

The Colors of the Sky

BONUS MATERIAL FOR
GOLDEN SKY STORIES



STARLINE

The Colors of the Sky: Bonus Material for Golden Sky Stories

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GOLDEN SKY Stories





Introduction

The road to the release of the English version of *Golden Sky Stories* was a long and strange one. The game came out in Japan in 2006, and I bought a copy, along with *Maid RPG*, in late 2006. Along the way I joined forces with Andy Kitkowski to publish *Maid RPG* in English, completed a Master's degree in the Japanese language, and ran a Kickstarter funding drive for *GSS* that was incredibly successful. Aside from it being gratifying just to see a heartwarming, non-violent game succeed in general, our own hard work—to say nothing of that of Ryo Kamiya and everyone else who worked on the original Japanese version—was well-rewarded.

The impact of Kickstarter on role-playing games is hard to overstate, and having our first funding drive raise over \$85,000 and reach 2,350 people was amazing. We also blew through a total of seventeen stretch goals, which meant we were going to translate and produce an enormous amount of additional material. This ranged from single character types to entire new settings. This book is a collection of the bonus material that connects to the core rules, usable in a normal *Golden Sky Stories* game set in rural Japan.

New Residents: This section has five new character types: mouse henge, wolf henge, pony henge, fish henge, and the witch. Three were originally special convention offerings in Japan, while two are original creations for the English version.

Strangers in a Strange Land: In this pair of scenarios, Rodrigo Garcia Carmona provides two very human tales about two boys and their relationships with the town.

Henge Candies: Allen Varney presents a guide to henge's favorite candies, and how they can be a part of your stories.

Tales: These are two prose short stories, which originally appeared in the Tsugihagi Tayori magazine in Japan.

There's still plenty more to come, but for us this collection represents a lot of effort, and getting to work with some pretty fantastic people. We hope it helps enrich your *Golden Sky Stories* games.

—Ewen Cluney

Notes on New Characters

The new character types included here are an optional bonus for those who would like to experiment more with Golden Sky Stories. They can be a little tricky to integrate into a typical story, and in some cases they're a bit different thematically as well. It is up to each Narrator to decide whether or not to include these in his or her game.

Horse Henge

In real life horses are quite rare in Japan. In feudal times samurai would ride horses in battle, but people used oxen as beasts of burden. The few horses in Japan today are mainly used for horse racing and other equestrian sports, and in certain tourist attractions. They were actually scarce enough that Akira Kurosawa had to import extra horses to film battle scenes in his period movies.

Japan doesn't have any horse-related mythology to speak of, so horse henge are a thing we made up for this game, inspired by A Certain Cartoon, plus lots of English idioms about horses and reading up a bit on real-life horses. Putting horses into a town in the Japanese countryside isn't really true to real life, but if you already have henge and local gods running around, horses are a pretty minor fantasy element. If you do want to include ordinary horses in your stories, you can use the description below.

HORSES

HENGE: ○ **ANIMAL:** 4
ADULT: ○ **CHILD:** ○

Horses are large, strong, swift animals that people use as beasts of burden and transportation. They have a strong herd instinct, and can be a bit skittish.

For more information on horses, see the introduction to pony henge.

Fish Henge Rules

Fish henge are a somewhat advanced

character type, best used either by the narrator or by players who already have experience playing regular henge. Being aquatic unless they transform makes it much more difficult for fish henge to fully participate in a story.

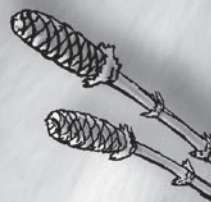
A fish henge's true form can be pretty much any kind of fish, from a common goldfish to an exotic tropical fish, though fish that actually live around Japan in some form are probably best. Think about what kind of fish henge you're making, and where your henge will live as a fish.

Fish henge can breathe air even in full fish form, but find it uncomfortable. They can also use human speech in or out of water.

TRANSFORMING

Fish henge don't have ears and tails the way most henge do, so when they take human form it works a little differently.

- +0 You look human, except you have a fish's tail instead of legs, like a mermaid.
- +2 You look human, but with some fish characteristics like patches of scales and webbed fingers.
- +4 You look like a regular human.



I'm Chika, the **MOUSE!** How old am I? I was actually born about two months ago, though I look like I'm 10 when I take human form. And remember, I'm just as smart as an adult too. I'm impatient, gluttonous, and tiny? Well of course; I'm a mouse. I'm small, but I run around a lot. Just look at me!

Mice as henge? Well, there are all kinds. Like I live above the ceiling in someone's house, but some live underground, or in the mountains or fields. I'm not, like, the only one who became a henge. Oh, but we're all pretty smart. We have to be because we're so tiny. We don't do anything violent, and we get pretty scared when people get mad at us.

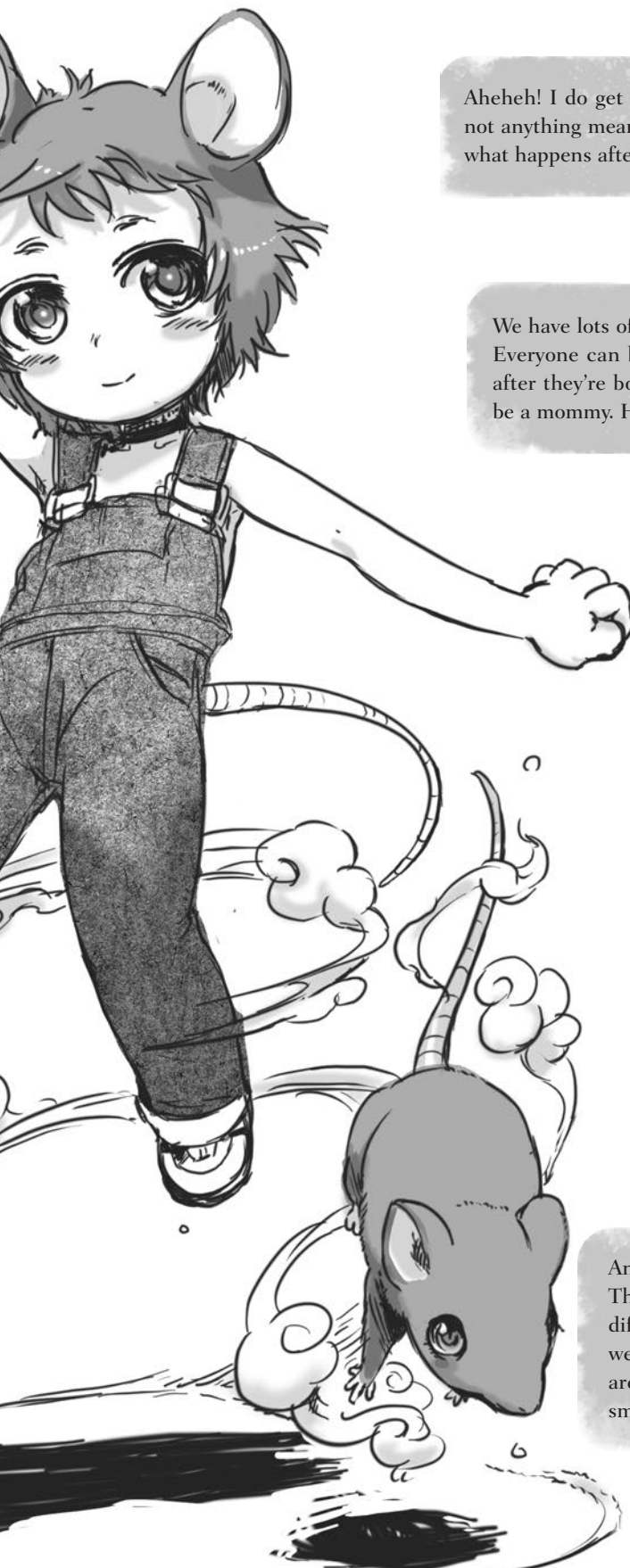
Hm? **Mice as animals?** Apart from field mice, people tend to not like us. A lot of it is stuff we can't really help though. Besides, we're small and really fast... and cute too, right? Hey, don't laugh!

I—I meant mice in general, not me! W-Well, I mean I'm a mouse, and a mouse is a mouse, so, well, you know... ***mumble***

The Japanese name for mice is **nezumi**, because they think that while you're sleeping (*neru*) we steal (*nusumi*) things, or because it's underground around roots (*ne*) where we live (*sumi*). We're just who we are though.

Mice are no good with **cats**. I've made friends with some, but lots of mice just run away from them. Cats have their own problems, but I wish they'd try to understand us more.





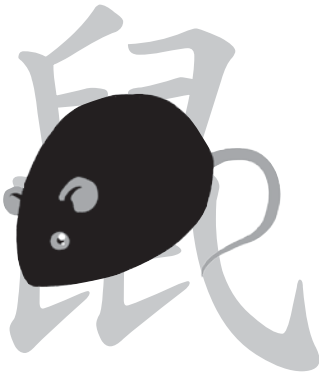
Aheheh! I do get up to lots of **mischief!** But not anything mean; I try to think carefully about what happens after.

We have lots of **children.** I have tons of brothers. Everyone can become a mom or dad only a month after they're born. Next time we meet I might even be a mommy. Heeheeheehee!

No matter how much **food** there is, it's never enough. My body's small, but has infinite power and a hunger to match! ...So if you really want to be friends, maybe you could let me have some food when you see me? Well, I know lots of places to get a snack actually.

For us, **time runs fast.** Anyone who thinks that some people go fast and should stop and take a look at how quickly things go for us. Just remember that if we seem impatient. You guys talk so slow!

And you know we're #1 in the **Chinese zodiac!** There are 12 animals, and each one watches over a different year! There are a lot of stories about how we took the number one spot though. But all of them are about how we had an ancestor who was really smart. Heehee!



MOUSE POWERS

Mice are small animals, but they're also very clever. In stories they can slip into the background and quickly ferret out the true cause of the trouble. Their tiny bodies let them go most anywhere, and find out all kinds of things. Of course, they're still quite good at finding things even in human form.

However, although mice are accustomed to having big families that get along, they don't easily befriend other animals or humans. Their cleverness gets in the way, preventing them from opening up as much to others. On the other hand, once they do let someone in, they treat them like a close family member.

You could say a mouse's role is to work hard behind the scenes for their precious friends and family.

Mouse Hole (4)

By finding tiny gaps, you can slip into all sorts of places. Even if the way is closed or blocked, you can leave a scene. You can also enter a scene when you wouldn't normally be able to.

You Do It (6)

You can have someone else do something for you. You can use this for any check other than an Impression Check. Rather than making the check yourself, you can have another character that is present in the scene do it for you. When you use this power, both you and the person helping you can spend Feelings on the check.

Liar (8)

This power lets you make someone believe a lie that you've told. Make an Adult check against their Adult attribute; if you win, you are able to deceive them. Without very direct proof in front of them, they will continue believing you and not suspect anything.

Sneaky (8)

You can move around without making a sound or other signs, so that others don't notice you at all. This lets you take action without anyone in the scene spotting you, without any chance to resist. This effect continues until the end of the scene or until you make some kind of noise, like talking above a whisper or causing a flashy scene.

Big Family (8)

Your large family of mice gives you wise advice. When you use this power, your Adult attribute is doubled for the rest of the scene.

Shenanigans (12)

Smart mice can get a big effect out of a little bit of mischief. You can use this to interrupt when someone (a henge or mononoke) is using a power. When you use this power, the target's power simply doesn't work.

WEAKNESS

Impatient

You're prone to being flustered and rushed, often engaging in wasted efforts. Any time you use a power, you have to spend 1 additional point of Wonder.

Underground

You live in a dark hole, and thus don't know much about the surface world or the town. You automatically fail any checks relating to information about the town, the lay of the land, machines, etc.

Tiny

Your small size means you're not very strong. You can't raise your Animal attribute higher than 1, and you can't use Feelings on checks that require physical power.

Glutton

You love to eat, and if you don't get a proper meal, you can barely move. Furthermore, if there's food in front of you, you have to stop and eat until you're full or the food is all gone, even if you have other things to do.

Scared

There are certain kinds of animals you just can't deal with. Even if they're actually a henge, if there is a cat or snake in the scene that you don't have a connection with, you have to run away.

Braggart

You have a habit of pretending to be stronger than you are. In order to use Feelings on a check, you have to spend an extra 2 Feelings.

ADDITIONAL POWER

Skitter (8)

You run away in the blink of an eye. You can use this to interrupt any check. When you use it, you are able to safely exit any scene. You can take one unresisting henge or human with you.

Treasure (6)

You know the location of some long-forgotten treasure. Once before the end of the story you can have a valuable item worth 500,000 yen (roughly \$5000), such as an ancient gold coin or other antique. However, this is in the form of an object rather than actual money, and you'll have to find a clever way to use it.

House Mouse (o)

You're a white mouse or a hamster, the type of critter people keep as pets. People will not suffer from Surprise when they see you in your animal form, and your attribute is increased by 1 when you do an Impression Check with a human.

Dine and Dash (4)

You can make off with food without anyone noticing. If someone is carrying food or has food next to them, you can take it. It doesn't matter how big the food is, though it has to be something you can actually get a grip on, so a wedding cake or a hot frying pan would be right out.

Stare (6)

By carefully examining someone, you can tell if they're a henge. If you use this power you can discern a henge or mononoke's true form and weaknesses. However, this power doesn't work on local gods.

I Don't Get It (o)

Though you mean well, you have a lack of self-awareness. You can use this power when a character's connection to you was just strengthened in the current break between scenes. You can now spend Dreams to strengthen your connection to that same character by any amount, instead of just by 1.

I'm Tsumuji the **WOLF!** I'm 3 years old, but I'm already grown up! I heard my mom and pop kept traveling up in the mountains until they came here, but... they left me behind. I dunno how they could do something like that to a little kid. Geez.

I was born in a **cave**. We're not that great at digging, so we have to go and find spots to use.

Hm? We live as **families**. I don't know about this "pack" stuff. We live as a family even if we're far apart. I have some brothers too, you know. My dad left me this jacket, you know... I'm really glad he did.

Yeah, it's really loud when we **howl**. It'll hurt your ears if you're too close, so be careful, okay?

