

THE SUTRA OF PALE LEAVES CARCOSA MANIFEST

CLEAR TEXT HANDOUTS PACK

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CHAPTER 2: BRIDGE MAIDEN PART I

LORE SHEET 14: DC BRAND

DC stands for “Designers and Characters,” a clothing brand with unique designs. When the concept of DC brands first appeared, it meant clothing that both emphasized a particular designer’s sense of style and an exquisiteness made possible through small-scale production. As its popularity grew, the term also came to refer to brand-name products made by manufacturers who met demand through advertising and mass production.

In the latter half of the 1980s, the bubble economy brought with it a demand for individuality in lifestyle. The popularity of DC brands, which expanded rapidly, came to an end within a few years.

Personal Background:

When you were in college, a few times a week you used to go to an apartment that served as an office for a modeling club. You could meet cool people there, and the staff was friendly and had interesting stories to tell. You were so happy when they let you sneak into a party at the TV station. You had a great time as a student.

LORE SHEET 15: TOMOE GOZEN

Tomoe Gozen was a woman of great strength, one of the most celebrated *onna-musha* (warrior women) in Japanese history. Her story is told in the “*Tale of the Heike*” and “*The Rise and Fall of the Genpei*,” and is the subject of popular poetry, song, and art. Members of the upper or Samurai classes, *onna-musha* typically wielded the naginata, which was considered a feminine weapon.

Under the leadership of Kiso Yoshinaka, her childhood friend, Tomoe Gozen commanded 300 samurai against the rival Taira clan during the Genpei war, helping him take Kyoto. Yoshinaka’s own cousin, Yoritomo, then marched against him with overwhelming force, and at the Battle of Awazu (1184 CE), when Yoshinaka realized it was his fate to die, he ordered Tomoe Gozen to return to her hometown in Shinano so that she might be spared. There are conflicting accounts of how her story ended. Some say she became a nun, others speak of her settling down or having died in battle.

In addition to Tomoe Gozen, there are legends of other female warriors who served and fought alongside Yoshinaka, such as Aoi Gozen and Yamabuki Gozen.

Note that “Gozen” is not a name, but rather an honorific title often used for female samurai, roughly equivalent to “Lady.”

LORE SHEET 16: HASHIHIME

According to various Japanese traditions, Hashihime (橋姫) was a goddess of water and the bridges that cross boundaries between lands. In *Tale of the Genji*, Hashihime serves as a metaphor for a cherished lover.

Later, a different version of this figure appears. This version of the Bridge Maiden was “Hashihime of Uji,” a noblewoman consumed by jealousy who soaked herself in the waters of the Uji River for 21 days and transformed into a powerful demon.

On a related note, throughout ancient Japan, horrifying legends abound of *hitobashira*, the act of sacrificing someone to the gods when completing a bridge or building to ensure it would stand strong. The word *hitobashira* literally means “human pillar” and comes from legends of human beings sealed alive in stone pillars that formed the foundation of the structure.

From these striking tales, Hashihime has become widely known as a jealous demoness and is associated with human sacrifice.

LORE SHEET 17: TAMAGAWA AQUEDUCT

The Tamagawa Jōsui (Tamagawa Aqueduct), is a 26 mile (43 km) long waterway that supplies the city with water from the Tama River. It is a historical landmark, built in the middle of the 17th century to serve the city of Edo.

The waterway runs from the upper reaches of the Tama River, through the Musashino Plateau, and branches off to various parts of the city via the water gate of the old water guardhouse, a waterway management office located near Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden. Excess water is discharged into the Shibuya River. The river flows near the National Stadium, through Jingūmae, and on to Shibuya. These sections were culverted in the 1960s as the city grew.

CHAPTER 3: WONDERLAND

LORE SHEET 18: I, MUD

Depending on who you ask, MUD might stand for “multi-user domain” or “multi-user dimension.” The original term, owing to its early RPG roots, was “multi-user dungeon.”

