

Sex & The Second City

A



scenario for 5 players

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Crash course in L5R for the GM:

Basic setting:

L5R is about samurai and their adventures. It's not set in Japan. It turns social combat into a real thing; Politeness, clever words and political clout can kill your enemies more effectively than stabbing them 37 times in the heart. And the players, as samurai, should be aware of this. Granted, they're kick-ass warriors too, but in L5R being a samurai is much more than that; They are expected to be warriors, poets, ambassadors, performers and philosophers. They shouldn't debase themselves with 'lesser' tasks like farming, commerce, or other peasant duties. As such, money isn't important for the most part. They'll have a hard time buying anything better than peasant weapons, though. Their own sword should be enough. It DOES represent their soul, after all. Their wakizashi (short knife paired with katana) represents their honour. It's incredibly shameful to lose either. Or to let another samurai touch them without express permission. For a non-samurai to touch anything of yours is usually punishable by death.

Anyway, most of the L5R stuff happens in Rokugan, often called the Emerald Empire. It's ruled by an Emperor, who has the favour of Heaven and the Kami. The Kami are the gods who founded the empire. When they were born (the Sun and the Moon had children, as you do), they fell to earth. One of them fell so hard he punched through the world and landed in Jigoku, the Realm of Evil. He became Fu-Leng, Lord of the Shadowlands, and was the principle nemesis of the Empire for most of its history. Of the other 8, one of them became emperor after defeating his 7 brothers and sisters in a series of contests. The rest became his loyal subjects, and founded the Great Clans that make the bulk of samurai in the Empire. That was about 2,000 years ago. Since then there have been a plethora of minor clans and even a few new Great Clans.

Recently in Rokugani history, Fu-Leng was defeated by a foreign goddess named Kali-ma, from the Ivory Kingdoms. There's a long meandering history to the battle. Suffice to say that Fu Leng died at Kali-ma's hand, and was in turn killed by Fu Leng's greatest servant, who became Master of Jigoku and created the Spider Clan.

Kali-ma had already laid waste to the Ivory Kingdoms before most of this. Rokugan, in an unprecedented case of progressive thinking, decided to expand, and founded the Colonies. It's a mish-mash of lands ruled by Great Clans who aren't used to being neighbours. The greatest colony is called the Second City. It has mostly managed to take this mish-mash and turn it into something almost like multiculturalism. It's a wild new frontier, and a lot of customs are being changed down here, mostly out of practicality (it's bloody hot down here, so court is held in the evening, for example), but some just because there's an opportunity to experiment.

Great Clans:

When the Kami fell to earth, one of them, Hantei, became emperor of Rokugan. The rest formed the Great Clans of the empire. Here's a short description of them:

Crab Clan:

They have the largest and strongest samurai by far. They have to; Their duty has always been to protect the Empire from the Shadowlands. They built a massive Wall across the border and it's defended daily by samurai with little time for politeness and diplomacy. Often seen as brutish, coarse and rude by others. They don't care; It's because of them that the others can fuff about with politeness and all those things you can indulge in when you aren't constantly being attacked by shrieking demons from your worst nightmares.

Crane Clan:

They invented politeness and most of the Empire's social institutions. They treat everything as an art, whether it be poetry or duelling. They tend to excel at both. Often seen by others as insufferably smug and arrogant, but always so polite you can't really do anything about it, which just makes it worse. They see themselves as custodians of civilisation, art and culture. They're usually the ones who start fashion trends. Or at least they take the credit for it.

Dragon Clan:

The most enigmatic clan. Their founder was essentially a crazy old man. Or a genius. Or both. Very focused on achieving enlightenment, and as a result are seen by others as strange, ascetic, bizarre, spiritual, or just batshit crazy mountain folk. Their ruling family is a monastic order with divine tattoos that give them superpowers. Their Kitsuki family has a crazy opinion that justice should involve things like evidence and logical deduction instead of testimony or duelling to determine who is right.

Lion Clan:

The boring clan. Absolutely obsessed with battle and honour, and dying honourably in battle. They have the largest armies, and are quite fond of popping out babies as a result of all the honourable dying in battle they do. They look down on everyone else because they don't adhere as obsessive-compulsively to Bushido like the Lion do. Admittedly their army leaders are tactically brilliant and you'd be a fool to go to war with them without some big advantages on your side. Of course, being so honour-bound makes them very easy to manipulate by clans like the Crane or Scorpion.

Mantis Clan:

Not actually founded by a Kami. Instead their founder Yoritomo was just so freaking badass he battled his way to Heaven and refused to stop punching gods until his family were recognised as a Great Clan and he was made an actual dragon made of thunder and lightning. REAL LIGHTNING. As a result they're very fond of ambition and tenacity, which leads others to call them brash arrogant upstarts (usually behind their back. Do NOT start a bar fight with a Mantis. You will lose). Also, they're pirates, but don't call them that. They prefer "undisputed masters of Rokugan's rivers and oceans". Either way, they're so disgustingly wealthy they even coat their chopsticks in mother-of-pearl.

Phoenix Clan:

Hippies. They're very pacifistic, which is probably a good thing considering they have twice as many shugenja (magical priests of the kami) as any other clan, and they each tend to be more powerful. Devoted to religion, philosophy, and magical research. Pretty arrogant, but also compassionate. Unwise to mistake their pacifism for cowardice. Their warriors won't want to, but if you give them no choice they will mess. You. Up.

Scorpion Clan:

When Hantei became Emperor, he realised there'd be things that needed to get done. Unpleasant things. Rather than risk his honour, he asked Bayushi to form a clan that would do what was necessary to protect the Empire. Bayushi is like Loki on speed. The Scorpion Clan is the villain of the Empire. They all wear masks to remind everyone "I am not to be trusted". The end justifies the means. There is no personal honour, only the Clan's honour, and a good Scorpion will murder, cheat and lie all day if it furthers the clan's goal of being the villain all the other clans hate (and so stop them from ever thinking about hating the Emperor). A bad Scorpion either improves swiftly or wakes one night to feel blood gushing from their slit throat.