I'm not much good with **towns**. I can hear my pop howling no matter how far away he is, but in town sometimes I can't.

Ayup, we have summer and winter **coats**. We're good at hiding, so you're gonna have a hard time finding me if I don't want to be seen. If I have just a little bit of brush you'll never find me.





I'm not **scary**, or violent, or inconsiderate, so don't say stuff like that. If you leave me alone, I'll leave you alone. Well, except maybe when I'm hungry.

Okuri-ookami? The Sending Wolf? Those legends of wolves that guide people to safety? Well, I don't really like people coming into my territory, so I'll watch them from behind and get them to leave my turf.

I don't get any weird urges when I look at **the moon**. I hardly ever howl at the moon.

You think I'm a **mountain god**? You're gonna cause trouble going around calling someone a god out of nowhere. Not that I mind getting the occasional offering, but at least leave some meat if you're gonna do that.



WOLF POWERS

People seldom encounter wolves. For that matter, even henge hardly ever run into wolves. The wolves live quietly, deep in the mountains and forests.

They have abilities relating to their domains, and they're all too good at surprising people (and in a different way from mononoke). Racing around open spaces, unleashing terrifying howls, and protecting those that need it... Such wolves only have frequent dealings with the local gods of the mountains and forests.

Wolves know little of people's society, and when a curious wolf cub comes into town, it can become a major incident for everyone involved.

Territory (0)

You have a certain territory in the mountains or forest where you're stronger than normal. As long as you're in your territory, the Wonder cost of other powers is halved (round up). You can only establish your territory somewhere outside of town. Talk to the Narrator about this before you begin.

Guardian (6)

You can watch over a certain someone, or notice when someone is watching you. Once per scene you can use this power, and it will last until the end of the scene. Pick someone for it to affect (which can be yourself); you can detect if someone is secretly watching or following them, regardless of what powers they might've used or checks they might've made. If there's another power in use, you can discern what kind of power.

Hide (6)

You can completely hide yourself as long as there's a tiny bit of brush or grass. Even if it's a clump of grass smaller than you are, no one will be able to see you from the outside. (However, the grass does have to be reasonably thick.) Others need to make a Henge check greater than your Henge attribute, plus 3 in order to see you. However, local gods can easily find you in their territory and this power will not work on them.

Substitution (8)

When it looks like someone is in danger, you can take their place. If you use this power, you can enter a scene even if you weren't participating in it before and put yourself in the line of fire. If it does turn out to be something dangerous, the narrator may have you get hurt and receive thanks for this act of sacrifice.

Wolf Howl (20)

You can unleash a howl that resounds all over town, startling everyone. You can only use this once per story. Everyone in town (including henge and mononoke) is subject to Surprise, based on your Animal attribute during the day, Animal +1 in the evening, or Animal +2 at night. However, this Surprise won't cause anyone to faint. Humans will generally not come to the area where you use this power, even if it's the center of town. If your use of this power causes too much bother for the town the Narrator may decide to lower the strength of your connection to the town.

Call of the Wild (30)

You can let out a howl that calls forth canine type animals from the town. All of the dogs, foxes, raccoon dogs, and wolves, and even henge of those types of animals, will hear the call and gather at its source. You can't use this call for just anything, but the animals will come unless they have some compelling reason to do otherwise, such as being tied up, in the middle of eating or sleeping, etc. If you have a reasonable request to make of them, they will listen.

WEAKNESS

Violent

You're a bit reckless, and tend to come out swinging rather than talking. When you need to make a check to persuade someone or make a request, you'll Quarrel with them instead. Needless to say, this means you're no good at persuasion or making requests. Also, if you use the Call of the Wild power and the animals you call don't resist, you don't have to spend points to temporarily overcome this weakness.

Frightening

Being a wild animal, you're rather scary. When you make an Impression Check, the Strength of the connection the other side gets to you is reduced by 1. (In other words, you need a result of 8 to create a Connection at all.)

Klutz

You're not very good at doing things efficiently or taking care of yourself. Your Adult attribute has to be zero, and you have to use 1 extra point of Feelings to make an Adult check.

Honest

You're a very honest wolf who just can't lie. Throughout every story, you can't tell lies at all, not even lies that would be kind.

Loneliness

You're prone to loneliness, and you hate being alone. You can't act separately from someone else. You have to always be with someone.

Gullible

You just can't figure out when you're being tricked, even when you're in the middle of tricking someone yourself. You never suspect you're being lied to, and even if you as the player fully understand that a lie has been told, your henge will have to believe it.

ADDITIONAL POWER

Growl (10)

You can glare and growl menacingly to scare someone. When you use this power, if your Animal attribute beats their Adult attribute, they'll be Surprised. If you manage to Surprise a henge with this power, they'll be forced to return to their animal form.

Go Away! (8)

By scaring someone, you can drive them away from the area. Make an Animal check. If it's higher than their Animal, they will leave the scene. However, you cannot use this against friendly henge.

Perseverance (4)

You have the ability to persevere through pretty much anything. If you use this, you can ignore Surprise. (You must declare that you are persevering.) Also, you can use this power to persevere through your own Weaknesses.

Giant Wolf (20)

You transform into a wolf some 3 meters long and as tall as an adult human. In this state, your Animal and Henge attributes increase by +10, and you're big enough for a few people (or 5 children) to ride on your back. This power lasts until the end of the scene or until you cancel it. However, each time you use this power, the strength of your connection from the town (or a connection from a friend if you don't have a connection to the town) goes down by 1.

Spirited Away (12)

In the blink of an eye, you dart off, interrupting any checks or powers and leave the scene to go to your territory. When you use this power, you can take someone with you as long as you have a connection with them. Even if they don't want to go, you can force them if you wish by making a check that beats their Animal attribute.

Wolf Guide (12)

By quietly following someone from behind, you can guide them and ensure that they stay on the correct path. You can guide any number of others you have connections with. You can ignore distance and travel times to swiftly deliver them to most anywhere. However, if you use this power to go somewhere outside of town, you'll have to use it again to get back.

Hi there! My name is Konpeito, and I'm a **PONY!**
My mom said she named me that because she knew I was going to be sweet. Do you think she was right? What's that? You think I'm impatient and skittish and stick with the herd? Well, I can't help it, okay?

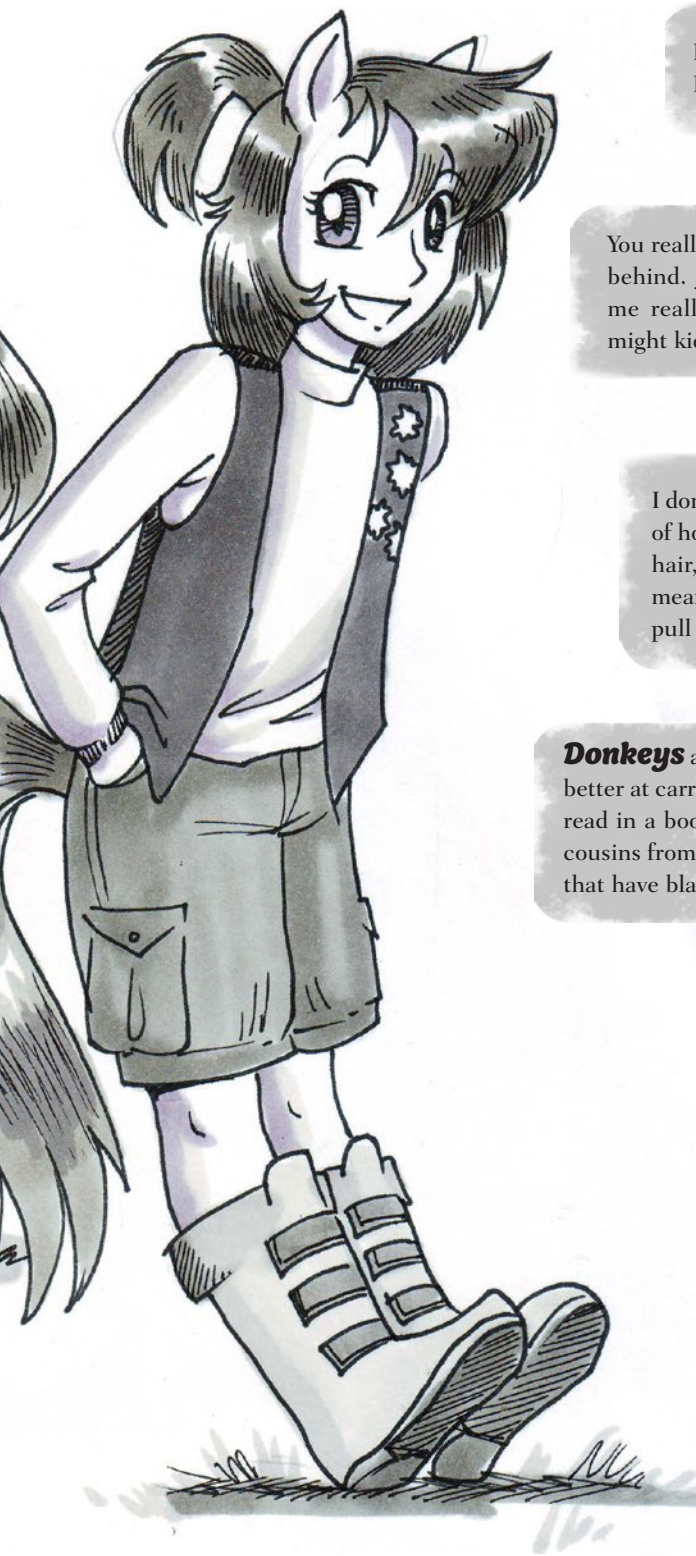
You want to know about **horses as animals?** Well, we're pretty big compared to a lot of other animals, and usually taller than most people. People can even ride on horses, though I guess they don't do it so much nowadays. We walk on four legs, but those legs end in hard hooves. We like to eat stuff like grass and hay. There's nothing like going out to a meadow and having a good graze.

Horse henge? Wellllll... not a lot of horses become henge. Most horses just want to graze and run around and stuff, and I guess only a few of us even want to do stuff like take human form and talk to people. Those of us who do... aren't your typical horses.

People can **ride on horses**. Not every horse will let you, so you'd better be careful if you try. If a horse does let you ride, you need to know how to give directions. We don't always know where you want to go after all. Oh, and you'll probably want to put a saddle on the horse. The area between your legs will thank you.

We horses can really **run fast**. I love to run, to feel the wind in my mane. We can run so fast that before people made cars and stuff, they would ride horses to get where they wanted to go.





Did you know that horses can **sleep standing up**? It's easy! What, you mean you can't do it?

You really shouldn't **sneak up** on a horse from behind. Just having someone behind me makes me really nervous, and when I get nervous, I might kick, and no one wants that!

I don't really know much about **different breeds** of horses. I'm just a regular ol' filly with regular brown hair, after all. Some horses are bigger, or faster, or meaner than others. Some run in races, and some just pull carts and stuff.

Donkeys are kind of like our cousins. They're better at carrying things, but not as fast. Once I read in a book about how we have these other cousins from somewhere far away called zebras that have black and white stripes.

There are also some special **magical horses**. Unicorns have a horn with magic powers, and pegasi have wings they can use to fly. Some people seem to think they're not real, but then a lot of people say that about henge. I'm just a regular pony so I can't fly or use magic like some of my friends. This one unicorn I met said there's a pony who's both a unicorn *and* a pegasus, and she's some kind of beautiful princess. I think I'd like to meet her some day.



Horses are strong, swift animals with a strong herd instinct. They can carry more weight and run much faster than most henge, and they have a natural affinity for working with others. Among the henge they play a supporting role, always helping any way they can.

However, horses tend to have trouble doing things by themselves, and they can be very skittish and panicky. They need others to be with them and help them deal with the unexpected.

PONY POWERS

Special Talent (0)

There's some special thing that you have a natural talent for, such as making something (pies, cakes, etc.), or performing (singing, acting), or doing something (gardening, throwing parties, taking care of animals, etc.). Whatever it is, whenever you make a check relating to that thing your attribute increases by 1.

Friendship (0)

You have a certain charm that makes others like you. The cost in Dreams for others to strengthen a connection to a pony is reduced by 1.

Work Together (1+)

You can back up your friends when they try to do something. When you use this power, you add the amount of Wonder you spend to their attribute for a check. You can only use this power with someone you have a connection with a strength of 2 or higher to, and you can't use it for Impression Checks.

Comfort (6)

By nuzzling someone's face and such, you can make them feel better. This lets you cheer them up after they've been Surprised, lost a quarrel, or otherwise had something get them down.

Pony Express (6)

You're fast enough to get anywhere in town in a short amount of time. By using this power you can get to anywhere in town by the end of the scene or before the beginning of the next scene. You can carry one or two others with you when you do this, though only if they're willing.

The Way Home (12)

Your unerring sense of direction lets you take someone you have a connection with home. You race like the wind and arrive there safely regardless of what's between you and your destination. However, if you use this power to leave the town, you'll have to use it again to get back.

WEAKNESS

Chew

You have a nervous habit of chewing on plants or wood. If you don't have something to do right in front of you, you'll start chewing on any plants or wood around you.

Mysterious Pegasus

Rather than being a normal horse, you are a pegasus with feathered wings like a bird. When you take human form you have these wings like a bird as well as your ears and tail like other henge. Your animal form will cause Surprise based on your Henge attribute plus 1, but you can spend 2 Wonder and/or Feelings (plus the cost for the time of day) to transform into a normal horse.

Skittish

You're easily startled and hard to calm down. Whenever there's a loud noise or sudden movement, you're subjected to a Surprise of 4. When someone's power makes you Surprised, your attribute is reduced by 2.

Strange Unicorn

As a unicorn you have a single horn growing from your head. If you take human form, your horn will still be visible unless you take fully human form. Your animal form causes Surprise based on your Henge attribute plus 1, but you can spend 2 Wonder and/or Feelings (plus the cost for the time of day) to transform into a normal horse.

Herd

You have a particularly strong herd instinct, and you never know what to do when you're by yourself. You can't act separately from someone else. You have to always be with someone.

Eats Like a Horse

You have a really phenomenal appetite. If there's food in front of you, you have to stop and eat until you're full or the food is all gone, even you have other things to do.

