

# TIME MACHINE 3

This book is a time machine.  
Travel back 350 years and become a samurai.



**SWORD OF THE  
SAMURAI**



**This book is  
your passport  
into time**



**Can you survive  
in the  
Age of  
Samurai? Turn  
the page to find  
out.**

# TIME MACHINE 3

## **Sword of the Samurai**

**by Michael Reaves and Steve Perry**

**illustrated by Steve Leialoha**



**A Byron Preiss Book**

**For Diane, naturally;  
And for the Thursday Night Irregulars  
in Balmer 205**

**-SCP**

**For Len and Chuck--The Blue Crew**

**-JMR**

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# ATTENTION TIME TRAVELER!

This book is your time machine. Do not read it through from beginning to end. In a *moment* you will receive a mission, a special task that will take you to another time period. As you face the dangers of history, the Time Machine often will give you options of where to go or what to do.

This book also contains a Data Bank to tell you about the age you are going to visit. You can use this Data Bank to travel more safely through time. Or you can take your chances without reading it. It is up to you to decide.

In the back of this book is a Data File. It contains hints to help you if you are not sure what choice to make. The following symbol appears next to any choices for which there is a hint in the Data File.



To complete your mission as quickly as possible, you may wish to use the Data Bank and the Data File together.

There is one correct end to this Time Machine mission. You must reach it or risk being stranded in time!

# **THE FOUR RULES OF TIME TRAVEL**

As you begin your mission, you must observe the following rules. Time Travelers who do not follow these rules risk being stranded in time.

1. You must not kill any person or animal.
2. You must not try to change history. Do not leave anything from the future in the past.
3. You must not take anybody when you jump in time. Avoid disappearing in a way that scares people or makes them suspicious.
4. You must follow instructions given to you by the Time Machine. You must choose from the options given to you by the Time Machine.

# YOUR MISSION

**Your mission is to go back to Japan under the shogunate, and return with the sword of the most famous samurai in history.**

*“The sword is the soul of the samurai.”*

This is a famous quote from medieval Japan, when the soldiers, known as samurai, fought their battles with swords, spears and other hand weapons. From before A.D. 900 until about 1870, the most important thing a samurai owned was his sword. No samurai was ever far from his weapon, even while asleep.

Of all the fighters in Japan, the most famous—and the best swordsman of all—was Miyamoto Musashi, who lived from 1584 to 1645. He traveled all over Japan for most of his life, studying different fighting techniques and fighting duels and battles.

Your mission is to find Musashi, and bring back the sword he made so famous. For you to succeed among samurai, you must act honorably. You will have to be careful. Japan is a dangerous place at this time—any samurai who wishes may cut you in half, for no reason at all!



To activate the Time Machine, [click here](#)

**TIME TRAVEL  
ACTIVATED  
Stand by for Equipment**

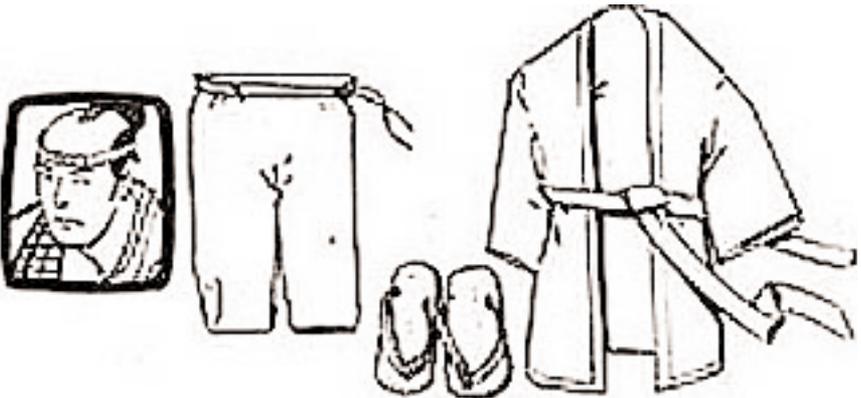


**[Click Here](#)**

# EQUIPMENT

You will have with you a drawing of Miyamoto Musashi as he appeared at about age forty, to help you recognize him.

You will be dressed in clothes suitable for the time period in which your adventure is set; you have only a small pouch in which to carry things. Choose one item from the three listed below to take with you. One of these might be useful during your mission.



1. Matches.
2. A comb.
3. Jelly beans.



To begin your mission now, [click here](#).

