



According to what has come down to us through ancient writings, the Firefly clan was founded by a prestigious and skilled samurai, after he defeated a demon that had settled in the area. It was a gigantic oni of great power, with skin of an intense blue and two long horns, that was massacring the people there. It killed a multitude of peasants and many warriors who dared to confront it, until the lands that today form the domains of the Firefly Clan were devastated and largely depopulated. After the legendary samurai Akio Saemonsaburo succeeded

in crushing this creature, he set out to restore splendor to those lands and created this powerful clan, which has prospered over the centuries.

Since then, it has been one of the most respected and feared houses in Japan, partly due to the fact that among its ranks are the best samurai in existence. This is due not only to the skill of their warriors, but also to the quality of their prized and desired katanas. The Firefly Clan prides itself on having the best blacksmiths in Japan, forging truly lethal swords. Their katanas make their troops generate real terror on the battlefield,



although unfortunately their numbers have been seriously depleted during the recent war against the Shōgun. To their misfortune, the Firefly Clan fought in favor of the emperor, so they are currently suffering the consequences of their defeat.

Until recently, this clan was divided into four families who lived by and for war. This has changed and now there are only three, for they suffered the betrayal of the Ishikawa, who during "The 100 days of Edo" defected from the Firefly Clan to join the troops of the Shōgun. The Saemonsaburo family rules the destiny of the clan,

faithfully followed by the Shinohara and the Kuroda. All its members hate to the extreme those born in the bosom of the Ishikawa, whom they consider vile conspirators, and against whom they have secretly sworn revenge.

Their founder chose the name of Firefly because of the sympathy that Akio Saemonsaburo felt for these creatures. He considered that their light came from the samurai who had lost their lives honorably serving their lord. For this reason, one of the main traditions of the clan is the "Hotaru gari" or "Hunting of fireflies," which





is repeated every year at the arrival of summer. This custom, passed down from one generation to the next, consists of going out to the countryside on warm summer nights to catch as many of these beautiful and enigmatic creatures as possible, especially near rivers, using large fans and wooden boxes. They carefully pour the fireflies into paper cones, which the creatures light colorfully before flying away.

The Firefly Clan is reputed to have the most skilled navigators, an honor motivated by their possessing one of the most impressive fleets in Japan. A large part of its economy is based on fishing, and this is also the origin of a long-standing conflict that has extended to the present day. Specifically, it is the hostility felt

toward them by the Mountain Clan. According to the Firefly Clan's elders, this animosity began when one of the Mountain Clan's best boats was sunk off the coast of Nagoya, supposedly for fishing in waters that the Mountain Clan claimed as theirs exclusively. From then on, hatred spread between the members of both clans, giving rise to quarrels that have not been resolved for centuries.

The Firefly clan is one of the most fervent in Japan. Proof of this are the shrines that exist in the capital, Ise, among which are the Gekū and Naikū, founded at the dawn of the Empire, which each year receive hundreds of visitors, eager to pay their respects to their ancestors and to the powerful kami.

AKIRA

When the Shōgun's evil forces attacked, the city of Ise fell quickly. The remnant of the Firefly Clan withdrew to the city Gojo, and there the Shōgun besieged them in their castle. The Firefly warriors were brave, but it was not clear that they could hold out. That's when the white-furred, nine-tailed fox, quite an impressive kitsune, appeared to Akira.

Akira was a member of the Kuroda family, a fine samurai, a natural leader among the Firefly. His father, the most renowned blacksmith in Japan, had forged Akira's first katana, a weapon that became almost human to him, an extension of his will.

The fox approached the astonished samurai. A beautiful tantō swung below its neck on a cord, with a note fastened to it.

Akira recognized the precious dagger. He had watched his father forge it! It now belonged to the lord of the Ishikawa, one of the families of the Firefly Clan. Dare he hope that Ishikawa was offering military aid? Docile and calm, the kitsune allowed Akira to unknot the cord. And yes, the letter was addressed to him. The fox padded away and disappeared while he read the missive.



It offered more than he had hoped. Reinforcements from the Ishikawa had arrived. They were waiting outside, ready to enter the castle, with provisions and arms. Together, the Ishikawa lord wrote, we shall drive them off. The note asked him to open a secret door into the fortress. He should not tell anyone, since a spy among the Firefly Clan might spoil their plans.