ADDITIONAL POWER

Race Horse (10)

You're an exceptionally fast horse. If you're willing to abruptly bolt off somewhere you can enter or leave a scene when and where you want, regardless of whether it's already in progress. This even works if you're doing something different in another scene taking place at the same time.

Pegasus Wings (2)

You have wings that let you freely fly through the sky. You can also carry things that are smaller than yourself. Furthermore, when you are running away or searching for things, add 2 to your attribute. However, you cannot use this power when you are in full human form or normal horse form. This effect lasts until the end of the scene.

Dash (8)

You're very, very quick when you run away at full speed. You can interrupt any check to flee from the current scene to somewhere safe. You can also take one unresisting human or henge with you as you run away.

Unicorn Magic (2)

You are a unicorn with a magical horn. When you use your magical power it glows, and you can magically manipulate objects at a distance with all the dexterity of a clever human, even in horse form. You can affect objects reasonably near you without touching them, and if you make a check for that kind of thing while using this power you can add 2 to your attribute.

From the Horse's Mouth (6)

Your honest character means that those who know you will trust what you say, however unlikely it might seem. When you use this power, people will believe you are telling the truth about something.

Strong as a Horse (8)

You're particularly strong, and good at manual labor. Using this power lets you complete a manual labor type task in half the usual amount of time.

I'm Sammy the **FISH**. Actually, I'm a salmon, and there are lots of kinds of fish but Ewen said we couldn't all go in the book so I guess I have to talk about all kinds of fish. I've spent three years living in my home river, and I'm nearly old enough to go swim in the ocean, so don't call me a kid or I'll beat you up. When I'm a human I'm 12 years old.

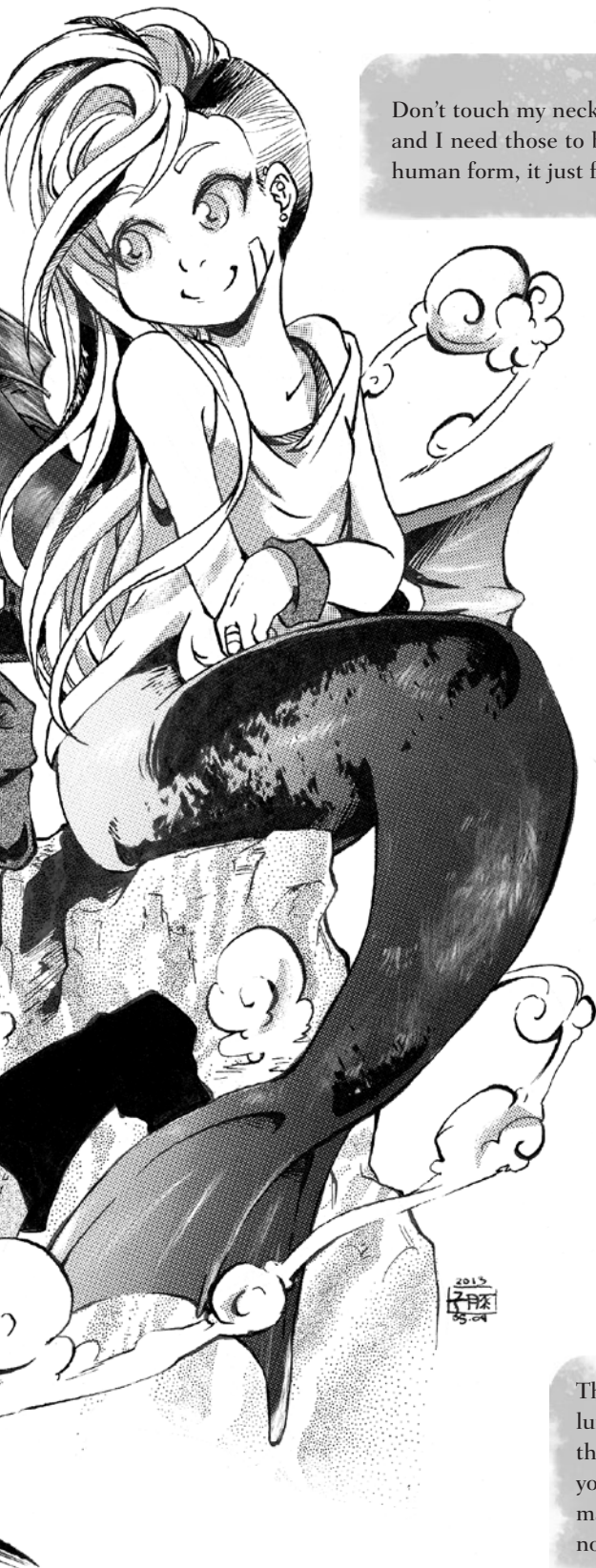
Yeah, I'm pretty **tough**. Salmon have a rough life in the streams; you gotta be tough to survive. I don't need friends or anything, but you seem pretty cool. You could hang out with me, I mean. If I didn't have anything better to do.

Anyway the thing about **fish henge** is we're not really from around here. This whole air-and-land world is pretty weird, you know. We don't know a lot about it, so a lot of us—not me I'm too cool—want to make friends and learn about your world. If you're lucky maybe I'll show you the ocean world sometime, too. We fish are pretty loyal to our friends but you should be careful, because some fish can grant wishes to their friends.

Some fish keep humans to take care of them but I'm a wild fish so I don't really know the details of that. Pets? What? No, no, I'm pretty sure it's the other way around.

Fish as animals? I dunno, we're not that interesting. I'm just a slippery little fish, you know, hard to see and harder to catch. What's that? What do we eat? Mostly other fishes, I guess. No, there's nothing wrong that. Fish are tasty! ...Except for salmon, of course. That'd be wrong.





Don't touch my neck! That's where my **gills** are, and I need those to breathe in the water. Even in human form, it just feels weird, okay?

Some people say that fish have **poor memories** but I don't know. Salmon can find their home stream out of all the water in the ocean. I'd like to see a human try that! Not all fish are like that, is what I'm trying to—what was I talking about again?

Don't laugh at me! **I'll hit you!**

Yeah, I wear some **pretty rough clothes**, I guess. I don't know how humans manage to survive without armor. Fish all have scales—they're pretty and protective. I guess my style is a little of both.

They say that **beautiful mermaids** sometimes lure human sailors into the ocean. I don't know about that, but thanks for calling me beautiful! Anyway if you ever go into the ocean with me, don't worry. I'll make sure you don't drown. What's that? A kiss? It's not that I like you or anything!



FISH POWERS

Fish are remote from life on the land, but fascinated by it. They want, more than anything, to make new friends with land-dwellers, both to learn about life in the air and to share their mysterious underwater world with them.

Fish Henge can move between two worlds: the underwater world that they come from and the human world that they long to explore. They can also help their friends move back and forth between these worlds. They are beautiful and happy and more than a little bit strange.

A fish's role is to show people the magic and wonder in the world all around them.

Gills (0)

You can breathe and survive underwater without difficulty. The water must be pure, natural, and clean, though it can be fresh or salt water.

Fish Out of Water (2)

If you end a scene partly or fully in human form and the next scene does not take place in water, you can use this power to remain in that form for the next scene. This replaces the standard transformation cost.

Mermaid's Kiss (6)

You can give other people the ability to breathe underwater. This gives them the "Gills" power until the end of the scene. If you kiss them to use this power, it only costs you 2 Wonder.

Quiet Watcher (6)

No one notices a fish. Once you activate this power, no one notices you until you say something or take obvious action.

Relaxing (8)

Your presence is calming to others. This power lets one other person or henge automatically pass a Surprise check.

Curiosity (10)

When you learn something new about the air-breathing world, immediately increase the strength of your connection to whoever teaches it to you by one. You can only use this power on a given character once per story.

WEAKNESS

Fishbowl

You are a pet fish, kept in a bowl or tank by a human. You don't have any access to under-sea society, and it's as strange to you as it is to any air breather.

Coat of Scales

When you take a human form with legs (i.e. with a cost of +2 or +4), you leave behind a beautiful coat of scales. Without it, you cannot turn back into a fish. You must pay as much of the cost of the transformation at the start of each scene as you can.

Tasty

You are a sort of fish that that humans find tasty. In your fish form, humans may very well want to eat you. Look out! This isn't the kind of game where a character will actually get eaten of course, but you could get caught by a fisherman if you're not careful.

Isolation

You are from a different world, and your connections to this world are weaker. Your connection to the town starts at a strength of 1.

Goldfish Memory

You tend to forget things very quickly. You cannot do knowledge-related Adult or Henge checks at all. Even if you as the player remember things, your fish henge will forget.

Mute

You can't speak, though you can still gesture, make noises, and sing.

ADDITIONAL POWER

Fish Needs a Bicycle (2)

You know where your owner keeps all her possessions, and how to use them to get around the human world. Use this power to borrow one ordinary, everyday item from your owner.

Innocent Beauty (0)

You have a mysterious charm that can entrance others. When you create a new connection with an Impression Check, if the other side is a person or henge who prefers your sex, the strength of the connection with them is increased by one. You can also pick the contents of the other side's connection for the first scene and break.

Wish (30)

If someone has caught you, you may grant them a wish in exchange for releasing you. This is a real wish, and lasts forever. You may decide to be mean or nice about it, but the ultimate effects are up to the Narrator. You can only use this power once per story.

Underwater World (8)

When you show someone your underwater world, increase the strength of their connection to you by one. You can only use this once per story for any given character.

School (8)

You have a whole family of fish that will back you up or help you hide. When you use this power, you call up a number of fish equal to the sum of your Henge and Animal attributes, times two, until the end of the scene.

Beautiful Song (10)

You can sing beautiful songs of the water. When you do so, anyone who hears you must pass an Adult check against your Henge score plus 2 or become entranced by your song, unable to do anything but listen or try to get closer to you until you stop singing.

I am Melissa Blois, a well-bred **WITCH**. I started using magic sixty... **ahem** six years ago. I started when I was six years old. Magic requires that I recite incantations and wear odd clothes, and sometimes I have terrible failures. I need more training I suppose.

I am nonetheless a **human**. Admittedly, in some ways I'm not quite like a normal human, and I've gotten used to being treated like a mononoke now and then. I don't stay in this town all the time either. Sometimes I go up into the mountains. However, I also often go into town to buy clothes and other things I need for my daily life.

I get along well with **the henge from the town**. Heehee, apparently they're not sure whether I'm a person or a henge like them. Surely, my role is to be an intermediary between the two. So, whether you are human or henge, I welcome you.

I live **outside of the town**. I eat food I buy in town, and the tomatoes and pumpkins I grow in my garden. Sometimes I'll share with someone who has helped me. Even with my slender arms, I can get by.

I can certainly fly without the aid of a **broom**. But, since I have a broom I can fly. Do you understand? I can let you fly on a broom too.





When you use **magic**, you are calling out, even if you don't make a sound. You have to let your voice be heard. You must send out your wish. You should be able to use magic, so why do you give up before you start? If you give up even a little bit, you cannot use magic. That's why we witches never give up.

For magic you need **words**. That's why I recite incantations. If you merely keep on thinking that you want something, it won't be enough to become magic. Even if it seems pointless, if you don't keep moving forward it won't become magic. In this world, wishes are not granted by mere thought, are they?

People's **wishes** can only be granted through magic. If your wish comes true, you have used magic. If fortune smiles on someone... they have surely managed to use magic.

Everywhere is overflowing with **Wonder**. The important thing is whether you think of it as such.

If you truly believe that, then you are now a magician too. And if it so happens that at the moment you're not a magician... well, everyone uses magic at least once in their long lives. So really, it's strange to pretend that there is that great a difference between us, wouldn't you say?



WITCH POWERS

A witch is a person of either gender who can use Wonder. Some are simply passing through the town, some are mysterious people who live on its edge, some are shrine maidens, and others live as normal people. There are many different kinds of witches, who can appear in many different kinds of stories. Most witches are careful not to offend the henge. They often serve as intermediaries between people and henge.

As a witch is already human, he or she has no need to change into one. They often dress strangely, but they can usually get by with a change of clothes. Witches can have the same kinds of names as ordinary people, or odd foreign names. Also, some witches are much older than they look, much like some henge.

Joyful Charm (1+)

You cast a small charm. One recipient (which can be you yourself) gains Feelings equal to the amount of Wonder you spend on this power.

Talk to Animals (2)

This power lets you understand an animal. Until the end of the scene, you can converse with one ordinary animal. However, this only works with one particular animal, and you'll have to use this power again to speak with a different animal, even if it's of the same type.

Broom (6)

You can fly on a magical broomstick. You can carry up to two times your own weight when flying. When the speed you're flying at becomes important, make checks with your Henge attribute; you can treat it as an equivalent Animal check result.

Change of Clothes (6)

This power lets you change the clothing you're wearing or that of a willing recipient to whatever you want. You can use this to remove your "Strange" weakness until the end of the scene (as far as your clothing goes), or to change someone else's outfit. You can also use it on an unwilling recipient by spending 12 Wonder.

Moonlight Mischief (20)

You can draw power from the moon and cause animals to become human and humans to become animals. You can only use this on a moonlit night, and only on those who want to be affected. This transformation does not affect one's gender, but age and clothing can change however they want. Henge who become human lose their Base Powers (but not Weaknesses or Additional Powers), and humans who become animals gain some of those animals' Weaknesses and Additional Powers. Those affected by this will not return to their normal selves until either the witch chooses to end the transformation, or the story ends.

Twilight Magic (20)

As the sun is setting, you can make the mysterious become normal. You can only use this power during scenes taking place in the evening. During a scene where you've used this power, henge can use any of their powers without spending Wonder.

WEAKNESS

Magic Words

In order to use your magical powers, you have to say special magic words. Anyone present in the same scene with a Henge or Child attribute of 2 or higher will know if you use one of your powers. If they do notice, they can prevent you from using a power if they get a higher Animal attribute result than you.

Strange

You speak and dress in a way that's out of touch with the times, or just looks conspicuous and flamboyant. Because you stand out so much you can't really hide, and if you try to walk around town you'll draw everyone's attention.