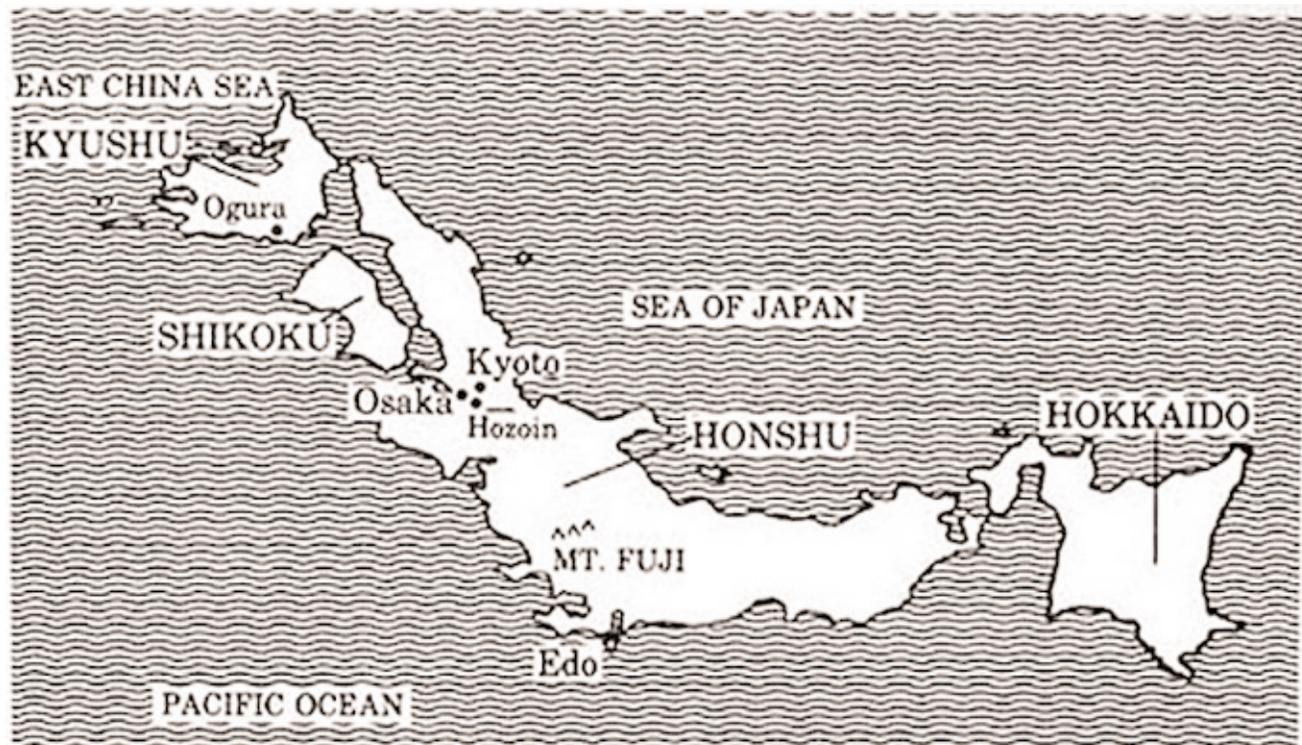


To learn more about the time to which you will be traveling, [click here](#).

# DATA BANK

These facts about samurai and medieval Japan will help you to complete your mission.

- 1) Honor was more important to a samurai than anything, even life itself.
- 2) Only samurai were allowed to carry two swords.
- 3) In Musashi's time, the law allowed a samurai to kill almost anyone he wanted to.
- 4) Ninja were a class of extremely dangerous spies and assassins. They often wore black. A ninja was not a samurai.
- 5) Both the samurai and ninja had women members.
- 6) Musashi was born in the village of Miyamoto in the province of Miyasaka. Like many Japanese, he had different names at different ages. He was known as Ben No Suke as a child and Takezo as a young man.
- 7) Musashi owned several swords in his lifetime.
- 9) The style of using two swords, a long and a short one, at the same time was developed by Musashi.
- 10) Musashi was sometimes called Sword Saint, or Kensei.
- 11) Musashi wrote a book just before he died, called A Book of Five Rings, all about strategy and tactics.
- 12) Musashi spent his final days living in a cave.



13) One of Musashi's favorite sayings was, "Seek the Way of Water." By this he meant, in part, that a samurai should learn to move as fluidly as water moves.

14) About 1634 Musashi established a school in the village of Ogura, on the island of Kyushu.

15) The shogun was a kind of deputy to the emperor, and ruled during Musashi's time.

16) There were two capital cities during Musashi's life in Japan: Edo, capital of the shogunate, and Kyoto, the Imperial city.

17) In 1615, Musashi fought in a battle at Osaka Castle.

**DATA BANK COMPLETED.  
CLICK HERE TO BEGIN  
YOUR MISSION**



**Don't forget, when you see this symbol,  
you can click it to check the Data File for  
a hint**



**Y**ou are standing in the middle of a small village on a hot summer day. All the houses are made of bamboo and branches, except for one big house which looks as if it's made of mud and wooden planks. Over the door of the biggest house is a board with Japanese writing on it.

But something feels wrong. The village seems deserted and somehow unreal. You hear shouting and run to the corner of the big mud house and peer around.

Two men face each other with long, curved swords. They are dressed like samurai warriors! Behind them is a glare of light. The sun looks strange, almost as if there are four suns instead of one.

“Prepare to die!” one of the men says. His sword flashes in the light.

“I am always prepared to die,” answers the other man.