Unicorn Clan:

Used to be the Kirin Clan. The Kirin Clan went on a big exploration crusade centuries ago. They returned as the Unicorn Clan, doing crazy barbaric things like wearing fur, eating red meat and shaking hands to greet people. Their travels mean they know all sorts of interesting foreign magic, and they have the best horses in the world. Partly due to all of this, they have the biggest presence in the Second City.

Spider Clan:

Absolute bastards. They were formed recently on a technicality; The Great Clans say you need to have a Kami to be called a Great Clan, and Fu Leng was a Kami. There was also a massive war from the Ivory Kingdoms the Empire needed help with, that sped up Great Clan status a bit. Nobody trusts them, they don't care. They follow a dark reflection of Bushido called Shourido, which emphasises selfishness and personal power over the compassion and loyalty and honour of its counterpart. The Taint of the shadowlands is forbidden in Rokugan, so most of their more freakishly mutated samurai are down in the Ivory Kingdoms fighting Rokugan's enemies with the ferocity that only multiple chitinous limbs and the ability to shoot dark fireballs of corruption can provide.

The Players:

Yogo Kaneko, Scorpion Clan:

The Yogo are cursed. Long ago, Yogo destroyed the one person he loved above all, and the family has been unable to avoid following in his footsteps. It's the main reason the Yogo defected from the Phoenix to the Scorpion; Nobody loves the Scorpion.

This trip to the Second City has you on edge. It was Ariko's idea, and you hate to be a negative voice when she's enthusiastic, but what if you finally meet someone you can fall in love with? You've managed to avoid the curse so far, but no member of the Yogo family evades it forever. Sooner or later, you'll destroy the one person you love most.

Doji Ariko, Crane Clan:

The Crane are the politest and most civilised of the Great Clans, because the Kami Lady Doji made them so. Your people have always led the way in terms of art, diplomacy, fashion and more. With this comes a certain... expectation of standards in potential suitors. So far, no man in Rokugan has met them.

Thus this little trip to the Colonies. Maybe there's a samurai OUTSIDE of Rokugan who will meet your standards. Or, maybe, out here, you'll be able to let your standards slip, just a bit, so you can find a tolerable husband and avoid shaving your head and spending the rest of your days in a monastery.

Kitsuki Ochiyo, Dragon Clan:

The Dragon are mysterious. The Kitsuki even more so. This shouldn't be; Everyone should rely on evidence and logic in legal matters. Too often the truth is irrelevant in Rokugani courts.

Ariko arranged this little trip. She says it'll be fun, and that your friend Kakita Takeda is her main reason for coming all the way to the Second City, but you can see it in her eyes and mannerisms; she's scared of retiring, and might be willing to do anything to avoid it.

Yasuki Yasuyo, Crab Clan:

The Crab defend the Empire from the Shadowlands, and always have done. Most of them don't stray far from the Wall, but they know they need the other Clans for supplies and such. That's where you come in.

Ariko organised this trip for you all. A little change of scenery would do you good, you're all close to retirement age after all. The Second City is sure to be full of surprises. Maybe you'll find a husband. Maybe you'll score a great deal for your Clan. Who knows? Fortune favours the mortal man, be that fortune spiritual or financial...

Ikoma Kaze, Lion Clan:

The Lion are traditionalists. And with good reason; Change is strange and usually leads to disaster. You have memorised many stories of heroes past that all testify to this.

Ariko's little trip is unusual, and that makes you suspicious. This “new” city has weird customs, and so it's obviously inferior, but it's huge, and there are stories of heroism out here too. It'll probably end in tears. ESPECIALLY if love is involved.

Mechanics:

L5R uses D10s.

Characters have attributes that are self-explanatory, except for Void. Void is a measure of connectedness with the world. It's a combination of insight, luck and fate. You have as many Void points as you have points of Void, if that makes sense. Void points can be spent on dice rolls. They replenish after a good night's sleep, or a tea ceremony.

When a skill roll is called for, you add the most appropriate trait and skill and roll that many dice, but you KEEP only as many as your trait. So for example if you had Agility 3 and Kenjutsu 4 and you wanted to hit someone with your sword, you'd roll 7 dice and keep 3 of them, which is called rolling 7k3 for convenience. You can improve the odds by spending a Void point to add 1k1 to a roll.

A roll of 10 explodes. Resolve exploded 10s before keeping dice to determine the best ones to keep. Remember, you don't HAVE to pick the best dice.

If you have a specialisation in a skill, you get a re-roll for any dice that come up 1 when the situation is appropriate.

There are no critical successes or failures. If you want the effect of a critical success, you have to make raises- that is, increase the difficulty of the number you're trying to beat on a roll. A raise increases the difficulty by 5. You can only make as many raises in one roll as you have Void. You can make a raise to find extra info when questioning someone, you can make a raise during combat to make a called shot or disarm an opponent or to strike with a particular poetic style. It's pretty open.

Combat:

Initiative is rolled, the highest goes first. Everyone declares stance; this is important as it affects the moves you can take.

Attack: Standard stance, no limit to your actions.

Full Attack: Gain +2k1 to attack roll, but -10 to Armour. Cannot make any non-attack action except movement, and that can only be TOWARDS an enemy.

Defence: Can make any non-attack action, and gain (Defence + [lower of Reflexes/Awareness]) to Armour TN.

Full Defence: Make a Defence/Reflexes roll (Roll Defence + Reflexes and Keep the Reflexes number of dice). Add half the result to Armour TN until your next turn. You can't make any actions besides free actions (shouting a warning, draw a SMALL weapon etc.)

Center: Take no action at all this turn, but gain 1k1 on your next roll AND add your Void ring to the result. Also, +10 to initiative for that round.

Attacking:

Roll the appropriate attack roll, and try to beat your opponent's Armour TN. If you hit, roll damage.

You can make a raise before rolling to hit:

Called shot:

Specific limb: 1 raise

Hand/foot: 2 raises

Head: 3 raises

Eye/finger: 4 raises

Damage rolled and additional effects are at GM's discretion.

Disarm: 3 raises

Does only 2k1 damage, but forces a contested Strength roll. If the opponent loses, they drop their weapon.

Extra Damage: 1 raise

Add 1k0 to the damage roll.