MUDs are text-based roleplaying games. Dating back to 1975’s *Adventure*, players read descriptions of locations, monsters, objects, and other characters, and respond to prompts to navigate the story. Some used mechanics not unlike tabletop RPGs, while others were interactive, using “choose-your-own-adventure” styles of fiction. With the birth of the internet in the late 1980s, these games truly became shared worlds, and were the forerunners of the MMORPGs we know today.

LORE SHEET 19: KAGAMINUMA HIGH SCHOOL

Traditionally, Kagaminuma has been a middle-class neighborhood, although it has recently elevated into the upper-middle class by the Bubble Economy of the late 1980s. As a direct consequence, many parents have chosen to send their children to private rather than public schools, leaving the local high school eerily vacant. Of the school’s three floors, only two are currently in use; the unlit third floor is now just storage. Class sizes are likewise halved. Only two first-year, three second-year, and three third-year homeroom classes remain. A decade ago, there were five to six homerooms for each grade. For the last three years, there has been consistent talk of shutting the school down.

Personal Background:

You are a teacher at Kagaminuma High School. Your job security does not look hopeful in the current circumstances, but as long as you are employed at the school, you have a duty of care to your pupils.

LORE SHEET 20: JAPANESE SCHOOLS

Elementary school (six grades, ages 6–12) and junior high school (three grades, ages 12–15) are compulsory in Japan, while high school (also three years, ages 15–18) is not compulsory, however, most children attend. Those who don't attend high school often enroll in one-year vocational schools or four-year technical colleges instead. After high school, many go on to four years of university.

The academic year starts in April and runs until March, with the month of August for summer vacation. Students are assigned homerooms (see **Tan'nin No Sensei**, following). These are numbered, the first number indicating the year, the second the homeroom; thus, second-year high school students might have the homerooms 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and so on. The focus is on team building and cooperation. Homerooms compete with one another in competitions like sports or choral performances.

Students wear uniforms. Blazers, trousers, and ties are typical for boys, with blazers and skirts for girls. The distinctive Japanese *gakuran* with its standing collar and military style is common for boys, as is a sailor's outfit for girls. The uniform style depends entirely on the school. Shoes are exchanged for school slippers inside the building.

A typical day begins with morning assembly at 08:15 (8:15 am) with the students gathered in the gymnasium and seated on the floor. The first period begins at 08:30 (8:30 am), lasting about an hour. There are typically six periods, with an hour for lunch. The school day ends at 15:30 (3:30 pm) and is generally followed by after-school club activities, such as tennis, baseball, soccer, judo, kendo, band, English, *sado* (tea ceremony), drama, art, and so on. Students usually remain in the same club for all three years and such activities are considered an important social circle.

Tan'nin No Sensei

One of the greatest differences between the Japanese education system and those in most English-speaking nations is the focus on the homeroom. In Japan, there are no lockers in the halls. Students have a homeroom, and they remain in that homeroom while their teachers come to them. Thus, they do not go to the history teacher's room, the teacher comes to theirs'.

Exceptions exist, of course. For computer science, physical education, fine arts, or industrial arts, students go to the specialist room, but in most other cases, they stay in the same room with the same peers all day, and sit at the same desk. They are also responsible for their homeroom, as janitors do not clean their classroom—this changes the calculus when someone thinks about throwing paper on the floor or sticking gum under their desk.

In addition, classmates are not “just” classmates. They are teammates, a notion reinforced by activities that pit one homeroom competitively against another. And, if their “class” is their team, their homeroom teacher is their coach.

The homeroom teacher (担任の先生, *tan'nin no sensei*) acts as a surrogate parent, confidante, and role model. If students are caught doing something inappropriate in public, people call the school—they see the uniform and immediately know which school the student attends. It then becomes the duty of the homeroom teacher to deal with such complaints.

LORE SHEET 21: WHEN YOU'RE A JET...