You look at the men closely. One is wearing a ragged, dirty jacket with short sleeves—a kimono, you know—and full pants. He holds two swords, a long one and a short one. He looks familiar. Could it be Musashi? You pull the picture of Musashi from your pouch and look at it. Yes, it could be Musashi. The other samurai, who is wearing full armor, including a helmet and a strange-looking mask, says, “I am honored to take the head of Miyamoto Musashi.”

It *is* Musashi. What luck, you've found him so soon!

Musashi says, “Not all of Ieyasu's men at Seki ga Hara could take my head. Why should I give it to you?”

The other samurai leaps toward Musashi. The two men move so



fast you can hardly see what they are doing! Then you see that the samurai in the armor is down, his sword lying ten feet away in the dry dust. Musashi stands over the man, his two swords gleaming like mirrors. Musashi has knocked the other samurai's sword out of his hand and won the fight!

You rush forward to congratulate him.

“Hey!”

“Stop! Fool!”

People are screaming—at you! You can't see them because the lights are too bright. What *are* those lights? Why are the people so angry? You turn and run in the other direction. You see a storehouse just ahead and you run for it. But when you get behind the storehouse, you stop, confused. The storehouse isn't real! It's only one wall. Behind it are planks of wood, propping it up, and thick, black electrical cables and sawhorses.

What is going on?

Somebody grabs you by the shoulders and spins you around. He is wearing blue jeans and running shoes and a T-shirt with a picture of Godzilla on it! What can he be doing in ancient Japan? This is impossible!

“What are you doing here?” the man says angrily. “This is a closed set!”

Other people crowd around you, including Musashi. Now you can see that he is wearing makeup.

You realize what has happened. Instead of Musashi's real village in ancient Japan, the Time Machine has taken you to a movie set where a film is being made about his life!

One of the technicians leads you out of the sound stage past the four bright lights.

As you leave the set, you see a sheet of paper on a wall. It says the next scene to be filmed is set in the province of Musashi, at the forge of Kanemitsu the swordsmith.

Hmm. Now you know two things you didn't know before: First, Musashi fought at the battle of Seki ga Hara, and second, the name of a swordsmith—probably the one who made Musashi's sword.

You look at the man taking you out of the movie set. “Excuse me,” you say, “but do you know when the battle of Seki ga Hara was fought?”

The man nods. “As a matter of fact, I do. It was in September, 1600, on the plains of Seki ga Hara—that’s why the name.”

You thank him as he leaves you at the gate to the movie studio. Musashi would have been a young man at the battle. Maybe you can find him.



**Jump in time to the Battle of Seki ga Hara, in 1600. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou're alone on a seashore. Waves pound the rocks, splashing salt spray onto you. Gulls squawk and circle over-head. Where—and when—are you?

You start to walk along the beach. As you pass a rocky cliff, two men leap out and grab you! They are huge, wearing clothes made of leather trimmed with fur. They have long mustaches and evil faces.

Who are these people?

The men tie your arms and make you walk ahead of them. One of them has a big scar across his face. He pokes you with a short, straight sword. "Hurry up!" he says.

He pushes you around a big rock and stops. Hundreds of wooden ships with bright sails are anchored in a bay in front of you. On the beach are a thousand men dressed like the ones who have captured you.

You are taken to an imposing man whose leather belt is hung with a wide sword and three daggers. He tugs at his long mustache and stares at you. "I am Kublai, khan of all the Mongols, grandson of the great Genghis Khan," he says. "We have come to conquer Japan! You would do well to swear loyalty to me!"

You are taken away and put into a fenced-in area nearby. There are other prisoners, all Japanese. You approach a tall man with a bandaged arm. "Excuse me," you say, "who are these people?"

The man laughs bitterly. "You don't know of the barbarian Mongols, from China? I would think all of Kyushu would have heard of them."



“I have been . . . traveling,” you say. “I’ve lost track of many things, including the year.”

“That’s easy enough to fix,” the man says. “It’s Hachi-gatsu: eighth month, twenty-fifth day.” August 25, that means.

“What year, sir?”

“Year? You have traveled a long way. It’s 1281.”

1281! You’re in the thirteenth century, in the middle of a Mongol invasion. Musashi won’t even be born for three hundred years.

You hear shouts and the sounds of battle beyond the nearby hills. A large group of Mongols staggers over the hills, being pushed back by an army of samurai warriors. The Mongols guarding you jump to their feet and grab their spears.

“Get moving!” they yell.

The guards push you toward the beach where their ships are anchored. On board the Mongol ship, you are taken to a dark and smelly hold and chained to the wall. There are a lot of other prisoners packed into the tiny space with you. You can’t jump in time there where they can see you. You find yourself getting sleepy, and you doze off.

You awaken to a rocking motion. The ship is bouncing all around. You spot a crack in the wood nearby and manage to crawl to it to peep out.

Dark clouds have built up all over the sky. Hard rain lashes at the sea and your ship.

The boat tosses again, and you are thrown against a man behind you. Outside, the wind howls louder and the *thrum* of the rain on the deck above your head is getting much harder.

The ship seems to stand almost on its nose, and you and the other prisoners are thrown toward the far end of the room.