Secret

You have a very strict rule against letting normal people see you as a witch. If someone does see your full witch garb, your connections to both that person and the town lose 1 strength.

Doohickeys

You just have no ability to understand machines. Regardless of your Adult attribute, you can't use anything that uses electricity.

Failure

Your magic sometimes messes up in a really spectacular way. Once per story when you're using your magic, the narrator can have that power fail in a particularly embarrassing way. You cannot spend points to overcome this Weakness.

Mysterious Person

You've become a little too involved in your magic, making you distant from others. Between scenes you only gain 1 point of Feelings from each of your connections, regardless of the strengths of those connections.

ADDITIONAL POWER

Explosion (12)

You cause a burst of light and sound. This doesn't cause any fires or knock anyone down, but it does cause Surprise. Everyone in the same scene as you must get a Henge attribute check result of 8 or higher or the Surprise will cause them to faint.

Crystal Ball (8)

You have a crystal ball that lets you check on those you care about from a distance. When you use this power, you can see what someone to whom you have connection is doing. If they don't want you to see them, they'll have to get a Henge attribute check result higher than yours. If you can see one person, you can see everyone else in the scene.

Changing Seasons (4)

You can make yourself younger or older in an instant. This power lets you change your apparent age at will. This lasts until the scene ends, or until you use this power again.

Magic Item (8)

You can produce an object with a special power in it. Pick any one power of yours or from one of your friends to put into the object. Anyone who uses the item properly can use that power (using their Wonder and/or Feelings). The item will not become lost or broken until the end of the story.

True Magic (Special)

This power lets you call upon the very purest form of true magic. You can only use this power once per story, and you must use it during the third scene of the story or later. It consumes all of the Wonder and Feelings of all the characters present, but if they all earnestly want the same wish granted, the narrator must make sure it comes true. After you use this power, you cannot use any Wonder or Feelings at all during the next scene.

Mysterious Moves (2)

You can use your magic to perform even very simple, everyday tasks. When you use this power, you can substitute your Henge attribute for any check.

HEART-WARMING ROLE-PLAYING

G O L D E N

S K Y Stories

**STRANGERS
IN A STRANGE LAND**

By Rodrigo Garcia Carmona

This module contains two scenarios tied together under the idea of moving from one place to another, and how to cope with it. You could play one, the other, or both as you prefer. I sincerely hope that you enjoy them!

Story 1



Just Arrived

CHARACTERS

Billy (also known as “Biri”)
 Hibito, Mutta, Sena and Shin, the bullies
 Albert and Anna, Billy’s parents
 Miyuki, a pretty girl

TIME NEEDED

About 3 Hours

WONDER AND FEELINGS

For this story, the narrator can use 10 points of Wonder and 10 points of Feelings in each scene.

Story Summary

Billy is an American kid whose family just moved to Hitotsuna Town, in Japan. He wasn’t happy about the move, but since Billy’s father had found a job in Japan, his parents told him there was no other option.

Billy is an intelligent but shy boy. Even back home in America he had trouble making friends. Japan isn’t much better - his Japanese isn’t very good no matter how hard he studies, he can’t follow the teacher’s lectures, and the other boys don’t even know how to correctly pronounce his name! They call him “Biri,” and laugh about it. To make things worse, some older kids from the school have taken to bullying him.

But not everything in his life is bad. A pretty girl from his class smiles at him ev-

ery morning. Also, unbeknownst to him, a group of henge have decided to help him...

Introduction

This is a story for narrators who have a little bit of previous experience playing *Golden Sky Stories* or other RPGs. The two stories presented in the *Golden Sky Stories* rulebook should be more than enough.

In this story the narrator will have to control several characters, some of them at the same time, so you should be used to handling other aspects of the game and have a good grasp of the rules. On the other hand, the only henge in this story are the player characters, so you won’t have to remember a lot of complex rules for powers and such.

One of the biggest differences between this story and the two presented in *Golden Sky Stories* is that here, the scenes are spread among several days. This timeframe forces the narrator to jump ahead in time, describing how things change in the interim.

Narrator Preparation

This story can take place during any season. However, don’t set it during the holidays, since the story takes place while Billy is at school.. Probably the best season would be Summer, either in June or the first half of July.

This story includes a lot of characters. Therefore, you must pick them from the *People* section of the *Winter* chapter in the *Golden Sky Stories* book beforehand. Use the *Lonely* template for Billy, *Top Brat* for the bullies (treat all of them as one character), *City Person* for Anna, and *Diligent* for Miyuki.

Any henge can participate in this story, but keep in mind that it includes a scene in which night vision is very important, so a bird with the *Night Blindness* weakness might not be the best choice.

First Scene

LOCATION: SOME OUT-OF-THE-WAY,

QUIET PATH

TIME: EVENING

This scene begins with the group of henge walking along some out-of-the-way path on the outskirts of town. Although there's still daylight, night will come soon. The weather is fine, with a sweet breeze that helps cool the heat of the day.

Suddenly, the henge hear the high-pitched voices of some children, coming from an old barn nearby. At first it sounds like they're laughing, but if the henge pay more attention to the voices, they'll realize that one of these voices, a strange-sounding one, sounds more like crying.

Without a doubt, the henge will decide to go to the barn to investigate. While approaching the building they begin to understand the voices more clearly. The henge will be able to hear five different voices, which belong to Hibito, Mutta, Sena, Shin, and Billy.

If the henge actually enter the barn through its door, or take a peek by climbing to one of its small windows, they will see an unpleasant image. Four Japanese boys—Hibito, Mutta, Sena and Shin—have corralled a foreign boy, Billy, into a corner. They are laughing at him; teasing him about his inability to speak without stuttering, the strange

color of his hair, and the fact that he is incapable of doing something as simple as using a pair of chopsticks. The poor Billy is sitting on the ground, with his arms around his knees, trying (without much success) to protect himself from the verbal assault of the other boys.

WRITER'S NOTES

It is extremely important to note that the bullies are only verbally assaulting William. They will not, under any circumstance, resort to physical violence. My first version of this story had the group of children push and shove Billy, but it was clearly inappropriate for this kind of game. Verbal violence is already near the limit for Golden Sky Stories, with physical conflict completely out of the question. Therefore, the narrator shouldn't let the fight escalate any more. Hibito, Mutta, Sena and Shin might be mean, but they aren't delinquents.

All of the boys are of the same age, around 11 years old, and wear the Hitotsuna School's uniform. The four bullies have tricked Billy into coming here with them. They told him that there was an amazing secret in this barn, and that they would show him if he wanted to come with them. Wanting very much to fit in, Billy followed the boys, and discovered too late that it was a trap.

Now two things could happen: the henge might decide to intervene, or they might wait to see what happens. If they choose the former option, the narrator will play this scene however he or she decides makes the most sense. If the henge appear in the form of humans, the bullies will leave the place as quickly as possible, since they don't want anybody to know that they were picking on the new kid in town. If the henge decide to show themselves in animal form, the kids will probably ignore them, unless



the animals decide to directly interfere with their mischief. Finally, if the henge appear as humans with clearly visible animal parts... Well, if that's the case, whatever happens will depend on the result obtained in the Surprise table.

If the henge don't interrupt the four kids, Shin will declare that he's already bored, and the bullies will decide to go home, leaving Billy in the barn.

Since the bullies will flee if they're interrupted, the most likely conclusion to the encounter is that the foursome leave the scene and Billy is left alone with the henge. Now is time for them to talk to the poor kid.

The little boy is on the ground, scared, alone and crying. Therefore, the henge will need to manage the situation carefully. Also, any curious henge will clearly be very interested in William himself. The narrator should explain to the henge how strange this boy is. He is a Westerner, something they've likely never seen before, with blue eyes, red hair, and oddly ruddy skin. On top of that, he speaks with a very odd accent and uses only simple sentences. He smells just a little different from anybody the henge have met before.

After the initial shock of finding this strange boy, the henge will probably talk with him. If they earn his trust he'll tell them how his first week in Hitotsuna Town (and Japan!) has fared. Billy lived all his life in the USA, in San Francisco. He had friends there and was very happy. However, his father changed jobs, and the whole family had to move to Japan, to Hitotsuna Town.

Although Billy already knew some Japanese from his grandma (he's one quarter Japanese), he's been having problems understanding the people here. He can only discern what they're saying when they speak slowly and simply. More particularly, he doesn't fully understand the lectures in school, so he's afraid he will fail the exams for every subject. Except English, of course!

One of the most embarrassing moments happened when William was introducing himself to the class during his first day at the school. He told everybody that he liked to be called Billy, but the other boys couldn't pronounce it properly and call him "Biri." The problem here is that in Japanese "biri" (ビリ) means "at the bottom" or "the last on the list." Needless to say, Billy didn't like this new name at all.

On top of all of these problems, Billy was never a particularly extroverted kid, and it's easy to see why things have been so difficult for him. Everything here is different, and he doesn't seem to fit in.

The henge should try to cheer Billy up. Probably, showing enthusiasm at the same characteristics that make him different from the other boys is the best way, but there are lots of approaches that the henge could try.

After the conversation finishes the sun will set, and it's time to end the scene.

Second Scene

LOCATION: THE OLD BARN

TIME: EVENING

Still in the old barn, Billy notices it's night time already. He should go home soon so his parents don't get worried, or worse, get angry at him for not telling them where he was going.

The problem now is that Billy is completely lost. He has no idea of how to get home from here. In fact, he doesn't even know his own address, since his grasp of the Japanese language is tenuous at best. He has only memorized how to get to and from school.

Confronted with this realization, Billy gets scared. Hitotsuna Town is very dark during the night, and unlike San Francisco there are hardly any street lights. Even worse, there's no moon in the sky tonight.

In this scene the henge will have to guide Billy back to the school build-

ing, and from there help him remember the way back home. This is easier said than done, since Billy relies on several landmarks to know where to turn and in which way to go. This scene is a great chance for the narrator and the henge to cut loose with the kid naming peculiar things (a green sign with the drawing of a fat cow, a bench with the names of some children engraved, a dog house with a red roof, etc.) and the henge looking around for the landmarks using their night vision.

This scene will end when the group arrives at Billy's home.

Third Scene

LOCATION: BILLY'S HOME

TIME: NIGHT

When the group finally arrives at Billy's house, Billy's mother Anna will see them coming and run out to embrace her son. She was very concerned about his whereabouts, and she's finally relieved that he's home.

After the embrace Anna and Billy will begin to talk in English. She's clearly telling him off for arriving home so late. But Anna is not really angry, and quickly realizes that his son is not alone. She will switch to speaking Japanese to address the henge, or at least any henge that in human form.

Anna will be very grateful to them, since she'll assume that they were the ones who helped his son get home safely. Speaking of which, she'll also be very interested in knowing why he was so late, and who his new friends are. Let's hope that the henge come up with a good explanation.

After this quick conversation Anna will invite the henge inside. She wants to offer them dinner as a thank you for helping Billy, and won't take no for an answer. She'll insist until the henge accept.

The fate of any henge in animal form depends on what sort of explanation the group gives. For instance, if a cat is in-

troduced as another henge's pet, he or she will be allowed to enter the house. However, explaining a fox henge as a pet might be more difficult. Anna is getting the hang of Japan a bit better than Billy, and won't fall for anything obviously made up about Japanese culture.

The family hasn't finished unpacking yet, and there're a lot of big cardboard boxes around the house. Albert, Billy's father, is not home, since he'll be working until late tonight. After inviting everybody in, Anna will go to the kitchen and quickly prepare a meal. The rest of the scene will consist in the group happily chatting. The henge will have to answer difficult questions from somebody that clearly doesn't believe in magic or talking animals. Meanwhile they will get to enjoy some food.

WRITER'S NOTES

If the narrator wants to play a little bit, he or she can introduce some "strange" Japanese or American dishes to the dinner. Although Anna's mother was a Japanese emigrant to the US, Anna herself hasn't been to Japan before, except for a brief visit when she was little. She might be eager to try making some Japanese dishes for her Japanese guests that she's not too familiar with herself.

For instance, she might serve the group some nattou, a traditional food made of fermented soybeans which has an incredibly powerful smell and a strong flavor. She and her son probably won't like it, and the faces they make could be hilarious.

Another fun possibility could be that Anna prepares some that is typical in America but strange to see in a Japanese rural community. How will the henge react when they eat pizza for the first time? Maybe a dog henge will be very happy, but it's possible that an ancient fox henge could be horrified.



The scene will end when the henge manage to leave the house, preferably after having enjoyed a good meal. At this point they will probably be Billy's only friends in Japan.

Fourth Scene

LOCATION: ANY PART OF HITOTSUNA
TIME: DAY

This scene is set a couple of days after Billy met the henge for the first time. He's had more success making friends, and he's starting to like Hitotsuna Town.

The scene starts when a little girl, Miyuki, sees the henge wandering around the town and tries to speak with them. For this to happen at least one henge must be in human form, so the narrator should be ready to drop them a hint.