The *Gaikokugo Seinen Shōchi Jigyō* (Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) started in 1978 as a Ministry of Education initiative to improve Japanese English ability by getting actual English teachers in the classroom. The “JET Programme,” as it came to be known, was only for British people at first (hence the spelling). It allowed native English speakers to come to Japan and participate in the classrooms of elementary, junior, and high schools as assistant language teachers (ALT). While the native Japanese teacher handled lesson planning, evaluation, and curriculum, the JET teacher modeled correct pronunciation and—importantly in a nation where 98% of the population was ethnic Japanese—gave the students the chance to interact with a real, live, foreigner.

The program soon expanded and by 1987 included Americans, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and other native English speakers as well. Applicants did not have to be teachers, but they did need a bachelor's degree and a strong command of the English language. Contracts were signed for a year at a time and JETs were not really expected to stick around beyond that.

HANDOUT—WONDERLAND 1: FOLK TALES OF EDO TOKYO

The monks of Kagaminuma-daishi were said to be a wicked and obscene sect, following not the teachings of Lord Buddha but a foul pretender. They used mirrors and the reflective surface of dark pools in their rites, and there were claims that they kidnapped young men to join their numbers. Their monastery was destroyed in the early Genbun era [1736–1741] at the hands of Buzan monks from the Nishiarai temple, who burned the place to ashes with purifying fire, along with all its wicked monks.

LORE SHEET 22: PACHINKO

Pachinko resembles US pinball but uses many steel balls on a vertical frame, and operates more like a slot machine. The aim is to get as many balls as possible into winning “catchers.” These are not exchanged directly for money (as gambling is illegal in Japan) but are traded to the house parlor for a so-called “special prize” of a gold ornament, which can in turn be sold back for cash to a “separate” vendor off-premises—thus, enabling parlors to operate within the letter of the law. Some pachinko parlors even give out prize vouchers for groceries at a nearby supermarket.

By the 1990s, the pachinko market in Japan will be worth the equivalent of nearly \$300 billion. It’s a vast, gray-economy industry, and, in the 1980s, has substantial yakuza involvement behind the scenes. Gambling addiction is an extremely common social problem.

Personal Background:

You often play in pachinko parlors and find it hard to resist the lure of the machines.

LORE SHEET 23: HIKIKOMORI

Hikikomori is Japanese for “withdrawal” or “pulling inward,” and refers to a social phenomenon that sociologists and psychologists first began recognizing in the late 1970s and 80s. *We are being slightly anachronistic here:* the term “hikikomori” for these cases did not appear until the 1990s when psychiatrist Saito Tamaki coined the phrase, but it was a growing concern already during the period in which this scenario takes place.

The clinical definition of *hikikomori* is a withdrawal from society and social interactions, with those affected often refusing to leave a single room for a period of six months or greater. There is never an obvious cause for this, no triggering condition. In modern Japan, half-a-million youths are affected by *hikikomori*, with just as many adults by some estimates. While the numbers were fewer 30 years ago, they were still high.

While not exclusively a Japanese phenomenon, *hikikomori* seems to be a response to the same social pressures that make people in other cultures lash out in violence. While such pressures might drive an American youth to act out toward their peers or family, their Japanese counterpart withdraws. This is more characteristic of the Japanese impulse to not rock the boat or make a scene. It is easier to disappear than disturb the social harmony.

HANDOUT—WONDERLAND 2: KENICHI'S SCREEN

Ken-ken: enters the clearing and sits cross-legged on a large toadstool. He unstraps his twin blades and lays them on the ground beside his seat to show the wolf he means peace.

Shadōkami: stalks into the clearing, his yellow eyes narrowing. “Roly-poly Ken-ken, my plump and tender friend. To what oh what do I owe this pleasure? I gave explicit instructions I was not to be disturbed.”

Ken-ken: lowers his eyes and is very careful never to look the wolf in the face. “I can’t find Howaitōkami anywhere. He is not in the Glade of Whispers, he isn’t in the Marsh of Dreams. I searched and searched in the Moaning Woods. I am worried. Could a bandersnatch have snatched him? Could the Jabberwock have wocked him?”