At midnight, Akira opened the door, filled with joy as the forces of Ishikawa poured into the castle.

It was disaster. The Ishikawa had switched sides to serve the Shōgun. Akira's friends and allies rose to defend themselves, but they were overwhelmed. A foul creature entered with the Ishikawa, a colossal demon, one of Shōgun's chosen

yōkai. Winged and powerful, it wielded a maddening, huge, double-bladed scythe with a devil's head that spilled fire and lava when it struck. Dazed by the evil he had brought upon his comrades, Akira faced this nightmarish being, and it struck him in the face. Lava splashed his eyes, leaving him unconscious, left for dead, and blind.

The remaining Firefly retreated to the castle tower, and it was from its very top that the demon struck Akira's own lord and hurled him to the rocks below. When Akira woke, he thought first of his disgrace. He alone had betrayed his entire clan. He must kill himself, only he must not do that now, for he had no way to offer anything of value to his beloved country by his death.



He thought of where he was: in a pit full of corpses, where his enemies had doubtless cast him, thinking he was dead. All of his friends were here, he recognized their mangled bodies, but... how could that be? He was blind. He had no sight, and yet, he could perceive. Akira gradually healed. For months he wandered, a disowned ronin, a samurai without lord and without honor, hoping to find a death that might bring a trace of redemption.

Daily, he marveled at his ability to sense the world about him without sight. He seemed to be living in a dense fog, in which he could detect vague forms: people, buildings; even weapons. Once, he used his katana to deflect a knife-blow, and then he aimed well enough to wound his attacker and drive him off. He wondered: How did I do that? Could I do it again?

One day, he crossed paths with Jirōbō, a tengu who would completely change his destiny. But that's another story...

201

The most extraordinary thing just happened. It might have been a dream, because it fulfilled your greatest personal desire. How could such a thing be real?

But it was real. You clutch the chain that hangs around your neck. It wasn't there yesterday, but it's here now. That chain leads down to an amulet,

an ancient relic pressed against your breast. That relic is real, and you just received it today. You take the greatest delight in recalling what happened.

An old friend, Kanou Toshimasa, came looking for you. He had left your village when you were young, to go far north and become a monk. You were delighted to find each other, but he was sad to see that you had become blind. When you told him how that had happened, his voice turned serious.

"I think I understand," he said. "And I hope you will, too."

"Understand what?" you asked.

"I studied at a shrine for many years. They had a precious relic that some people worshipped, although no one knew what it could do."

Kanou took a deep breath before continuing.

"My recent studies were often interrupted by a certain kami, trying to tell me something. Each time I tried to understand the thoughts that flooded my mind, and each time I failed. But finally, I heard the kami's words. The kami told me to take this relic and give it to you."

At that moment, your friend thrust the amulet into your hand. At its touch, your spirits bounded, filled with hope. Kanou Toshimasa continued. "I must say, the other monks must have been astonished to find what I had stolen, but I know that my act was righteous. Here's the thing, Akira: you can use this



amulet to capture evil souls. I have no doubt that the Demon Hunter, who blinded you, is one such. Perhaps this gift is a sign that you will have a chance to avenge your city and your blindness.” “How does it work?” you asked. And in a few moments, he explained it to you. “But there’s more,” he said. “A deeper understanding of this relic will aid you in some way. You must find an appropriate person who can advise you.”

“I don’t know where to look. Whom should I ask?”

“I suggest that you begin with a priest of our own clan. Like me, he fled our city when we were young. He’s somewhere in Iga. Find Katsura Tameaki. He will help you.”

Consequences:

- Place 1 Akira Personal Mission token in Iga.
- If you interact with it, 📖 202.
- If you do not interact with it by the end of this phase, 📖 220.



You easily find the shrine where the priest Katsura Tameaki has served. It's an inspiring shrine, and Katsura had a reputation for keeping it in excellent order, providing for necessary cleanings, timely rituals, and food for those living within its walls.

Katsura's wealthier friends. Which one will you choose, to find him?

- Place 1 Akira Personal Mission token in Wakayama and another north of Nagoya.
- If you interact with the token in Wakayama, **203.**
- If you interact with the token north of Nagoya, **204.**
- If you do not interact with either by the end of this phase, **220.**

You are fortunate to find the priest, Katsura Tameaki. You let him hold the amulet and study it, but you never let go of its chain. He takes a long time,



first exclaiming over it, and then studying so intensely that you barely hear his breathing. At last, he speaks.

