi, he will be polite and mildly friendly, but not outspoken. He will not identify himself as Black Watch, instead simply naming himself as a Scorpion Clan Magistrate. If asked why he is here, he says he is “traveling on Clan business.” To fellow Scorpions he will say he is “investigating a crime against the Clan and the Empire.” He will only reveal his true mission (to hunt down the traitor Yogo Tomoko) to fellow members of the Yogo family or the Black Watch.

If the PCs learned how the fire was started, and tell Aiguchi, he nods politely. “I was simply curious,” he says. A **Contested Awareness** roll will suggest that he is slightly relieved to learn the mundane cause of the fire.

Regardless, eventually Aiguchi heads for the castle to partake of Tonbo Yuji’s hospitality.

Sene One: A Meeting With Tonbo Yuji

Presumably the PCs will avail themselves of the offer to stay at Shiro Senshi. (Yogo Aiguchi will certainly do so.) If they don’t, their only options are to stay in a peasant hut or camp outside – neither option terribly appealing when a castle is ready to hand.

Shiro Senshi is relatively small (only three stories) and plain, although not as austere as a Crab fortress. The outer walls appear to be in need of repair, with several small breaches and crumbled areas. A roll of **Battle**, **Siege**, or **Engineering** with the **Perception** trait (all at TN 5) can determine that this is not recent damage, and that most of it is caused by wear rather than battle.

The PCs are admitted to a small waiting room, where servants offer them tea and inform them that the daimyo will receive them shortly. After a brief wait, another servant leads them to the main receiving hall.

Tonbo Yuji awaits the PCs on a low dais, with his “son” Junta behind him on his right. Seated along one wall are several young bushi and Ikoma Uso.

Tonbo Yuji appears to have the weight of many years upon him. His weathered face sags with exhaustion, and his kimono hangs loosely on his thin frame. His eyes, however, are alert, and dart amongst you all quickly and attentively as if searching for something.

The daimyo introduces himself and his son. His voice is shaky and slightly hurried. He is feeling alarmed and somewhat trapped by the sudden arrival of so many guests, and his drug-addled mind is inventing hazards that do not exist. This will be especially true if the PCs include Emerald Magistrates, Dragonfly, or Scorpion among their ranks – a **Courtier/Perception** roll at TN 10 notices that his gaze rests on such persons (including Yogo Aiguchi) longer than others.

“As guests in my land, I offer you the hospitality of Shiro-AAA. The fates, unfortunately, have chosen your day of travel to burn down the Inn of the Turning Leaf. Since I would see no samurai to sleep under the stars without shelter, please accept dinner and lodging for as long as you require.”

If there are ronin in the party, any PC can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Law/Intelligence** at TN 5) to realize that Yuji’s invitation to stay “as long as you require” could potentially let ronin stay here forever. Yuji himself will realize this a few moments after he finishes speaking, and his face pinches with embarrassment and further unease.

In any case, Ikoma Uso will step forward at this point, introducing himself as a Lion diplomat and “another guest of Lord Tonbo Yuji-sama.” He will be sure to praise the past deeds of any PC with a Glory Rank of 2.0 or more. After conversing pleasantly with the PCs in this fashion for a few minutes he will invite them to accept Lord Tonbo Yuji-sama’s hospitality so that the conversation may be continued over dinner.

Aiguchi Drops the Bomb

When it is his turn to announce whether he is accepting the castle’s hospitality or not, Yogo Aiguchi will step forward, bow, and say:

“Your offer is most gracious, Lord Tonbo-sama, and I will certainly avail myself of your hospitality. However, it is my duty to inform you I am here on the business of my Clan. I have reason to believe that a fugitive from Scorpion justice, a young woman named Tomoko, may be hiding in this area. She is a smuggler and murderess. I trust you will be able to offer me your full cooperation in apprehending this criminal.”

Aiguchi is deliberately putting this into the open in the hope of provoking a response. He has already noted signs of opium dependency in Lord Tonbo Yuji, and suspects Tomoko may be involved. He is “rattling the cages,” trying to provoke a rash response with this public speech.

Tonbo Yuji will certainly be alarmed by Aiguchi’s words, especially the mention of a “smuggler.” (He knows his own opium is illegally smuggled, after all.) He will pretend wrath at the Scorpion’s public suggestion that “I allow criminals to flourish in my province,” and refuses to offer any cooperation with such a “so-called investigation.” A bitter argument will quickly develop, with Yuji claiming that his Honor has been insulted while Aiguchi insist that he is merely doing his duty by informing the daimyo of his investigation.

It is up to the PCs whether or not to intervene and try to defuse this developing crisis. If any one PC notably takes the Yogo’s side more than the others, that PC will be the target of the frame-job in Scene Three.

- If any PCs side with Yogo Aiguchi, such as by pointing out that he is merely doing his duty, they will need to role-play convincingly and roll **Courtier**, **Sincerity**, or **Etiquette** (with the **Awareness** trait) at TN 15 to convince the daimyo to back down. Yogo Aiguchi will graciously apologize for his own “perhaps indelicate remarks.”
- If any PCs side with the daimyo, they will find it much easier to convince the Scorpion to back off (he is a master of such things, after all). He has no proof, after all, other than that he traced Tomoko’s two-year-old trail to this province. Any solid role-play on the part of the PCs will convince him to apologize and drop the matter, at least publically.
- If none of the PCs are able or willing to defuse the situation, Ikoma Uso will eventually step in and convince Yogo Aiguchi to back off and apologize.

Regardless, once this unpleasant conversation is over, Tonbo Yuji will tell the PCs that dinner will be served shortly, and invites them to wash the dust of the road from their bodies. He rises and departs somewhat hastily, accompanied by Ikoma Uso.

What the Party Can Learn

As a result of their meeting with Tonbo Yuji, the PCs can potentially determine the following:

- A **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 15 will reveal that Tonbo Yuji is extremely nervous and fearful, and that the arrival of the PCs has somehow fed into his fear.
- Anyone who makes TN 20 or more on this roll (or TN 15 with **Ichi Miru/Awareness**) will realize that the daimyo is definitely hiding something, although he is trying his best not to show it.
- Any PC who paid attention to the quiet son, Tonbo Junta, can roll **Courtier** (TN 10) or **Investigation** (TN 15), both with the **Perception** trait, to notice Junta occasionally shooting resentful, bitter glances at Yuji. Also, such PCs can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 to notice a distinct lack of family resemblance between Junta and his “father.”
- A PC who rolls **Courtier/Perception** at TN 15 or **Manipulation/Perception** at TN 10 also notices that Tonbo Yuji kept glancing at Ikoma Uso, as though for guidance. He was clearly relieved whenever Uso stepped into the conversation.