Duels:

Round 1 – Assessment:

Both fighters roll Iaijutsu/Awareness roll. If anyone beats the other by 10 or more, they get 1k1 in the next round.

Round 2 – Focus:

Both fighters make a contested Iaijutsu/Void roll. If someone wins by 5+, they win First Strike, and get a free raise for every 5 they beat the other by.

Round 3 – Strike:

Whoever won First Strike makes an attack using Iaijutsu/Reflexes. Free raises awarded earlier can be used for anything from damage to disarming to ensuring the strike leaves a memorable scar on one cheek. If the second duellist is still alive, they can then make their strike.

If nobody won first strike, they attack simultaneously. It's a tie, the matter is considered dropped and nobody is a winner/loser.

In a duel to first blood, the loser is whoever gets struck first. Striking after you lose is **EXTREMELY DISHONOURABLE**. Don't do it. In a duel to the death, after first strike combat becomes the regular kind described above.

Synopsis:

The players are all Samurai of some note (Rank 3 in game terms, which is above the rank and file, and could mean they're a diplomat, a lieutenant in their Clan's armies, or a very talented artisan or swordsmith). They're also in their late thirties, and in Rokugan when you hit 40 and you're unmarried you become a monk and retire to a monastery. The players don't WANT to give up a life of wealth, privilege and adventure in exchange for poverty, lack of social status and a life of quiet contemplation. Alas, standards must now take second place to practicality and so the players have come to the Ivory Kingdoms to find themselves a spouse.

They arrive with the valid excuse that they're supporting their playwright friend's first production in the Colonies, and discover halfway through the play that he has been murdered (well he hasn't really, but shhh). As his friends the players are invited to help investigate his death (Yes, Rokugan justice works like that), which leads them on a free-form merry adventure through the Second City where they encounter some suitable (and several completely unsuitable) suitors. There's the highly-strung Crane kimono designer, a Crab brawler with a talent for writing steamy romance, a Lion warrior who becomes a love-sick kitten, the Unicorn playwright campaigning to have erotic kabuki recognised as a valid art form, and more.

After a series of investigations, a Zoolander-style fashion catwalk-off, and maybe even chasing some assassins through the streets at night, hopefully the players will manage to find the killer, and find, if not love, than at least a politically useful marriage and an excuse not to retire. And then they'll find out that their friend actually killed himself. Awkward...

Opening Scene: Arrival in the Second City

Paraphrase the following for the players:

It's been a long few weeks of travel. The only route from Rokugan to the Colonies is through the Western Wastes; That's what the Unicorn always called it, and it's aptly named. The whole journey from the steppes that mark the end of Rokugan has been nothing but bland, barren rock and sporadic attacks by filthy gaijin barbarians. You lost a number of good samurai to those savages. In order to spare more civilised food supplies, the Unicorn contingent of this caravan stooped to eating the flesh of lizards and whatever other disgusting animals were foolish enough to live here. There was no spare water for bathing, for crying out loud!

But now it's over. The Second City looms above you, and it is a glorious sight, a marvel of construction brought about by all the Great Clans. It shines like a beacon in a land filled with strange, dangerous creatures, monstrous remnants of past wars and mysterious ruins left by the civilisation that was destroyed by those wars.

The first thing to greet you after the guards inspect your travel papers is a welcoming little inn run by a friendly Unicorn. She is more than happy to provide you with your first bath in months, a good meal and beds for a couple of nights while you get your bearings and find more permanent accommodation. Her name is Moto Rula. Yes. It sounds like Motorola. Deal with it.

“Oh, your reputations precede you, noble guests! Samurai of your stature will of course be expected to present themselves to the governor and offer the traditional gift. If your gift was destroyed in the gaijin attacks that always plague the journey down, then you'll be happy to know that the markets and artisans of the Second City are huge and diverse. You will have no trouble finding something suitable.”

Anyone wishing to make an Awareness/Etiquette roll, TN 30, will be able to tell she's amused that none of the players brought gifts for the governor, but she's too polite to say it outright and genuinely hopes they find something in the city.

Anyone wishing to find out what kind of gift would appeal to the governor can make an Intelligence/Courtier(Gossip) roll, TN 20. They can find out more detail with each raise they make. Give them a free raise if they choose an appropriate place to search for gossip; a sake house frequented by samurai will get better results than a peasant selling pottery in the market.

- The governor is of the Lion Clan, Akodo Rensai.
- She used to be a general
- She campaigned against the Scorpion, and has a deep dislike for them and gifts relating to them.
- She is an avid historian.

Once they have gifts, they must present them to the governor. GM NOTE: Tradition dictates the governor will refuse each gift twice, and accept it on the third offer, to show the humility of the recipient and the generosity of the giver. Roleplay it up, and give 1-3 Glory points to any impressive scenes!

Once the gift giving is done, they are free to remain at the governor's court, where their playwright friend will greet them in the next scene.

Scene 2: The Morning After

Kakita Takada warmly greets the players, obviously enthused and excited that they came all the way from Rokugan to see his latest work. Takada is a well-known playwright who had recently gone through a bit of a dry spell before moving to the Second City, and the change in scenery has totally reinvigorated him. He excitedly wrote to the players months ago claiming to have found inspiration for what would surely be the greatest play of his life, and hoping that they would come to see its opening performance. That performance is only a couple of days away.

Takada is typically Crane: slender, graceful, long white hair, impeccable dress sense and perfect manners. Hiding behind all the appropriateness is a sharp mind and talented critic.

He'll ask the players all about their journey, quite obviously making mental notes for later plays. He'll make appropriately shocked and horrified sounds and platitudes if the bandit attacks and lack of amenities are mentioned. He'll praise anyone who found the governor a worthy gift, and offer constructive friendly criticism for anyone who screwed up. He will subtly refer to the players' advancing years and the many opportunities available in the Second City to find a suitable husband.

After the players have started running out of things to say, Takeda will clap his hands together and insist on celebrating their arrival with a trip to his favourite sake house. It's an upmarket place, even for samurai. Weapons are left at the door so they can be polished (and so drunk samurai don't have swords handy, but don't say it in public). The sake is phenomenal, and there is an extremely talented set of musicians playing over the quiet hubbub of conversation.