"This is an extraordinary instrument. I can't imagine how any trick of fate brought such a thing into your possession. It must be true that you are destined to use it. There's more than one way that such a prize might have been imbued with power, so I cannot tell you who can best teach you about it. But it's not a weapon, so here's what I think: show it to Master Bubashi. Have you heard of him?"

"Of course!" you say. "I know him. In a sense, it is Master Bubashi himself who sent me on my way, so that I might be here. This is a sign! An omen of good happenings! I will show it to him."

Consequences:

- Remove 1 Akira Personal Mission token from north of Nagoya.
- Mark **"Bubashi knows more"**.

204

You're in a hurry, tracking Katsura Tameaki. You want to find him before the Shōgun's officers do. Or, if you arrive at the same time, maybe you can rescue him.

In fact, you get to this wealthy friend's home before your enemies do. But your priest has left, still trying to escape. Good luck finding him! He's got to be somewhere.

Consequences:

- Remove 1 Akira Personal Mission token from Wakayama.
- Mark **"The escape of the kannushi"**.



What luck, you found Katsura Tameaki, the priest who, you hope, can explain everything about your amulet. You let him examine it. Then he dashes your hopes. But almost at once, he raises them again.

"There's no single way to imbue an amulet like this with power. I can't begin to guess how it works. I believe that Kanou Toshimasa did well to bring it to you, but I have no idea why he thought I could help."

That's when you felt miserable.

But then he said, "Do you know Master Bubashi?"

"Of course!" you say. "He is guiding our efforts."

"Well then, go to him. Your relic is not a weapon, so you need not bring it to a weapon master. I'm sure the honored Master Bubashi will know how to help you."

"This is fine!" you say. "Asking me to seek help from someone I already know. It is a sign from fate, an assurance of safety on the way, a signal of destiny from the kami. Katsura Tameaki, I thank you."

"And well... there's something more", the priest says, while looking at one of the buildings, close to the square. "Those damned yōkai entered the tavern. The owner there is a woman of pure soul, please save her. I beg you."

Consequences:

- Place your miniature adjacent to the **green** civilian token.
- Remove the **GREEN** civilian token and keep it.
- Place door 6 on **RED**. Remove **RED**.
- Mark "**Bubashi knows more**".

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But suddenly your shortly recovered happiness disappears, as a jikininki emerges from the darkness to pounce on the neck of the priest. By the time you raise your weapon and the yōkai flees, it is too late.

You see the priest, in agony, trying to make his way to a nearby building. "I have to help her... I have to help her..." Finally his body collapses to the ground and his life ends.

Consequences:

- Place your miniature adjacent to the **GREEN** civilian token.
- Remove the **GREEN** civilian token.
- Place door 6 on **RED**. Remove **RED**.
- Place 1 new jikininki in the square where the **GREEN** civilian was and add his initiative card.
- Mark "**Bubashi knows more**".

207

You are very fortunate to make time to see Master Bubashi, with so much going on. You are sure that Katsura Tameaki sent you to the right person. Master Bubashi spends a few minutes looking at your relic, and he quickly gives you choices. "Monks at the shrine of Izanami can surely teach you. Some blacksmiths can teach you as well; I recommend the blacksmith at the Hidden Fortress of Resistance. Also, one of my beloved disciples, the monk Byakuei, can surely teach you, but he is

missing. If you wish his help, please do everything you can to rescue him."

Bubashi tells you how to find the Hidden Fortress, in case that's your preference. Now you must choose.

Decide:

- If you search for help among the monks of Izanami Sanctuary, 📖 208.
- If you prefer to be helped by the resistance blacksmith, 📖 209.
- If you prefer to find Byakuei, 📖 210.

208

Consequences:

- Place 1 Akira Personal Mission token in the Izanami Sanctuary.
- If you interact with it, 📖 211.



Consequences:

- Find the Resistance Fortress secret location card and place it on the map.
- If you interact with it,  212.

**Consequences:**

- Mark **"Byakuei required"**.

At the shrine of Izanami, you ask the monks to arrange a private session with you. Most of them are able to attend. When you take your relic out and show it to them, an awesome silence fills the room. One by one, the monks rise and walk off, their sandals pattering on the well-swept sand. When only one monk remains, you try to swallow your disappointment.