Eavesdropping

In the unlikely event that sneaky, dishonorable PCs decide to snoop around immediately, rather than bathing, they might be able to find the private room where Tonbo Yuji is meeting with his “friend” Ikoma Uso. The walls and doors of this interior room are paper, of course, and the PC need only roll **Simple Perception** at TN 10 to overhear snatches of the conversation. At the GM’s discretion, however, such a PC might need to roll **Stealth** to get to the room unobserved.

Tonbo Yuji is in a panic, pacing back and forth as he asks Uso for advice. Although both of them are well aware that Yuji is an addict and traitor, neither speaks of it, and their conversation is oddly indirect. The following are examples of what might be overheard:

Yuji: “...but what if in the course of the Yogo’s investigation he learns of other things?”

Uso: “That is possible. He may find tracks that are not on the trail he seeks. However, as long as he sticks to his primary goal... others will have nothing to fear.”

Yuji: “How can we be certain? How?”

Uso: “Calm yourself. Without balance...”

Yuji: *“Simple enough for you. You are not the one... in this predicament. <pause> I’m sorry... I spoke from anger.”*

The conversation will continue along these lines for a few minutes. Servants are active in this part of the castle, so a PC will not be able to listen long without being caught.

Scene Two: Dinner is Served

Dinner is a simple affair. It will be quite apparent to any one skilled in the courtly arts (**Courtier** or any suitable **Lore** skill, **Intelligence** trait, TN 5) that this meal was hastily prepared, and while a good appearance has been put on, the true substance of a fine meal is absent. Yuji has let his food stores dwindle over time, and no longer has the wherewithal to entertain well.

There are no other guests at the castle: the total complement at dinner comprises the PCs, Tonbo Yuji, Tonbo Junta, Ikoma Uso, and Yogo Aiguchi.

Tonbo Yuji will be silent and morose until about halfway through the dinner, when he brightens a bit and then abruptly leaves the table. See “Opium Calls,” below, for details.

Ikoma Uso will resume his earlier conversations with the PCs, and will prove quite adept at ferreting out their attitudes and purposes without seeming to be doing so.

- If any PCs ask him about himself, he claims to be a “simple diplomat” who has occasionally stayed here before, and who has a “passing acquaintance” with the “honorable Lord Tonbo Yuji-sama, hero of the Battle of the Lion’s Jaws.” He will describe the battle in detail to anyone who asks.
- Although Uso claims to have been here only a few times before, any PC who observes him and rolls **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 10 can deduce that he seems too familiar with the servants, the castle’s layout, and other such matters to be a casual visitor.

Tonbo Junta will be more talkative here than he was in the audience hall, and will speak extensively with Yogo Aiguchi about his investigation, especially about the mysterious “Tomoko” who Aiguchi is hunting. The Scorpion answers in carefully vague terms, pleading the privacy of his Clan whenever Junta’s questions get too specific.

If any of the PCs appear to be interested (and especially if any of them are Scorpions or magistrates), Junta will also question them as to why they are passing through, where they are going, what they are doing, and so forth.

He is trying to determine who is a threat and who is just a random passerby.

- If any PC inquires after Junta’s mother, or makes note of his distinct appearance, he will reluctantly explain his background, while insisting that he is “very honored, more than I deserve” to have such a foster-father. Any PC who rolls **Contested Awareness** can tell that Junta is actually seething with resentment against Yuji.
- Any PC who observes Junta in his conversations with Yogo Aiguchi can roll **Investigation/Awareness** at TN 15 to realize that he is personally alarmed by Aiguchi’s investigation. If the PC rolls TN 20 or higher, they can tell that Aiguchi, beneath his bland smile, has seen the same thing they have.
- An extremely persuasive PC might, at the GM’s discretion, convince Junta to open up a little about his feelings toward his foster-father. This would require both good role-play and a high roll with a skill like **Manipulation** or **Seduction**. In such a case Junta will confess in a low voice that his “father” is a dissolute, incompetent man who wastes away his time with opium and a “filthy geisha” named Meiko. “When I am daimyo, I will govern as my blood demands, with honor and skill,” Junta declares softly.

Opium Calls

At one point during dinner, Yuji will abruptly get up and leave. Since he is a daimyo, this sort of insult must be borne with honor, but it will be plain that Tonbo Junta is quietly angered by his father’s erratic behavior.

Yuji returns after a few minutes and resumes the meal as though nothing happened. A **Simple Perception** roll at TN 20, or **Courtier** or **Investigation (Perception)** at TN 10, will notice that he seems more relaxed and self-controlled, and even becomes slightly friendly.

If any PC specifically asks about the possibility of a chemical cause (opium or otherwise) for Yuji’s more relaxed demeanor, they can roll **Medicine/Perception**

at TN 15 to notice a tell-tale slight glassiness in Yuji's eyes.

Yuji has indeed availed himself of a small amount of liquid opium. He has also put into motion a plan which he believes will turn aside the attentions of this snooping Scorpion and these troublesome samurai.

Poetry and Plans

As the dinner concludes, Tonbo Yuji will ask his son to recite some poetry for his guests. Junta forces a polite smile, stands, and recites:

*Family bonds twine
Tighter than steel, binding hearts
Flower's thorn draws blood*

Yuji applauds, smiling, and encourages his other guests to grace the evening with a poem. Ikoma Uso will offer one if no one else will. Regardless of how well or poorly anyone does at their poetry, Yuji will follow their performance with this statement:

“Poetry has always had the effect of calming my mind. Please, Magistrate Yogo Aiguchi, accept my apology for my earlier outburst. I fully understand the importance of your investigations and will cooperate with them with all my heart. I welcome the opportunity to show that no such crimes stain my province. I hereby declare that you are empowered to search all the rooms of Shiro Senshi, from top to bottom. In fact, I insist that you start with my own humble chambers. I invite all those who are guests of my castle to join Yogo-san during this investigation so that we may all bear witness.”

This is highly irregular, to put it mildly: any PC with even a single Rank in the skills of Law or Etiquette will know that daimyo do not allow passing magistrates to search their quarters. Any PC who rolls **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 will notice that Tonbo Junta flinches a little, his face tightening a bit, when his father makes the announcement.

Yogo Aiguchi will be surprised by this announcement, but will agree after a moment's hesitation. He will carefully reassure everyone that his sole desire is to hunt down the “criminal Tomoko,” pledges not to read any documents without their owner's permission, and so forth. He will also suggest that since Tonbo Yuji is clearly above suspicion, there is no need to search his quarters (Yuji will insist, however).

If the PCs protest this invasion of their privacy, they will have to express themselves carefully to avoid insulting Tonbo Yuji – after all, he has already made the offer, and arguing with him could be construed as insulting a social superior. Yuji will insist that his offer applies to all within his walls, and will grow quite angry if any PC (especially the one he has targeted for framing, see below) is recalcitrant.

Ikoma Uso will go along with Yuji (although he has some private reservations, detectable with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 15), and will try to smooth over any hurt feelings, pointing out that it is better to avoid trouble and accept this minor humiliation. “After all, none of us have anything to hide.”