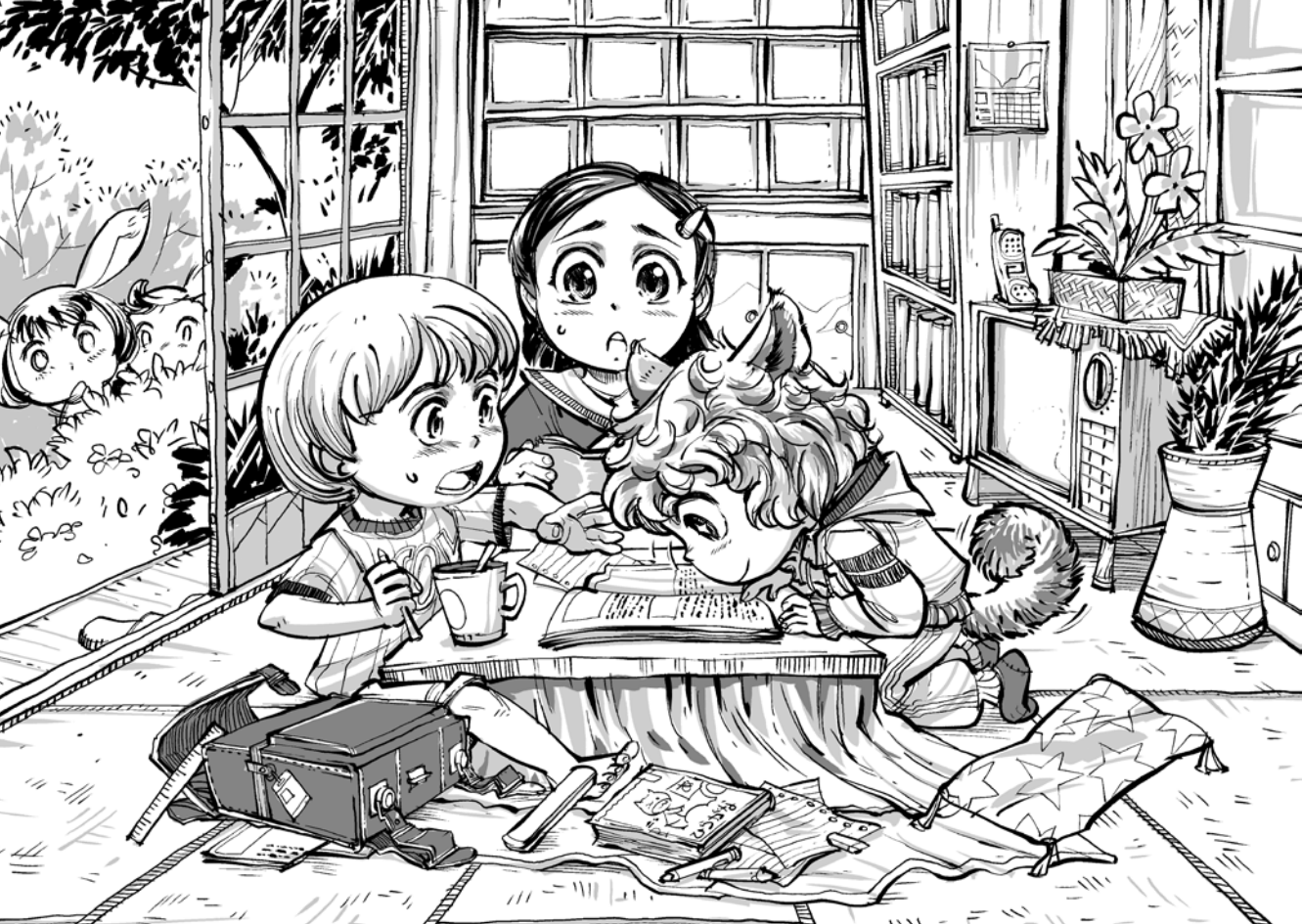
Miyuki is one of Billy's classmates, and she has a favor to ask. She's seen him hanging out with the henge lately

and, thinking that they're his friends, wants to ask for their help.

The story is as follows: Miyuki is a very good student. She always answers the teacher's questions in class and does her homework on time. However, there's one subject in particular that Miyuki doesn't seem to be able to grasp: English. No matter how hard she tries, English just gives her headaches and twists her brain in knots.

Recently, Miyuki has taken some interest in Billy. She always thought he was cute, and now she's thinking that maybe they could help each other. Billy is clearly a smart kid, but he gets lost a lot during the classes, probably because he doesn't speak Japanese very well. The only subject that Billy excels at is English.

Miyuki has concocted a plan: Billy can help Miyuki with her English, and she'll help him with the other subjects.



The only problem is that Miyuki doesn't dare speak to Billy. Since he's a foreigner, Miyuki is a little afraid of him, and she would like for the henge (on the surface they seem to be Japanese kids) to introduce her.

Miyuki speaks quickly, all the while looking down and fidgeting. It's clear that she isn't completely sure of what she's doing. Don't forget to let the henge make Impression Checks to form connections with Miyuki.

When Miyuki has explained herself and the henge have offered their help, all of them go together to Billy's home. The henge already know the way!

The scene ends when the group reaches Billy's house.

Final Scene

LOCATION: BILLY'S HOME

TIME: EVENING

It's already evening when Miyuki and the henge arrive at Billy's home. The boy and his mother are at home, gathered around a notebook. They were trying to make sense of William's homework when the doorbell rang.

Anna welcomes the henge, very happy to see her son's friends again. She'll also notice the new girl, and will introduce herself and her son to Miyuki. Miyuki will be acting shyly, and even blushes sometimes while the henge explain Miyuki's offer to Billy.

Billy also blushes a little bit, but in the end will wholeheartedly accept. Anna will also be very happy; it really seems that her son is adapting to life in Hitotsuna Town.

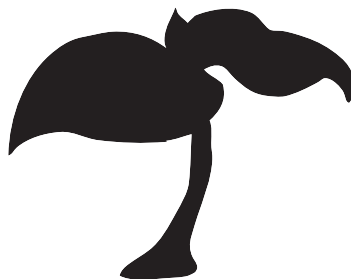
The scene (and the story) will end when Billy and Miyuki sit down together to study. They seem happy together, and Billy has finally left behind the toughest days of his new life in Japan.

Thanks to the henge, that is.

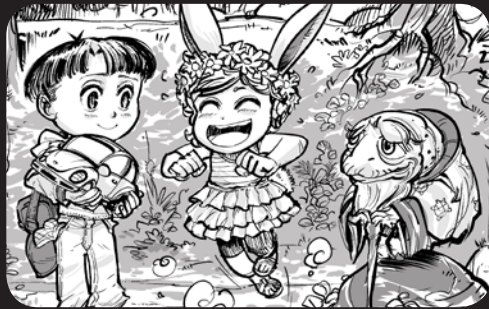
Customization

As the narrator you could easily change this story to suit your needs. The fate of any henge. In addition to or instead of helping Miyuki, you could add one or two scenes where it turns out that the bullies actually feel bad about their behavior and try to apologize to Billy. Later they could even turn into his friends!

Another way to change this story is to add some kind of tour around Hitotsuna Town. In the process of introducing Billy to life in the small town, the henge could take the opportunity to show him some of the most relevant landmarks. They might even get to meet other henge or a local god!



Story 2



Just Leaving

CHARACTERS

- Satou
- Apo, his trusty dog (a henge)
- Kenji, the old fisherman
- Gorogoro, the local god of a small pond

TIME NEEDED

About 2 Hours

WONDER AND FEELINGS

For this story the narrator can use 20 points of Wonder and 20 points of Feelings in each scene.

Story Summary

Satou is a small boy who has spent his whole life in rural Hitotsuna Town, but a month ago his parents told him that they're moving to America. He tried to persuade his mother to let him live in Hitotsuna Town by himself, but to no avail.

The ominous day has finally arrived, and the family leaves tomorrow. Angry at his parents, Satou has packed up his most essential things (his favorite toys) and fled from home. He'll stay in Hitotsuna Town no matter what!

However, Satou's plan is clearly impossible, and in his heart, the runaway knows it. Maybe a group of henge could find the stray boy, help him say goodbye to his best friend, and convince him to return home safe and sound. Luckily, Satou's parents haven't found out about his escapade yet...

Introduction

This story, like the previous one, introduces some elements that make it slightly different from the two scenarios presented in the Golden Star Stories book. Although this story has fewer characters than *Just Arrived*, one of them is a henge and another is a local god. The narrator should take a look at the Local Gods section of the Winter chapter in the *Golden Sky Stories* book. It'll be much easier for the narrator to play this story if he or she has played at least one or two games of *Golden Sky Stories* before.

The most important thing to keep in mind while playing this story is that it's a bittersweet tale. No matter what the henge do, they won't be able to stop Satou's departure. However, they could help him reconcile with the fact and give a proper goodbye to his best friend. But don't let this ruin the mood! Satou will surely be very happy in America.

Narrator Preparation

This story will have a much bigger impact, and therefore will be much more fun, if the henge already have some Threads with Satou. If they have shared some experiences before, the departure will be more meaningful for both Satou and the player characters. In fact, a possible modification to this story is for Satou to be the master of a player's dog

henge. This is described in the Customizing This Story section.

For this story, the Narrator should use the *Leaving Town* character type with a Child of 3 and an Adult of 1 for Satou, and the Sensei character type for Kenji. Both can be found in the *People* section of the *Winter* chapter in the *Golden Sky Stories* book. For Apo, the Narrator could use any dog henge of his or her own devising. The only condition is that this henge must have the *Collar* weakness. Finally, for Gorogoro, the narrator should use the *Pond God* character type found in the *Local Gods* section of the *Winter* chapter. Don't forget to take a look at the dog henge and pond god powers.

Any henge can participate in this story, and it can happen during any season.

First Scene

LOCATION: SATOU'S HOME

TIME: EVENING

The story begins with the henge walking around Hitotsuna Town. They pass near the home of one of their friends, a dog henge named Apo. It looks like Apo's family is going to leave town very soon, since they're cleaning the house and packing up all their belongings.

Apo is in the yard. He's big, cheerful Akita, but today he doesn't seem happy at all. In fact he's pacing nervously around the yard. When he notices the henge he calls them, clearly looking for help. Of course, Apo can't take human form in front of his family, so the henge must devise a way to distract them or take Apo somewhere else.

When Apo and the henge can finally talk, he explains what's happening: his family is moving to America tomorrow, but Satou, the couple's only child, doesn't want to leave Hitotsuna Town. Unable to convince his parents that they shouldn't leave, Satou ran away from home! He left carrying only his favorite toys, and told Apo that he doesn't plan to come back. Needless to say, Apo

is very concerned about the situation. Satou's parents haven't noticed his absence yet, but the dog is afraid of what will happen when they do.

Apo also tells the henge that he knows where Satou is, but that he can't go looking for the boy. He begs the group to go to a spot along Towa River where the boy will likely be, and convince him to return home.

If the henge ask Apo why he doesn't go himself, he'll say that Satou ordered him to stay. Other henge might not understand why Apo is so obsessed with obeying his master's orders but for him there is no other way. (Remember, Apo has the *Collar* weakness.)

This scene ends when the henge agree to help Apo and leave for the river, looking for Satou.

WRITER'S NOTES

If one player gets to play Satou's dog (no need to name him Apo) as described in the Customization sections, a lot of aspects of this scene will change.

*To begin with, the location doesn't need to be Satou's home. If the dog henge is controlled by a player he or she won't have the *Collar* weakness, or if he does, Satou won't have ordered the dog to not follow him. The scene could be set anywhere in Hitotsuna Town; it just needs to be a place where the henge meet frequently.*

If Satou's dog is a player character, they get to deliver this exposition instead of the narrator. However, the narrator should meet in private with the dog player beforehand, to explain to him or her the initial situation and how the story begins. This character should also know that Satou will be found at the flood plain. It's entirely possible that this scene would end up featuring no narrator's characters.

This setup seems to offer no op-





portunities for the narrator to intervene, but that's not necessarily true. The narrator could set the scene in a place with bystanders, interrupting whatever the other henge were doing when Satou's dog appears. The narrator should try to lighten the mood a little bit using the entrance of the dog henge! Maybe the other henge were eating and the dog jumps on top of the food, or they might have been spying on some people and the dog gives away their hidden place barking at them.

Second Scene

LOCATION: BY THE TOWA RIVER

TIME: DAY

Following the indications given by Apo, the henge arrive at a spot in on the banks of the Towa River, where they find Satou talking with his best friend. Surprisingly, Satou's best friend is nowhere near his age. Kenji, a fisherman around 70 years old, is the person Satou likes the most in the whole town. Kenji is a wise and patient man, who has taught Satou all about fishing. When the henge arrive, Kenji is trying to convince the boy to return to his parents.

Kenji, has lived in Hitotsuna Town for a very long time - since he was born - and as such he already knows about henge and other spirits. He won't be Surprised by them, even when witnessing at a transformation. In fact, he immediately knows who the interlopers are.

After a long conversation, in which the henge should participate and offer their opinions, Satou arrives at a compromise, agreeing to one of the propositions that Kenji made. He will accept departing Hitotsuna Town if he can leave behind something important to him. That way he'll be compelled to return one day to get it back.

At this moment Kenji will turn to the henge and ask them if they know about any friendly local gods. It's possible that

the henge will be shocked at this comment from the fisherman, who seems to know a lot about the supernatural beings of the town.

Shock or not, Kenji will explain himself, and tell Satou and the henge that the best way to ensure that an object is still in Hitotsuna Town when he returns is to entrust that object to a local god. With the reasoning behind his words exposed, Kenji asks the henge again for the name of a local god with whom they are in good standing.

Now the narrator should tell the henge that, in fact, they know about such a local god. Gorogoro, a turtle god who guards a pond in the southern part of town, could be ideally suited for the task. Gorogoro is old and sleepy, but has a heart of gold.

After the conversation is finished the henge will guide Satou to Gorogoro's pond. But before leaving, the boy will bow to Kenji, thanking him for his patience and friendship.

It's time to move on to the next scene.

Third Scene

LOCATION: GOROGORO'S SHRINE

TIME: DAY

After walking for a little bit, Satou and the henge will arrive at the aforementioned pond. It's a quiet and relaxing place, partially hidden from its surroundings by a gentle slope and a subtle mist. One could spend hours here, isolated from the outside world. At the nearest shore of the pond is a tiny shrine, with a small turtle figurine that could be mistaken for a pile of rocks if seen from afar. The turtle statue has a well-worn red scarf around its neck.

Gorogoro is the local god that presides over this pond. He takes the form of an old turtle the size of a five-year old. He always walks on his hind legs, albeit with the aid of a walking stick. A long beard grows from his chin, and his big black eyes show wisdom. Since his area of in-

fluence is only this small pond, Gorogoro doesn't have an important position in the hierarchy of the kami. He doesn't mind though; he's quite humble and calm.

This local god likes to sleep a lot, even when it would be inadvisable to do so. In fact, Satou and the henge will find him sleeping when they arrive at the pond.

Now that they've found the local god, the henge should wake him up and tell him why they came. At first Gorogoro will be annoyed (after all, nobody wants to be woken up from a nap), but he will be touched by the story of young Satou. It's the henge's task to change the heart of the local god.