Shadōkami: “Awwww roly-poly pudding and pie, are we worried about Howaitōkami? You poor little thing. I promise you he is just fine.”

Ken-ken: frowns and lowers his head. “Then you know where he is?”

Shadōkami: “When does Shadōkami not know all? Am I not high in the favor of our King?”

Ken-ken: “But Dread Wolf, haven’t you heard? At the school? Everyone knows now. People have come to investiga—”

Shadōkami: “SHUT UP you pathetic little fool!!!” The wolf looks away from Ken-ken and stares out. “Fee-fi-fo-fum...I smell the blood of intruders.”

Ken-ken: “What? What?”

Shadōkami: ignores the sniveling little fool on the toadstool. “Little pigs, little pigs...I seeeeeeeee you. Right there just beyond the computer screen. Yes... you. I am talking to you. Run away, little pigs. The Big Bad Wolf is not ready for you yet. Just you wait your turn.”

CHAPTER 4: BRIDGE MAIDEN PART 2

LORE SHEET 24: THE RAINBOW BRIDGE

The Port of Tokyo Connector Bridge—Tōkyō Kō Renrakukyō (東京港連絡橋)—is a huge suspension bridge scheduled for completion in 1992. Work began in 1987, with the foundations currently under construction. The length of the suspension bridge is about half a mile (798 m) and, when completed, will connect Shibaura in the city center with Odaiba, an artificial island dating from the 1850s, now designated for development. Some call it the “Rainbow Bridge”—in Norse mythology, a legendary rainbow bridge called the Bifrost connects Earth (Midgard) to the realm of the gods (Asgard).

HANDOUT—BRIDGE 1: TWO NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON ANCIENT DOCUMENTS

Bringing 800-year-old Documents to Light (dated 1979/6/22)

Preliminary academic research has been launched to establish a foundation to preserve and present to the public the collection of documents that the Hashimoto family in Kyoto has protected for many years. The documents will be catalogued and organized and are expected to be designated as important cultural properties by the national government.

800-year-old Document Stolen (dated 1980/3/19)

The Hashimoto Usugumo-tei Bunko Foundation Preparatory Committee has announced that a part of the collection of books kept by the Hashimoto family in Kyoto for many years has been stolen. The lock on the storeroom was destroyed, and a Sutra from the late Heian period (794–1185) was discovered to be missing. Professor Arai of Tokyo University, who is conducting the inventory, said, “Under the guidance of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and in cooperation with the police and antique dealers, we are monitoring for any signs of the book being sold on the black market.”

HANDOUT—BRIDGE 2: SUMMARY OF THE TEXT ATTACHED TO THE MANDALA

An Oracle of the Prince

On pale yellow paper, draw this mandala and fashion the *fuda* (paper talisman). By this Sign of the Divine Eye, the Prince can judge one’s fate and essential nature. When it changes color, you will know that you have found Hashihime. He who sacrifices himself to find Hashihime will be granted a place in Eternal Heaven.

HANDOUT BRIDGE 3: “THE TALE OF KISO YOSHINAKA'S ATTEMPT TO FLEE TO ETERNAL HEAVEN”

When Minamoto Yoritomo's army entered Kyoto, the Order of Mitsudomoe quickly hatched a plan to deceive Tomoe Gozen, who led Kiso Yoshinaka to a bridge on the Uji River.

As Eternal Heaven appeared on the other side of the Uji River, Yoshinaka and his men crossed the bridge, attempting to escape. At that very moment, Yoritomo's army attacked.

Tomoe Gozen was able to hold them back with her great strength, but, by chance, a flying arrow knocked off the hat she was wearing. Tomoe Gozen suddenly lost her balance and fell off the bridge with Yoshinaka.

Yoshinaka and Tomoe Gozen were able to escape to the coast thanks to the current of the Uji River. However, Yoritomo's men captured and executed nearly the entire Order of Mitsudomoe before the sect could reach Eternal Heaven.