Tonbo Yuji himself will not be above delivering verbal jabs like: “Is your honor above that of a daimyo?” “Do you question the right of a magistrate to pursue his quarry?” He will even use the PCs' own arguments from the initial discussion in the audience hall as reasons for submitting to the search. If a PC still does not relent, Yuji will remind them that they are in his castle and are here at his sufferance. If absolutely necessary, he will have several of his bushi stand guard while the rooms are searched forcibly, although this will be an absolute last resort.

Scene Three: But That's Not Mine...

The search of the daimyo's room will, of course, reveal nothing – his servants keep it immaculate. There is a writing desk, a high-quality futon, an old but well-cared-for suit of armor on a wooden stand, and so forth.

Investigation/Perception rolls will be needed to discover the only oddities here: TN 15 will notice that Yuji's writing kit has not been used in many months, and TN 20 will observe that the tatami mats on the floor are extremely fresh, without a trace of wear. (Yuji has them replaced often, to avoid letting them develop an odor of opium.)

Tonbo Yuji stands in the center of the room and invites everyone to search freely. Yogo Aiguchi will look around politely, making the minimum effort needed to satisfy the daimyo's demands. It is up to the PCs how they deal with this scene – if they root around actively, they will probably lose Honor or Glory for such uncouth behavior.

Once the “search” is concluded (and precedent established), Yuji will insist that the rest of the castle be searched, starting with the guest rooms. He will make a

point of asking to search the Yogo's own quarters ("no one is above the eye of scrutiny, Yogo-san"), and Aiguchi will agree with a faint smile. He keeps all his secrets in a small puzzle box which is always on his person. His room reveals nothing of interest.

The PCs' rooms will be searched next. Yuji will not permit delay, nor will he allow any PCs to leave on their own during this event.

The Chosen Victim

One of the PCs will have a large quantity of opium planted in their traveling bag. The daimyo's chosen frame-up victim will be based both on whether they argued against him earlier, and on whether they have the prestige to defend themselves. He will avoid anyone from the Imperial families, as well as Emerald Magistrates and persons obviously above reproach (Honor Rank 4.5 or higher). He will also try to avoid Scorpions, since he fears Yogo Aiguchi might not be enthusiastic about such a target.

Favored targets for the frame-up will include ronin, Crab, Unicorn, and anyone with opium addiction (as an addict himself, Yuji has an eye for such people).

The Discovery

Inevitably, when the traveling pack of the chosen PC is searched, a large package of opium is discovered, wrapped in heavy rice paper. The quantity (several pounds) is far too much for anyone to believe it is for medicinal uses or even for a single individual. It is clearly a smuggler's quantity.

If any PC is watching Tonbo Junta when this discovery is made, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10 to spot a brief expression of surprise and relief cross his face. Yogo Aiguchi will notice this as well, although he gives no outward sign.

Scene Four: Accusations and Investigations

At the sight of the parcel of opium, Tonbo Yuji's face contorts in rage. "I offered you food and shelter as one samurai to another! You betray that hospitality by bringing such... such foulness into my province! Guards! Arrest this criminal!"

If the PCs do nothing, the chosen target will be arrested and thrown into the dungeon. Yogo Aiguchi will look grave and thoughtful, but takes no action to protect the PC victim unless he or she is Scorpion. Ikoma Uso will

look properly shocked, and says nothing. The other PCs will have to step up and speak on behalf of the accused – Yuji will not listen to anything the victim might say for themselves.

Once one or more of the other PCs begin arguing for their comrade to have a chance to clear his/her name, Tonbo Yuji will back off a bit. He realizes belatedly that if he pushes matters too strongly it will appear suspicious. He will give the accused PC one day to clear the accusation, and demands that those who spoke on the victim's behalf swear on their honor not to let him/her escape from the province.

What Has Actually Happened

While he was away from dinner, Tonbo Yuji ordered one of his servants (an elderly man named Hikaru) to fetch the opium from his room, wrap it in rice paper, and place it in the PC's traveling pack. From there, Hikaru went to the castle basement, there to hide until the investigation is concluded.

Investigating the Scene

Tonbo Yuji's plan was conceived hastily, and while under the influence of opium. He has little to no opportunity to cover his tracks.

If the PCs look at the package of opium, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10 to see that it was hastily wrapped and spilled a little into the traveling pack. Any PC with experience in criminal matters (a magistrate, or 3 or more ranks in **Law**) knows that opium is extremely valuable and smugglers always take care not to let any be wasted.

Shugenja PCs may decide to *Commune* with the spirits in the room. (Yogo Aiguchi can do so as well, but will not volunteer his services unless the framed PC is a Scorpion. Otherwise, the PCs will have to ask for his help.) The room contains Air and Earth spirits in abundance, all of whom can testify that an old man in simple clothing placed a package within the traveling pack.

Questioning/Observing the NPCs

The Servants: If the PCs promptly question the servants who are responsible for this part of the castle, they can easily learn that old Hikaru was seen in this area around dinner time. If the PCs wait more than an hour or so, Tonbo Yuji will have time to give orders to the servants not to speak about such things.

The Guards: There are guards posted throughout the castle. Again, if the PCs promptly question the guards in the guest area, they will remember seeing an old servant pass through with a package during dinner. However, since samurai normally ignore servants, the PCs will have to specifically ask about “servants,” “anyone at all, even a servant,” or similar in order to get this response. Again, after an hour or two Tonbo Yuji will have given orders to the guards to say that they saw nothing.

Ikoma Uso: Uso will profess complete bewilderment and horror at the discovery of opium smuggling. However, any PC speaking with him about this can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 25 to realize that Uso is very concerned about Tonbo Yuji’s behavior.

Tonbo Junta: Junta will excuse himself and depart from the castle shortly after the discovery of the opium. Yogo Aiguchi will quietly follow him. If any of the PCs decide to follow as well, go to Scene Eight: The Lovely Tomoko.

Tonbo Yuji: If any of the PCs try to keep an eye on Tonbo Yuji during these investigations, they will see him speaking briefly with several of the castle guards. These are mostly normal orders, but at one point he will order two of the guards (Tonbo Koryu and Tonbo Akira) to go into the basement and kill Hikaru, thereby hopefully ending the chain of clues. “Cut the man’s throat.”

PCs will not be able to notice this conversation unless they are paying close attention to Yuji’s activities or ask whether any of the guards behave oddly (in that case, **Simple Perception** at TN 10 to see that they appear vexed by their orders). To actually overhear Yuji’s words, the PCs will have to sneak up and eavesdrop (Contested **Stealth/Agility** against Yuji’s **Perception**) or use magic.

If any PCs actually ask Yuji about this conversation, he frantically denies everything and accuses them of insulting his honor.

Scene Five: The Fate of Hikaru

The two guards, Koryu and Akira, head for the cellar to carry out their orders. Neither of them understands what is happening, but they are loyal samurai and will do as their lord commands. They are not trying to be stealthy, and can be easily followed if the PCs noticed their conversation with Yuji. To follow unnoticed,

however, the PCs will need to roll **Stealth/Agility** at TN 10.

