



# SECOND CITY

The heat that coursed through the corridors of Shiro Tamori was unlike that found in any other castle even within the Dragon lands, lands known for their searing heat in the late summer months. Mirumoto Shikei, lord of the Dragon Clan, considered the ability of the tattoo on his left arm to mitigate the discomfort, but chose not to indulge its power. Discomfort endured was strength gained, or so the Tao instructed. Shikei found wisdom and foolishness in equal measure within the Tao, but considered it a vital tool of instruction for any mind seeking enlightenment. He smiled at the thought, and wondered if the man he came to see would share such sentiment.

The chamber Shikei entered was more a laboratory than temple, filled with all manner of apparatus that the young man had little practical understanding of. "Shimura," he called. "Forgive my intrusion, but I would have words."

An elder man appeared amid the vials and concoctions. "Shikei-sama," Tamori Shimura said. "Forgive me, my lord, I did not know of your arrival. I will see my servants disciplined."

Shikei lifted a hand. "My doing, not theirs, my friend. Stay your hand toward them as a favor to me".

The priest's features clearly indicated displeasure, but he nodded respectfully. "As you wish, my lord."

"I come with grim tidings," Shikei said. "The arrangement we have forged with the Unicorn concerning the transport of your craft to our kinsmen within the Second City has been altered. The date of departure has moved forward by a measure of three days. Can you be ready?"

Shimura swore explosively, then glanced up at his lord. "My apologies, my lord."

Shikei smiled. "None are necessary."

"If I may be forthright, my lord," Shimura said, "this is a blatant attempt by the Unicorn to exert dominance. They chafe at the situation with... with you and your betrothed." He bowed his head. "All respect, my lord."

"That is a matter to be decided by one who bears the Imperial chrysanthemum," Shikei said. "Let us speak no further of it. The question remains: can you deliver according to the new date of departure?"

"If it is your will, it will be done," Shimura said with a bow.

"I am grateful," Shikei said. "You look tired, my friend. I hope I offer no offense in that observation. I worry for your health, with all these vapors."

"It is years that are my burden, my lord, not matters of alchemy," Shimura said. "You need not fear. My replacement is well-trained."

"Wotan's son," Shikei nodded. "Meritocracy once held great favor in the Empire, but more traditional means of succession have since achieved prominence again. But then when have the Dragon ever held to tradition?"

"I offered many times to marry at your father's arrangement," Shimura reminded him. "He declined."

"My father held strange beliefs with regard to marriage, a holdover of his mother's people," Shikei said. "He believed that marriage must have room for love."

Shimura looked to the window, gazing at the distant volcano. "There is but room in my heart for hate."

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Bayushi Higaonna reviewed the documents set before him. "The Unicorn have moved the departure forward, then."

"Hai, magistrate," the black-clad man standing before him answered.

"And the reason?"

"As commanded, evidence suggests an increased presence of bandits along the land route between the Empire and the colonies," the attendant answered frankly. "They have every reason to believe that each passing day poses an increased risk to all who travel the route."

"Are the Dragon aware of this?"

"They are not," the attendant said. "The documents passed between the two clans were intercepted, altered, and replaced without detection."

"A risky proposition," Higaonna said. "The Dragon and Unicorn are to travel in close proximity for a number of weeks before reaching the Second City. The matter is bound to be disclosed at some point."

"A reasonable assumption, my lord," the attendant said. "However, the Unicorn officer placed in command of this particular outing has certain weaknesses that make him suitable to manipulation. Should that fail, of course, extortion of a more deliberate nature will doubtless prove effective, given some questionable actions from his past."

Higaonna rolled the scroll up. "Then it seems all is in readiness. See to the matter's conclusion. I must turn my attention toward the matter of the Kitsune. I trust you to deal with this."

"Thank you, my lord."

## — New Rules and Wordings —

Some cards in this expansion create a duel without a challenge, using wording such as "X duels Y." This anticipates an upcoming streamlining of the rules. If "X duels Y" then X is the challenger and Y is the challenged in the duel. All aspects of the duel are the same as a duel created through a challenge.

### Notes on Specific Cards

**Formal Apology:** You gain the Honor right away if your Family Honor is below its starting value when the Event resolves.

**Utaku Liu-Xeung:** The penalty need not reduce the Personality's actual Force to trigger this trait (that is, a Personality currently on zero Force still can receive penalties).

**Quagmire:** The Reaction can trigger from bowing as a cost or effect.

**The Earth Flows:** The trait only triggers to the rulebook's Honor gain.

**Wrathful Ancestor:** By the rules on performing, only Personalities