"Do not be glum! The others have left in order to appoint me for this task," the monk says. "I agree that I'm well-chosen. Let me inspect your amulet closely."

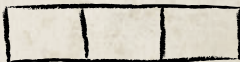
You remove the chain from your neck and hand it to him, hoping that he is worthy of this task, and that he won't try to walk off with it. Soon he is making satisfied sounds.

"This is a soul-capturer," he says. "I warn you, never use it on a good soul. I advise you to practice, to capture a few weak, evil souls. You might try an onryō or a jikininki, at first. Your relic will help you learn how to better defeat the creatures whose souls it already holds."

He hands the relic back to you, and you return it to its usual place, hidden against your chest. It is an essential part of you now. You didn't feel whole without it.

"Once you have mastered it with minor yōkai, you can try to increase its power to capture more powerful ones."

Each time you defeat 1 onryō or 1 jikininki, mark 1 box.

**Consequences:**

- Mark 1 box to **"The power of the crystal: Monks"**.

You were told how to find the Hidden Fortress of Resistance, but you were also advised to help keep it hidden. Your approach took half a day, during which you checked and checked to make sure you sensed no one observing you.

This Hidden Fortress is an amazing place. Half of its people farm and collect edibles. The other half make tools and weapons that they send down in small, secret caravans, to members of the resistance.

The master blacksmith is delighted to examine your amulet. He takes a long time studying it and barking observations to an assistant, who makes notes. You have to be patient. At last, he speaks. "When I have time, I shall try to make a few of these. I believe I can do it. Capturing evil souls is good work for good people. Now, what you should do with this relic is to harvest corrupted souls. But here's my advice: capture a few small souls, first. I'm sure you agree that your ability to



kill any kind of enemy must improve with practice."

"Of course," you say.

"But when you kill a yōkai and capture its soul, your ability to kill such yōkai should improve even more. Go collect an easy soul or three, and return to me. I suggest you try a few corrupted soldiers: kachi or ashigaru."

Each time you defeat 1 ashigaru or 1 kachi, mark 1 box.

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Consequences:

- Mark 1 box to **"The power of the crystal: Blacksmith"**.

213

At the Shrine of Izanami, the monks congratulate you for training yourself with your relic. They say it's likely that the relic remembers what you have captured, giving you an advantage when you face such creatures in the future. The monks perform a spirit ritual to ensure that your training, and your improved skill, if any, will never be forgotten.

You mention your fear of filling the amulet up with small, worthless souls until there would be no room for a great, evil one. They laugh and assure you that the relic's thirst for evil souls is infinite.



Perhaps you are ready to face the Demon Hunter, but only if you have excellent assistance. You are sure that this creature will kill you, if you ever fight it alone. But this is known by the Kami only...

Consequences:

- Mark 1 box next to **"The power of the crystal: Monks"**.
- Akira gains +1  when attacking onryo or jikininki.

214

Despite his wounds and fatigue, the monk agrees to listen to you for rescuing him.



"All right, let's see this relic of yours," Byakuei says. You feel safe entrusting it to him, and you are fascinated by how he examines it. Several times, he takes your finger and runs it over tiny bumps and runnels, explaining how these aspects of its manufacture enable it to perform its function, and how its cleverly blessed closures make it impossible for entrapped souls to escape.

He hands it back to you, and you hang it where it belongs, making you feel whole again.

"You know how to collect the Demon Hunter's soul," he says, "but there's more to this relic. Capture any evil soul, or perhaps a few of them, and return to me. I believe the relic will amplify your ability to learn the defensive tricks of monsters whose souls you capture. You might try a kappa or a shikome."

Each time you defeat 1 kappa or 1 shikome, mark 1 box:

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Consequences:

- Mark 1 box next to **"The power of the crystal: Byakuei"**.

215

The master blacksmith welcomes you back to the Hidden Fortress of the Resistance. You recount your

successes with the relic, and he congratulates you.

"Let's commemorate your achievement with a small ritual," he says, and he orders two assistants to heat up the main forge. "My ritual is not just for show. I believe the relic has enhanced your skill against any yōkai whose soul you captured. I wish to make sure that this gain of yours is permanent."

