

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

[C/F/S] CFS of the Week #153 - Imperial Month
#1

Greetings and Salutations, everyone!

A Game Master's job can be difficult. You have to come up with something for the players to do every game session. You have to come up with new challenges, new ideas, and new adventures. It can be a daunting task at times. Sometimes you just need a little bit more inspiration to get your own creative juices flowing. Sometimes you get to a game session and you don't have anything ready. Sometimes you can't come up with anything at all.

That's what CFS of the Week is for. Each week, in order to help all the hardworking GMs out there, I offer an adventure seed that can be developed into a full gaming session. It's instant inspiration to help you and your players have fun.

But that's not all I have for you this time.

A long, long time back, during Request Month, I asked readers of CFS of the Week what kind of topics they'd like me to explore in the future. There were a number of different ideas, but a few caught my eye and inspired me.

*Kalajel wrote:*How about things you could base a whole campaign on?

So this year I'd like to take you all on a Tour of the Empire.

Over the next few months, I'll be focusing on a different faction each month and presenting a new locale that your player characters can visit. The first installment of the month will give some background information about the location and an adventure seed that can be used with it. Subsequent installments in that month will give additional adventure scenarios that can be set in the same location, developing it further and giving your players new things to do.

The locales are designed (like everything else in CFS of the Week) to be timeline neutral and generic enough to fit into as wide a range of campaigns as possible. Although some suggestions may be given, you can feel free to change or adapt the locations, characters, and adventures in order to fit your game. None of these locations are canon, and while they might not be on any official map of Rokugan you should be able to find some underdeveloped corner where they will fit without causing too much conflict with either established material or your personal vision.

The format for each location is as follows:

Name: The name of the location is given, as well as its meaning.

Stewards: The Clan or faction to which the holding belongs.

Suggested Location: Places where it might be possible to incorporate the location into the rest of Rokugan without too much alteration to the known canon.

Background: Some information about the location, including its purpose, history, and current situation.

Features: The main things that PCs are likely to find or notice in the location, as well as any special points of interest.

NPCs: Major figures that the PCs are likely to encounter in the location. Most NPCs listed here are involved in some way in the adventure seeds provided.

Atmosphere: Some notes to help you envision what the given location is like when you describe it to the PCs. It also gives some information about the general theme of the adventure seeds.

Getting There: Ways you can bring your player characters to the location listed.

After the introduction of the location, you can find that week's CFS adventure seed, followed by some notes and additional ideas to consider. Reactions and alternative ideas are always welcome, and it's even a CFS of the Week tradition for readers to offer suggestions for the scenario's title. So feel free to put in your two zeni!

With all that explanation out of the way, let us begin the tour! Our first stop is the winter home of the favored sons and daughters of the Imperial Families.

[Location Summary Start]

Name:

Yukibana Rikyuu - Snowflake Villa

Stewards:

The Imperial Families

Suggested Location:

Somewhere in Miya lands, although any territory held by one of the main Imperial Families will work. In a pinch, it can also be placed in Crane or Lion lands, with the villa itself being a special holding of the Imperial Families.

Background:

Everyone knows about the Imperial Winter Court. The eyes and ears of all citizens of the Empire turn there to pay witness as the most influential figures of the Clans gather to pay respect to the rightful ruler of the Empire. It is the center of all social and political activity for the winter season. Equally famous, if not as prestigious, are the winter courts held at Kyuden Seppun and Kyuden Otomo, which also garner a great deal of

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

attention from onlookers. There are those among the Imperial Families, however, who are not up to the rigors of such high-profile winter courts. For them, the Miya maintain Yukibana Rikyuu, the Snowflake Villa, where honored Imperials may spend the winter months in peace and tranquility.

The villa was originally constructed for a niece of the reigning Emperor generations ago. Suffering from poor nerves, she found the demands of court too taxing and retreated to her room for most of the winter each year. Her uncle commanded that a private sanctuary be built so that she could spend the winter season in comfort and peace. The result was a marvelous estate, complete with a breathtakingly beautiful garden, truly worthy of a relative of the Emperor. Indeed, the prestige of the place was such that the spending the winter with the Emperor's niece at Snowflake Villa became almost as coveted an honor as attending the Emperor's Winter Court.

Over the years, Snowflake Villa has continued to serve as winter home for influential figures seeking a brief respite from the pressures of politics. It is especially common for members of the Otomo and Seppun families who are about to retire to go to Snowflake Villa rather than take part in Winter Court. On the other hand, younger Imperials are also fond of visiting, simply so that they can say they have done so. Although it is not a glamorous or exciting place, the Miya maintain it to be as comfortable and inviting as a true palace.

Guests from other Clans are a rarity at Snowflake Villa. It is normally closed to all but the Imperial Families and their personal servants, and outsiders are expected to respect the Imperials' privacy. However, it is possible for samurai to be personally invited as guests of an Imperial personage. This is a great honor, as not many are allowed to enter the private sanctum of the Imperial Families, and those who are asked to join an Imperial who travels to Snowflake Villa for the winter are often the subject of a great deal of envy and admiration.

Major Features:

In many ways Snowflake Villa appears to be similar to other estates used by important nobles, but there are three features which set it apart. The first is recognizable in its design. Because it functions primarily as a winter retreat, it has been groomed so as to appear most beautiful in the snow. While its garden would look quite plain in any other season, in winter it is truly a thing of wonder. Trees, shrubs, and stones create an entirely new landscape when shrouded in white. Paths through the garden are kept groomed, but areas of pristine untouched snow are also maintained. The result is a garden that is at once

both tranquil and enchanting.