Fade to black.

Everyone wakes up hungover back in the inn from scene 1. Nobody has a full memory of what happened. Give these snippets of flashback to random or appropriate players over the next few minutes:

- Your left thigh feels bruised. Is... Is that a tattoo of a wolf wearing a shield and prayer beads? (Roll Intelligence/Lore, TN 35. Success = an obscure monastic sect that died out more than a century ago)
- There appears to be lipstick on your good kimono. You weren't even wearing it last night.
- There is a fan with the Mantis mon next to the bed. Where did that come from? (Make an Intelligence/Heraldry roll to discover it belongs to a Yoritomo Kenshi. He/She will be very embarrassed if they track him/her down and return it)
- You burp. It reeks of... brine? Roll Willpower, TN 12, to avoid gagging or otherwise letting on you did anything other than a polite cough.
- Ow, your finger! Wait, why are you missing a fingernail!?

Throw some pointless and amusing drama at them for the rest of the day as a result of the hangover; Yoritomo Kenshi's fan? He left it in the room of the player he went to bed with, and earlier that night challenged another player to a drunken duel, hence their missing fingernail. Do they have a rematch while sober? Does the Mantis regret his proclamation of undying love in the cold light of day? Will he pay the player off never to mention it again, or eagerly accept a challenge to get out of it?

Make shit up for the sake of lulz and drama, before it's time to attend their friend's play that evening.

Scene 3: In Which It All Goes Horribly Wrong

It's time for Kakita Takada's play. There is a theatre house known as The Ivory Blossom, a small, very exclusive place most samurai have never heard of, even those living here for a decade or more. There is an interesting assortment of patrons here (See the list later, they'll be important in the coming days). Allow a couple of minutes for chat before the players are asked to take their seats.

The play is called "Waiting for Moto". It's an impenetrable confusing and depressing piece of Noh theatre revolving around a pair of samurai waiting for their companion so they can go to battle. It's so modern and so intelligent that it makes no sense whatsoever. When the half time break comes, players with a good Awareness/Investigation roll (say TN 40 for the audience as a whole, or roll against an Intelligence/Etiquette of any major NPCs who might be chatting with them) will have a chance to realise that the only reason people are raving about how amazing it is is because they couldn't understand it but are afraid of being seen as stupid for admitting it.

The play resumes, and only a few minutes in, something drops from the rigging above the stage. It's Kakita Takeda's body, hanging by the neck from a rope. There is, understandably, uproar.

Things to note as the scene unfolds:

- None of the NPCs here actually killed Takeda. The whole murder is mostly irrelevant to this game, actually. It's actually a suicide, I'm just using it to give a dramatic kick to proceedings and force interaction with guests. The players can be approached a day or two later by a geisha who will explain Takeda's death (see later)
- There are a couple of Scorpions in the audience. The Crane delegation will cast sideways glances at them, while the Lion delegation will outright accuse them of murder. Swords can be drawn, and champions may be decided. If you're feeling cheeky, you could try having both sides nominate a player as their champion in a duel.
- Awareness/Investigation rolls can determine a few leads in the murder:
 - There are 2 names on the guest list who did not attend: A Unicorn playwright called Ide Nakamura and a Crane artisan of some sort named Kakita Hime.
 - Asking about either will reveal that Nakamura was a competitor, and Hime is one of the greatest kimono designers in the Second City.
 - Pressing further (Intelligence/Investigation or Intelligence/Courtier(Gossip), TN 30) will reveal that the socialites of the city believe that Takada and Hime had a bitter argument a few weeks ago.

Where to from here?

Well, that's the question. It's mostly up to the players. There's the obvious options of following up on Kakita Hime and Ide Nakamura, which should provide for some entertaining conversation, a few dice rolled in challenges, and so on. See the next page for suggestions:

- Court will have to be attended. If the players have started investigating Takada's death without permission, they'll have to do a little Courtier-ing to convince the Governor and others that their intentions are noble. One way or another they are tasked with finding their friend's killer and bringing him to justice. Court is a great place to have things happen. Bored samurai will duel to first blood, people will gossip, or have origami/singing/whatever contests. Meeting the Governor is totally optional.
- Kakita Takada's funeral is a big one, as he was just that famous. It's long, noisy, and filled with prayers, noble speeches, and a few tributes to his genius. This is an EXCELLENT place to introduce a few potential suitors (Or have the Matsu Berserker make a tit of himself).
- If there's time, add in a scene where they see some likely murderers leaping across rooftops. They're just thieves smuggling for a man with a mask like two scorpions facing each other (Bayushi Tokashi to any player with a decent straight Intelligence roll), but that'll implicate him in further shenanigans, all of which he'll deny but just not quite strenuously enough.
- Ideas for other suitors to kill off or replace ones the players killed:
 - *Why not add in a gruff Lion suitor who will only marry someone who can beat him in a fight? Not a duel, but an actual fight. Turns out he's an amazing fighter, and thus destined to die alone...*
 - *Or a Mantis bad boy that all the ladies at court want, but just can't have? Rich, brash, and wild, untameable like the oceans. Which of the players is bold enough to tame him?*
 - *A filthy rich member of the Otomo family (Imperial family, serious power and money, second only to the Emperor himself) takes an interest in one of the players at court and tries to buy her love with (admittedly a lot of) koku? There might even be a heart of gold underneath his many folds of blubber, but could they stomach his expansive stomach?*

In The End:

A few days after the death of Kakita Takada (Long enough that you've introduced most of the suitors, maybe had a duel or two and caused a few deaths), a geisha approaches the players with a letter in Takada's writing (on next page). She hasn't read it. She was ordered by Takada that should he ever die, she was to deliver it to the players X days later.

The letter explains that Takada killed himself; He was tired of how little sense the theatre made, and wanted to create some REAL drama that would touch lives for years to come. And so, halfway through the nonsensical Waiting For Moto, he hung himself from the rafters. Any enmity between him and other samurai was carefully cultivated to allow for maximum drama in the days to come. Clever bastard.

My dear friends,

I should be three or more days dead by the time you read this. I hope you have seen plenty of adventure and drama in the days since. This is my parting gift to you, who may soon have to retire to a dull monastery and replace your katana with a prayer wheel. And it is also my way of spitting in the eye of a snooty, arrogant society of pretentious fools.