Koryu and Akira go directly to the cellar and, following Yuji’s instructions, look behind a large pile of sake casks. Hikaru is there, and realizes what is to happen the moment he sees them. Resigned, the old man kneels and bows his head for a quick death. The guards instinctively behead him and then, remembering they were told to cut his throat, slash it above the point of decapitation. Unsettled by their deed, they depart quickly, leaving the cooling body in a pool of blood. None of this makes much noise.

In the unlikely event that one or more PCs follow the guards into the cellar and confront them, Koryu and Akira will be angry and aggressive, saying they are on the business of their lord and demanding to know what the PCs are doing following them around. The PCs will have to speak cleverly and eloquently, and make a **Sincerity/Awareness** roll at TN 15, to avoid conflict. (Alternatively, PCs with Glory of 2.0 or more could roll **Intimidation/Willpower** instead.)

Regardless, the guards will still insist on carrying out their duty unless the PCs can convince them otherwise. Persuading a samurai to refuse orders from his lord is an extremely difficult feat, and will require skilled and powerful role-play from the PCs (not to mention a skill roll such as **Sincerity, Oratory, or Intimidation**). Hikaru himself is resigned and will say nothing unless the PCs manage to spare his life.

In the highly unlikely event that the PCs manage to save Hikaru’s life, the guards will immediately go to their lord to request seppuku (see *Scene Nine: By My Honor*). Hikaru will reluctantly admit that Lord Tonbo Yuji ordered him to place the opium in the PC’s bag, although as a mere heimin, his testimony is worthless next to the word of a daimyo.

Finding the Body

Once the PCs start looking for Hikaru, Tonbo Yuji will pretend to cooperate, ordering other guards to search the castle for the old servant. The body will be found quickly enough. (Of course, some PCs may already know what has happened.)

An old man’s body lies in the back corner of the cellar. His head has been cut from his body, and blood pools thickly around the corpse. Above the severed neck, oddly, is another wound in his throat.

The PCs will need eta to examine the body closely. It will take about half an hour to fetch an eta from the village. During that time, Tonbo Yuji will dispatch other guards around the castle on a pretense of “searching for the murderer.”

Once the PCs have an eta to move and search the body for them, they can learn the following:

- Anyone who examines the wounds on Hikaru’s body can roll **Medicine/Perception** at TN 10 (or **Kenjutsu/Perception** at TN 20) to see that the throat wound was actually inflicted after death. Both wounds were delivered by a trained hand using a long sharp blade – probably a katana.
- There is no evidence of a struggle. Judging from the position of the body, a **Simple Intelligence** roll at TN 10 determines that Hikaru was kneeling and leaning forward when he died.
- The body wears the simple clothing of a castle servant. However, if a PC examines the clothing closely (or rolls **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10 when looking at the body), they notice a piece of colorful silk cloth tucked under the waistband. This is an ornamental piece of silk with red woven edges, of the sort often used to wrap gifts or packages. A **Medicine/Perception**, **Poison/Perception**, or **Herbalism/Perception** roll at TN 10 will detect traces of opium on the inside surface of the cloth.

The Cloth

The piece of wrapping-cloth on old Hikaru’s body is the key clue. The PCs may think on their own to speak with merchants in the village of Taro no Mura (the obvious people to ask about cloth). If they don’t think of this, an **Investigation/Intelligence** or **Commerce/Intelligence** roll at TN 15 can suggest it.

It is up to the PCs whether to continue investigating tonight or wait until the morning. However, if they mention the significance of the cloth anywhere the daimyo might hear about it, Tonbo Yuji will panic and dispatch the long-suffering Koryu and Akira to dispose of the geisha, Meiko, from whom he got the cloth (and the opium). See *Scene Seven: Fate of a Geisha* for details.

Scene Six: Tracing the Cloth

Regardless of whether the PCs go looking in the evening or the following morning, the result will be the same: they will soon find that only one merchant in town, a pudgy, greasy little fellow named Koitsu, sells cloth with red woven edges of that sort.

Koitsu is quite alarmed if the PCs start mentioning opium, murders in the castle, and so forth. He swears to the Fortunes (truthfully) that he has never had anything to do with opium. If the PCs ask about the cloth, he admits that he uses it to wrap gifts and purchases, and also mentions that he sells it to other merchants and to some of the geisha at the local house, the Melting Blossom.

The geisha house is the correct lead, of course. The other merchants are just as ignorant as Koitsu.

Scene Seven: Fate of a Geisha

If the PCs visit the Melting Blossom during the day:

The House of the Melting Blossom is a quiet, nondescript single-story building hiding behind stone walls and a large garden. In contrast to the rest of the village, the place seems prosperous and well-maintained. None of the windows or doors are open, and the only sound is the buzzing of a fly and the faint tok...tok of a water clock.

Unless the murder of Meiko has already occurred, the PCs will have to knock on the gate repeatedly before a sleepy bouncer opens the door and asks their business.

If the PCs arrive at night:

The House of the Melting Blossom blazes with the light of scores of colored lanterns, and music and laughter drift out on the night breeze. A pretty young girl in a colorful kimono greets you at the gate and politely asks you to wait while she fetches the madam. She runs inside with a tinkling of ankle-bells. A large man, apparently a bouncer, stands to one side, watching with arms folded over his broad chest. When you look at him he smiles and bows respectfully.

This scene can play out in two different ways, depending on whether or not Tonbo Yuji realizes that

the PCs may be able to track the cloth to the geisha house. See “A Murder” if Yuji sent Koryu and Akira to kill Meiko.

Finding Meiko

Assuming the PCs kept their information secret, Meiko will still be alive. To find her, they will first have to speak with the house madam, a plump, noxiously flirtatious middle-aged woman named Nami. She will try to recruit any wealthy-looking male PCs as customers, especially if they arrive at night: “Oh, you must stay and relax for a little first, surely? Listen to some relaxing music, enjoy fine sake and pleasant conversation?” An evening at the Melting Blossom, should the PCs accept it, costs three silver bu.

The PCs will have to be persistent (or rude) to get Nami to pay attention to their questions. Once they show her the red-edged cloth, she will hem and haw and finally admit that three of her girls (Sae, Umi, and Meiko) enjoy that particular design. If the PCs demand it, she will reluctantly summon them to be interviewed.

If the PCs ask whether Tonbo Yuji visits the house, or whether any of the three girls has connections with the castle, they will have to convince Nami to betray the privacy of her customers. This can be accomplished with flattery (**Sincerity**, **Manipulation**, or **Seduction**, all with the **Awareness** trait, at TN 15), with a bribe (at least one koku), or with threats (**Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 10). Thus convinced, Nami will admit that Tonbo Yuji frequently visits Meiko.