Another point about Snowflake Villa is the care that has been taken to create a winter home that can be enjoyed in comfort. Each room has a recessed area in the floor which is used to hold an earthen pot full of charcoal. The warmth this heating system provides is such that those nearby can easily forget the cold weather outside. Prayers to air kami keep cold drafts outside, and the main chamber of the estate is enchanted so that those within can look out on the snow-covered garden without becoming chilled. There is even a hot spring on the grounds, so that dignitaries can enjoy a warm bath any time they wish.

The final unique feature is the scarcity of servants on the estate grounds. While some may believe (whether accurately or not), that Imperials prefer to be waited on hand and foot, the servants at Snowflake Villa have been instructed by the Miya to stay out of sight unless called upon to do otherwise. They perform their normal duties without fail, but largely leave guests to enjoy the peace and solitude that is all too rare in an Imperial's life. Even the sentries keep their distance, patrolling the area from outside the estate grounds. They, like the servants, can be found if they are needed, but do their best not to encroach on their masters' privacy.

Some information about noble estates can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Additional pictures are [here](#) and [here](#).

Because Snowflake Villa is intended for use in the winter, the amount of water used in its landscaping is reduced. Instead of large bodies of water like those in the pictures above, it features more paths, open areas, and low trees and shrubs that look attractive when covered with snow. On the whole, however, it generally resembles the type of complex shown in the above pictures.

You can, of course, add other features that you think would be appropriate or interesting.

NPCs:

The current resident of Snowflake Villa is a dignitary named Morisato. He is widely regarded as an influential functionary from one of the Imperial Families, although his status is largely ceremonial. Most people afford him a good deal of respect, and he has a fair amount of influence in political matters. Recently, though, he has turned his attention to more spiritual concerns. Rather than spend the winter engaging in the social games of the court, he has come to Snowflake Villa to meditate in solitude and reflect upon the world and his place in it. Morisato's family name is left up to individual

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

GMs to determine as appropriate for the political situations in their own campaigns. He could be an Otomo or Seppun, a Miya, or even a close relative of the Emperor or Empress.

Accompanying Morisato are his three daughters. Renowned for their beauty, charm, and grace, they are called “the three goddesses” by some, and are admired by many. Despite their high social standing, they are generally polite and approachable, even to the point where one can forget that they are high-born members of the Imperial Family. Though they maintain proper decorum befitting their station, they do not go out of their way to remind people of their status. This is one of the factors that accounts for much of their popularity whenever they appear in court, besides their obvious attractiveness, of course.

His oldest daughter is named Kako. Trained as a bushi, she is very impulsive and headstrong, often speaking or acting before she thinks about the consequences. She is also fond of meddling in other people’s affairs, and has a habit of gossiping and poking her nose into the business of others. If left to her own devices at Snowflake Villa, Kako will attempt to pass the time reading pillow books and sipping plum wine, but is likely to become bored quickly. Once this happens she will not hesitate to let others know her displeasure, either directly or indirectly.

Morisato’s second daughter is Ariyo. Although she is a skilled courtier, she has a dislike of conflict and does her best to avoid argument. Somewhat more mature and responsible than Kako and Mirai, she is exceptionally sensitive to others’ emotions. Ariyo sincerely cares about others and tries to do what is best for everyone, even at her own expense. She will try not to be a bother during her stay, but being the perfect daughter all the time is difficult, especially if she has to watch over Kako and Mirai, and she may need someone to lend her emotional support.

His youngest daughter, Mirai, is much more idealistic than her sisters. While young, she has developed some skill as a shugenja, and is also interested in studying the world around her. The idea that the impossible might be made possible appeals to her, and she spends a lot of time dreaming of things that she will one day create with her magic. Mirai has yet to stretch her wings as an individual. She spends a lot of time following after her sisters, and can appear immature at times. She is also slightly insecure and becomes lonely quite easily if left all alone.

The three sisters sometimes refer to one another by the names they held before they reached adulthood. Kako was called Chi, Ariyo went by the name Ren, and Mirai was known as Ten.

Although they do not use such familiar names in formal situations, they can forget themselves when the setting is more relaxed. It is worth noting that anyone outside the family who used one of these names to refer to one of the sisters would be assuming a very high level of familiarity. Depending on the situation this might be endearing, awkward, or even scandalous.

You can, of course, let the PCs encounter other NPCs at Snowflake Villa as well. There are not usually a large number of guests, Imperial or otherwise, in attendance at any one time, but you can always make an exception if it suits your campaign to bring others there.

Atmosphere:

Snowflake Villa is a place of incredible beauty and great comfort, but it is also a simple place. It is palatial, but not overly ostentatious or extravagant, offering nobles who visit the opportunity to refresh their minds, bodies, and spirits. Spending the winter at Snowflake Villa is not the same as attending Winter Court. There are no outside sources of excitement, nor any big events to take part in. It is a quiet and tranquil place, free from both the demands of daily life and the hustle and bustle of politics.

The theme for the adventures at Snowflake Villa is family. Though the PCs are not part of the family, they can very easily become embroiled in the the affairs of Morisato and his daughters, and will have to be especially diplomatic about how they deal with the issues that arise. If the PCs handle themselves well the relationship they forge with the three girls may even be as close as that between true siblings. Before they can get to that level, however, they will need to deal with a number of family-related concerns.

Getting There:

There are a number of ways you can bring your players to Snowflake Villa.

If they belong to one of the Imperial Families you can simply have them or one of their immediate relatives decide to make use of the estate for the winter season and insist on bringing the PCs along. When they arrive, they happen to discover that Morisato and his family are also in attendance. Although it is uncommon for multiple groups to spend the winter at Snowflake Villa at the same time it is not unheard of, and because both of them have a right to use the facilities there is no reason why either of them should object to the presence of the other.

