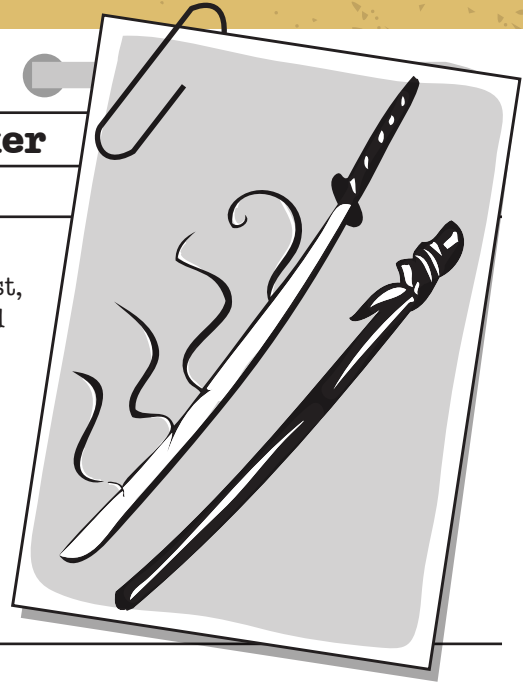


CASE: The Mad Samurai Sword Maker

LOCATION: Japan

Muramasa Sengo was a 14th century sword craftsman who was much feared by his contemporaries. He was a great artist, but he was also completely mad and often violent. It was said that his madness passed into his swords, which were known for their astounding quality. According to legend, whoever possessed a Muramasa sword became crazy and dangerous. In 1603, the Shogun banned Muramasa swords and instructed that they all be melted down. Today, Muramasa swords are difficult to identify because many had their markings changed to avoid the ban. Authentic Muramasa swords are now considered priceless. Many forgeries have surfaced over the centuries.



WITNESS: Keiko Yukimura, resident:

I had just moved into this old house after my great-grandmother left it to me. There are many old things in this house, including a beautiful samurai sword that's been in my family for generations. People in my family claim it was forged by the great sword craftsman Muramasa Sengo in the 1300s. Anyway, I couldn't sleep, so I was wandering around the house. I was in the living room when I felt the air stir behind me. I turned around and just narrowly managed to avoid being speared by the flying sword! I leapt to the side but, as you can see, I got this deep gash on my arm. You know, I've heard that Muramasa Sengo was crazy and that people who possessed his sword went crazy, too. Maybe his ghost or the ghost of someone who had owned this sword still haunts it.

NEW EVIDENCE:

But wait...you found this letter in a very old file, dating back to 1780:

I feel my mind slipping away...I've begun to hear strange whispers at night, the sound of metal being twisted and scraped. I know that this is not grounded in reality, but must be the work of some unseen wraith sent to torment me...for what misdeeds, I do not know.

As a detective, which witness do you feel is more trustworthy?

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What do you think could be the explanation for the second witness' problems?

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