The force of all the weight on the chain is too much—the chain snaps and you are free!

Quickly you manage to open the hatch and climb out onto the deck.

There’s a wave right in front of you, over thirty feet tall! No wonder the ship pitches so violently. Men are screaming orders at each other.

You crawl toward the rail. The wind seems to ease up for a minute, and the rain slackens. You see other ships, and—

You are all being driven toward a rocky shore!

You are going to crash on the rocks. At the speed you're moving, the ships will be bashed into thousands of pieces.

One of the other prisoners next to you is laughing. He must be crazy!

"Isn't it wonderful?" he says. "The typhoon will destroy the invaders! The gods are protecting our islands! It is a *kamikaze*—a divine wind!"

"But we'll be destroyed with them!" you say.

The man shrugs. "That's not important."

You shake your head. Maybe it isn't important to him, but *you* don't want to be smashed and drowned. You have a mission to complete.

A huge wave sweeps over the ship. When the water recedes, the man who was talking to you has been swept away. You see another wave building up to swamp the ship. You don't see anybody else on deck.

You're over three hundred years too far back in time. You should jump 300 years in the future and return to Musashi's time. But where?



**Jump 300 years in the future to Edo.**

**[Click here.](#)**



**Jump 300 years in the future to Osaka.**

**[Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou are on the plain at Seki ga Hara in 1600. Seki ga Hara is a long, flat stretch of land with clumps of trees here and there. Thousands of men fight all around you. An arrow zips past your ear—thwip!

You drop to the ground just as a samurai on horseback rides by. From the top of a nearby boulder, another samurai leaps onto the rider and pulls him from the horse. The two men hit a puddle. Water splashes as they wrestle around, yelling at each other.

How will you find Musashi in all this? There are men everywhere, cutting at each other with swords, yelling and screaming. They wear strange armor—helmets with curved spikes, heavy gloves, and leg and chest covers.

From behind, you hear a thunderous BOOM! You turn and see a samurai in full armor holding a strange-looking gun nearly as long as he is tall. He has just finished reloading. It looks as if he's about to shoot in your direction!

You run toward a small grove of trees nearby, ducking around the men with bloody swords.

Fortunately, the battle soon moves away from you. Wounded and dead men lie all around you.

You see a young man lying not far away, bleeding from a bullet wound in his hip.

You bend over the young man. His face is covered with blood and dirt. You start to wipe away the blood on his hip. You find a flask of water nearby and some cloth from a banner, and start to bandage the wound.



The man props himself up on one elbow. “Who are you?” he asks. “I’m a friend,” you say.

He falls back. “Good. It would not do to accept help from an enemy. I am Takezo,” he says. His voice is very low. “From Mimasaka Province.”

Good! Perhaps he knows Musashi; they’re from the same province. You are about to ask him when you hear hoofbeats. Samurai are coming! They may be Takezo’s enemies. Takezo’s wound isn’t too bad, he won’t die, but the samurai may think he’s dead if he will just lie still. Even though you’re dressed in Japanese clothing, *you* don’t look like a samurai. They might try to capture you, or worse!

Maybe you should jump ahead in time fifteen years and try to find Musashi when he’s more famous. Or should you try to hide so you can question Takezo? Through the trees, you see a wounded samurai coming menacingly toward you! Choose quickly.



**Stay and question Takezo. [Click here.](#)**



**Jump fifteen years into the future. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou walk back through the crowded theater toward the man who has been so helpful, to ask him about Hozoin.

Suddenly a rough hand grabs your shoulder. It's one of the soldiers! "Who are you?" he says. "I don't know you!"

It's dangerous to be a foreigner here, and you can't prove you are a citizen.

The soldier drags you from the theater and takes you to the town jail. You're locked in a room with other prisoners. The air smells rotten. The people are dressed in rags, mostly, and look as if they haven't eaten anything in weeks.

In one corner, you see the Jesuit priest you saw arrested earlier. You squeeze your way through the smelly, dirty prisoners toward him. Maybe he can help you understand something about the way things work here.

"Father?"

The priest looks at you. "Yes, my child?"

"Why did they arrest you?"

"The Japanese fear outsiders," he said. "Even now, only a few Europeans are allowed into the country, and only in certain parts of the land. I went outside the limits they set." He shrugs. "My fate is up to God."

The priest doesn't look worried. "Perhaps I should have gone with my brother to the new lands to the west, the Americas," he says. "Even the red savages there would be easier to understand than the Japanese, I think. I spent nearly two years, on a ship from



Lisbon and five years in this land, and I sometimes think I will not see home again.”

“What do you think will happen to us?” you ask.

“Probably we will be used to test sword blades—to see how sharp they are. They can cut right through two or three bodies sometimes.

“One man heard they were going to cut through his middle, and he swallowed many stones beforehand. When the executioner used his blade, it broke on the stones in the man’s stomach.”

You shudder. How horrible!

Suddenly, out of the darkness, an old man lunges at you and grabs your neck in both hands. He starts to choke you. You trip over a prisoner behind you and fall; as you reach out to save yourself, you knock over a lamp full of rancid-smelling oil. The dirty straw on the floor bursts suddenly into flames!