This same approach can be used if the PCs have a close ally who is a member of the Imperial Families, although as specially invited guests they will have to be more careful about how they

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

handle themselves. Should they do anything to displease Morisato, his daughters, or their Imperial patron they may find themselves ejected from the Villa and forced to trudge home through the cold and snow.

If your PCs are not members of the Imperial Family and have no close connection to someone who is, there is little chance that they would be allowed to use Snowflake Villa for themselves. In this case, the easiest way to have them visit Snowflake Villa is by invitation.

One easy solution is for Morisato himself to be the one to invite the PCs. This requires a little advance planning, as he would be unlikely to invite strangers that he has just met. If you have a chance to introduce Morisato in advance and let the PCs interact with him the invitation will be much more believable. Once he gets to know them and can witness their integrity and prowess for himself, it would not be inconceivable for him to ask them to accompany him and his daughters.

If your PCs have not met Morisato before and you do not have a chance to set up a series of social encounters with him before using these scenarios, it is possible for another member of the Imperial Families who has met the PCs to introduce them to him and speak to their qualifications as reliable samurai. In this case, the PCs will have to try even harder to satisfy and impress Morisato and his daughters, lest they make their supporter look bad.

Even if the PCs have no allies in high places, they may still be selected to join Morisato at Snowflake Villa for the winter. The leaders of the Great Clans are always eager to curry favor with the Imperials, and may offer the services of their samurai in an effort to gain future political allies. The PCs may be selected by the heads of their families for such a duty and sent to serve Morisato in the hopes that they can influence him favorably. Again, this would mean that the actions of the PCs would reflect not only on themselves but also on their superiors. If they do well it may mean great things for them and their families, but failure would have dire consequences.

[Location Summary End]

The first adventure this month deals with getting the PCs to Snowflake Villa and also gives them something to do once they get there.

Challenge:

Morisato asks the PCs to spend the winter with him and his three daughters at Yukibana Rikyuu. While he is looking forward to a few months of

quiet contemplation, meditation, and relaxation to clear his mind and refresh his spirit, he worries that his daughters will find such an uneventful winter boring and tedious. Thus, he would like the PCs to keep his daughters engaged and entertained.

If the PCs have never met Morisato before, you can use some of the suggestions provided above to get them into a situation where he would be able to make such a request.

Focus:

It takes some time for Morisato's daughters to warm up to the PCs. Kako resents outsiders invading her privacy, and may even accuse the PCs of spying on her at her father's behest. Ariyo worries that the PCs are serving her father because they have some hidden political agenda and are trying to influence him, so she tries to spend very little time with them, becoming distant and aloof. Mirai is initially friendly, but after a few days she begins to suspect that the PCs are only spending time with her because her father requested it and do not actually consider her a friend.

Strike:

If the PCs are to fulfill their mission of keeping Morisato's daughters happy they will first have to find some way of winning them over. There is little chance that they will be able to keep the three girls from becoming bored and unhappy if they are unable to reach some sort of positive relationship with them. Only after they convince the sisters that they truly do mean well will they be able to make any headway. Even once they do so, however, they will still need to work at entertaining them during the long, lonely winter months.

If you want to give your PCs some encouragement you can have a servant or ally mention to them that the three girls are quite well-mannered and friendly once they are suitably acquainted with someone. The PCs simply have to get past the obstacle of winning them over and they will be able to get along without trouble. Alternately, you can make getting on the girls' good side much more difficult. They might take quite some time to trust the PCs, and the issues that prevent them from opening up might be much less apparent. The degree of challenge that making a good impression presents is completely up to you to decide.

There are some other reasons you can use to explain why Morisato's daughters may react badly to the PCs' presence. One possibility is that they find the PCs boring. The girls' favorite pastime may be gossiping, painting pictures of the snow-covered trees, or playing hanafuda (a type of card game). If the PCs do not have any

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

skill in these areas, the girls are likely to dismiss them as "just another group of dullards." For characters that have few skills outside fighting and making war entertaining young ladies could prove to be a huge challenge.

The PCs might have the misfortune to belong to a family or Clan that is not in favor, causing them to be viewed in a negative light. While it may seem unfair to us to be judged by the words or actions of another, Rokugani have no qualms about letting one person's dishonor spread to their whole family. The PCs may need to prove their worth as individuals before they have a chance at gaining the girls' esteem.

Or, the problem might arise from the girls themselves. Perhaps they are used to deference from Clan samurai and expect the PCs to do whatever they say. They do have the social standing to order the party around, and if they are spoiled or pushy the PCs might find themselves stuck in a very difficult situation.

If you want to take a cue from several anime or manga stories, one of the PCs might walk in on one of the girls when she is less than fully dressed, earning him a reputation as a pervert. If played seriously this turn of events would have extremely drastic consequences, but if you want to take a more comedic approach it can lead to a number of interesting and funny misunderstandings in the future.

One of the main challenges in this scenario comes from the fact that the PCs may not know exactly which social rules apply in their interactions with Kako, Ariyo, and Mirai. The girls are members of the Imperial Family, and would likely be their superiors in normal circumstances. However, that may or may not have been what Morisato intended when he asked the PCs to accompany him. If he asked the PCs to serve as chaperones in his stead, their status would effectively be increased to the point where they could potentially give the girls orders. On the other hand, if he wanted the PCs to attend to his daughters' wishes, the party could find themselves being treated more like servants than samurai. The girls and the PCs may both spend some time trying to determine exactly what to expect from one another.