HANDOUT BRIDGE 4: INVITATION CARD

Presenting Hashi-Hime

The Last Word in Fashion

(Two photos: Designer: Prince, and Designer: Kabo.)

Program: A Night of Glamour

Shibaura Wharf, Warehouse XX, 19:00

Fireworks at Sea (filmed by helicopter)

CHAPTER 4: THE FIXER

HANDOUT—FIXER 1: A BUSINESS CARD

THE FIXER

Nomura Hirotaka

Professional Mediator

Tokyo, Taito, Akihabara 4-4-4

LORE SHEET 25: WAKARESASEYA

Wakaresase (別れさせ) means “farewell” or “break-up,” and “ya” (屋) means “shop,” so a *Wakaresaseya* is a “break-up shop.” *Wakaresaseya* specialize in breaking up relationships, often by drawing one of the partners into an affair or gathering incriminating evidence of an affair; however, *wakaresaseya* perform other services as well, most of which are analogous to those performed by private detectives in the West. Reasons for engaging a *wakaresaseya* include damaging a person’s reputation, securing an employee’s resignation, securing a promotion, or breaking up a relationship.

Personal Background:

You once moonlighted for a *wakaresaseya*. Your job entailed romancing a target to justify a divorce proceeding. The company you worked for was engaged by a disgruntled spouse who felt that evidence of infidelity would ensure the best economic outcome. You regret the work you performed on behalf of the *wakaresaseya*, but you did learn some valuable insights.

LORE SHEET 26: JAPANESE ULTRANATIONALISTS

Although relatively few in number, right-wing Japanese ultranationalists remain highly visible. Their ideologies vary from group to group but share common nationalist themes, including hostility toward foreigners, especially Chinese and North Koreans; anti-communist sentiment; and attempts to justify or minimize Japan's role in World War II. Some ultranationalists overtly embrace neo-Nazism.

Japanese Ultranationalists, like other extremist political groups, are known to use *gaisensha*, or propaganda vehicles, equipped with loudspeakers and often painted black or khaki. These vehicles are used to stage protests and blast propaganda along busy streets and sidewalks.

Japanese law enforcement agencies find it difficult to arrest members of such organizations as the Japanese Constitution protects their freedoms of thought and speech. For this reason, yakuza groups sometimes use ultranationalist organizations as cover or camouflage for other illegal purposes.

Personal Background:

Your brother had trouble with grade school. You moved from neighborhood to neighborhood, attempting to reestablish yourselves, but your brother fell in with a rough crowd each time. In his final year of high school, he was arrested for shoplifting and spent an entire month in jail. Soon afterward, he joined an ultranationalist organization and moved out of the house. The last time you saw him, he was driving a *gaisensha* in your neighborhood. He is an embarrassment to your family. You tried everything we could think of to get him to leave the ultranationalists and return home, but they are cult-like. Nothing short of kidnapping him will likely work. Your father has seriously considered this option.

HANDOUT—FIXER 1: A BUSINESS CARD

A cardboard strip with five portrait photos glued on, each titled:

Shiokawa Masa (CEO)

Miyazaki Shinzo (Politician)

Kamiya Sabura (Priest)

Suzuki Shinichi (Policeman)

Yamaguchi Ken (Yakuza)

LORE SHEET 27: STOLEN FASHION DESIGNS

Personal Background:

You were an aspiring fashion designer, studying at Bunka Fashion College. You worked a day job and attended class in the evenings. You spent entire weekends designing clothes and a good many nights as well. It was common for you to start on new and innovative concepts shortly after getting off work and continue until the sun rose the next day. Your designs were imaginative and adventurous. Then, Shiokawa Masa, the CEO of the prestigious Poka Poka Fashion Corporation, stole your designs.

LORE SHEET 28: EXTORTED SALARY MAN

Personal Background:

The Poka Poka Fashion Corporation once employed you as an accountant. You worked diligently and faithfully for years. A few years ago, as part of a company-mandated internal audit, you discovered irregularities suggesting that the CEO, Shiokawa Masa, was embezzling from the company.