I killed myself, you see. I'm sure you didn't think *Waiting for Moto* was my finest work. It makes absolutely no sense, from start to finish it's nothing but obscure symbolism and a whole load of nothing happening! Too many plays are like this, and too many people call them brilliant because they're afraid they're the only ones who don't understand something that's completely incomprehensible to begin with!

And so *Waiting For Moto* was a distraction to set up the main event. Nothing I could write will touch the souls of samurai in the audience as my death before their eyes. I can almost see the Scorpion being accused immediately by Arrogant, unimaginative Lion and Crab dullards, the dozens of feuds and duels and poems and songs that will arise from the reaction of the audience. I created arguments with a number of others, like Ide Nakamura, to cultivate maximum controversy when I displayed my final performance. I have created REAL drama, that will be remembered forever!

I am confident that my plan will not cause you any physical harm, unless you are foolish. And I pray that you will forgive me the deception of my friends when you contemplate how interesting your lives have been made by this one little act.

I have been and always shall be your friend.

Kakita Takada.

List of potential suitors:

Here are 6 potential husbands for your 5 players, enough to provide drama and lulz, and even one death while still allowing everyone to get married. Feel free to make more up from movies/comics/terrible soaps etc.

Hida Kirune, Crab Clan Brawler:

Kirune is first encountered at the Ivory Blossom. After that, he can be found at Takada's funeral, and from then on either patrolling the streets with his soldiers in the Bonesmashers Company, or in his personal chambers in the Crab Embassy. It's shared with the Scorpion Embassy, which causes obvious tensions.

Kirune is a huge man, standing almost 6.5 feet tall. He's extremely well-built, one of those bodies that's well muscled but not so bulky to slow him down. An improper lady samurai might consider him "totally hawwwwt".

He's quick off the bat to implicate the Scorpion patrons in the murder of Kakita Takada, there's no love lost between Crab and Scorpion. An Awareness/Investigation roll TN 30 will reveal from the body language and the nature of the accusations that there's more to it than just that though; Hida Kirune and one of the Scorpion delegates have *History*. Kirune is a massive brawler by day, but at night he writes pillowbooks under the pseudonym 'Lucky Li', steamy romantic novellas about love-crossed samurai. They're scandalously explicit, and actually really well-written, and they're extremely popular in the city (behind closed doors as is proper). Hida Kirune believes that if anyone found out he was the author, his reputation would be in tatters and he'd be forced to commit seppuku.

If the players find out, he'll be furious at first, then fall into despair, and begin arranging seppuku... Unless one of the players convinces him otherwise. Marrying into another Clan would have advantages; Less pressure from the Crab to die defending the Wall, more time to write his pillowbooks, the possibility of his wife taking the credit (more proper) and thus removing the Scorpion's power over him.

He is a fan of Kakita Takada's work, and will give a very moving tribute at his funeral. Surprisingly moving. It's obvious the man has more than just his looks and ferocious fighting skill.

Suggested spouse: Doji Ariko. Her writing and storytelling skills are known, she could convince others that the pillowbooks were hers all along. She in turn would get a grateful and loyal husband with that rare combination of being built like a brick shithouse while still having a deeply sensitive side.

Likely rolls:

Fighting: 10k6 to hit, 7k3 damage

Courtier/etiquette: 6k3

Duels: Everything except actually striking: 6k3

General violence and writing steamy romance: 10k7, re-roll 1's.

Bayushi Tokashi, Scorpion Clan Diplomat:

Tokashi is first encountered at the Ivory Blossom. After that, he's mostly at court or in his personal chambers in the Scorpion Clan Embassy. It's shared with the Crab, which causes obvious tensions.

Tokashi is Scorpion and proud; Dressed in fine, billowing red and black silk, sporting an elaborate mask that covers only his eyes, like a pair of spectacles shaped like two scorpions facing each other, tails curving out from his eyes almost like horns. Tokashi knows a secret about Hida Kirune that could potentially ruin his career, and this is why Kirune was so quick to accuse the Scorpion of the murder. He knows that the scandalous, explicit (and actually really well-written) pillowbooks taking the city by storm of late are written by Kirune, and Kirune is worried enough about what his family think to do almost anything to ensure the secret doesn't get out.

Tokashi isn't an evil man, despite his outward appearance. He's just doing his job, his superiors weren't happy with the Crab and told him to get some dirt on them to make them more pliable, and what Tokashi found was Hida Kirune's pillowbooks. He's not proud of the hurt he's causing Kirune, who he actually admires for both his writing talent and fighting skill, but loyalty to his masters must come personal feelings.

If someone were to ask him to marry them, he would be interested; Provided they have enough Status and Glory, he could give up the Scorpion name for theirs, and enjoy considerably fewer orders to lie, cheat and blackmail. In return, his well-cultivated network of contacts would be very useful to an enterprising mind, be it trade, spying, organised crime or anything else you could think of.

Tokashi is fond of playing Go, and will happily play for information. A winning player might be able to get a few secrets out of him. Even a gracious loser could charm him out of a titbit here and there:

- Kirune's pillowbook secret
- The Dragon courtier over there? He accidentally killed a woman once. Togashi Kurama, his name is.
- Oh, that lady over there? She is talented at spreading rumours. Interestingly, she is easily persuaded by a bottle of good sake...
- Matsu Bakin bothering you? I'm not surprised. Let me offer a helpful piece of gossip: He is deathly afraid of puppet shows.
- Yes, I was there when an assassination attempt was made against the Governor. And others can vouch for my presence. I couldn't possibly have done it.

Things like that.

Suggested spouse: Kitsuki Ochiyo. Her investigative skills would be challenged by Bayushi cunning, and when working together and complimented by Tokashi's underground spy network, there'd be no problem they couldn't solve.

Likely rolls:

Fighting: 9k4 to hit, 7k2 damage

Courtier/Etiquette: 10k5

Duels: Everything except actually striking: 7k3

Sincerity: 10k5, re-roll 1's

Matsu Bakin, Lion Clan Berserker and Besotted Love-sick Puppy:

Bakin is first encountered in the Ivory Blossom. After that, he tends to follow players around or show up at inappropriate moments.