Perhaps the most difficult social situation to navigate is building a friendship with Morisato's daughters. The PCs could potentially reach a point where they are able to feel at ease being informal with the three girls, speaking frankly, calling them by their childhood names, making jokes at their expense, and even spending time alone together unsupervised. This type of behavior might be overlooked in the isolation of

Snowflake Villa, but were it witnessed by anyone else it could cause a great scandal. Will the PCs remember their station, or will they forget themselves? What if Kako, Ariyo, and Mirai dearly want to have that kind of friendship with the PCs? Can people truly be friends if their social standings are so unequal?

Finally, don't forget the challenge of finding ways to keep the three girls entertained. Winter can be long and boring, and if the PCs do not find some way to fill the time they may find other problems presenting themselves...

All friendships start with the risk of rejection. Only a few involve the risk of causing a political catastrophe.

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu

[\[C/F/S\] CFS of the Week #154 - Imperial Month #2](#)

Greetings and Salutations, friends!

I know it hasn't been a full week since my last CFS of the Week post, but I figure we all need something to take our minds away from counting the minutes until 4E is out. Let's just all try to relax and play nice, shall we?

This week's adventure is set in Snowflake Villa and involves NPCs that were [introduced previously](#).

If you have not already played through CFS of the Week scenario #153 you can still use the following adventure seed. Simply have the PCs secure an invitation to Snowflake Villa, introduce the PCs to Morisato's three daughters, let them get to know a little bit about each of the girls, and then let the fur fly.

If your players are not at Snowflake Villa you can move the action to another venue. One way is to have Morisato come to meet with the daimyo or superior of one (or more) of the PCs. While the important dignitaries are talking it falls to the PCs to make sure that the girls are kept happy and there are no interruptions.

In any case, once the stage is set and the proper introductions have been made, you can get on with the action and conflict.

Challenge:

The normally tranquil atmosphere of Snowflake Villa is shattered by a disagreement between two of Morisato's daughters. The girls have had a falling out over some matter and want nothing to do with one another. Snowflake Villa is not that large, however, and they are not really able to get away from each other.

The nature of the argument and the two girls that become involved are up to individual GMs to

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

decide, although some suggestions are given below.

Focus:

At first the two girls merely ignore each other, but as their anger grows they begin to take more direct action. First they slight one another when they cross paths. Then they escalate to making hurtful remarks. If nothing is done, they eventually take to making outright insults and may even engage in a very unladylike and shameful shouting match.

Strike:

If things get to the point where Morisato's quiet contemplation is disturbed, he will voice his anger at the entire household. The PCs would do well to find some way to settle the conflict, or at least manage it, before that happens. If they can restore peace to Snowflake Villa they will prevent a terrible scene and make life a lot more pleasant for everyone.

There are any number of reasons why different sisters could have a falling out. Feel free to choose from the possibilities described here, or choose two sisters and imagine a reason for them to fight on your own. With a small number of people cooped up together for days on end in the middle of winter there's sure to be something that will cause them to get peeved at one another.

Although she is the eldest, Kako has trouble acting responsibly, and even more trouble apologizing when she does something wrong. It is certainly possible for her to say or do something that rubs Ariyo or Mirai the wrong way and then be too stubborn to make amends. On the other hand, she might feel that having her younger sisters around prevents her from having real fun and resent their interference in her life.

Ariyo tries her best to avoid conflict, but she can be judgmental, especially in regards to her family. She is also strong willed. It is entirely possible for her to make a critical comment about either of her sisters and refuse to apologize for what she sees as an innocent and completely justified remark. Alternately, she may feel that she is unfairly burdened with responsibilities, and that Kako and Mirai do not appreciate her.

For the most part, Mirai idolizes her sisters, but being the youngest sometimes makes it difficult to relate to them as equals. She could object to her sisters treating her like a child. This may be a legitimate complaint, or she might just be overreacting. Or, she could lapse into a stint of immature behavior, teasing either Kako or Ariyo just a little too much and causing them to lose their temper.

Numerous other causes for argument exist as well, as readers who grew up with brothers or sisters will certainly know. One sister may break or damage an item that belongs to another. Careless words may have more of an impact than intended. Maybe two sisters have feelings for the same man. This could be an especially big problem if the object of their affections is one of the PCs, who must then decide who he will spurn and whose feelings (if anyone) he will reciprocate.

Some PCs may believe that it is not their place to get involved in such a matter. They are not members of the family and have no business sticking their noses where they do not belong. While this is technically true, the very fact that they are present to witness the argument, as well as insults and outbursts that may occur, makes them involved. Should Morisato become aware of what has transpired or have to intervene himself, it will cause him to suffer a loss of face in front of the PCs. This would be a very uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. Settling the argument without any major incident would benefit not only the girls and Morisato, but it would ultimately save the PCs from having to go through future unpleasantness as well.

Another way to get reluctant PCs involved is to have one of the sisters ask them to intervene. Not only does she fear the consequences her father may impose, but she truly cares for her sisters. If she is not one of the two who are involved in the quarrel she could ask the PCs to bring the others to their senses and get them to stop fighting. If she is one of the squabbling sisters she may recruit the PCs in order to convince the others that she is right. Either way, once the PCs are approached they will have a hard time keeping themselves from being drawn into the fight. Even if they try to stay neutral, they may find themselves being accused of favoritism.