“Fire!” somebody yells.

“This way!” the priest calls. You see men run toward an opening in the wall. You start to follow, but suddenly a hand catches your foot.

You manage to kick free, but the smoke is so thick now you can’t see anything. You’d better jump out of here while you are hidden by the smoke.



**Escape the fire. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou arrive in Musashi Province in the year 1603. An old man carrying a pair of buckets on the ends of a long pole slung across his shoulders is walking toward you on the narrow dirt road.

“Excuse me,” you say, “but do you know where the swordsmith Kanemitsu has his shop?”

The old man nods. “Certainly. Everyone here knows that. Kanemitsu’s shop is the last building on the road out of the village.” He points down the road behind him.

You thank him and move on. Kanemitsu made Musashi’s first sword, you know. But you don’t know exactly *when*.

The last building is a small, wooden structure. As you approach, a boy moves in front of you. He is much bigger than you. He wears a dirty kimono and pants and a leather apron which looks burned and scorched in places.

“Where do you think you’re going?” he asks.

“I’m going to see Mr. Kanemitsu,” you say.

The boy laughs. “Not likely! He is working at the forge on a blade!”

“I just want to talk to him,” you say. “I won’t bother him.”

The boy sneers at you. “Fool! No one may watch while a sword is being made! It is a secret process! Only his assistants may watch!” The boy taps himself on the chest. “I am Hoju, the chief assistant, and I am telling you to go away.”

“This is silly,” you say. “I’m not a spy! I just need to talk—”

“Silly? You say my master’s work is *silly*?”

“No, I didn’t mean that—” But it’s too late. Hoju has picked up a long stick from the side of the building. He is holding it like a sword and is coming toward you!

You turn and run. He might be bigger, but you are much faster. After dodging through the huts of the village, you leave Hoju behind.

You circle around, back to Kanemitsu’s building. Hoju doesn’t seem to be around; he must still be looking for you.

Carefully you approach the door.

As you try to see inside, a voice calls out. “Come in, come in—don’t stand outside wasting time!”

The room you enter is really hot. Sweat breaks out on your face and neck. The heat is coming from a big stone and brick furnace near the middle of the room. Thick smoke pours up through a hole in the ceiling, but some of it stays in the room.

A man with a smoke-darkened face smiles and nods at you. “Ah,” he says, “you must be the new assistant from the next village. Well, come on, we need your help. My good-for-nothing boy Hoju isn’t here to do his work, so you can help. Have you ever worked with a swordsmith before?”

“No sir,” you say, bowing politely.

“Well, then, just watch, and I will explain.”

On a stone block near the front of the forge, two assistants hold a bar of glowing red steel with long-handled tongs. Two more assistants take turns pounding on the steel with heavy hammers. When the steel is flattened a bit, Kanemitsu steps in and holds what looks like a chisel against the hot metal. Sweat runs off the old man and hisses as it hits the steel. One of the assistants hits the chisel, then the other assistant hits it. After three or four strikes each, there is a deep groove in the steel. Kanemitsu takes a pair of pliers and grips the bar, then folds it over to make two layers. The assistants use the tongs to thrust the steel back into the fire.

“You see? The metal is folded many times, making thousands of layers as it is hammered out. Then the metal is tempered—cooled—in water, with special clay to make the edge hard and the body of



the blade more flexible, so it will not break when used.”

You nod.

Kanemitsu says, “Come.”

You follow him to another room, even smaller, through a narrow door. Here, two men are polishing and sharpening blades. Kanemitsu picks up a blade and shows it to you. “Watch,” he says.

He pulls a thin silk handkerchief from his kimono and tosses it into the air. As it floats gently toward the floor, he holds the blade under it, edge upward. The silk drapes itself across the sword—and cuts neatly into two pieces! You pick up the cut silk and look at the edges. There is a tiny bit of frayed thread along the edges.

Kanemitsu frowns at the threads. He turns to one of the men working on the blades. “This one will never do,” he says. “Too dull!”

You shake your head. This is the sharpest blade you’ve ever seen. How could it be too dull?

You turn toward the old man. “Excuse me, but have you made a sword for a man named Miyamoto Musashi?”

“I think not,” Kanemitsu says.

Hmm. Unless the screenwriter got his facts wrong, you must be here too early, before Musashi ordered his sword.

Suddenly a big man comes into the room. He has a dark, angry face and a drooping mustache. “Where is the sword you promised me, old man?”

Kanemitsu calmly walks to a wooden chest by the wall and opens it. He removes a sword in a wooden sheath from the chest, turns, and hands it to the samurai.

The man swings the sword and sheath together, then pulls the naked steel from the case. The metal sings—*zwing!*—as it comes out of the sheath. “Ah! Now it must be tested!” The samurai looks at you. “You!” He smiles an evil smile. “Thanks to Amaterasu for providing Koura with a body to test his blade upon!”

What? You look at Kanemitsu. “You can’t do that!” you say to Koura.