The three girls (Sae, Umi, and Meiko) are superficially identical: beautiful, gentle, modest, heavily made-up, and easily frightened. However, once the PCs start mentioning red-edged cloth, opium, murder, or any other such “red flag” topic, it will quickly become apparent that Meiko’s fear is of a different and deeper sort than that of her fellow geisha. A **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 10 will detect this.

What Meiko Knows

Several years ago, Meiko murdered a thuggish Dragon samurai who was abusing her. Although she believed the crime had gone unsolved, Ikoma Uso learned the truth. He used the information to blackmail Meiko into becoming his spy and instrument. Through her, he addicted Tonbo Yuji to opium. The geisha house receives opium shipments hidden in supply wagons which come from out of town (run by a Scorpion-backed yakuza syndicate, although Meiko knows

nothing of this), and she then supplies it to Yuji when he visits her.

Meiko will be extremely reluctant to confess any of this. The PCs will have to be either very ruthless (threatening to turn her over to a torturer, for example), or very gentle and sympathetic, to get her to reveal her opium-smuggling activities. She will be even more reluctant to admit her connection to Ikoma Uso, and will never dare explain what sort of hold he has over her – she knows her crime merits death.

Remember that Meiko, as a geisha, is one of the *hinin* – non-people. In Rokugani law her word means nothing, and they certainly cannot accuse Tonbo Yuji or Ikoma Uso on her testimony.

A Murder

If Tonbo Yuji learned that the PCs might be on the trail of Meiko’s cloth, he dispatched his two bushi, Koryu and Akira, to kill her. The bushi reluctantly break into the back of the geisha house (Yuji ordered them to let no-one see them), find Meiko’s room, and murder her, along with a younger egisha-in-training and a serving boy who happened to witness the crime. The room is left soaked in blood. The bushi flee out the back, sickened by their deed.

What the PCs find depends on how soon they go in search of Meiko. If they seek her on the same night as Hikaru’s death, they will arrive at the geisha house shortly after Meiko’s death. Madam Nami will be frantically trying to keep the horrible scene a secret from her customers, while summoning eta to cleanse the room.

If the PCs arrive the next day, the murder scene has been cleaned up, and Nami has reported the crime to the doshin (armed peasants) who maintain law in the town. She will be reluctant to speak on the matter to the PCs, although she will crumble quickly under pressure.

Investigating Meiko’s Murder

If the PCs are able to examine the bodies, they can see (with a **Kenjutsu/Intelligence** roll at TN 15 or **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 10) that all three were slain with sword-blows, and that the younger girl and the boy were trying to flee the scene when they died. If either roll makes TN 20 or better, it becomes apparent that there were two attackers.

If the bodies have already been cleaned up, the PCs can still learn this information by speaking with the eta who

did the work. The PCs will have to ask the right questions (“Did it look like one attacker or two? What sort of weapons?”) in order to get the information.

If any of the PCs are shugenja, they can *Commune* with spirits in the area. There are many Air and Earth spirits in the room, and Fire spirits in the lanterns. If the PCs arrive before the scene is cleaned up, there will also be Water spirits from a teapot which the serving boy dropped as he died. All the spirits can describe two armed men coming in from the garden and attacking the people in the room. The images from the Water spirits clearly mark the intruders as Tonbo Koryu and Tonbo Akira.

If the PCs ask around the area for witnesses, they can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 to discover two young peasant boys (in their early teens) hanging around nervously and watching the scene. These boys, Ryu and Shin, witnessed the samurai sneak into the back of the geisha house and then flee a few minutes later with bloody swords. (The boys were trying to work up the nerve to sneak in and spy on the geisha when this happened.)

The boys are afraid they will be slain for what they have seen (they recognized the samurai as guards from the castle). To get them to open up and describe what they saw, a PC will have to be gentle and considerate, and demonstrate a rapport with common folk (ronin, Crab, and Fox Clan PCs will have the best chance). Rudeness or bullying will simply frighten the boys into flight or mulish silence, although the direct prospect of death will of course make them speak.

Scene Eight: The Lovely Tomoko

The same night that the PCs are dealing with Hikaru’s murder, Tonbo Junta is worrying about his lover Tomoko. He knows that Yogo Aiguchi is here in search of a woman by that name, and just as Aiguchi hoped, his fears drive him to seek her out.

This event happens after the discovery of Hikaru’s body. If the PCs are keeping an eye on Tonbo Junta or Yogo Aiguchi, they will see Junta head out of the castle toward the village. Aiguchi will follow stealthily.

If the PCs do not investigate this matter, Junta will meet with Tomoko and her apprentices at her house on the edge of town. Aiguchi will break in on the meeting and attempt to arrest Tomoko, but the maho powers of her and her two apprentices prove too much for him,

and he is slain. Junta is horrified but is now in too deep to escape; he has no choice but to help the three maho-users hide the body. Junta returns to the castle, badly shaken, and tries to keep a low profile for the remainder of the adventure.

If the PCs follow Junta or Aiguchi, they will have the chance to disrupt this chain of events. Junta goes to a small, ordinary house on the edge of the village – the sort of place which is home to a minor samurai or middle-class commoner. A teenage girl, obviously a commoner, admits him. Inside, he meets with Yogo Tomoko (who he refers to as “Tomo-chan”) and her apprentices (the girl and her brother).

Yogo Aiguchi will slip up to the house and listen to the conversation until he is sure he has identified Tomoko. If any PC approaches or interrupts him, his response will vary depending on who they are and his opinion of them:

- Scorpion PCs will be immediately told that the woman inside is the criminal he seeks. Aiguchi warns that she must be taken back to Scorpion lands for trial.
- Non-Scorpions who strike Aiguchi as prudent and trustworthy will be told that “the criminal Tomoko” is in the house. Aiguchi will try to carry out an immediate arrest so that the PCs do not overhear anything they shouldn’t. He will not ask for the PCs’ help but will not reject it if it is offered.
- Non-Scorpions who seem foolish, untrustworthy, or hostile to Aiguchi will be told nothing. He will refuse to discuss “Clan business” with them and, if pressed, will simply return to the castle. It is up to the PCs whether to investigate further on their own or not.

Eavesdropping

If the PCs listen in on the conversation between Junta and Tomoko, they will need to roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 (or use some sort of eavesdropping magic). They will quickly realize that Tomoko is the dominant one in the relationship. The following is a sample of what might be heard:

(Junta): *But Tomo-chan, what if he finds out about us..?*

(Tomoko): *Quiet! If he finds nothing he must leave soon enough.*

(Junta): *But... this matter with the opium, and Yuji...*

(Tomoko): *That is none of our concern. The old fool is dooming himself with his feeble plots. You need*

only wait, dear one, and soon what is yours will fall into your hand...

Making the Bust

If the PCs enter the house (either alone or in the company of Yogo Aiguchi), they will see the following scene:

By the light of two lanterns, you see Tonbo Junta kneeling in front of a beautiful woman in her twenties. Long black hair hangs down her back, gleaming in the lamplight, and her kimono is immodestly loose, although you notice the hilt of a wakizashi thrust under her obi. Two commoners, a boy and a girl in their late teens, kneel quietly to one side. All four people look up with startled and angry expressions as you come in.