In addition to the personal aspect of the quarrel, you can introduce a political angle as well. All three sisters are members of the Imperial Families, and stand to hold significant power in the future. Different PCs may be inclined (or ordered) to gain the favor of one sister or another in the hopes that they can count her as an ally down the road. How they go about this goal at a time like this can have a big impact on how the daughter they choose to support, as well as her sisters, view them in the future. Will they be unfailingly loyal, honest in laying blame, or underhanded and vengeful? Is it really worth winning political favor when the cost may be the love between two sisters?

If you really want to make things difficult for the

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

PCs you can have them be involved in the conflict from the start. Maybe one of them says or does something that draws the ire of one of the sisters and she begins to fight with the PCs. Or maybe the matter begins as an argument between two sisters but grows to engulf the entire household as sides are taken and battle lines are drawn. It's even possible that the argument could begin because of something one of the PCs says. Some of the most terrible wars in history have been started simply by a man declaring one woman more charming than another...

You only hurt the ones you love. If they love you back, though, they'll be sure to return the favor.

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu

[\[C/F/S\] CFS of the Week #155 - Imperial Month #3](#)

Greetings and Salutations, friends!

We're all counting down the hours until 4th Edition is available, and the excitement is growing. Just remember to control your emotions and not let things get out of hand when you finally get what you're after. After all, someone has to clean up afterward...

This week's adventure, like last week's is set in Snowflake Villa and involves Morisato's three daughters. Click [here](#) if you need more information about the place or the NPCs. You can still use this scenario even if your players haven't played through CFS of the Week #153, as well as if your players are not at Snowflake Villa. Just get the party into a situation where they are assigned to serve as chaperones for Morisato's daughters and go from there. You can do this by bringing them to Snowflake Villa, having Morisato visit their home, or by making them all guests of the same Winter Court. After you take care of getting the PCs in the right place at the right time, you can bring in the party crashers introduced below.

Challenge:

Three young men arrive at Snowflake Villa in the middle of the afternoon, completely unannounced. They wear the mon of one of the Imperial Families, and the fact that they were able to prove their identities to the sentries outside the estate makes it unlikely that they pose any sort of threat. Still, their sudden arrival is certainly unorthodox.

Focus:

Kikazaru, Mizaru, and Iwazaru are indeed members of the Seppun family. They report that they decided to come to Snowflake Villa on the spur of the moment and had no idea that anyone

was in attendance. The truth is that the three brothers heard a rumor that Morisato's three beautiful daughters were spending the winter sequestered away at Snowflake Villa and decided to pay a visit. Although they do not harbor any ill intentions, neither are they particularly refined.

Strike:

Although the three young men do not deliberately cause trouble, their presence gradually becomes more and more disruptive. Having so many young people in the same place leads to high levels of excitement, and it is easy to forget oneself in such an unstructured environment. Unless the PCs intervene before things get out of hand Morisato's paternal wrath will fall on everyone. will have to face Morisato's paternal wrath.

Having three bored young men and three attractive young women cooped up in the same building for an extended period of time is a recipe for trouble. Even if nothing inappropriate occurs, having more people around means that there will be more noise and activity to disturb Morisato's meditation. The three brothers might organize a kemari match to show off their athletic prowess, or encourage the girls to stay up late drinking sake and singing songs. They might even try to get the party members to join in the fun. While the chance to unwind and have a good time may be appealing, if the PCs get too carried away they just might forget the fact that Morisato is trying to relax in the next room.

If you think your players might be overly suspicious of three nobles who wander in out of the snow without warning, an alternate approach can be used. The three young men arrive with their mother, Seppun Junta, who is an old friend of Morisato's. While Junta and Morisato play shogi, drink tea, and reminisce about the good old days, the PCs are tasked with watching over their sons and daughters. Of course, making the three brothers official guests rather than just travelers who stopped by means that the PCs will have to watch what they say and do. Even if the PCs are placed in a position of authority, Kikazaru, Mizaru, and Iwazaru are still members of the Imperial Family, and will not react well to being ordered around.

Like Kako, Ariyo, and Mirai, the three brothers also sometimes refer to each other by their childhood names. Kikazaru, the oldest, is called Ilho by his brothers. Mizaru wears a patch over one eye, and is also known as Yiho. The youngest, Iwazaru, is nicknamed Samho, and covers the lower half of his face in the fashion of the Scorpion Clan. Depending on the level of familiarity and the situation, the girls or even the

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

PCs might be allowed to use these nicknames as well. This can give the PCs an insight into how different sisters feel about given brothers, and even how well the three brothers are getting along. As with the three sisters, though, using these names lightly is not advised for those who are not on close terms.

The family that Kikazaru, Mizaru, and Iwazaru belong to can be changed as needed to provide more interesting interactions between them and Kako, Ariyo, and Mirai. If they come from different families there is the chance that romance may bloom between two (or possibly more) of them at some point, and the PCs may be called upon to act as either chaperones or secret confidants. On the other hand, if the two sets of siblings come from the same family there is the possibility that they met at some point while they were growing up. Did the girls get along well with their cousins, or are there still some old grudges left to settle? In either case, emotions are sure to run high.

If the PCs have been getting along well with the three sisters you can have the three brothers serve as rivals for the girls' attention, and possibly their affections as well. If the PCs have been making progress in winning the girls over as political allies they may find themselves at a setback when the three brothers begin making the party the subject of ridicule. Or maybe the brothers manage to make a better impression on Morisato's daughters and the PCs are left in their shadows. If the PCs have romantic designs on any of the girls, the three brothers might attempt to outdo them in any number of ways. Not only are they likely to have the advantages of wealth and station, but they might even be able to challenge the PCs in other areas as well. A PC who tries to use poetry to win Ariyo's heart may find that Mizaru is just as skilled, or even better, at composing romantic verses. The rivalry might even escalate to the point where a "friendly sparring match" between rivals for a girl's heart turns ugly. Love can make people do strange things, and the two desperate men may risk disturbing Morisato and drawing his ire as well as potentially suffering a serious injury. Which of these two is the worse fate is left to individual GMs to decide.