You dutifully informed your supervisor of your findings. In less than four hours, the company formally removed you from the audit team and reassigned you to a paper-shuffling role. You were then subjected to various forms of power harassment, but you did not give up.

A few weeks had passed when you were called into Mr. Shiokawa's office, where he passed you an envelope containing compromising photos of you. He told you that he would trade these embarrassing photos for any evidence you collected of his embezzlement. He said that if you didn't immediately resign, he would send the pictures to your family and friends.

You resigned from the job without explanation and you traded the evidence of Shiokawa's embezzlement in return for the negatives of the photos.

Note: work out with your Keeper what was in those photos when you accept this Lore Sheet.

LORE SHEET 29: FRIENDSHIP ABANDONED

Personal Background:

Your best friend in grade school was Shiokawa Masa. You did everything together. You played in the creek together. You attended cram school together. You went to English summer camp together. You studied kendo together. And then Shiokawa Masa joined the varsity baseball team and became their star pitcher. He moved into the popular crowd and dated the hottest girl in school. He abandoned your friendship rather than tarnish his reputation by remaining your friend. But he had the gall to continue to use you for homework. You are older now, wiser, and more experienced. That gives you the advantage of seeing him for what he truly is: a sociopath willing to use other people to get what he wants. Now he is a powerful industrialist, at the top of his game. You are destitute and in need of financial support. You know, now, with absolute certainty, he would pretend not to recognize you.

LORE SHEET 30: GIJUTSU OTAKU

Personal Background:

You are a technophile and know computers. You enjoy strolling through Akihabara Electric Town, which you know like the back of your hand. You can build a computer from a random collection of memory chips, motherboards, and other spare parts.

You sometimes visit Kaneda shrine to buy *omamori* talismans to protect your computers from electric surges, bugs, overheating components, and other harm. If anyone buys a custom computer from you, it will come with an *omamori*, and your personal guarantee that it is one of the best machines in Japan.

LORE SHEET 31: FORMER PRIEST IN TRAINING

Personal Background:

You were once a Shinto priest in training, studying under the tutelage of Kamiya Kenichi, the head priest at Kaneda shrine. Kenichi's sons, Gengoro and Saburo, were also studying as priest in training.

Kamiya Kenichi took to you, and though he was many years your senior, you built a solid friendship. Saburo took notice and, at times, overtly displayed jealousy. While you took your studies seriously, you never expected to be promoted into the role of Chief Priest, as those roles are traditionally handed down within the family. However, Saburo took steps to ensure that he inherited the position by slandering you in front of his father and seizing on every opportunity to call out your shortcomings. You eventually went your own way, and the struggle for succession continued among the Kamiyas. You understand that Saburo won out in the end, but only after falsely asserting that his older brother was using heroin and other illicit drugs.

LORE SHEET 32: BROKEN ENGAGEMENT

Personal Background:

Many years ago, you were Kamiya Gengoro's fiancée. He was studying to take over his father's role as head priest at Kaneda shrine. You were in love and had a promising future ahead of you.

Then one evening, shortly after Gengoro picked you up in his car for a dinner date, you were pulled over by a police officer, Suzuki Shinichi. The police officer searched the car and found a bag of heroin in Gengoro's gym bag. You absolutely knew it had to be a setup; Gengoro was not that kind of guy. In any event, you were both immediately arrested and taken to jail. Your father nearly killed you when he heard the news. The charges were later dismissed when the evidence mysteriously went missing, but the damage was done. Gengoro's father disowned him, foreclosing on your plans. You had student loans and were not the child of a wealthy family. You had little choice but to end your engagement with Gengoro.

You would later learn that Gengoro blamed his younger brother Saburo for setting him up. You are not sure if that is true, but it makes sense, given that Saburo is now the Chief Priest at Kaneda shrine. That seems like so many years ago: a different time, a different place, and even different people.