For play balance, the number of apprentices can be increased to four against high-level parties.

If Yogo Aiguchi is here, he will point his wakizashi at Tomoko and command her to submit to arrest. Regardless, Tonbo Junta will jump up and step in front of Tomoko, demanding in a shaky voice what the PCs are doing “invading my privacy.” Tomoko will use this distraction to pull a knife and start murmuring the words to a maho spell; her apprentices will do likewise. If the PCs do not initiate action, these spells will go off unopposed.

Tomoko and her apprentices will not surrender – if they cannot slay these intruders quickly, they will flee if possible, fight to the death if necessary. Tomoko will not hesitate to use the blood of her apprentices (or even Junta) as spell-fuel for her *maho*.

Tonbo Junta will at first be confused when fighting breaks out, and terrified by the sudden use of *maho*, but after a moment he will draw steel and defend his lover. He is not suicidal, however, and if Tomoko is slain he will drop his sword and burst into tears.

Consequences

If the PCs somehow manage to take Tomoko alive (such as by reducing her to the Out rank and then preventing her from committing suicide by biting her tongue), Yogo Aiguchi will demand that she be handed over to him. He has a warrant for her arrest. He will at all costs try to keep the PCs from questioning her about her past (it would dishonor the Yogo family and the Scorpion Clan for Tomoko’s betrayal to become public knowledge).

If Tonbo Junta is taken alive, he will rant incoherently about how Yuji “stole my birthright” and “dishonors me every day with his incompetence,” in between weeping for his lost “Tomo-chan.” He refuses to believe that Tomoko and her apprentices were mahotsukai, even though the evidence was right before his eyes. He also does not believe Tomoko was a Scorpion – he is convinced she is simply a lovely, well-educated commoner.

If the PCs search Tomoko’s house (something Aiguchi will try to do for himself), they will be able to roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 to find a Scorpion puzzle-box hidden under a loose floorboard. Aiguchi will try to claim the puzzle-box as Scorpion Clan property (it has the Clan and Yogo mons embossed on the outside). He will be quite angry if any PCs insist on opening it, and may even challenge them to duels if he thinks himself more capable than them.

It will require **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20 (or **Nazodo/Intelligence** at TN 15) to open the puzzle-box. Inside are scrolls and papers detailing Tomoko’s maho experiments, as well as an old wooden chop for “Yogo Tomoko” and several of her old spell scrolls.

Scene Nine: By My Honor

This scene will usually occur whenever the PCs return to the castle after investigating in the town (either to look up the red cloth and Meiko, or to follow Junta and Aiguchi). It might occur earlier if the PCs witnessed the murder of Hikaru, or if they fail to follow any of the clues from Hikaru’s corpse.

Tonbo Koryu and Tonbo Akira petition their lord for permission to commit seppuku. Word of this remarkable event quickly spreads throughout the castle, and the PCs will hear of it the moment they arrive. Shortly after, Tonbo Yuji will summon the two bushi to the main audience hall to announce his decision.

If the PCs ask why the guards have requested seppuku, they learn the guards claim to have failed to prevent a bandit from getting within the castle walls. This bandit was supposedly responsible for the murder of Hikaru, “a valued old retainer of Shiro Senshi.” Of course, nobody except the two guards claims to have seen or heard of this supposed “bandit,” and the death of a single old servant is hardly a failing worthy of a samurai taking his own life.

Almost the entire complement of castle bushi is present in the audience hall, ranged along both walls. The two guards kneel in the center of the audience

hall, heads pressed to the polished floor. Lord Tonbo Yuji enters and seats himself. He holds up a folded sheet of paper. "I have read your petition, and I accept it," he announces. Murmurs of surprise circle around the room. "You may perform the ceremony at the next dawn."

Koryu and Akira have resigned looks upon their faces as they rise and head to the baths to cleanse themselves before spending the night in meditation. Any PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell that they are feeling deeply conflicted and see this as the only way out. A PC who watches Tonbo Yuji during this scene can roll **Investigation/Awareness** at TN 15 to sense that Yuji is very relieved, almost triumphant, over the two guards' decision.

Speaking with Koryu and Akira

PCs who try to approach the two bushi during the audience with Tonbo Yuji will be committing a breach of etiquette, interrupting a grave matter between samurai and their lord. This could potentially bring an Honor or Glory loss on the PCs. Skills such as **Political Maneuvering** or **Courtier** could be very useful here.

There will, however, be chances for the PCs to approach the two bushi later, as they fast and meditate in preparation for the dawn ceremony. The PCs' best chance is to approach in a polite and respectful way and urge the samurai to tell the truth about what is happening. Invoking the tenets of bushido (and questioning whether Tonbo Yuji is upholding them) will be very helpful. Mentioning the PCs' own knowledge of Koryu and Akira's involvement in the murders (from spirit interrogation, or the two boys in the village) will also help shake them into speaking.

If the PCs actually managed to successfully interrupt the murder of Hikaru, the two bushi will be much more willing to speak with them.

Depending on what sort of verbal approach the PCs take, they will need to roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 15, **Manipulation/Awareness** at TN 10, or **Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15 in order to convince the guards to speak.

Even if the guards confess what they have done, they will be unwilling to forgo seppuku. In fact, since by confessing they are betraying their lord, they will feel that seppuku is more necessary than ever. The PCs should be able to convince them to accuse Tonbo Yuji before they die, however.

Scene Ten: Resolutions

The two plot threads in this scenario have several possible outcomes. The most likely ones are listed here:

Confronting Tonbo Yuji: If the PCs attempt to confront Yuji using only the evidence of commoners (such as Meiko), they will probably not be able to shake him. Despite his fragile mental state, Yuji knows he need not fear the testimony of a mere geisha.

If the PCs confront Tonbo Yuji with the confessions of the two bushi, however, he will abruptly break down, weeping. "I have dishonored myself, I am worse than an eta, a slave to the basest needs," he sobs.

If any PC happens to be watching Ikoma Uso during this scene, they can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 to spot a brief expression of alarm on his face. The Lion strides across the room, bows to Yuji, and says, "Honored lord. There is only one answer for your sins, and it must be made immediately. I will be your second, if you wish."

Unless the PCs intervene with a forceful argument, Yuji will nod weakly, draw his wakizashi, and prepare to commit seppuku immediately. PCs who present strong arguments based on the need for the ceremony to be seemly, properly prepared, etc., can make a Contested roll of their **Sincerity/Awareness** against Ikoma Uso's **Manipulation/Awareness** to talk Yuji into delaying and holding a proper ceremony the next morning.