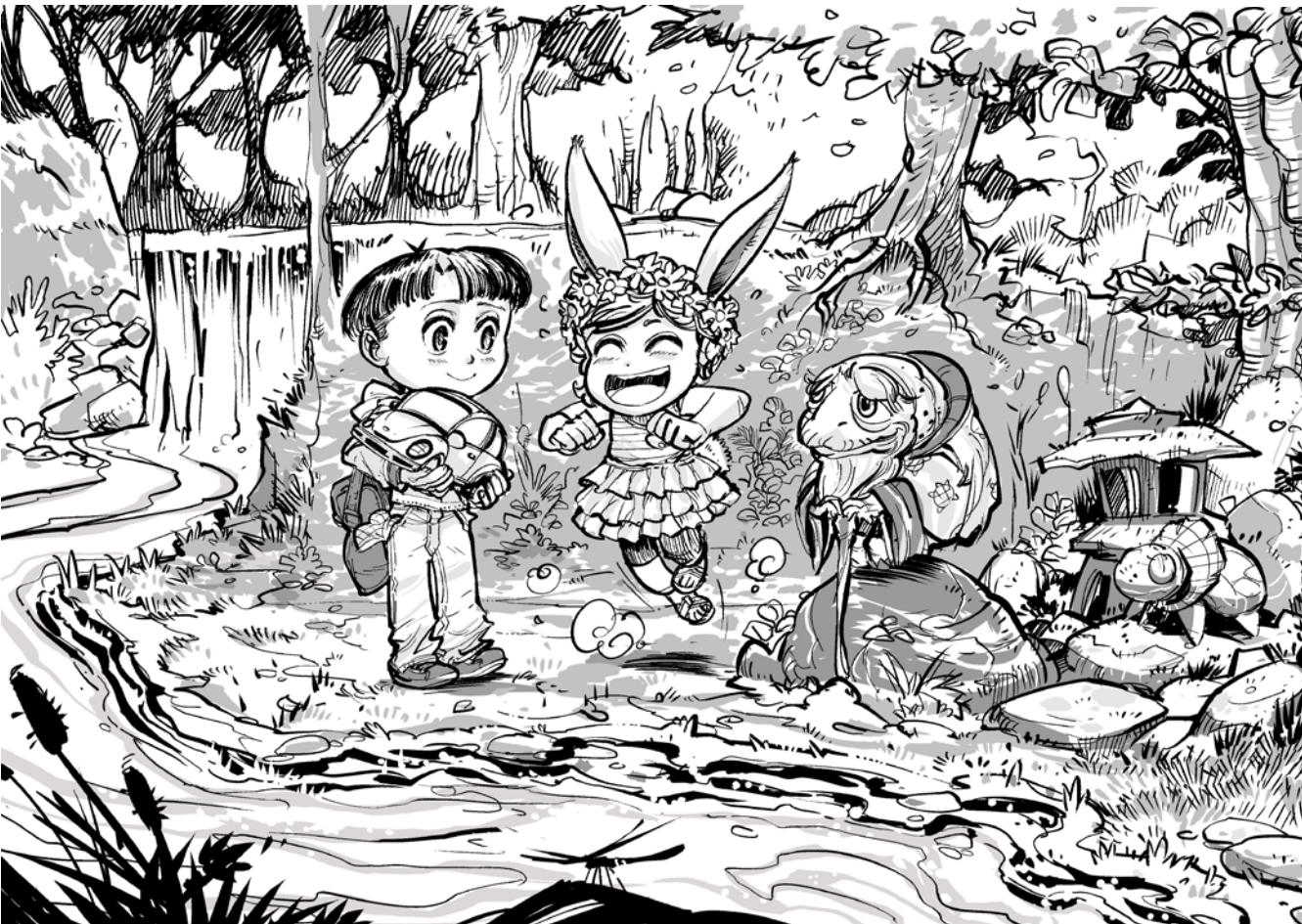
Gorogoro will offer to store the object for Satou until he comes back. But in return, the boy must also do a favor for the ancient turtle. What Gorogoro asks is simple: he wants some clothes. The local god points at his shrine and tells the group that the last offering he received, the scarf that's around the turtle

statue's neck, has just about worn out, so he needs another piece of fabric that will last him some time. This request is fairly easy to fulfill, since nearly any cloth will suffice, but Gorgoro insists that Satou himself make the offering, as he is the one asking for a favor.

After the offering is made, Gorogoro will use his Water-Strider power to walk to the deepest part of the pond with Satou (who surely will be impressed!) and the henge. (Though any cat henge present might not like being surrounded by water...)

Once there, Gorogoro will ask Satou to throw something important to him to the water, promising that he'll keep it safe until his return. After a brief pause, Satou will reach into his backpack and extract a toy car, which he'll throw into the pond.

At this point, Satou will realize that he should go back home to his parents. He has finally accepted his fate and is ready to leave Hitotsuna Town. He carries in his heart the time he spent with



Kenji, and is now confident that someday he'll come back.

The scene ends when Satou and the henge go back to Satou's house.

Final Scene

LOCATION: ANY PART OF HITOTSUNA

TIME: EVENING

In this scene Satou arrives home safely, and tells Apo that he's very sorry. The dog can't contain his emotions and begins licking his master's face, incredibly happy for his return. Apo will also show his gratitude to the henge, and will excuse the boy's behavior.

Luckily for the boy, his parents didn't notice that he was away the whole evening. They were busy cleaning and packing!

Only the farewell remains. Make it sweet and moving. Say goodbye to Satou and his henge, wishing him the best in his new life.

WRITER'S NOTES

Remember that if a player character is Satou's dog this scene will be much more convoluted. You'll have to determine if he also leaves or stays at Hitotsuna Town. If it's the former, give him or her the goodbye he or she deserves!

Customization

This story can feel completely different with just one change: letting one of the player characters be Satou's dog. Of course, this character is still a henge, but now he or she (and the henge's friends) will be experiencing the story in a completely different way. Now the kid leaving isn't just a small boy from Hitotsuna Town, but the dog henge's master.

If your group already has a dog henge with a different master you can change the story to make that master the one leaving town. However, this will only work if the aforementioned master is a kid, or maybe a teenager. An adult will have a radically different perspective

on leaving home. They're unlikely to be forced to leave home just because their parents want to move, though even if they do choose to leave on their own the parting could still be bittersweet.

The scene most affected by this change will be the first. There is a "writer's notes" sidebar there explaining what modifications are needed. Note that using this customization could make the story last up to three hours, from the original two.

Last but not least, there's an important point to consider before making Satou one of the players' master: what will happen with the dog when the story ends? If the family is leaving for America, will they leave the dog in Japan? Or will they travel with the animal to their new home?

For a dog to lose his or her master is a huge blow, but for a henge to leave his or her friends and hometown could be even worse. With this in mind, carefully consider whether you want to still customize the story in this way. It could be an excellent opportunity to end a series of stories, retire a character, or even say goodbye to a friend who is leaving in real life.

Whatever you decide, be respectful to the other players and discuss the matter with them beforehand.

Subsequent Stories

After this story is finished, you could also go forward in time a while, and play another story in which an adult Satou returns to Hitotsuna Town to retrieve his submerged toy. He might not be very sure if what he remembers is true or just the fantasy of a small child, but when he meets the henge again (still looking like kids!) he will know his memories are authentic.

A return to Satou's past could be a heartwarming tale that should include a visit to old Kenji, which surely will be still alive to see small Satou turned into a grown man.

Henge Sweets

By Allen Varney

Introductions can be awkward. When henge meets human, or two henge meet each other, it helps to break the ice. For many henge, one sure way to win a new friend is to offer candy—Japanese candy!

Any random Asian grocery sells hundreds of candies. Buy ten random bags—or boxes, canisters, blocks, trays, wheels, Chinese take-out food containers, shapes of all kinds, more package shapes than a toy store. Open any one of them, try one bite, and there it is, on the tongue, immediate: the Asian weird. Maybe it's delicious sticky-chewy rice gelatin, with an odd filmy transparent wrapper that melts in the mouth. Maybe it's sweet-salty red bean paste, or sesame chocolate, or lip-puckering salty-sour lemon. Maybe it's seaweed. It's probably seaweed. It's definitely strange and wonderful—magical—just like a henge.

Many henge steal food sometimes (and the mouse henge rather more often). Candy, though, is different. For a henge with a sweet tooth—the Japanese term is *amatou*—candy isn't food but pure pleasure. In the presence of their favored candy, these “sweeties” get weak in the knees. They react with wild interest, the way fox henge react to fried tofu, or raccoon dogs with the Glutton weakness react to, well, everything.

When the player group wants to introduce a new player, the characters can play a scene where one of these “henge sweets” attracts the henge newcomer. Or if they've already met, but haven't yet developed a Connection, an offer of the correct sweet gives an easy reason to like the bearer.





Henge and Their Sweets

Each type of henge—not every single one of that type, but most of them—tends to love candies with one specific kind of flavor. Your own henge character doesn't have to like that kind, but you automatically know which kind attracts your own type. Witches and older fox henge know the preferred flavors of all types of henge. So do some old people in town—and Elder Turtle, of course. (Yet who knows Elder Turtle's favorite? Hmmm...)

Older henge usually like home-made sweets; younger ones may prefer packaged commercial brands. Mononoke henge and humans might like any or all sweets, or none; there's no way to tell.

Henge	Preferred Flavor
Bird	Spiced Plum
Cat	Squid, Scallop
Dog	Caramel
Fish	Sweet Rice
Fox	Taro Root
Horse	Cabbage
Mouse	Chocolate
Rabbit	Red Bean Paste
Raccoon Dog	Pretty Much Everything!
Wolf	Chicken Essence

Sweet Stories

If you like, you could build a story around sweets. Maybe some candy mysteriously disappears from a house in town, and the characters track down the thief.

But in a little story, the candy can do its job in one short scene. A character's favorite sweet winds up attracting a new

visitor; a henge cooks a batch of candy just to win new friends; or the established characters simply meet the new arrival, and someone happens to be carrying the right candy in her pocket.

Here's how it works: imagine someone with candy—the “bearer”—meets a henge for the first time, and there's no prior Connection between them. If the bearer offers the sweet, and it's the kind the henge likes, the bearer's Impression check succeeds automatically—please don't bother choosing an attribute—and creates a Like connection between them of strength 1. (If these two are the only players in the story, the Like strength is 2.)

Sweets at the Gaming Table

East and West share *amatou*, though, as in many other ways, their differences are surprising. For players unfamiliar with Asian culture, the fabulous range of candies at small Asian groceries provides a gentle introduction, and a nice conversation piece during the game.

Possibly the best-known Japanese candy in North America and Europe is Pocky. The chocolate-coated biscuit sticks have been around for nearly 50 years. In Japan there are dozens of Pocky flavors, like banana, grape, tangerine, green tea, coconut-ginger, Kobe wine, cream cheese, Brazilian pudding, Men's (dark chocolate), and black sesame.

But the real action in strange commercial candy flavors is in Kit Kat bars. These are the same Nestle chocolate wafer biscuits sold worldwide, but in Japan, Kit Kats are actually something of a good luck charm for Japanese students, because the name sounds like *kitto katsu* (“you shall surely win”). So Kit Kats are packaged with books or CD singles, and dozens of different Kit Kat bars are flavored with everything from custard pudding, grilled corn, Earl Grey tea, and sweet potato to Camembert cheese, lemon vinegar, and citrus with hot pepper. And the bestselling Kit Kat flavor? Soy sauce.

These are the odd foothills of a strange mountain of red bean paste, spiced plum, taro root, lamb-flavored caramels, and New Golden Chicken Essence Candy (ingredients: sugar, corn starch, chicken essence, salt, monosodium glutamate). Westerners find some of these sweets delicious, like Botan rice candy (in the edible wrapper) and the popular Kasugai gummies. Others taste okay but are sold under names that give pause, like Meiji Gummy Collagen. Many require advanced study and a careful approach, such as Pickle EX Lemon Milk bourbon stick chocolate, Okonomiyaki Drops (in cabbage and radish flavors), and caffeinated Black Black Super Menthol gum, Oolong or Ginseng flavor, sold in single packs or by the tub.

The mountain extends down to the sea, too, with delicacies like chocolate-covered dried squid, scallop candy in sweet sauce, Kanten Konbu seaweed, and *echizen kurage*, made from the flesh, if that's the word, of a six-foot-long, 440-pound jellyfish. It's flavored with caramel.

Then there are the cakes, cookies, and ice cream. According to the web site Weird Asia News, these are all real flavors of real desserts sold in real stores:

- corn, potato, wasabi, taro, tomato, fried eggplant
- octopus, shrimp, whale, oyster, abalone, crab, eel, tuna
- ox tongue, horse, pit viper, chicken wing
- miso, cypress, noodle, soy sauce, lettuce-and-potato, wasabi

Sampling some of these sweets requires a true spirit of adventure, but many of them can please even the stodgiest palate. Ahead of the next roleplaying session, please consider a foray to the nearest Asian grocery. It might turn out that not only henge are fond of Japanese candy.

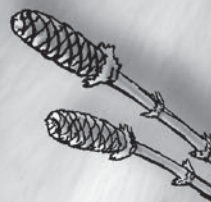
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...plus extensive personal research.

Editing by Basil Lisk

Art by Honoel A. Ibardolaza



Tale: A Lively Summer



It was early afternoon on a midsummer day. Dragonflies hovered over the rice paddies, and the cicadas had been singing for days. Playing children's voices sounded from somewhere far away. A bird tweeted from the rooftop.

Shizue sighed. "Everyone's so lively..."

The sky was blue, the sunlight was warm, and the wind was still.

"I wish I could be like that," she murmured to herself. "I guess."

Even in the shade of the porch, the heat and humidity were unbearable. The wind chime would only sound if she fanned it, and her hand had already gotten tired of waving her fan around. Her sweat had made her black mourning clothes damp, and they clung to her skin. The hem of her kimono felt heavy somehow, and with no wind, a kimono can be sweltering.

Frowning, she drained the can of beer in her hand, which by now had gone completely flat.

She put her feet into a bucket of water. When her feet met the surface of the water it splashed. She let out yet another sigh.

"I wish... I could cheer up." She saw the sleeve of her mourning dress, which seemed to cling to her knee, and it made her sigh again.

"Is something... wrong?" A girl's voice came from somewhere.

"...Huh?"

"Everyone likes the summer... right?"

Startled, Shizue looked around, but didn't see anyone. "What? What's going on?"

"Here." The voice was coming from overhead.

"O-On the roof?"

"Yeah, on the roof. The sun is hot again today..."

"Where did you come from? Please come down."

"Will it be bad if I don't come down...?"

"Yes," Shizue said to the roof, starting to get a little mad.

"Okay, I'll come down."

A gentle wind came up. The wind chime rang softly. The wind caressed Shizue's sweaty body wrapped in mourning clothes.

The girl came down to the ground as though gently wrapped in wind. She had yellow hair and white skin. And there were large wings on her back, the same color as her hair.

She looked like an angel.

"Hello?" She had such a beautiful voice.

"H-Hello." Shizue returned her greeting without really thinking about it. For a moment she just stared. Having a strange girl show up at her house wasn't a good thing. Shizue wondered how the girl had made those wings, and asked, "Where did you come from? You know you shouldn't just barge into people's houses, right?"

"Sarah is Sarah. I didn't come into the house... I just stopped on the roof... This roof is good for perching."

Hearing the girl say that with such a calm expression, Shizue couldn't be mad at her. "Sarah? Is that your name?"

"Yes. Sarah's name. What was this sad person's name again...?"

“Shizue.”

“Right, Shizue. I remembered. Shizue. Shizue.”

“I don’t think we’ve met before.”

“No, Sarah knows Shizue. Sarah knows her well. Shizue is sad today.”

“People don’t normally say they know that, you know.”

“Why are you sad? Are you sick?”

The girl alighted on the lawn and tilted her head to one side. The girl had been floating, and maybe it was the beer that let Shizue take it in stride.

“I’m not sick. Do I look sick to you?” Shizue lifted her arms a little, displaying the sleeves of her black kimono. She had just lost someone very important to her.

“Black clothes.”

“H-Hey...”

“Are you a crow?” asked Sarah, taking hold of Shizue’s sleeve.

“What’re you talking about?” asked Shizue, becoming perplexed. “Stop it.” Who was this girl? Why did she have wings on her back? With these and other questions running through her head, she couldn’t say anything more.

Sarah patted Shizue’s body. “Shizue, you’re not sick?”

“No, I told you I wasn’t.”

Sarah pressed a hand to her forehead and peered into her mouth. With Sarah getting a little too close, Shizue pushed her away.

“Why are you sad, Shizue?”

“Listen to me!”

Somehow, in dealing with Sarah her depression had lifted. Somewhere along the line, Shizue had become more like her old self. Strange as it seemed, Shizue just couldn’t leave Sarah to her own devices. Without realizing it, she started talking to Sarah like a friend.

“Oh... Shizue, Shizue! The sunset...”

“Listen... Oh, you’re right. I’d better start making dinner... Oh.” If she made dinner she’d still have to eat it alone. Shizue suddenly remembered the depression she’d forgotten while chatting with Sarah.



"Shizue? Shizue?"

And all it took was one word: dinner.

Tears streamed down her face and wouldn't stop. Every painful thing seemed to swirl around inside her head.

"Shizue, don't cry. You need to call out." Sarah flapped her wings, and the wind embraced Shizue. "You need to sing." The wind brought the smell of summer sunshine and warmed her. "Sing."

Sarah began to sing. Her voice was beautiful. The wind began to dance. Sarah sang and sang and sang. She sang the wind.

Gently...

Shizue found herself soaring through the air.

"What...?" She was so startled that her tears came to a stop.

There was a flapping sound, and Sarah spread her wings and floated in mid-air. "Want to go to the other side of the sky? This place isn't good... You shouldn't cry."

There was another flapping sound, and it came from Shizue's own back.

"What? Huh?"

"I gave you wings... Want to go?"

"Whaaaaaaaaat!?"

Shizue rose up, lifting herself into the air. The bucket tipped over.

Higher and higher. The wind chime rang, and they rose into the sky.

"What? W-Wait... I'm... I mean..." Her drunkenness immediately faded. Sarah and Shizue flew through the fading sunlight on great bird wings. At first it was too much for Shizue to really take in, but she soon forgot her troubles in the face of the scenery stretching out below her.

This was what it was like to be a bird. She flew after Sarah, another bird. She let herself trust the wings and the wind, and glided. She was flying.

Looking down at the houses and rice paddies, she saw the Towa River that cut

through the town, and they continued south. The red light of the setting sun bathed the land from the east.

They came to the south of the town, to a large shrine, the Hitotsuna Nushi Shrine.

The two of them circled overhead, and then lightly touched down on the gravel outside.

"We're here, Shizue."

"Huh? This is... Hitotsuna Nushi Shrine? Wh-Why are we here?" Shizue wasn't supposed to be in a shrine while still mourning, and it made her nervous. She uncomfortably looked around.

"Suzune... It's almost night, so... I'm going to sleep," said Sarah.

A reply came from behind Shizue. "I suppose it can't be helped. You can hardly see without light after all."

Shizue jumped and spun around to see a young girl with a fluffy golden tail and pointed ears sprouting from the top of her head. The girl was younger than Sarah, and short enough that she just came up to Shizue's waist. Even so, something about her bearing made her seem far, far older.

The girl's eyes met Shizue's.

"Um... Uh..." She was about to address the girl when there was a sound of flapping wings again. "S-Sarah?"

"Sleeping."

The winged girl rubbed her eyes and floated in the air. She was too high to reach. Shizue tried to fly like before, but the wings were gone.

"Sarah! Wait! I'm barefoot!"

"I'll bring them tomorrow. If I remember..." And with that, Sarah began flying unsteadily through the dark sky, somewhere into the forest by the shrine.

"She's quite a handful. Now, your name is Shizue? I am Suzune. And it seems you are Sarah's guest."

"Uh, um... Miss Suzune, I..."

"Excellent. It's not often Sarah brings a friend. And we can entertain you even without her."

"Huh?"

A gently flickering lantern shed its light on the shrine, and light was leaking from the door of the shrine. There was a sound of voices inside. There were a lot of people... talking, it seemed.

"Everyone will be gathering soon." Suzune took hold of Shizue's black sleeve with her tiny hand, and laughed. "You are not a child; would you care for some sake?"

"Um... Well... Wait, Suzune, you drink?" Shizue was more than a little surprised to hear this young child speaking of such things.

"Of course. We're having a banquet tonight. It should be great fun."

Suzune kept walking, and pulled Shizue into the shrine proper. The door opened with a creaking sound, and the voices inside rose in celebration.

The interior of the shrine was lit by countless candles, and it was full of creatures Shizue had only ever heard of in the folk tales of her youth. They

were big, small, creepy, cute, so many different kinds, all eating and drinking together.

Kappas drank sake from the dishes of each other's concave heads.

Flickering ghosts danced overhead, singing graveyard songs.

A great big oni sat drinking sake out of a huge cup like a hat.

An animal like a jet black wolf slurped up sake from a bowl set in front of him.

And there were more creatures that Shizue could not name, monsters she'd never heard of, all making merry and celebrating.

At the heart of it all was a woman with long, black hair. She sipped her sake and stared at the newcomers.

"Kaminaga-hime, this is Sarah's guest. She flew here to join the banquet." So saying, Suzune briskly walked into the midst of the revelers.

Shizue did not panic; rather, she was so dumbfounded that she simply gaped



at the scene before her. Even as she walked, Shizue was offered sake again and again. Even though she'd started to tremble from fear, Shizue gulped down the sake. No sooner had she finished draining one cup when another appeared in her hand.

"Impressive. Sarah just brought you here, yet you really know how to drink."

Shizue looked down into her sake. "Well, I can drink plenty more."

"If you're feeling down, drinking can cheer you up a bit."

"You're really something. I was sure a human would just run away, but..."

As they spoke, Shizue kept drinking whatever they gave her. She was starting to feel the effects of the alcohol, and she didn't care about being surrounded by monsters anymore.

Shizue had not originally been this black-clothed brooding woman. Surrounded by monsters, she drank, laughed, and celebrated. She partied with the monsters, and drank the night away.

She cried a little too. For just a little while, she forgot the loss of her husband, and slept.

Shizue groaned just a little as she opened her eyes to the light of morning. The birds were singing. Her head was pounding from a hangover. "Ugh. Oww..."

She held her head as she sat up, and she found herself on the porch of her own house.

"Oh... It was a dream..."

Feeling disappointed, she kicked a beer can as she stood up.

"What's a dream?"

"Shizue, did you have a dream?"

Before her eyes were Sarah and Suzune. Shizue stared, mouth hanging open.

"It seems Kaminaga-hime has taken a liking to you. That's quite unusual."

"Kaminaga-hime?"

"Be quiet, Sarah."

"Shizue, would you care to join us again?"

Seeing the two of them like that, Shizue burst into laughter.

"Sure. Let's head to the shrine together. Can you wait while I change clothes?"

From that day on, Shizue didn't wear mourning clothes anymore. Many people saw her going to the Hitotsuna Nushi Shrine, accompanied by two girls.

Everyone had a lively summer.



Tale: Kaminaga-hime's Soccer Ball



Lately, the kids in Hitotsuna Town have been into soccer. Daisuke, the ringleader, got his parents to buy him a great soccer ball, and everyone's been playing soccer all the time since then.

They don't really care about the finer points of the rules of soccer, so they just try to kick the ball between whatever they agree to be the goal, or use the field at school when they can. But then, there are a lot of kids doing stuff there besides soccer, so they don't actually get to use the school's field all that often. During winter break they got to use the field as much as they wanted, so the boys enjoyed playing soccer all through Christmas and the New Year.

It wasn't just the kids that were waiting for winter break though. There were some henge who wanted to pretend to be human and play with them. One of these was a dog named Koro. For her, chasing a ball and kicking it to someone on the same team was a dream come true. At first the boys were a little wary of this girl that suddenly showed up and wanted to play with them, but before long they became fast friends. Whenever they made plans to play soccer, they were sure to let her know.

When winter break finally arrived, everyone met at the school's athletic field, but...

"No way... They're doing construction."

"What?"

"What the heck?"

This time there were no goals or anything to use on the athletic field.

"Sorry, but we can't do much about it. If you can hold out, you should be able to use it the day after tomorrow though," the construction man said apologetically.

No one complained, but there was still the matter of where to go to play.

"Where should we go? The park?"

"There's too many tiny kids there. We'll get in trouble."

There were only two parks in Hitotsuna Town, and both were too small for them to use for their game.

"But we'll get in even more trouble if we play in the rice paddies, and the fields have too much zebra grass to trip over..."

"And if we go to the riverbed, the ball could fall into the river..."

"Well, then Koro could get it for us."

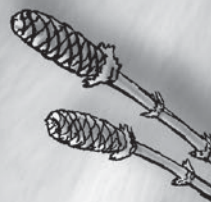
"But it looks like there isn't anywhere else to go."

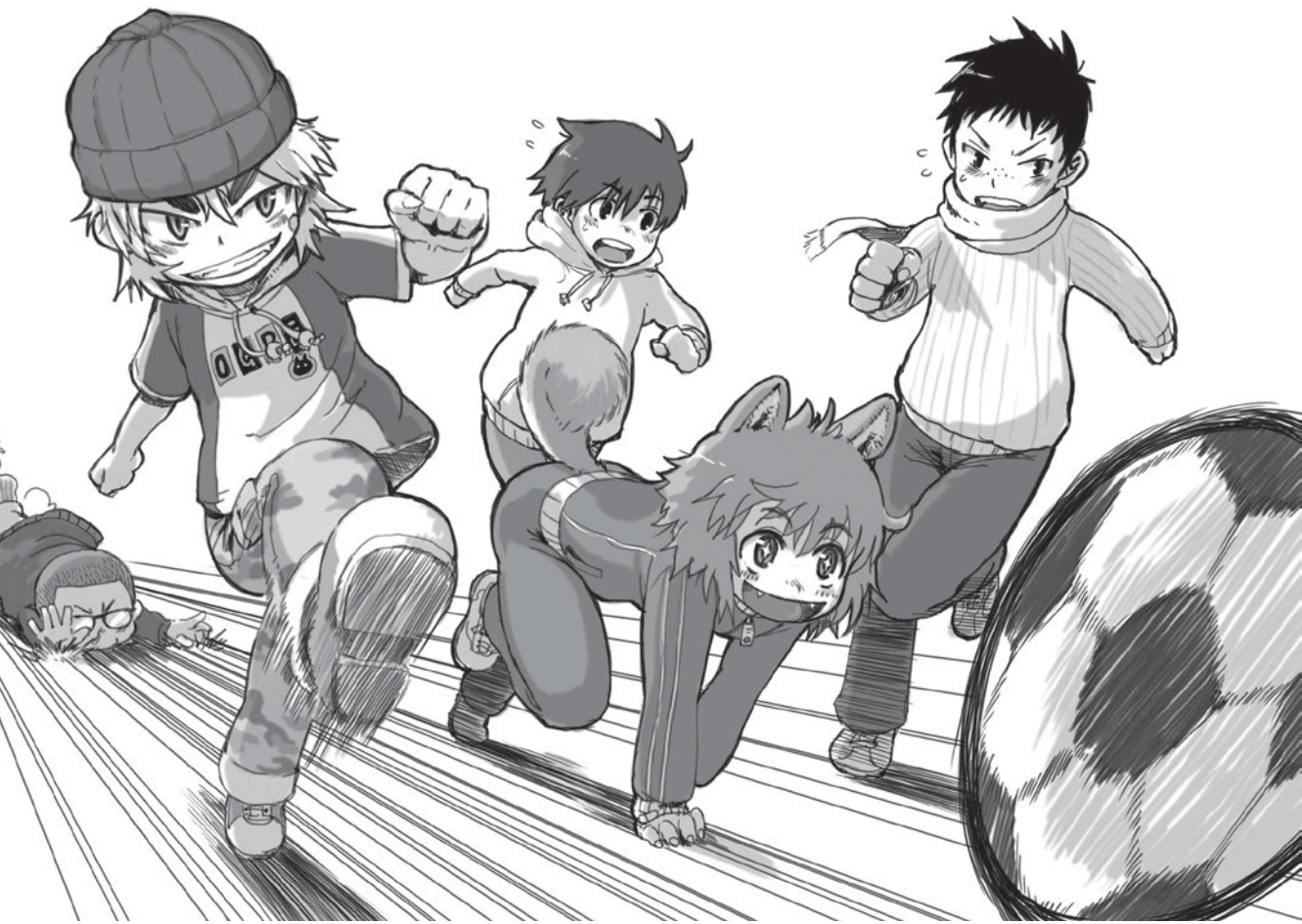
"Aww." Koro remembered something and perked up. "Oh. Wait! There's a place we can go on Mt. Kaminaga! There are trees around, but no cliffs! The grass is really short, so we can play soccer!"

"Well, I guess we might as well try."

"Yeah. It's not like we have anything else to do."

So, they all headed to this secret field on the mountain. Koro had only been there once before, with Suzune the fox and Amami the rabbit. The henge and mononoke and such of the town gathered there once a month to sing and dance. There were a lot of henge and mononoke that Koro had never met before. With everyone gathering there





time and time again, the grass on the field was suitably short, but since people seldom went to Mt. Kaminaga, hardly anyone knew about it.

They had ventured a little ways up the mountain, and when they emerged from the trees, a great field suddenly spread out before them.

“Woah! This is amazing!”

“Awesome! I never knew this was here!”

“Heheheh. We can totally play soccer here.”

“Thanks, Koro!”

“Wuf! You’re welcome!”

“Huh? But it looks like someone’s here?”

“Huh?”

When they looked closer, it turned out there was a boy out on the field. “Hey, what’re you guys doing here?” He was about the same age as the boys, but he looked kind of scary.

“Um, we came to play soccer.”

“Hey! Towa-chan! Hi there!”

“Oh, it’s the doggie. You brought them here?”

“I’m not doggie! I’m Koro!”

“What? Is he a friend of yours, Koro?”

“Yup!”

“S-Since when was I your friend?!”

“Huh? What?”

“Come on, Towa-chan! Play soccer with us!”

“Are you even listening?!”

This boy was in fact an oni who’d lived in Hitotsuna Town since olden times. He’d been taking a nap on the field, and hurriedly taken human form when these boys showed up. Towa was violent, contrary, and a braggart. He had lived for a long time, but others often said his attitude had remained childish. He was well-acquainted with Koro, and he wanted to break up his boredom with some exercise. It took a little while for Towa to come around, but soon he was

totally caught up in playing soccer.

Towa Douji let out a shout as he gave the ball a powerful kick. The ball flew through the goal they'd made.

"Woah! It went right in!"

"Wow! Towa-chan, you're amazing!"

"That means we win!"

Towa and the boys were getting along great.

"Damn. I couldn't stop it that time."

"Heh. Don't think you can avoid me!"

"Grr. Next time!" Koro chased after Towa as he kicked the ball in front of him.

"Woah! Dammit!"

She kicked the ball sideways, out of Towa's reach, but the ball went high and into some thick trees...

"Aw, man. Now we've gotta go find it... Huh?"

There was a rustling sound, and the ball came flying out of the trees, followed by someone.

The ball landed and rolled a little ways.

"Uh..."

"Woah."

"Crap."

Everyone froze with their mouths hanging open. There was a mysterious older girl in an old-fashioned kimono.

".....I came to see the source of the commotion.....and a ball struck my head..... You have some nerve..."

She must've stopped the ball with her head, and she did not look happy about it. Everyone took in the angry look on her face.

Koro and Towa knew her though. She was the local goddess of Mt. Kaminaga, Kaminaga-hime. She was a very old spider, said to be one of the oldest of the local gods of Hitotsuna Town. She avoided people, preferring to stay on the mountain, and often scolded misbehaving henge and mononoke. She'd gotten mad at Koro and Towa Douji many times before.

Kaminaga-hime's eyes scanned the assembled group, and then she used her long fingers to pick the ball up in one hand.

There was a popping sound, and the ball began to deflate. The boys trembled in fear. Daisuke stared with his eyes wide open.

Koro put herself between the boys and the spider goddess. "I-It's okay! It'll be fine! Towa-chan and I will talk to her." With Koro doing her best to tell them it was all right, the boys somehow calmed down. If they got too scared and ran away, they might not be willing to play with her anymore. Towa had finally become friends with them too, and she didn't want to see that ruined.

And besides, Koro was a little mad at Kaminaga-hime for ruining their precious soccer ball.

"It seems your elder must administer a..... punishment." Kaminaga-hime dropped the punctured soccer ball on the ground and loomed closer. Daisuke, the oldest boy in school, unconsciously took a step back.

"I-It's okay. It'll be fine!" Koro quickly took his hand and tried to reassure him.

Kaminaga-hime reached out with her slender hand.

Daisuke clenched his eyes shut...

"How long..... do you intend to be a child.....?"

But her hand gripped Towa Douji's ear, and pulled him with her.

"H-Hey! I—! Ah! Ow! That hurts! Stop it!"

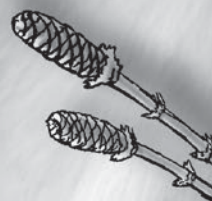
"You joined them..... You played here. You kicked the ball....." She pulled him over to a large rock on the edge of the clearing, and sat down. Then, she bent Towa Douji over her knee.

"H-Hey! They're watching! What're you doing?!"

"A misbehaving child..... gets a spanking." And with that, Kaminaga-hime pulled down his pants, revealing his bare bottom. Koro and the boys looked on, dumbfounded.

"Gah! You idiot! Don't treat me like a kid!"

He struggled, but couldn't hope to escape from Kaminaga-hime's grasp.



She raised her free hand. “Now we begin..... One.”

Slap!

Her hand struck Towa Douji’s behind. “.....Two.”

Slap!

Towa Douji cried out, though even the sound of the spanking seemed painful. With each slap everyone watching unconsciously flinched.

“.....Three.”

Slap!

“Stop it!”

It went on until Kaminaga-hime had counted to ten. Towa Douji had gotten a spanking in front of everyone, and he let out a small groan.

Kaminaga-hime sighed. “Now, leave this place..... Do not bring your ball..... here.”

Towa Douji struggled to contain his tears as he pulled up his pants.

Perhaps because her hand hurt, Kaminaga-hime waved her hand in the air.

Koro and the boys looked at each other.

“I—I guess we should go?”

“Y-Yeah...”

Everyone was ready to go, but Daisuke was staring at his punctured soccer ball.

“Daisuke-kun...” Koro looked at him, and then she turned a rare angry glare to the goddess. “Kaminaga-hime! Before we go, fix the ball!”

“.....What?”

“That ball was really important to Daisuke-kun. Make it better!”

But even a local god can’t always fix what is broken. She had originally destroyed the ball to scare the children off, hoping they would simply run away. That way they wouldn’t come back to the field... except Koro had been able to calm the children down, such that they had not in fact run away.

“K-Koro.....”

Daisuke, looking worried, took hold



of Koro's hand. The other children looked uneasy.

Kaminaga-hime picked up the ball and stared at it. She had lived sequestered on the mountain that bore her name for a long time, and she really had no inkling of the worth of this ball. She tilted her head to one side, and asked, "You are..... called..... Daisuke.....?"

"Y-Yeah."

"And this ball..... is important to you?"

"My dad bought it for me for my fifteenth birthday, so... yeah."

"Hmmm..... A gift for a ceremony of attaining manhood..... and I destroyed it."

"You just came out of nowhere!" cried Towa Douji. "If you hadn't been hiding like that, it wouldn't have hit you!"

".....Silence. It is not your time to speak, Towa Douji."

He rubbed his backside and muttered, "Jeez. Why does she always go after me?"

Kaminaga-hime did not often go into town. The fifteenth birthday was a ceremony of attaining manhood, a coming of age ceremony. And if she recalled correctly, it was customary for the father to give the son a family heirloom. It was clear that she had to take responsibility for destroying it.

However, unsure of what exactly to do, even the great Kaminaga-hime seemed troubled. "Daisuke-dono, what should I do?"

"Um, well, I'd like you to come and tell my dad what happened, so he knows that I didn't break it."

"It has been some time..... since I left the mountain and went into town. But it cannot be helped. Very well. I will go."

Koro grinned and laughed. "All right!"

Daisuke's nervousness faded, and he let out a sigh of relief.

"Very well..... Shall we go?"

Kaminaga-hime stood up and headed towards the children, but they realized that the sight of them with this strange

kimono-clad woman in tow would cause a commotion in town.

"Um, you might want to dress more... normal?"

"That's right. Kaminaga-hime, you're going to shock everyone in town."

"Yeah, totally. Walking around town like that will be a problem."

Everyone was commenting on her attire.

".....Suzune and Goukou-hime visit the town like this..... Do they not?"

"Yeah, but you're an adult. People will look at you differently."

"Yeah, they're right and stuff."

Suzune the fox and Goukou-hime the centipede both looked like little girls. Even when they went and played among the children, the adults never bothered them. They did their best to persuade Kaminaga-hime that if she was going to play with children and meet their parents, she would have to dress appropriately.

She tilted her head to one side. "Then..... how should I dress, exactly?" She had not been into town for some time. The other henge had begun to dress strangely, and as a spider henge, she could weave whatever clothes she wanted out of thread. "My dear dog..... Come with me into the shadows....."

After all, it would not do to change her clothes while the children were watching. Not that Kaminaga-hime really knew what clothes to change into.

"So, what manner of clothes shall I change into?"

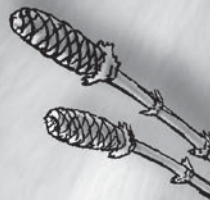
"Um... Maybe something like Riko wears?"

"Hmm..." Her clothes smoothly came apart into their threads, then wove together again into new clothes.

"Woah! Amazing! It's like on TV. But, you made it just like Riko. It's almost like you turned into her."

".....Hmm. Then I'll change it..... a little."

Finally, it seemed Kaminaga-hime was clad in modern clothing.



“Wow, Kaminaga-hime. You look so pretty!”

“Um.....”

She was wearing a skirt and stockings, plus a sweater. She seemed embarrassed at having her legs uncovered.

Koro looked at her and said, “Your thighs are showing some, but... it should be fine... I think?”

She still seemed worried about the skin showing between her skirt and stockings.

“It’ll be fine,” Koro reassured her. “Everyone’s gonna be amazed!”

“I..... I’m not sure that’s.....”

“In a good way! Look!”

Koro pushed her out into view. Kaminaga-hime was uncomfortable showing herself in such unfamiliar garb. It lacked the voluminous sleeves of a kimono, and did little to hide the shape of her body.

“Woah... Kaminaga-hime totally transformed.”

“What? That’s the same lady as before?”

“Incredible! She looks like someone from a TV show!”

Everyone seemed startled at the sight of her.

“A-Are they... praising me?” Kaminaga-hime asked uncomfortably.

“Totally!” Koro replied with a chuckle.

Kaminaga-hime still didn’t look convinced.

“Anyway, let’s go!”

“Wuf! It’ll be fine if we go together!” Koro stood on tiptoe to tousle Daisuke’s hair.

Night was approaching as they took the road into town.

“They’re..... staring at me.”

“Well, no one’s seen you before.”

“It seems..... it does not suit me.....”

“No way! You look really cute, Kaminaga-hime!”

“Cute.....?” Kaminaga-hime’s face flushed with embarrassment, and she



started to slouch a little. Neither Koro nor Towa Douji had ever seen her like that before.

Kaminaga-hime started to listen to the boys in earnest, and started to become friends with them.

“Hey, Kaminaga-hime? Are you sure we can’t play there?”

“Well..... If you can refrain from damaging the trees or disturbing the animals..... I don’t mind.”

“Then we can come play again?”

“Umm..... However, when you play this ‘sakkaa’ be careful not to send the ball into the trees.....”

“Don’t sweat it. It’s just a ball,” said Towa Douji.

Kaminaga-hime hit him again.

“Ow!”

Kaminaga-hime became serious again. “The trees contain insects and birds’ nests..... It could break eggs or kill chicks. Playing in the field is acceptable, but..... I will not allow damage to the mountain. Do you understand.....?”

When they reached Daisuke’s house, Kaminaga-hime apologized, Koro and the boys did their best to explain, and Towa Douji butted in some too. Daisuke’s dad agreed to buy a new soccer ball.

And then, a while later, more children started to come to the field on the mountain, and many more people saw the curious sight of a mysterious and beautiful woman in Western clothes on Mt. Kaminaga.



GOLDEN SKY Stories

PORTRAIT

HUMAN FORM :

NAME :

TRUE FORM :

AGE :

(BOY / GIRL)

POWERS

_____ () _____ ()
 _____ () _____ ()
 _____ () _____ ()

HENGE () *Mysterious Powers*

ANIMAL () *Run, Feel, Hide*

ADULT () *Use Machines, Knowledge, Hide Feelings*

CHILD () *Play, Wheedle, Get Protected*

WEAKNESS

ADDITIONAL POWER

● _____ ↔ ○ _____ ()
 ● _____ ↔ ○ _____ ()
 ● _____ ↔ ○ _____ ()



DREAMS

TRUE FORM

CONNECTIONS

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

PARTNER

YOU ()	■ ■ □ □ □	☆	□ □ □ ■ ■	(Acceptance)	TOWN
YOU ()	□ □ □ □ □	☆	□ □ □ □ □	()	_____
YOU ()	□ □ □ □ □	☆	□ □ □ □ □	()	_____
YOU ()	□ □ □ □ □	☆	□ □ □ □ □	()	_____
YOU ()	□ □ □ □ □	☆	□ □ □ □ □	()	_____
YOU ()	□ □ □ □ □	☆	□ □ □ □ □	()	_____

WONDER

FEELINGS

PARTNER CONTENTS

THREADS

MEMORIES :

_____ ()	_____ ()
_____ ()	_____ ()
_____ ()	_____ ()
_____ ()	_____ ()

TRANSFORMATION COST

Day : +4
 Evening : +0
 Night : +2

Human : +4
 Tail : +2
 Ears & Tail : +0

RAISING CONNECTIONS

1 : 5 Dreams*
 2 : 5 Dreams*
 3 : 5 Dreams

4 : 8 Dreams
 5 : 12 Dreams

* free with Impression Check