“I’m afraid he can,” Kanemitsu says. “The law allows samurai to do such things.”

You turn back toward the big samurai, who has raised the sword over his head. You know how sharp it must be—he could cut you in half with it!

Well, the law here might allow him to cut you down, but there's no law that says you have to stay and let him! You turn and run for the door of the building.

“Stop!” Koura yells, chasing you.

You hear Koura's footsteps right behind you.

You feel the wind of his sword as he chops a big piece of bush away, looking for you. Time to jump, but where? You know Musashi was famous for his fighting. Perhaps you should look for him at a battle site?



**Jump ahead in time to Osaka Castle.**

**[Click here.](#)**



**Jump back in time to the coast of Japan.**

**[Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou're standing next to a barn on the outskirts of a fairly big town. It is Roku-gatsu, or sixth month, which makes it June, in the year 1615. After a few minutes of walking you see a sign—you are in the city of Edo.

You come upon a small crowd. As you make your way toward the front, you see several soldiers surrounding a man in a strange-looking robe. "What's going on?" you ask the woman next to you.

"They are arresting a foreign devil," she says. "A priest of the western god, a Jesuit."

You nod. "Why are they arresting him?"

"Who knows? We don't allow many foreign devils in our country." She spits onto the ground. "They are all barbarians!"

You notice the soldiers aren't all taking the priest away. Some of them seem to be looking toward the crowd. They're looking right at you!

The soldiers walk in your direction. You know that the law says they can kill just about anybody they don't like, so you turn and blend into the crowd.

Just ahead you see men and women hurrying into a building. You follow them.

It is a theater. You sit on a long, wooden bench just as the show starts.

The curtain opens to reveal several players in very bright costumes. Some are wearing wooden masks, others have their faces painted white. It is hard for you to understand just what is going on,

because the actors speak in riddles and songs.

The audience isn't being very quiet. They are talking and laughing, acting more like guests at a party than the audience of a play.

You turn to the man next to you. He is wearing a blue silk kimono. Part of his head is shaved. What hair he has looks as if it's been sprayed with clear plastic.

"Excuse me," you say, "I've never been to a play like this before. Could you tell me what it is about?"

The man smiles at you. His teeth are painted black! "This play is about the traveling samurai, called *ronin*," he says, "those who go from place to place fighting duels and learning the art of war. See that man?" As he points, you see that his long fingernails are painted blue.

You nod.

"That's the famous actor Sunji. He is playing the part of Miyamoto Musashi. You've heard of him, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes." This was a lucky break. Here you can learn about Musashi, safe in a theater instead of out on a battlefield!

A woman comes onto the stage and calls to the actor playing Musashi. "Oh, Takezo, do not run away from me!" She calls Musashi by the name he went by as a teenager.

The man bends down next to you and says, "The woman is a man made up to look like a woman. All the women's roles are played by men in the *No* theater."

There's a sound behind you. The same soldiers who were arresting the priest are here in the theater. They are asking questions of people in the audience. If you wait until they get to you, you're pretty certain they won't like any of your answers. Time for you to leave.

As you walk out, you hear the actor playing Musashi say, "I am going to study at Hozoin. I must go."

Hozoin. Now you know the name of another place Musashi might be. Would that be worth checking out?

You look at the man who told you about the play. You can ask him about Hozoin, or you could stay here in the city of Edo, look for a library, and find out about Hozoin there.





**Find a library. [Click here.](#)**



**Go back into the theater. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou reach over and shake the unconscious Takezo. “Wake up!”

He opens his eyes. “Soldiers are coming,” you tell him. “We’ve got to hide over there, in the trees.” You’ve decided to stay with Takezo because you know from your data bank that Takezo was the name Musashi used as a teenager!

You help him up. The two of you manage to stagger into the safety of the trees, using his spear as a crutch.

The samurai ride by without noticing you.

Now you have time to think. You have done part of what you needed to do: You’ve found Musashi. But he doesn’t have a sword yet.

Takezo looks as if he is about to pass out. You help him lie down, give him a sip of water, and wipe his face. “Seek . . . the Way of . . . Water,” he says, his voice a whisper.

You hear the sound of hoofbeats again. The samurai are coming back! You look at Musashi. You know he’ll be all right: History tells you he lived a long time after this battle.

Suddenly Musashi glares up at you. “Demon!” he yells. “I will kill you!”

You’ve just helped him and now he thinks you’re his enemy! Musashi staggers to his feet and waves his spear at you. He lunges, but you quickly scramble up into one of the trees. Musashi is too weak to climb. After a minute, he falls to the ground, unconscious again.

You look down at Musashi. Even if he could talk to you, it



wouldn't help much. He doesn't even have a sword yet; he's using a spear. Of course! He didn't get his first sword until he was nineteen—in 1600, he would have been only sixteen or seventeen.

Perhaps you should jump in time. On the movie set, you learned the name of the swordsmith: Kanemitsu, in the province of Musashi. If you get there about the time that Musashi is nineteen, maybe you'll at least get a look at his sword.

A group of about five samurai warriors arrives under the tree. They don't bother with Musashi, so they must think he is dead.