Even if the PCs are not romantically inclined towards any of Morisato's daughters, the arrival of the three brothers could still spark trouble. It could turn out that two different brothers fall for the same girl, or perhaps two of the sisters develop feelings for the same guy. Not only will the PCs have to decide what to do in order to keep things from turning ugly, but they may be asked to get involved directly. If Kako asks the PCs to arrange things so that she can have some time alone with Kikazaru, will they agree to help?

What if Mirai also makes the exact same request? Will the PCs help even if they know that Ariyo does not approve of such a relationship? The PCs may find themselves serving as intermediaries, or as stern chaperones, and have their work cut out for them either way.

If the PCs manage to keep everyone happy, prevent any serious incidents, avoid angering both sets of siblings, and maintain a low enough level of chaos so as not to disturb Morisato they may find themselves in a position to gain some important and influential allies. Even if the party doesn't hit it off too well with Kikazaru, Mizaru, and Iwazaru, they will certainly respect anyone who has the guts to go toe to toe with them. The next time they meet it may even be on more friendly terms. Time has a way of changing one's perceptions, and both the sisters and brothers may eventually come to thank the PCs for being the ones who helped them have such a magnificent time the year that they all met at Snowflake Villa.

There's no such thing as spring break in Rokugan, but that doesn't mean people still don't get a little too wild for their own good. Next year I'm going to the Isles of Silk and Spice for Winter Court and hitting the beach!

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu
[\[C/F/S\] CFS of the Week #156 - Imperial Month #4](#)
Greetings and Salutations, everyone!

Fourth edition is finally here! Gosh, I remember saying the same thing about Third Edition once upon a time. Was it really so long ago? And as much as I'd love to drive to the game store and get a copy, there are things I have to do before I can give into temptation.

Ah, sweet temptation. You'd never steer me wrong, would you?

This week's adventure is set in Snowflake Villa and involves Morisato's three daughters, [just as in previous weeks](#) of this month. You can still use this scenario even if your players haven't played through CFS of the Week #153, as well as if your players are not at Snowflake Villa. In fact, this scenario can be easily adapted to a number of settings. So long as the PCs, Morisato's daughters, and Morisato are all in the same place you should have no problem setting things into motion. Having the girls get onto friendly terms with the PCs would help, but it's not essential. Desperate people will turn to just about anyone who can help them.

Challenge:

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

One of Morisato's daughters becomes anxious and distressed, especially around her father. At times it even seems as if she is going out of her way to avoid him. Morisato does not seem to notice, but others have no trouble picking up on her strange behavior. Eventually she or one of her sisters approaches the PCs for help. Although the cause of her gloominess is a family matter, there is no one else to turn to. You can choose any sister you like to fulfill this role, but I personally recommend selecting one that has not had a lot of trouble in previous adventure scenarios.

Focus:

Morisato keeps a set of scrolls with him that contains his late wife's diaries. Some time ago he forbid his daughters to read them, swearing to severely punish any of them who disobeyed his orders. Last week, one of the three sisters opened one of the scrolls and looked inside. When she did so, however, she damaged the ribbon used to tie the scroll shut. It is only a matter of time until Morisato notices, and when he does he will surely discover the intrusion. That is the cause of her nervousness and why she is turning to the PCs for help.

Strike:

Morisato already knows the truth. He does not actually want to punish any of his daughters, but he is trapped by his oath. He cannot go back on his word, and while his daughter is seeking some way to avoid punishment he is trying to think of a suitable course of action. If the PCs can somehow fix this difficult family conflict they will find themselves enjoying the gratitude, favor, and admiration of all involved.

This is another situation where the PCs' first instinct may be to avoid getting involved. They are not members of the family, and really have no business interfering. By virtue of being present to witness all that occurs, however, they are already involved. They may try to ignore the events that unfold, but ultimately someone will turn to them and issue an order or offer an apology for the shameful display. Once things reach this point trying to stay out of the entire affair will no longer be an option.

It may be useful to explain the problem Morisato faces in a little more detail if you want the PCs to be a little more sympathetic to his situation. As a samurai (and as a parent), he is expected to keep his word, no matter what. Should he go back on his oath now it would mean a loss of honor and a loss of face. No matter how much he may want to overlook the incident, he may have trouble rationalizing such a course of action. If the PCs can give him a way to save face, or even convince him that no such loss will be incurred,

he will be very grateful. Of course, the girl they have helped will be just as grateful too, if not more so.

Of course, the PCs may face an ethical dilemma here as well. If they lie to Morisato or espouse a course of action they do not truly believe in they are sacrificing their own honor to protect the girls. On one hand it is good to protect those of higher social standing from dishonor, but it is also improper to lie to a person of higher standing. The PCs may have to decide who they owe greater allegiance to, and even then there may be some difficulty in rationalizing their actions. A lie may not seem like a lie when it is spoken, but if the PCs do not truly believe in what they say they may find that their honor has already left them.

Depending on how strict and frightening you wish to make Morisato, he may be reasonable or unbending when it comes to enforcing his rules on those who are not part of the family. If the PCs themselves were never told that the scrolls were not to be handled (and are able to give a good explanation for why they were looking at them in the first place), Morisato may be willing to let them off with a warning that the scrolls are to be left alone in the future. After all, if he did not let the PCs know his wishes beforehand it would not be right of him to punish them. Alternately, you could have him lose control and threaten to punish anyone and everyone. It is not the wisest course of action, but he is a member of the Imperial Family and the PCs are guests in his domain. Should they resist there will be repercussions.