Matsu Bakin has a problem, and that problem is one of the players. Pick a player at random; the moment they walked in to the Ivory Blossom theatre, he was besotted with them. He barely noticed the play, he was openly gazing at the player. Even when the death happened and accusations began flying, he was unable to take his mind off the player. The following day, he declares his passionate, fiery love for the player, and announces that he'll do anything to prove it and win their affections. Climb a tall tree upside down? Sure. Wrestle an elephant? No problem. Challenge the Spider Clan Champion to a duel? He'll do it. He'll even challenge any other suitors to a duel to the death, if the player doesn't agree to marry Bakin. He doggedly follows the player, or shows up at inopportune moments to loudly proclaim his undying passions.

Suggested spouse: Nobody in particular, he's intended to be an amusing annoyance or a deus ex machina ("If you truly love me, you'll sneak into the Governor's chamber and leave this incriminating letter there!") for any player unscrupulous enough to put him to the test. That said, Yogo Kaneko could find a use for him; He only needs to stay alive long enough to marry her and get her pregnant. After that... well, accidents happen.

Likely rolls:

Fighting: 10k5 to hit, 9k4 damage

Courtier/Etiquette: 6k2

Duels: Everything except actually striking: 4k2

Anything else: 3k1. He's not much good at anything besides fighting.

NB: Bakin is prone to not dying on foolhardy quests, so whatever the object of his affections challenges him with, he'll return a few hours or days later bruised and battered, maybe missing the tip of a finger, but ultimately successful. The only way you can successfully kill him in this game is to beat him in a duel. Good luck in a duel to the death, he's dangerous, but if you could say first strike, or otherwise convince him to commit seppuku...

Ide Nakamura, Unicorn Playwright and Champion of Kabuki Porn:

Nakamura can be found in his personal studio in the peasant district. This should strike players as odd; Samurai playwrights have a whole section of the artisan district in which to live.

Nakamura is a visionary. Not perhaps the visionary this city needs, but one can't be picky when it comes to visionaries. Ide Nakamura is a playwright, and a very good one. His preferred medium is kabuki, a time-honoured and beloved style of acting which is very heavy on the ostentatious costumes, gurning faces and loud yells and grunts and massively over-emphasised gestures. Unfortunately, his preferred topic is eroticism, a huge taboo subject in Rokugani society. His reputation is rather poor as a result, and he's often had to resort to hiring peasants to act in his works, as few samurai will work with him due to the stigma.

This is actually their loss; Anyone who reads one of his scripts will see that Nakamura is clearly a genius, that his characterisation, plots, pacing and senses of humour and irony are impeccable, and all he really needs is a chance to prove his work's merits. Whether they convince society to accept erotic kabuki, or convince him to write less controversial works, whoever marries this man would gain a very talented writer who's career is about to skyrocket.

As a Unicorn, Nakamura has the look of a foreigner about him, leading most clans to be suspicious of him. Get past his gaijin heritage however and he's a tall, slightly skinny man with a well-trimmed goatee and a twinkle in his eye, and a natural dexterity that makes him a dangerous fighter, or perhaps a talented lover...

Suggested spouse: Yasuki Yasuyo. Kabuki porn is very much a niche product, but the Yasuki specialise in rare and exotic products. Besides, he has a very adventurous imagination, and Yasuyo really, *really* wants one of those.

Likely rolls:

Fighting: 9k4 to hit, 7k2 damage

Courtier/Etiquette: 6k3

Duels: Everything except actually striking: 7k2

Performance art: 10k5, re-roll 1's

Kakita Hime, Crane Kimono Artisan and all round Highly Strung Fashionista:

Hime can be found in the heart of the city's artisan district, as is only proper for such a skilled artist of clothing. Her house includes a catwalk and a long display room of some of his finest works. He is not at Takada's funeral, but a good Awareness/Investigation roll will reveal that Takada has been dressed in one of Hime's finest kimonos.

Hime is also a visionary, albeit a very focused one with a very narrow section of society he intends to revolutionise; Do NOT call Hime a tailor. No, that is what you call a peasant hacking together some rags to preserve modesty. Kakita Hime is an *artisan* of kimono design. His understated embellishments, his flawless stitching, his dyes and his cuts of silk and his designs are actually breathtaking, and nobody else in the Colonies can match him at his best. He has outfitted the Governor of the city and a few of her selected favourites, and only takes a client if he feels like it.

This fame has its price though, and Hime is obsessed with his craft. He thinks of everything in fashion terms. Everything. If it's in ANY WAY suggested that he had anything to do with the death of Kakita Takada, he will challenge the players to a duel... OF FASHION! Thus begins a re-enactment of the famous catwalk-off scene from Zoolander. It will require a great deal of Agility, Etiquette, Performance, Sincerity, and any other attributes and skills you can think of combining in strange and unnatural ways. Encourage the players to be creative.

The winner will gain Hime's respect, and a much more humble request later to offer his services for the rest of his life, as the player has the PERFECT body and poise for his kimonos. Think about it; Being the best-dressed courtier is actually a serious advantage in the courts of Rokugan.

Suggested spouse: He will want to marry the winner of his fashion duel. Ikoma Kaze has a good shot at this, and would find the endless high fashion clothing and jealous looks from lesser courtiers very agreeable indeed.

Likely rolls:

Fighting: 8k5 to hit, 7k2 damage

Courtier/Etiquette: 10k5

Duels: Everything except actually striking: 9k4

Fashion: 10k7, re-reoll 1's

Togashi Kurama, Shy Dragon Clan Courtier and Master of Tantric Arts:

Kurama can be found at court, usually sitting alone reading a book, while other samurai can be seen gazing longingly at him from a distance.

Kurama is a Dragon, which marks him as a bit strange. His shyness is a liability at court, and he seems very bookish. Not a lot going for him, really. But that's not the strange thing; Kurama has made it his life's work to study and master the tantric arts as a path towards enlightenment. He's not prone to talking about it unless pressed by someone willing to have an open mind. There are two reasons for this; First, it's not exactly a proper topic to discuss in polite society. Secondly, he is afraid he has become TOO good, as his first and last apprentice did not survive training. He takes some solace in the fact that she died happy.

