Ghost of a Chance

By Jason Flowers

Challenge

On a tax-collecting trip the player characters arrive in Swift Starling Village, only to learn from Eichi, the headman, that the taxes have already been collected! As the only official tax-collectors in the region, the PCs quickly determine that the faux samurai responsible were actually otokodate bandits in disguise. Eichi and other villagers point the samurai north out of town, the direction the bandits were last seen heading; toward the old, haunted shrine to Inari in the nearby forest.

Focus

At the ruined shrine to Inari, a group of otokodate deserters led by the former ashigaru, Kaiketsu, have established a camp, despite the local tales of the shrine being haunted. To the surprise of all, the shrine is indeed haunted by a goryo; the restless ghost of someone who has been murdered. The ghost, called the Man in the Wall, was, in life, a man named Kisho, murdered as he finished the construction of the shrine some twenty years ago. The goryo will admit that his murderer is unknown to him, but it must be a resident of Swift Starling Village.

Strike!

The villagers of Swift Starling remember Kisho, the son of the former headman, fondly despite his disappearance decades ago. Who could have wanted the young man dead? Could it have been Botan, the carpenter and best friend to Kisho, who had always been jealous of Kisho’s status. Or Eichi, the friendly headman, who married Saeko, Kisho’s childhood love, shortly after his disappearance. Perhaps it was Hiroki, the dour blacksmith, who led the crew that constructed the shrine and was known for his adversity with Kisho’s father. Could it possibly be Genki, the jovial and perceptive sake house owner, who may have more dire intentions for Swift Starling Village? Surely it wasn’t Saeko, the demure wife of the headman and former love of Kisho, in a lover’s quarrel? Can the Player characters bring justice to this small farming community?