LORE SHEET 33: ON THE TAKE

Personal Background:

You were once a police detective attached to the Manseibashi Police Station. Back in those days, your partner was Suzuki Shinichi. Although your career never blossomed, Suzuki made the rank of Lieutenant. He is healthy, has a beautiful wife and children, and a good station in life. You would be proud to say that he was your partner, save for the fact that you know him to be crooked.

You once worked a case together against a yakuza gangster by the name of Yamaguchi Ken. Yamaguchi set up an extortion ring focusing on local pachinko parlors. You gathered sufficient evidence of the crime, including financial records and collaborating witness statements. Before you could arrest Yamaguchi, he waltzed right into the office and handed Suzuki an envelope of money. Yamaguchi winked at you and walked. The case never saw the inside of a courtroom.

LORE SHEET 34: AN AFFAIR

Personal Background:

A few years ago, you and your buddies skipped out on work to watch a Giants baseball game at the Tokyo Dome. You witnessed your wife kissing another man while on the way to the stadium. You would have confronted them then and there, but he was a muscular man who could probably have beaten you up. You later found out that the man having an affair with your wife was a police officer. It turns out that discretion is the better part of valor. Better to have a bruised ego than a bruised face and a police record.

LORE SHEET 35: STUCK HOLDING THE BAG

Personal Background:

You were once a salaryman committed to the Poka Poka Fashion Corporation. Your supervisor was particularly harsh and often engaged in various forms of power harassment. One time, your supervisor called you after 10:00 pm, requesting that you meet him and the CEO for a drink at a “snack” (hostess bar) in Akihabara. When you got there, the two of them were obviously inebriated. Not more than five minutes after your arrival, the CEO excused himself and departed. Your supervisor left you with a tab totaling over 500,000 yen; his departing words were, “*You know that’s not expensable, right?*”

You attempted to negotiate the bill down. That was when you were introduced to Yamaguchi Ken. His tattoos marked him as a member of the yakuza, and he snarled and growled like a rabid dog. He told you he owned the snack and would not let you leave without paying the bill. You used two different credit cards to cover the amount. Yamaguchi Ken walked you out the door and then hit you in the face, “*For interrupting the mahjong game.*” You reported the assault to the local police, who just laughed it off.

You remember Yamaguchi Ken. You hate him perhaps as much as you hate your former bosses, and you pray that karma catches up to him.

LORE SHEET 36: CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC WORKS

Personal Background:

You were once an aspiring structural engineer. You were part of team creating a bridge spanning the Kanda River. On September 14, 1984, an earthquake rocked Japan and your bridge over the Kanda River collapsed, killing three people. In a press conference, Miyazaki Shinzo blamed the bridge design and the engineers.

A few days after the earthquake, you inspected the ruined bridge. You also audited purchase orders and other transactional documents related to the bridge’s construction. Based on your inspection and audit, you deduced that substandard materials were used in the bridge construction. Further investigation revealed that the inferior materials were delivered to the construction site by a shell company controlled by Yamaguchi Ken of the Yamaguchi Crime Syndicate.

You believe, but cannot prove, that Miyazaki Shinzo accepted a kickback in connection with the bridge project, and it infuriates you that he would blame the designers and engineers when any cursory investigation would find the use of substandard materials was to blame for the bridge’s collapse.

LORE SHEET 37: STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Personal Background:

When you were a police detective, you conducted an investigation concerning the gangster Yamaguchi Ken. You cataloged Yamaguchi Ken's shell companies, business fronts, and other criminal enterprises. You also investigated how the money flows in and out of his various businesses. You found evidence that Yamaguchi Ken pays bribes and kickbacks to Miyazaki Shinzo, a local politician. Unfortunately, you were unable to act on this evidence during your tenure with the force.