He has occasionally been intimate with a number of ladies at court, as their happy limps and hushed stories about bizarre injuries will attest (Awareness/Courtier(Gossip) rolls, TN 20 + 5 for every odd story you want to make up about torn ligaments or groin strain). He could be convinced to share some of his, um, knowledge to the right person. The question is – Who is able to bed him and survive? He has a mysterious almost tragic air about him, which the ladies find even more appealing. The death of his apprentice sometimes weighs on him. He is similarly drawn to people with tragic airs, so Yogo Kaneko will interest him.

Suggested spouse: Nobody, really. If the Yogo player tries her luck, she'll actually end up killing HIM on the wedding night. Lots of fallout, to be sure, but they DID consummate the marriage, so in her mind totally worth it.

Likely rolls:

Fighting: 7k3 to hit, 7k2 damage

Courtier/Etiquette: 9k4

Duels: Everything except actually striking: 5k5 (It's all Void!)

Sexytimes: 10k10, re-reoll all 1's and 2's.

Yogo Kaneko, Scorpion Clan:

The Yogo are cursed. Long ago, Fu Leng cursed the first Yogo destroyed the one person he loved above all, and the family has been unable to avoid following in his footsteps. It's the main reason the Yogo defected from the Phoenix to the Scorpion; Nobody loves the Scorpion.

You know all this, but still in your heart of hearts you just *know* there's a man out there for you. You've heard it said that true love conquers all. Admittedly only in plays, and the people saying it usually found true love not long before dying tragically and taking a whole lot of innocent people with them, but still, you dream of a lavish wedding ceremony, full of colourful priests, and song, and dance, and everlasting happiness. Your friend Ikoma Kaze thinks it's cute, but naïve and dangerous.

This trip to the Second City has you on edge. It was Ariko's idea, and you hate to be a negative voice when she's enthusiastic, but what if you finally meet someone you can fall in love with? You've managed to avoid the curse so far, but no member of the Yogo family evades it forever. Sooner or later, you'll destroy the one person you love most. Won't you?

School skills:

RANK 1: THE WAY OF THE SCORPION

Scorpion bushi always seem to get the jump on opponents. You gain a bonus of +1k1 to your Initiative Rolls. You also gain a bonus of +5 to your Armor TN against any opponent with lower Initiative.

RANK 2: PINCERS AND TAIL

The infamous Scorpion feint has been the demise of many foolhardy samurai. You may make the Feint Maneuver for one Raise instead of two.

RANK 3: STRIKE AT THE TAIL

Scorpion bushi strive to keep their enemies off guard, stopping their attacks and slowing them down. When you assume a Stance at the start of your Turn, you may choose a target within 30'. If you successfully hit him during your Turn, the target is Fatigued as if he had gone without rest for 24 hours (+5 to every TN). At the end of his turn, an affected opponent may attempt an Earth Ring roll against a TN of 25 to negate the effects of this Technique. If he fails, the effects of this Technique stop at the end of his next turn.

Doji Ariko, Crane Clan:

The Crane are the politest and most civilised of the Great Clans, because the Kami Lady Doji made them so. Your people have always led the way in terms of art, diplomacy, fashion and more. With this comes a certain... expectation of standards in potential suitors. So far, no man in Rokugan has met them.

You always possessed a talent for critique. You were much sought after back in Rokugan for your insights into the arts of calligraphy and poetry. Alas, you were also good at finding flaws in the potential suitors your family gently nudged your way. Now that's come back to bite you, as you near the age of retirement. If you hit 40 without a husband and a child on the way, it's the monastery for you. No more court gossip. No more fine art. No more duels, or adventure. Unthinkable!

Thus this little trip to the Colonies. Maybe there's a samurai OUTSIDE of Rokugan who will meet your standards. Or, maybe, out here, you'll be able to let your standards slip, just a bit, so you can find a tolerable husband and avoid shaving your head and spending the rest of your days in a monastery.

RANK 1: THE SOUL OF HONOR

Apprentice Doji courtiers are taught to rely on their Honor when dealing with others, infusing their every word and gesture with the power of their purity, and to build networks of allies by discerning what others need and fulfilling those needs.

So long as you maintain your Honor Rank at 6.0 or better, you gain a Free Raise on all Courtier, Sincerity, and Etiquette rolls. Also, by conversing with another person for a few minutes, you can make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness against the target's Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness to learn whether they are in need of any favors or assistance (such as needing travel papers to reach another province, for example).

RANK 2: SPEAKING IN SILENCE

At this Rank the Doji learns Cadence, the art of communicating through subtle gestures and body language. This gives them a huge advantage in the courts by allowing them to share information while their rivals are none the wiser. You can roll Courtier/Intelligence at TN 15 to communicate simple ideas and instructions (things like “distract them,” “this favors us,” or “intercept that person”) with any other Crane who is trained in the Doji Courtier School or who has at least 5 Ranks in the Courtier skill. More complex ideas can be conveyed with Raises, although there is an upper limit (set by the GM) on how complicated Cadence can become.

RANK 3: THE PERFECT GIFT

The Doji build their networks of alliances through selflessness, offering others what they need so that in future the Doji may rely on their assistance. Any time you are in court or in an urban area, you can roll Courtier/Awareness at TN 20 to come up with a suitable gift or a helpful political favor for someone else. By calling Raises on this roll, you can acquire a rarer or more potent gift or favor. If such a gift or favor is accepted, you may immediately take that person as an Ally with 1-point Devotion, without XP cost (subject to the GM's permission).

Kitsuki Ochiyo, Dragon Clan:

The Dragon are mysterious. The Kitsuki even more so. This shouldn't be; Everyone should rely on evidence and logic in legal matters. Too often the truth is irrelevant in Rokugani courts.

As a pupil of the Kitsuki school of Investigation, the truth is very hard indeed to hide from you. You've discovered a murderer or two in your time, and saved more than one daimyo the shame of condemning the wrong samurai to death. Perhaps you were too busy to notice life creeping up on you.