If the PCs do manage to delay Yuji's seppuku, he will issue a public proclamation clearing the name of the PC accused of opium smuggling. He will also confess to opium addiction and to ordering the murder of Hikaru (and Meiko, if things got that far). He will not say anything to implicate Ikoma Uso unless he is speaking privately to a Scorpion or a fellow Dragonfly (he will confess to the Dragonfly to warn his clan about Uso, and to a Scorpion in hopes of gaining some measure of revenge on Uso).

Confronting Ikoma Uso: The Lion spymaster will be impossible to break. He will claim complete innocence of any involvement in opium smuggling, spying on the Dragonfly Clan, or anything else untoward. He dismisses any commoner testimony the PCs have gained as "the word of mere half-people."

If some of the PCs actually gain a confession from Tonbo Yuji about his connection to Ikoma Uso, they

may decide to confront Uso about it. Uso will attempt to dismiss or belittle their accusations. Under no circumstances will he confess anything. If a PC demands a duel, Uso will refuse. “I cannot fight a duel without the permission of my daimyo or yours. You may petition for one if you wish, of course.”

Clearing the Accusation: If the PCs were unable to secure the confessions of the two guards, they will still have to find a way to clear the name of the PC accused of opium smuggling. The evidence which the PCs will have (interrogations of spirits, the word of commoners) is not sufficient in itself to do more than cast vague doubt on the chosen PC’s guilt.

The obvious solution is for the accused PC to demand a duel. Tonbo Yuji will assign the captain of his house guard (see NPC stats section at the end of the module) to fight on his behalf. The PC can choose whether to fight to first blood, to “down,” or to the death – the guard will not push the fight farther than the PC does. Another alternative is for the accused PC to simply make an impassioned speech pleading innocence. The GM should judge how effective the speech is (in addition to eloquence, making references to friend in high places can’t hurt). The skill roll required should depend on the style of the speech; **Oratory** is the obvious choice, although **Sincerity** and **Manipulation** might also work. TN is 20 to convince Tonbo Yuji to drop the charges.

Blackmail: A ruthless PC (especially a Scorpion) who gains the confession of the guards may decide to use the information to blackmail Tonbo Yuji rather than confronting him openly. If they take this approach, Yuji will fold easily, and will do whatever is needed (including absolving the accused PC) to keep his shameful secrets hidden. He may even, at the GM’s discretion, admit to Ikoma Uso’s activities.

Failure: If the PCs do not manage to clear the name of the framed PC, Tonbo Yuji’s actions will depend on the rank of the accused PC. If the PC is of Glory Rank less than 1.0 (a ronin, for example), he will have them executed. If their Glory is between 1.0 and 2.0, he will execute them unless they can threaten retaliation from more powerful allies (e.g. the PC has an NPC **Ally** like Daidoji Mei or Miya Yoto, an advantage such as Ear of the Emperor, a Crane Bride, and so forth).

If the PC has Glory 2.0 or better, or can cite allies as listed above, Tonbo Yuji makes a speech about the need for mercy and compassion, and then expels them from his lands with warnings never to return to the territory of the Dragonfly. The PC gains the

Disadvantages of **Bad Reputation: Opium Smuggler** and **Sworn Enemy: Dragonfly Clan**.

Junta’s Fate: If the PCs did not follow Aiguchi and join in his action against Tomoko, the unfortunate Scorpion simply vanishes. Tonbo Junta will return to the castle and stay out of things, keeping quiet until the adventure is over. If the PCs succeed in “breaking” Tonbo Yuji, Junta will step in and assume control of the castle, clearing the framed PC and apologizing for their unfortunate experiences in his lands. The PCs will detect a tone of subdued triumph from him, mingled with guilt and uncertainty.

If the PCs captured or killed Junta, they will have to explain their deeds to Tonbo Yuji. He will be badly shocked by the discovery that his foster-son was consorting with maho-tsukai, and if the PCs press him at all his drug-addled mind may well snap under the strain, leading him to make wild accusations against both Junta and the PCs. (“You are all against me! All betraying me!”) In this case Ikoma Uso will again intervene and persuade Yuji to commit seppuku.

Barring this eventuality, Yuji will order Junta hanged (if he is not already dead) and will look for an excuse to throw the PCs involved off his lands. The daimyo is clearly crushed by the loss of his foster-son. The PCs will still have to resolve the matter of the opium-smuggling accusation.

Tomoko’s Fate: If the PCs captured Tomoko alive, Yogo Aiguchi (if he survived) will insist on taking her back with him to Scorpion lands (and Traitor’s Grove). He will thank the PCs for their assistance but will still try to keep them from learning anything more about Tomoko. In practice, the only ways the PCs will be able to interrogate Tomoko are if Aiguchi is dead, if one of the PCs is an Emerald Magistrate, or if one or more of the PCs significantly outranks Aiguchi in Glory Rank (at least two ranks).

Tomoko will not confess anything unless she is kept alive and then tortured ruthlessly (Shiro Senshi, like any castle, has a torturer). If thus questioned, she will eventually confess to having betrayed the Yogo family and fled with maho knowledge from the libraries of the Black Watch.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	1 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
PCs defeat the frame-up:	1 XP
PCs help Yogo Aiguchi discover Tomoko:	1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor

A PC who is framed and unable to clear his name loses 1 point of Honor.

Scorpion PCs gain +1 Honor if they help Aiguchi kill or capture Tomoko (and keep her identity secret).

Glory

A PC who is successfully framed for opium smuggling will lose a full rank (10 points) of Glory.

Scorpion PCs who help to find and defeat Tomoko (and who keep her identity secret) gain +1 Glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

If a PC was successfully framed as an opium smuggler, that PC gains the disadvantages Bad Reputation: Opium Smuggler and Sworn Enemy: Dragonfly Clan.

Non-Player Characters

Tonbo Yuji, Fallen Daimyo

Yuji is a thin, worn-down older man, in his late thirties or early forties. His face is long and narrow, and his eyes often dart about nervously. Although he still retains some of his warrior skills, he has declined badly since the great days of his youth, and his opium addiction affects him both physically and mentally.

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 1 Stamina 2	WATER 1 Perception 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 in armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0.8/4.3

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 4, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 2, Sincerity 4, all other High skills at 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Gentry, Social Position (local daimyo)/Chemical Dependency (opium), Dark Secret (traitor to his Clan)

Equipment: Heavy armor (never worn), kimono, fine daisho set.

Generic Tonbo Samurai

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 in light armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 2.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 2, Jiujutsu (hand-to-hand) 2, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu (archery) 3, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Light armor, daisho, bow with 20 arrows.

Shiro Senshi's Captain of the Guard

FIRE 2 Agility 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
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EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 with light armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 2.8/2.5

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 4, Jiujutsu (hand-to-hand) 3, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (archery) 4, Shintao 2, Sincerity 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set, bow and 20 arrows.

Tonbo Junta, Corrupted Heir

Junta is a muscular young man just a few years past his gempukku, with thick hair tied back in a samurai topknot. He is handsome in a rather square-faced, blunt sort of way, but tends to be a bit sullen and uncommunicative. Anyone who speaks with him for any length of time can sense the intense emotions which boil beneath his surface.

