Birthright and Wrong

By Jason Flowers

Challenge

In the court of a local lord the player characters observe a young heimin, Arata, pleading for assistance. He is the son of the area’s most successful merchant, Kyosuke, and states that his father’s estate was viciously attacked by wild animals or vile monsters depending on the campaign and location. Arata only survived because his father threw himself in the way buying the time needed to escape and seek help. The merchant’s son asks the lord to please send samurai to run off the attackers and check on his family’s condition. Depending on the status and positioning of the player characters they are either ordered to investigate by the daimyo or volunteer.

Focus

The PCs arrive at Arata’s home to find it still overrun by the attackers he reported, and the grounds littered with the bodies of those killed. The characters will need to get rid of the creatures somehow, either by defeating them in combat, scaring them away, or using some other tactic. Once the merchant’s home is safe, the player characters hear a girl’s voice calling out. They will find Arata’s young sister, Haruna, locked away in a hidden room. She survived the attack after Kyosuke locked her in. Eventually the PCs will discover that Haruna’s tale of the attack does not seem to match the story told by Arata. In fact, her brother had not even been home when the attack started.

During the search of the estate, the Player Characters will find a lure, either magical or mundane, that is attuned to whichever creatures were responsible for the attack. Based on this discovery, the samurai may begin to suspect Arata’s involvement. Haruna will also tell them that her brother had become irritated at their father’s refusal to retire and hand over his merchant holdings to Arata.

Strike

The characters know that if the lure cannot be disabled or removed quickly more of the beasts will return. But as they try to dispose of it the estate does indeed come under attack again, this time in even greater numbers than before. The waves of attack will continue until the lure is destroyed.

When the lure has been stopped the PCs will likely be surprised to find that Arata has arrived. Whether he followed to observe out of familial concern or to see the results of his ploy is up to you. He vehemently denies Haruna’s claims that he was anxious to inherit the business and swears to the love he holds for his family. If confronted with the remnants of the lure, he will continue to proclaim his innocence, pointing out that Haruna was always the one who had an interest in hunting or the spiritual, depending on the source of the attacks. Obviously one of the siblings is lying, but which one?