While they are talking, you lean out over your branch for a closer look. One of them looks up and sees you. "Aieeee!" he yells. He leaps forward and jabs upward with his sword.

You pull back into a thicker patch of leaves.

"What is it?" someone asks.

"I saw something; a Kami demon, I think!"

The other men laugh. "Ho, you are seeing spirits in trees, eh? The battle has made you foolish!"

"No, I saw something!"

"Well, we will look for it, then!"

The samurai jab their swords into the trees all around you. A sharp spear just misses your foot! Time to jump.



[Click here.](#)



**Y**ou are in a library in a quiet section of Edo. The “books” are actually rolled up scrolls of thick paper, handwritten in long columns of Japanese letters, which go up and down the page instead of left-to-right as they do in English. After a few minutes, you find a list of books about Musashi. Even though he is only about thirty years old in 1615, he has already fought sixty duels, winning them all.

You have just started to read more about Musashi when a young man enters the library and walks past you. You notice he has only one arm. He glances at you and then at the books you are reading. His eyes widen.

“You are reading about the ronin Miyamoto Musashi?” he asks.

You nod.

“Do you know him?”

You think about that for a second. Surely it would be a good idea to know such a famous man. You have *met* him, after all. “Yes,” you say, “you might say that.” You smile.

The man’s face fills with rage. “Musashi! I hate him! He is my enemy! He cut off my arm for no reason! He is a cruel man!” With that, the one-armed man pulls a knife from his kimono and jumps at you. “If you know him, you are my enemy!”

You leap up. So Musashi could be cruel! Innocent people sometimes got in the way of his famous sword. You will have to be careful! You run down the corridor of the library, around a wooden rack of dusty scrolls. Better jump out of here, while the one-armed man can’t see you.

You decide to go back to a place you're sure Musashi visited.



**Go back to Seki ga Hara in the year 1600.**  
**[Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou wake up and see a man with a shaved head staring down at you. He wipes your face with a cold cloth. “How do you feel?” he asks.

“My head hurts,” you say. You reach up and find a big lump on your scalp. “Who are you? . . . Where am I?”

“You took a hard knock,” he says, smiling. “I’m Teitaro, one of the priests here at the Hozoin Temple. I usually take care of people who get hurt.”

“Musashi,” you say. “I’m looking for Miyamoto Musashi.”

“Musashi? Ah, yes. The ronin. He was here; but he’s gone now.”

Oh, no. You lost him. “Do you know where he went?”

“Seems I heard he was going to the capital,” the bald monk says. “But I’m not sure.”

You try to sit up, find you are dizzy, so you lie back down. “Best you rest a while,” he says.

You decide he might be right. But you can’t stay here long, not if you want to accomplish your mission to get the sword of Musashi and return to your own time with it.

While you are thinking about what to do, you fall asleep.

You wake to the sound of gongs. You stand and walk to the doorway. Beyond the little room you’re in, you see a big room full of priests. They are all kneeling, chanting quietly. A fat priest stands by a big metal gong. Every few minutes he hits the gong with a padded stick. Another priest, with a long, white beard, walks among the kneeling men, carrying a bamboo rod. As you watch, the old man pauses behind a priest, then whacks him

sharply on the shoulder with the bamboo stick. You wince as you hear the *crack!* of the stick, but the kneeling priest doesn't move. After a second, the older priest walks to another man, then hits him the same way.

"Meditation," says a voice behind you. You turn and see Teitaro there. "It's a form of . . . prayer."

"But why is he hitting them?"

"Because they aren't concentrating properly."

"But how does he know that? They all look just alike to me!"

"He is a Zen master—he knows."

Your head feels better now, and you to watch the students practice a kind of dance they've learned from some Chinese monks, called t'ai chi chuan, a slow-motion exercise. Then you see several students practicing with fighting sticks.

"They are very good," you say to a boy standing nearby.

"Ah," he says, "yes, they are good, but Musashi could beat them both at the same time!"

"You know Musashi?" you ask.

"No, but I saw him fight. I only wish I could see him at the kendo matches before the Shogun later this month in the imperial capital!"

Aha, you think, the priest said Musashi was going to the capital; this confirms it.

Since you feel better, you decide you will start out after Musashi immediately. You thank Teitaro for helping you and walk to the main road, just down the hill from the temple.

There are two main paths you can choose from: one goes to Edo, the other to Kyoto. You see the road signs, but suddenly you are confused. *Both* signs say "capital" after the name of the city! How can that be?

You stop a passerby and ask her. "Which is the capital city?"

"Why, both cities are," she says. "One is the capital of the shogunate, the other where the emperor lives."

You are confused. Which one is Musashi going to? Which path should you follow?



**Look for Musashi in Edo. [Click here.](#)**



**Look for Musashi in Kyoto. [Click here.](#)**



**T**he man jumps forward and swings his staff at you. You jump back, throw down your staff, turn and run! As you reach the door, you hear the laughter of all the people following you. They yell insults at you: “Coward! Dog! Turtle!”