One possible twist on this scenario is to make the entire affair a test. Perhaps the girl in question wishes to see how loyal the PC she has asked to help her really is, or maybe she hopes to test his honor. This could have either positive or negative consequences in either case. A PC who is loyal and dependable will be likely to enjoy much favor from a future princess of the Imperial Family. If he is too unquestioning in his loyalty, though, he might find himself being put in an unpleasant position when he is asked to make a sacrifice for her sake. Alternately, an honorable man is also someone the Imperials would like to have at their service, but being unwilling to put aside one's honor for the greater good may mark the PC as uncooperative. Depending on how idealistic or ruthless the girl in question is, the nature of the test can change quite a bit.

You could even have Morisato engineer the entire thing himself. He approaches the PCs and tells them the situation, explaining the quandary that his honor and his personal feelings have gotten him stuck in. He asks one of the PCs to

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

step forward and take the blame, publicly accepting punishment in front of the entire household. What he has in mind, however, is actually to judge whether or not the PC would be a loyal ally. He would like the PCs to continue to protect his daughters in the future, but before he can ask that he must be sure that they will be willing to place the honor of the girls before their own. Again, the right thing to do may differ depending on Morisato's priorities, but if the PC is able to make a good impression it will be sure to lead to good things in his future.

Another question you could explore is exactly what is written in the scrolls and why Morisato does not want anyone else to read them. They could be no more than a memento that he keeps out of sentimentality, such as romantic poems or a letter of love. It's also possible that the scrolls hide some secret that he does not want his daughters to know. Dire prophecies, dark secrets in their family's past, plans for arranged marriages in the girls' futures, confidential information kept secret by Imperial order, or hints about how their mother really died are all things that Morisato might want to keep his daughters from reading. Perhaps his threats were meant to keep the girls from learning something that they would be better off not knowing.

You could also take Morisato's motivation away entirely. The decision to keep the contents of the scrolls secret was never his to make, and neither is the authority to waive any punishment. Instead of his wife's diary, the scroll actually contains some secret information, which he was commanded to keep safe. When his failure to do so is discovered his superiors will want to make sure that whoever stuck his or her nose into their business is suitably punished. There is no avoiding the consequences. The only question is who will suffer them, and perhaps if those who stand by and do nothing can live with themselves afterward.

Next time you peek at your presents a little early, remember that your parents are well within their rights to ask for your seppuku.

Additional Ideas:

Here are some other events you can have happen at Snowflake Villa.

-The girls catch glimpses of a ghost that is said to roam the halls of the estate and attempt to make contact with it. However, no one is sure whether it is a malevolent spirit or an honored ancestor.
-Kako begins flirting with one (or more) of the male PCs out of boredom. She intends it as nothing more than a joke, but her sisters take her words at face value, and others might as well. Unless he clears up the misunderstanding, the

PC in question may find himself called to give answers about his true intentions.

-The enchantment that holds out the cold air becomes reversed when Mirai tampers with it, making the inside of the estate just as cold as the outside. Unless something is done to fix the problem things will become very unpleasant once night falls.

-An old acquaintance of Ariyo comes for a brief visit. While the two were previously close, they have since become political rivals. Ariyo is honor bound to provide hospitality, but there is a great deal of underlying tension between them. Ariyo suspects that the woman is just trying to dig up useful information. Ariyo asks the PCs to help entertain the guest and keep her from prying into the family's secrets.

-Iwazaru, Kikazaru, and Mizaru ask the girls and the PCs to accompany them on a short hunting trip in the woods nearby. Unfortunately, they are not as competent outdoorsmen as they let on, and things soon start to go wrong.

-The leader of the guards informs the PCs that he has reason to believe a spy or thief has gained entrance into the main building. He would like to handle the matter without alerting Morisato's family, and asks the PCs to help him, either by catching the intruder or keeping the girls from suspecting that anything is wrong.

-One (or more) of the girls goes missing, and no one seems to know where she might be. The PCs will have to locate the wayward maiden and bring her back to the Villa. To make matters worse, a severe snowstorm approaches.

-In addition, if all goes well, more twists on the theme of living with three young ladies will be posted [here](#).

Mechanical Information:

Here is what Snowflake Villa looks like according to the station rules presented in Way of the Daimyo. Players who wish to construct a similar estate or perhaps even take over custodianship of Snowflake Villa itself can use the following guidelines as a reference.

Under 4th Edition rules, applying the Gentry advantage to Snowflake Villa would probably cost from 15 to 18 points.

Snowflake Villa – Keep, 14 pts (see Way of the Daimyo, Chapter One)

Location: 3 pts. The villa is in an accessible location surrounded by simple to traverse terrain.
Accommodations: 2 pts. There are guest chambers suitable for up to fifteen people.

Armaments: 0 pts. The villa is protected by archers along the outer walls. There are no other special defenses.

Barracks: 2 pts. There is room for up to thirty five guards.

Court Chamber: 2 pts. There is a chamber is large enough to accommodate all guests.

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

Fortifications: 0 pts. The base TN to hit the walls with a damaging strike is 10, and 100 wounds of damage in a single area will breach the wall.

Shrine: 2 pts. A shrine to the Children of the Sun and Moon on the grounds provides a +1 on morale rolls.

Luxury: 3 pts. The villa costs 3 points more than other estates of a similar design due to the attention to detail and quality put into its craftsmanship.