LORE SHEET 38: GRUDGE FROM THE PAST

Personal Background:

In the early 1600s, the Tokugawa Shogunate wrongfully seized your ancestral lands and gave them to the Miyazaki clan. One may think that such an event would be water under the bridge, but this would minimize the enormity of having your ancestral right denied, and would discount how a single wrong multiplies deprivation, collecting compound interest with each passing year. You are the rightful owner of the land upon which the insufferable politician Miyazaki Shinzo now lives.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 1: RIGHTFUL CROWN PRINCE

Personal Background:

People call you [_____], but your real name is Mikasa Shunsuke, and you are the grandson of Prince Mikasa Takahito. People may not believe you, but you are the rightful Crown Prince of Japan.

The following story was relayed to you by Marquis Kido Kōichi in 1976, a year before his passing. In October of 1947, shortly following Japan's surrender to America, Emperor Showa (Hirohito) informed his trusted advisors, including the Marquis Koichi, that he would abdicate the throne and be succeeded by his brother Prince Takahito. The Shinto enthronement ceremony, requiring the imperial regalia (sword, mirror, jewel, and seal), was held in secret by the Shinto priests that attended the royal family.

General MacArthur, fearing instability and perhaps wrongfully influenced by a descendent of the royal Kuni family line, refused to recognize the abdication. Emperor Showa was forced to hold the mantle of emperor, although he had already resigned spiritually.

From devastating natural disasters to Emperor Showa's failure to produce male children fit to rule, the spirits of the land remind us of this failure to perfect the imperial succession. Upon Emperor Showa's death in 1989, the so-called Emperor Akihito was wrongly enthroned. You know that the spiritual enthronement was incomplete, as a proper ceremony would have required the use of the imperial regalia, which you currently possess.

You are the rightful crown prince, and you should be enthroned as soon as reasonably possible.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 2: CARCOSA'S ARCHITECT

Personal Background:

The Prince of Pale Leaves has appointed you Chief Architect of Carcosa. Your job is to build magnificent, unorthodox bridges, avenues, zoos, aquariums, parapets, towers, and such, befitting for a capital city. When sufficient projects are complete, Akihabara becomes Carcosa, and the Pale Prince shall take up his throne and become the rightful spiritual leader of Japan.

Through harnessing your expertise and natural artistic sensitivity, you will create a magnificent throne, keep, castle, and town for the Prince of Pale Leaves.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 3: ROYAL MATCHMAKER

Personal Background:

You serve as the Royal Matchmaker for the Court of Carcosa. Your responsibilities include identifying potential matches for the aristocratic bloodlines, administering the imperial breeding program, and breaking up undesirable relationships. You have the ultimate authority to approve or disapprove of all courting and marriages in the land of Carcosa.

You remember Yamaguchi Ken. You hate him perhaps as much as you hate your former bosses, and you pray that karma catches up to him.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 4: MASTER OF SPIES

Personal Background:

You are the left hand of the Prince of Pale Leaves, who has appointed you Carcosa's Master of Spies. You gather intelligence and collect leverage over powerful adversaries. You operate a network of spies, thieves, and assassins on behalf of the Pale Prince.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 5: JUDGE OF THE STAR CHAMBER

Personal Background:

You have been appointed to the Privy Council of Carcosa as the Judge of the Star Chamber. You have the ear of the Prince, and you sit on his council. You preside over his court, the Star Chamber, where the entire roof is festooned with images of magnificent, gilded stars that shine down and remind us that the Stars are Right! In these chambers, you hear arguments and deliberate over the guilt of those violating the Prince's laws and dictates. You prefer that officers of the law enforce your dictates, but on occasion, when their will lacks resolve, you must carry out your own judicial sentences.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 6: ROYAL SCRIBE

Personal Background:

The Prince of Pale Leaves appoints you as the Royal Scribe of Carcosa. You are entrusted with the faithful creation and recreation of the Sutra of Pale Leaves in any manner or medium you desire.

SPECIAL LORE SHEET 7: ROYAL TUTOR

Personal Background:

You are the Royal Tutor of Carcosa. You prepare the curriculum and instruction for all Carcosa's royal family and their loyal subjects. You use the Sutra of Pale Leaves as your primary textbook, but you may also employ other visual and audio aids.