Ariko arranged this little trip. She says it'll be fun, and that your friend Kakita Takeda is her main reason for coming all the way to the Second City, but you can see it in her eyes and mannerisms; she's scared of retiring, and might be willing to do anything to avoid it.

School skills:

RANK 1: KITSUKI'S METHOD

The Kitsuki are masters of investigation and perception, noticing the most minute and telling details with merely a glance. You gain a Free Raise on all your Investigation Skill Rolls. However, while the Kitsuki are trained for investigation and diplomacy, unlike other courtiers they do not wholly neglect the ways of the warrior. In a skirmish, you add your Perception Trait Rank to your Armor TN.

RANK 2: WISDOM THE WIND BRINGS

The Kitsuki skill at noticing small details makes it very difficult to deceive them. Anyone making a Social Skill Roll for the purpose of lying to you or otherwise deceiving you, or making a Feint or Disarm Maneuver against you in a skirmish, must add +5 to their TN for each of your Kitsuki Investigator School Ranks.

RANK 3: KNOW THE RHYTHM OF THE HEART

The Kitsuki study a secret methodology known as Ichi Miru, or "first look," which allows them to size up another person in almost a single glance. After speaking with someone for a few moments, you can roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception against a TN of their Intelligence x 5. A success grants you a true and accurate, if simple, picture of their personality and motivations. For example, you might perceive that a boisterous ronin is actually a calculating man who is trying to put on the picture of being a rude, simple fellow.

Yasuki Yasuyo, Crab Clan:

The Crab defend the Empire from the Shadowlands, and always have done. Most of them don't stray far from the Wall, but they know they need the other Clans for supplies and such. That's where you come in. You can get a person almost anything they want. If you can't, you probably know someone who can. And thus you form a network of contacts, allies and trade partners throughout Rokugan to benefit you and your clan.

Alas, business men of the Empire tend to be extremely boring folks. No imagination beyond the table where you make your deal. No passion for life or the enjoyment thereof. If only there had been a man to match you before the age of retirement began looming. You could probably convince people to allow you to keep working, but it's a whole load of hassle that would burn out some of your best contacts, leaving you at a disadvantage in your old age. A dilemma indeed.

Ariko organised this trip for you all. A little change of scenery would do you good, you're all close to retirement age after all. The Second City is sure to be full of surprises. Maybe you'll find an interesting husband. Maybe you'll score a great deal for your Clan. Who knows? Fortune favours the mortal man, be that fortune spiritual or financial...

School skills:

RANK ONE: THE WAY OF THE CARP

The Yasuki are masters of commerce and practice it far more openly than other samurai families; they do not consider it to be a breach of etiquette to engage in open commerce. You gain a Free Raise when using the Commerce skill, and you do not lose Honor or Glory for using the Commerce skill even in public. Also, Yasuki are taught from youth to be adept at sizing up their potential customers. When speaking with someone you may make a Contested Roll of your Commerce/ Perception against their Etiquette/Awareness to discern some material object or service they want or desire.

RANK TWO: DO AS WE SAY

The flip side of Yasuki commerce is Yasuki pushiness. The Yasuki are renowned for both their glib tongues and their high-pressure sales tactics, pressuring and deceiving their customers and allies into doing what they want. A number of times per session equal to your School Rank, you may re-roll a failed Sincerity or Intimidation Skill roll. You must keep the results of the second roll.

RANK THREE: TREASURES OF THE CARP

Your contacts in the merchant and commercial circles of Rokugan make it possible for you to acquire almost anything you might need to satisfy a customer. You may roll Commerce/ Awareness at TN 20 to locate a rare or useful item, subject to GM discretion, for someone else. You may track down higher-quality or rarer items by calling Raises.

Ikoma Kaze, Lion Clan:

The Lion are traditionalists. And with good reason; Change is strange and usually leads to disaster. You have memorised many stories of heroes past that all testify to this. The other clans find it odd that such stories can be used in court to establish precedent for any number of legal situations. That's because they don't realise the value of an honoured ancestor. It has served you well, and your lifestyle has become one of wealth and comfort beyond most Lion courtiers. Much as you are a fan of tradition, it has to be said that you're not looking forward to retiring to a monastery. It's just that your duties kept you from sorting out a marriage to continue the family line.

Ariko's little trip is unusual, and that makes you suspicious. This “new” city has weird customs, and so it's obviously inferior, but it's huge, and there are stories of heroism out here too. It'll probably end in tears. ESPECIALLY if love is involved.

RANK 1: THE HERALD OF GLORY

The Ikoma are historians and storytellers, tasked with recording the glorious deeds of others for posterity, ensuring that courageous and honourable accomplishments are never forgotten. You gain the Precise Memory Advantage for no cost in Experience Points (if you already have Precise Memory, you are refunded that many Experience Points). You may use the Perform: Storytelling skill to engage in public bragging on behalf of another person. If you can cite heroic or noble actions by that person and successfully roll Perform: Storytelling / Awareness at TN 20, that person will gain a number of points of Glory equal to your School Rank. This may be done a number of times per person per month equal to your School Rank.

RANK 2: THE HEART OF THE LION

The Ikoma are tasked with conveying the emotions which the rest of the Clan keeps bottled away in stoic rectitude. You do not lose Honor or Glory for displaying emotion in public, so long as you do so on behalf of another Lion or for an honorable cause greater than yourself (such as your clan, the Empire, or the Code of Bushido). At the same time, your understanding of both honor and emotion strengthens your own soul against temptation. Anyone attempting to sway your emotions through the use of the Intimidation or Temptation skills must add +5 to their TN for each of your School Ranks.

RANK 3: THE VOICE OF THE ANCESTORS

The Ikoma act as Battle-Criers for the Lion, inspiring their soldiers on the battlefield with tales of the heroic deeds of their ancestors. Prior to a battle or skirmish, you may inspire your allies by speaking for a few minutes and rolling Perform: Oratory / Awareness at a TN equal to 15 + 5 per person you are inspiring. Targets who are not members of the Lion Clan increase the TN by 5 for each such person. With a successful roll, each person you inspired may add their Honor Rank to the total of any one Skill Roll during that battle or skirmish. (If this benefit is not used by the end of the battle, it is lost.)