You wonder whether the blacksmith plans to heat up your relic, which does not seem like a good idea. However, he merely instructs his assistants to make the forge give off an intense, dry heat, and then, standing a good way off, he gives you, and your relic, his blessing. He claps you on the shoulders, and then says, "Into the world with you. It's time you made Japan a better place."

Consequences:

- Mark 1 box next to **"The Power of the Crystal: Blacksmith"**.
- Akira gains 1  attribute point, if able.

216

You have returned to Byakuei. He congratulates you on completing your training. "You know," he says, "all you have to do is turn this relic loose and it will do its business. But you get an extra benefit from your amulet. Tell me, what have you trapped in there so far?" You tell him.

"Excellent. Now, I'm sure you feel more competent than before, to attack such monsters. Am I right?"

"I'm amazed at what I feel I have learned," you say.

"Exactly. The relic has enhanced your understanding. This additional knowledge is easily forgotten."

"I feared as much." You know all too well that success can lead to failure.

"In this case," he says, "you have nothing to fear."

He clasps your hands and utters a series of prayers. "That's it. My prayers will cause you to remember what you've gained, exactly when you need it."

You are ready. You know it.

Consequences:

- Mark 1 box next to **"The power of the crystal: Byakuei"**.
- Akira gains 1  when attacked by kappa or shikome.

217

You have redeemed yourself from the betrayal of your city by utterly destroying the Demon Hunter. In death, you receive full samurai honors, recognized by all the clans as someone who began as a ronin, but has become so much more. Your life is celebrated in a series of stages, in several cities, so that many citizens can join in the mourning rites you deserve. Many people weep, wishing that you could

know how greatly you are honored at last.

The final stage is unusual and mysterious. Selected Samurai and a few monks who have magical powers go off to bury you in a little-known place. Perhaps you yourself know where your soul and your body dwell, but few others will, and they might never tell. And even better: an emissary of the Shōgun who manages, somehow, to find your tombstone is unlikely to find a way to despoil your grave, or to seize your artfully concealed relic.

Consequences:

- Mark **"Ultimate sacrifice"**.

218

You have failed, because the enemy who caused your downfall, that awful Demon Hunter, still lives. The priestess Mochizuki urged you to "search deep within yourself and follow your own destiny." That is so much bullshit! Your destiny is too obvious to require even one moment of thought. You could seek out the Demon Hunter right now, but before you ever got a chance to trap its soul, it would kill you. That is your destiny: to try, and to fail.

Maybe, some day, you will wake up in the morning, the kami will smile on you, and you will know that on that day, you could trap the damned thing's soul. You might as well find some tiny, out of

the way place to live where no one can bother you, a place near the Demon Hunter's own home, just in case. Maybe a bottle of good sake could take your mind off this for a while. Hell, it wouldn't even have to be good sake.

Since you don't want your friends to watch you drink...and drink, it's time to slip away.

Consequences:

- Mark **"Dishonor again."**

219

You continue to try to awaken the power of the crystal by eliminating the yōkai that were pointed out to you.

- If you have the mark **"The power of the crystal: Monks"** and also completed the track included in  **211**, place 1 Akira Personal Mission token in the Izanami Sanctuary. If you interact with it,  **213**.



- If you have the mark ***"The power of the crystal: Blacksmith"*** and also completed the track included in  **212**, place 1 Akira Personal Mission token in the Hidden Fortress of the Resistance. If you interact with it,  **215**.



- If you have the mark ***"The power of the crystal: Byakuei"*** and also completed the track included in  **214**, place 1 Akira Personal Mission token in the Dosojin Sanctuary. If you interact with it,  **216**.



You can hardly sleep, blaming yourself for not being able to find Katsura Tameaki. But for once in a lifetime luck seems to be on your side, as a man approaches you the morning, introducing himself as Katsura.

"I met Kanou Toshimasa and he told me that you would need my help," he says. When you show him the amulet and ask him about it, though, you realize that he is not the person who may give you the information you need. "I am sorry I can't give you more information about this relic, but at least I can tell you someone who could."

Afraid to receive again a random name with no clear location to look for, you feel ecstatic when Kanou tells you that the person you should look for is none other than the Master Bubashi. Lucky once in a lifetime... twice. You think.

Consequences:

- Mark ***"Bubashi knows more"***.