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 4
EARTH 2 Stamina 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 in armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 1.2/3.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 2, Jiujutsu (hand-to-hand) 2, Kenjutsu 4, Poetry 2, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (daimyo's heir)/Dark Secret (pawn of Yogo Tomoko), Driven (to regain "his" lands).

Equipment: Light armor, kimono, daisho set.

Ikoma Uso, Lion Spy

Uso is a charming, smooth-featured man in his late thirties. His hair is undyed and he wears a small goatee. He is not particularly athletic and dresses like a courtier, not a bushi. His usual expression is a polite, pleasant smile.

FIRE 2 Intelligence 4	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3	WATER 2

Willpower 4	Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Ikoma Spymaster 2

Rank One: Taking the Measure. Gain a free Raise against opponent (in social or combat interactions) by making a Contested Awareness roll.

Rank Two: The Lion Cannot Fail. When rolling with Sincerity, add 3k1 to the roll.

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.1

Skills: Bard 2, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 5, Defense 3, Etiquette 6, Heraldry 4, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 4, Law 3, Lore (many) 2, Manipulation 5, Meditation 2, Oratory 3, Research 3, Shintao 2, Sincerity 6, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Apparent Honor (2), Blackmail (Tonbo Yuji, Meiko, many others)

Equipment: Fine kimono, wakizashi (1k2).

Yogo Aiguchi, Scorpion Magistrate and Member of the Kuroiban

Aiguchi is a young-looking man in his mid-twenties. He wears a wooden mempo (mask) which covers the upper half of his face. Although as smooth and cultured as any Scorpion, he tends slightly toward overconfidence.

FIRE 3	AIR 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Yogo Shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.7

Skills: Athletics 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, History 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Maho) 4, Meditation 3, Poetry 3, Research 4, Sincerity 4, Stealth 4, Theology 3, Yarijutsu 3.

Spells: (Air) *By the Light of Lord Moon, Quiescence of Air, Tempest of Air, Wind-Borne Slumbers, Yari of Air, Call Upon the Wind, Essence of Air*, (Water) *Reversal of Fortunes, Reflections of Pan Ku, The Tie That Binds*, (Fire) *Evil Ward, Fires of Purity, The Fires From Within*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Ability (Yari of Air)/Overconfident, Yogo Curse.

Equipment: Kimono, mempo, wakizashi (1k2), scroll satchel, puzzle box (TN 20) containing personal records and notes.

(Yogo) Tomoko, Corrupted Shugenja and Seductress

Tomoko is a lovely woman with an elegant face and a perfectly proportioned body. Her hair is long and lustrous, and she often wears it loose for maximum seductive effect. Beneath her soft outer appearance, however, is startling speed and skill. Due to her internal Taint, her blood is slightly discolored, with yellow-black spots floating within the red.

FIRE 3	AIR 4
EARTH 4	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 3	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 3.6

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Yogo Shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 0/0.7

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 2, Calligraphy 4, Courtier 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 4, History 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Maho) 6, Meditation 3, Poison 4, Research 3, Seduction 6, Sincerity 5, Spell Research 4, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 4.

Spells: (Maho) *Fires of Corruption, No Pure Breaths, Pain*, (Air) *Cloak of Night, Way of Deception, Tempest of Air, Secrets on the Wind, The Eye Shall Not See*, (Fire) *Fury of Osano-Wo, Inferno's Tooth*. Tomoko knows all these spells as Innate Abilities, and does not normally carry scrolls.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Dangerous Beauty, Quick/Black Sheep, Dark Secret (mahotsukai)

Equipment: Kimono, wakizashi (1k2), tanto (2k1). The wakizashi is poisoned, and inflicts an extra 3k3 wounds if the victim fails

Tomoko's Apprentices (statistics identical)

FIRE 2	AIR 1 Reflexes 2
EARTH 3	WATER 1

VOID 1	
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Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.3

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Craft (various) 1-2, Knife 3.

Spells: (Maho) *Fires of Corruption, No Pure Breaths, Pain.*

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (Heimin), Dark Secret (maho-tsukai)

Equipment: Clothing, knife (2k1)

GM's Note: Casting Maho Spells

Maho spells are cast by rolling dice equal to Earth+Taint Rank, keeping Earth. The caster must spill blood (their own or another's) equal to the spell's Mastery level, and gains Taint equal to twice the Mastery level.

The caster may take Free Raises for each additional amount of blood (equal to the Mastery level) which they spill.

Fires of Corruption

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 9

Raises: Casting Time, Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: This spell is a twisted, maho-powered version of the shugenja spell *Fires from Within*. The caster calls forth a pillar of black, pulsating fire which smites the target(s), who must be visible and within 100 yards. The spell's DR is equal to the caster's Fire+Taint, keeping Fire.

No Pure Breaths

Base TN: Target's Earth x 5

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Raises: Casting Time, Damage (one non-kept die per raise), Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: The air within the target suddenly corrupts and explodes out of the body, rupturing the lungs and tissues. The target suffers wounds of a DR

equal to the caster's Taint rank. The victim also suffers a +10 penalty to all TNs until magically healed, due to the pain of ravaged, Tainted lungs.

Pain

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 1 Round

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 4

Raises: Duration (1 round per raise), Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: The target (who must be visible and within 25 feet) is suddenly wracked with terrible, debilitating pain. The victim may not act for the duration of the spell. Further, victims of this spell must roll Simple Earth at TN 15 or cry out in agony, dishonoring themselves.

GM's Handout #1: Plot Synopsis

- 1: Early evening, day One: PCs and Yogo Aiguchi arrive at Shiro Senshi. Meeting with Tonbo Yuji.
- 2: Dinner, day One: Tonbo Yuji leaves the meal and orders Hikaru to plant opium in a PC's room, then to hide in the basement.
- 3: Dinner, day One: Yuji returns to dinner. Hikaru carries out his orders.
- 4: End of dinner, day One: Yuji calls for poetry recitation, then orders searching of rooms. Opium found in PC's room.
- 5: Evening, day One: If PCs force further investigation of the opium discovery, Yuji orders Tonbo Koryu and Tonbo Akira to murder Hikaru. They do so.
- 6: Evening, day One: Shortly after Hikaru's body is discovered, Tonbo Junta sneaks out of the castle to visit Tomoko. Yogo Aiguchi follows him.
- 7: Late evening, day One: Junta meets with Tomoko. If the PCs do not intervene, Yogo Aiguchi attempts to arrest Tomoko, and is killed. Junta returns to the castle very late that night.
8. Any time after murder of Hikaru: If Tonbo Yuji learns that the PCs are looking into the red-edged cloth, he dispatches Koryu and Akira to murder Meiko the geisha. They also kill another geisha and a serving boy who are in the room.
9. Koryu and Akira request permission to commit seppuku.