Guards: Five rank 1 bushi and ten rank 0 bushi are usually stationed on the grounds, and more may come to protect especially important guests.

Notes: Any custodian of Snowflake Villa will be expected to have ranks in the Etiquette and Lore: Heraldry skills, as well as some connection to the Imperial Families (if he or she is not already a member). Those without the Gentrified Samurai station may be temporarily appointed custodianship of the estate, but would need to make significant political connections in order to keep the position for any lengthy period of time.

For those who wish to run [CFS of the Week #100](#) with the NPCs from this month as guests, here are their simplified statistics and goals. See that adventure seed for more information about how these statistics should be read.

Morisato (originally appeared in CFS #153, CFS #154, CFS #155, and CFS #156)

Imperial Courtier

C: Lore: Heraldry, Investigation, Lore: Theology, Tea Ceremony, Lore: History

B: Status rank, Meditation, Courtier, Etiquette, Sincerity, Games: Shogi

A: None

Agenda: Although being the Plenipotentiary of Imperial Shrines is not a demanding position, Morisato is a man who takes his few duties very seriously. However, he also is considering retirement. Recently he has begun to look for someone to serve as his assistant, or possibly even as his replacement. While at Court he will be on the watch for any suitable candidates and seek out any who make a good showing of courtly skills.

Kako (originally appeared in CFS #153, CFS #154, CFS #155, and CFS #156)

Imperial Bushi

C: Lore: Literature (Pillow Books), Temptation (Seduction), Kenjutsu, Battle, Polearms

B: Games: Hanafuda, Lore: Fashion, Courtier (Gossip), Juijutsu, Defense

A: None

Agenda: Although it appears that Kako's main aim at Winter Court is simply to enjoy herself, she and Kikazaru have actually been ordered to secure informants for the Imperial Families among rank and file samurai. With political tensions mounting, Otomo Ayako and Otomo

Shigeki are concerned that they may not always be able to trust Clan daimyos. Thus, they asked the two younger Imperials to work on spreading their influence. When Kako invites her fellow guests to parties and plies them with sake, she is really trying to loosen their tongues and win their loyalty.

Ariyo (originally appeared in CFS #153, CFS #154, CFS #155, and CFS #156)

Imperial Courtier

C: Artisan: Ikebana, Lore: History, Medicine, Sincerity, Perform: Song

B: Awareness, Games: Hanafuda, Courtier, Investigation, Artisan: Poetry

A: Etiquette

Agenda: Because she has a number of friends from around the Empire, Ariyo usually has a busy, if enjoyable, time at Winter Court. This year, with favors and promises being traded so frequently, she finds herself even more busy. A number of different people have asked Ariyo to help them achieve their goals, and she does not have the heart to turn any of them down. Finding some way to help all her allies is very difficult, however, and the strain is sure to take a toll on her eventually.

Mirai (originally appeared in CFS #153, CFS #154, CFS #155, and CFS #156)

Imperial Shugenja

C: Spellcraft, Calligraphy, Lore: Theology, Meditation, Artisan: Jewelry, Earth magic

B: Intelligence, Games: Hanafuda, Lore: Spirits, Artisan: Origami, Water magic

A: None

Agenda: Mirai has heard rumors of that a number of Imperial treasures from Nankou-do Cave were recently borrowed by a group of samurai. She has long wanted to investigate the various nemuranai kept there, but she has not yet been granted permission. She is beginning to believe that going through the proper channels will take too long, and she will pledge her aid to anyone who can help her find a quicker way to achieve her goal.

Kikazaru (originally appeared in CFS #155)

Imperial Bushi

C: Agility, Defense, Horsemanship, Intimidation, Battle

B: Athletics (Kemari), Juijutsu, Kenjutsu, Sincerity, Lore: Warfare

A: None

Agenda: Kikazaru thought that his assignment to help Kako would be an enjoyable way to spend the winter. All he has to do is pretend to be interested in nothing more than talking with people, drinking, and having a good time. But his people skills and acting ability are rather poor, and he has trouble knowing how much sake is too much. On top of which, since he began

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#153 through #156
Imperial Month

spending so much time with Kako he has started to become attracted to her. Keeping his mission from affecting his real life may be the biggest challenge he faces this season.

Mizaru (originally appeared in CFS #155)

Imperial Bushi

C: Stamina, Defense, Kenjutsu, Investigation, Courtier (Gossip)

B: Athletics (Kemari), Horsemanship, Juijutsu, Spears, Perform: Storytelling

A: None

Agenda: Things have not been going well for Mizaru lately, and his pride has taken a beating. He had the misfortune to be thrown from his horse in front of several ladies of the court, and the story of his humiliation spread rapidly. He has tried to put the incident behind him and move on, but his mounting frustration at his bad luck has made it all the more difficult for him to relax, causing him to do even more poorly each time he tries to restore his image.

Iwazaru (originally appeared in CFS #155)

Imperial Bushi

C: Reflexes, Horsemanship, Kenjutsu, Games: Dice, Acting

B: Athletics (Kemari), Defense, Juijutsu, Kyujutsu, Chain Weapons

A: None

Agenda: Winter Court is usually a boring time for Iwazaru. He lacks the refinement and poise to negotiate the political arena, and it's usually all he can do to keep from making a fool of himself. This year, however, he has something to get excited about. With so many contests of martial skill he not only has a chance to blow off some steam but he can escape the dreadful routine of court and finally feel comfortable. Though his older brothers may be miserable, Iwazaru couldn't be happier.

That's all for Snowflake Villa and Winter Court. Next week will feature a new faction and a new location. I hope you all enjoy it!

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu