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Cup of Death

Shannon Gilligan

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22 ENDINGS!

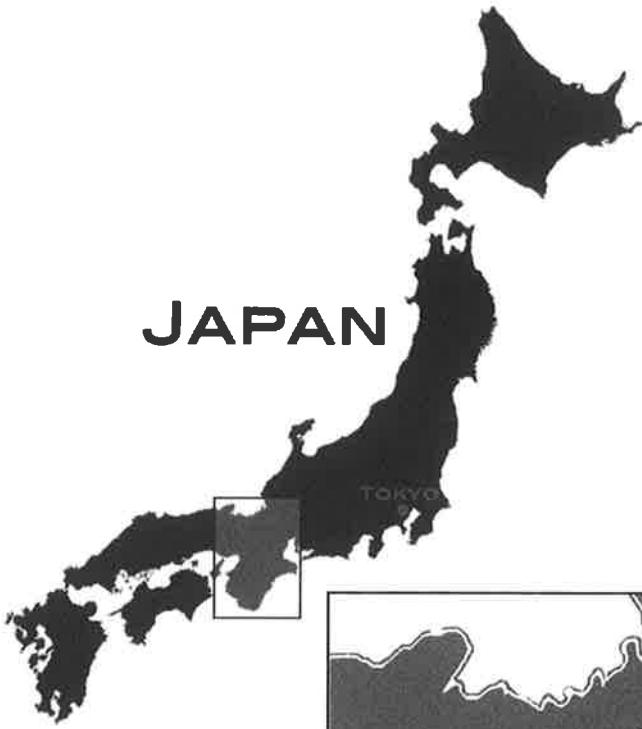


Series Editor: Marcos Benevides

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JAPAN



You are a private investigator.

You have just finished working on a big Mafia investigation in New York. Luckily, you caught the boss of the gang and put him in jail. After the investigation finished, you decided to take a break and go to Japan for a holiday.

You have visited Japan many times before. When you were younger, you studied Japanese language and culture there. You even have a black belt in karate.

Today is January 3rd. It's a cold day in the beautiful city of Kyoto. Tomorrow, you hope to visit your favorite place in the area, Lake Biwa. But today, you will take it easy, relaxing in the hot spring baths near your Japanese-style inn.

RRRRING! RRRRING!—your cell phone rings just as you are getting ready to go into the bath.

"Moshi-moshi," you answer in Japanese.

"Oh good, you're still in Kyoto! Please, we need your help!" It's your old friend, Kenichi Doi. He is speaking very quickly. He sounds troubled.

"Kenichi, slow down," you say. "What's wrong? Where are you?"

"I can't talk on the phone. I'm at Ura Senke, the tea ceremony school where my older brother, Takashi, studies. Takashi and I are in big trouble. Can you meet us here?"

"Yes, I'll be there right away," you say.

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Thirty minutes later, you are walking through the gate of the famous Ura Senke school. Kenichi is waiting for you.

"Follow me," he says, quietly.

You follow your friend along a stone walkway. You enter a traditional garden and continue towards a small building.

"This is the tearoom," Kenichi tells you quietly. "Takashi is inside. He'll explain everything."

Takashi bows as you go in through the low door. "I'm so glad you could come," he says. "Kenichi tells me you are a private investigator in your country. I thought that maybe you could help us."

"What's the problem?" you ask.

Takashi explains, "This morning, just before a tea ceremony for four very important guests, I noticed that our special tea bowl was missing."

"It was stolen, you mean!" Kenichi says.

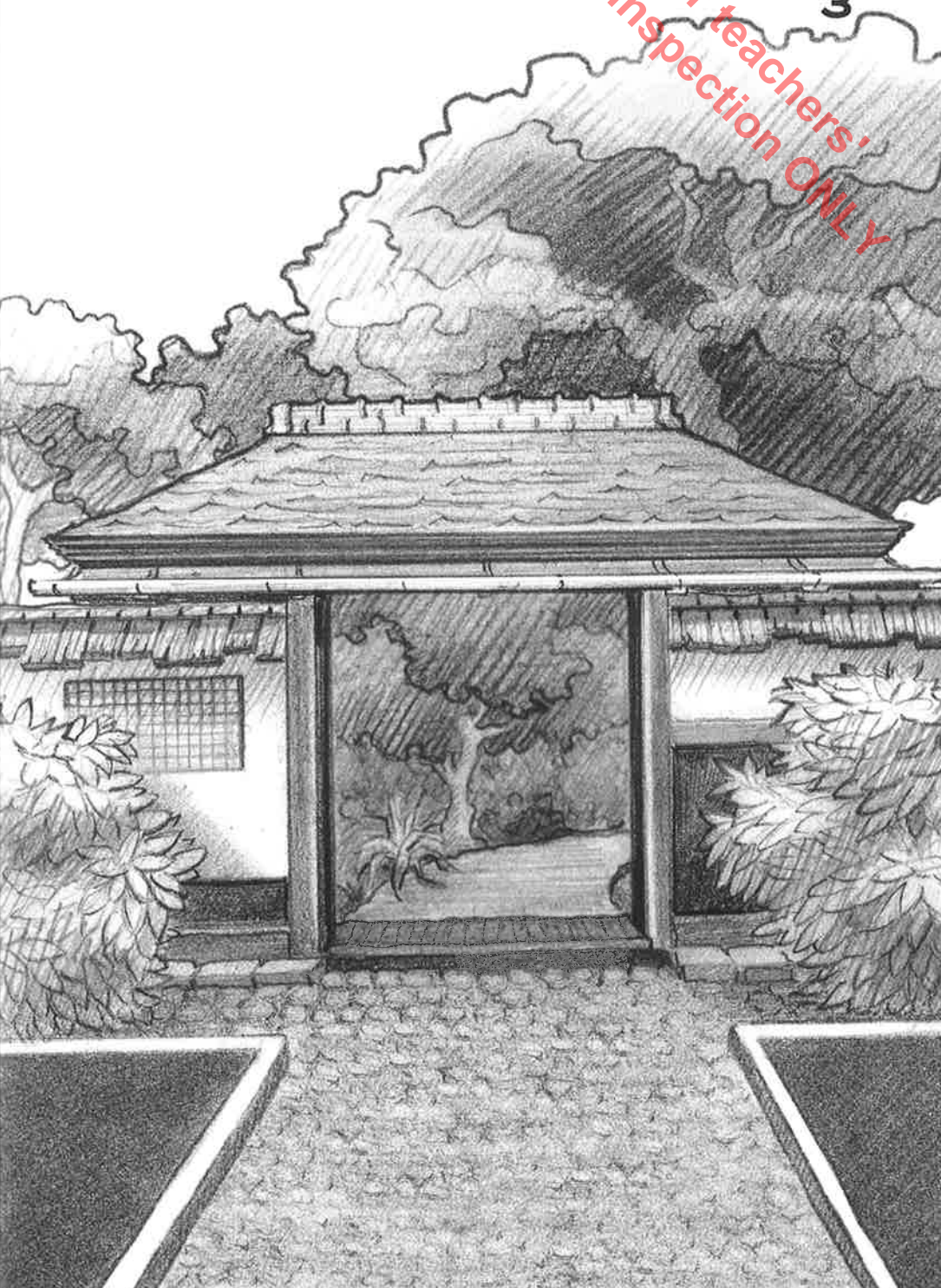
"Yes," Takashi agrees. "We believe it was stolen."

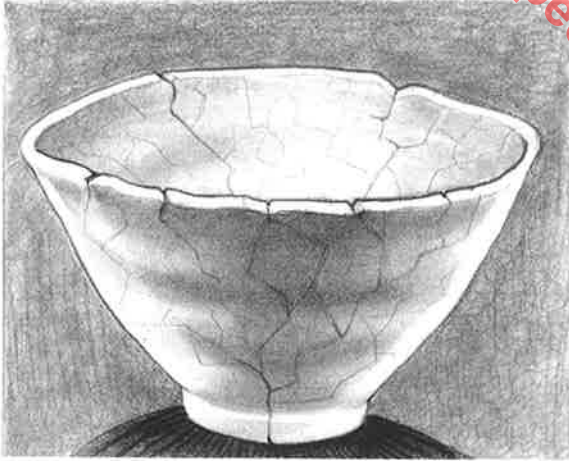
"It is an old—and very famous—bowl," Kenichi says. "A Shino bowl, called Yukigumo."

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"What is Shino?" you ask.

"Shino is a style of pottery. It's white, with some gray or red spots on it," Takashi explains. "Our bowl, Yukigumo, has grayish parts near the edge on one side. It looks like gray clouds against a white sky. The name 'Yukigumo' means 'snow clouds' in Japanese."

"All important tea bowls have names," Kenichi says. "A few years ago, Yukigumo was made a Japanese National Treasure."

"A *what?*" you ask.

"A Japanese National Treasure," Takashi says again. "Protected works of art. For example, a statue, a temple, a painting, a tea bowl. These are priceless items which are very important to Japanese culture. A National Treasure can never be taken out of Japan."

"How long has the bowl been missing?" you ask.

Takashi looks at his watch. "Fifty minutes. The tea ceremony was going to start at 10:30 this morning. But then I noticed that Yukigumo was gone. We searched and searched, but we had no luck. We had to cancel the tea ceremony."

"We didn't want to call the police until we knew for sure that the bowl was stolen," Kenichi says. "A thing like this will be big news. It will bring shame to the school—and to our family."

You know that the first rule of investigations is to get as much information as possible. But this job sounds very big. What will you do?



You are about to make your first choice!
Make your choice before you turn the page.



*If you suggest calling the police right away,
turn to page 8.*

*If you ask about the four important guests,
turn to page 12.*

"Takashi, I think it's important to tell the police about this. I'm sure they'll keep the news quiet if you ask them," you say.

Takashi thinks a little and says, "I guess you're right. Can you go to the police station and get them? Kenichi and I will continue to search for the bowl here."

"Sure," you say. You say goodbye to Takashi and Kenichi, and head for the police station. You see some young men pulling rickshaws, but you decide to walk because the police station is just down the street.

Then, you notice a black car driving slowly behind you. Why is it going so slowly? After a moment, you look back again. The car is still there and getting closer. Is someone following you? The car windows are very dark, but you see two men sitting in the front seat. They are looking straight at you!



If you decide to run, turn to page 16.

If you jump onto a rickshaw, turn to page 22.



You start to run, but suddenly another black car stops in front of you. A man in the front seat opens his door and jumps out. You notice the tattoos on the man's neck and right hand. You know what this means: He is *yakuza*, the Japanese Mafia!

You get ready to do a karate kick, but before you can do it, another man grabs you from behind. He pulls you into the back seat of the car.

"Let me go!" you shout.

"No chance," the man laughs. "You won't be able to help your friends find the tea bowl now!"

Then, you feel a sharp pain in your arm. It is a sleeping drug. You quickly fall asleep.