

*Wise Servant of the Dragon,*

*I have long been contemplating our Champion's vision. The wisdom of lord Togashi Yokuni is boundless, yet when one seeks enlightenment one must often walk an untrod path. He speaks of a rising wave that strips the plain bare, that none can hide from the Empire's might. His vision is shared among the daimyō of our clan and, behold, the Army of the Rising Waves descends toward Otosan Uchi. Even now, the honorable Mirumoto Hitomi leads the warriors of the Dragon to the Emperor on behalf of her lord and our Champion. Should the crashing wave that Yokuni-ue has foreseen strike the capital, the Emperor's safety must be preserved.*

*As I write this letter, the first leaf of autumn falls. While it has unfortunately been some time since I was free to visit the mountains of our home, I am blessed by the peace and beauty of the palace gardens. I have watched the roses this year bloom with a dark hue, more red than pink. They will make a striking image, I think, when their petals flutter to the pond's surface and cover it in a shifting coat of crimson.*

*When a petal settles upon still water, its ripples may reach a great distance. So too have the events of the court reached far and wide. By tradition, the Ancestral Sword of the Hantei shall be entrusted to one of the Great Clans until the Crown Prince is of age to ascend his father's seat. Despite the best efforts of the esteemed Imperial Chancellor, the Emperor's family retains its close ties to the children of Bayushi. It will take much skill to direct the Son of Heaven's trust away from his close friend and his Advisor, and I am certain the Crane and the Phoenix will seek to do so. I have called upon additional diplomats and investigators of my family to join me in the capital, that they might remind the other clans of our noble heritage. But I wonder if the prestige of this duty is truly a blessing. Though the cricket is small, its song is heard throughout the land. So too, does the word of an advisor carry far and wide. The Ruby Champion and Lady Kachiko have found that their duties sometimes intersect, and I do not believe Shojū-sama has reason to distrust such sage insight as our clan can offer. Perhaps allowing this honor to be bestowed upon the Scorpion, and drawing the eyes of the Empire to the clan of secrets, would not be so dark an outcome.*

*While many questions remain unanswered, the wisdom of the servants of the Dragon has not diminished. Soon, Togashi Mitsu shall be at my side to provide counsel to those who most need it. Certainly I will be glad to have such a worldly tattooed warrior in my confidence, for the isezumi see ripples in the pond that I cannot. Let this letter be a summons for you to join me in the Imperial Capital as well, that we might uncover the answers our Clan Champion requires of us.*

*Finding the answer is easy. It is asking the question that is hard.*

*Kitsuki Yaruma,*

*Ambassador to the Imperial Court*