As you reach the outer gate, you see another samurai entering. He looks straight at you.

It’s Musashi! This is your chance. “Sir!” you yell. “I need your help!”

Several of the people who were yelling at you suddenly appear behind you. “There the coward goes! Running away from a match, that’s worse than anything!”

You look at Musashi. He frowns back at you and shakes his head. You realize he wouldn’t even talk to a coward!

“Stop, coward!” the men behind you yell. “We’re going to paint you white, to show your shame to the world!”

That doesn’t sound so bad.

“Then,” the man continues, “we are going to beat your head in!”

*That* sounds bad. Time to get out of here. You leap to the side, while Musashi watches you with scorn, and hide behind a thick bush.



**Hide your shame in the past. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou are standing on the shore, looking at the Sea of Japan. The waves lap gently at the shore.

You see a boat coming toward the shore. As you watch, it lands, and a dozen fierce-looking warriors, wearing kimonos and battle gear, hop off into the surf.

One of the men approaches you and pulls his sword out. He points it at your neck. “Who are you? You don’t look like a samurai or a peasant or a merchant!”

“I—I’m a . . . traveler,” you say honestly.

“Well, ‘traveler,’ you have the misfortune to be facing the *Wako!*”

You smile, not knowing what he means.

He grows angry at your smile. “We are pirates! We take from all! We have captured Chinese junks and Portuguese ships and fat merchant ships from under the nose of the shogun!”

“I don’t have anything worth stealing,” you say, holding your hands out.

“Oh? But we can always use slaves! And there are blades to be tested and sharks to be drawn away while we swim! We can find some use for you!”

You are sure this isn’t the Way of Water Musashi meant—to be used as sharkbait by pirates!

You try an old trick. “Oh, look,” you say, looking over the man’s shoulder. “A Chinese junk!”

The pirate falls for it. As he turns to look, you spin around in the sand and start to run down the beach as fast as you can.

“Quick!” the leader shouts. “Our new slave is trying to escape!”

The men begin chasing you. You head for a big rock standing alone near the edge of the water. You run around behind it, breathing hard. Only a few seconds before they catch up to you!



**Jump backward in time. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou are in a small village in the year 1605. You wander past a collection of bamboo huts with grass roofs until you find a man tending a garden.

“Pardon me, but do you know where the Hozoin temple is?”

The man nods and points to a large group of wooden buildings atop a nearby hill. You walk toward them.

The hill is a quiet, wooded place, with narrow paths leading to a gate. You see monks, dressed in long robes, trimming bushes and working in a garden. You walk through the gate and knock on the door.

A monk with a shaved head answers. “Yes?”

“I am looking for Miyamoto Musashi,” you say.

The monk looks surprised but nods. “Come in,” he says.

The man leads you into a large, crowded room. The sun shines through the high windows and is reflected off a polished column, dazzling and blinding you for a moment.

When your eyes are clear, you see two men in the middle of the room—fighting with long poles.

The people watching include several samurai, who sit cross-legged against one wall. You look at the men closely, but you don’t see Musashi.

One of the men fighting swings his pole. The other holds his stick up to block, but there is a loud *crack!* and the second man’s staff breaks in two pieces. Before he can move, the first man spins his staff and thunks it against the other man’s head.

Two men quickly run to the fallen man and drag him away.

This is a rough game.

The man with the staff smiles. “Who is next? Will anyone dare to face me?”

Nobody moves.

The man sees you, and his smile gets bigger. He points the end of the staff at you. “You! Pick up a *bo* and face me!”

Your eyes widen. “Me?” He must mean somebody else! You look around, but he is definitely pointing at you.

“I only came to watch,” you say. “I’m looking for—”

“There are no watchers here!” the man yells. “All are students! Take a staff or face me without one!”

You see that everybody in the huge room is looking at you. A boy hurries over and hands you a pole as thick as your wrist and as long as you are tall. “You must fight,” he whispers, “or you will lose all honor!”

The man across from you raises his staff over his head.

What should you do? You don’t know how to fight with this thing! But to run away would disgrace you, so that you could not come back to the Hozoin Temple.

“Aiiieee!” the man yells, leaping at you and swinging the staff.



**Throw down the staff and run. [Click here.](#)**



**Stand and fight. [Click here.](#)**





**Y**ou're standing outside an immense house surrounded by high stone ramparts. The year is 1615. Samurai are everywhere—it looks as if a battle is about to begin. A small boy running by tells you that the house is Osaka Castle. Two powerful noble families, the Tokugawas and the Toyotomi family, are fighting inside the castle.

“Wait,” you call to the boy. “Do you know if the swordfighter Musashi is around here?”

“Yes,” the boy calls as he runs from sight. “He fights on the side of the—” Suddenly the boy’s voice is drowned out by the roar of thousands of samurai, all rushing toward the castle, waving their weapons and screaming.

You run to the edge of the castle, looking for a safe place. You’d better join one side or the other, to have fewer enemies, at least. While you are in the shadow of a bush near the wall, you hear two guards talking.

“It doesn’t look good,” one says. “There are two of them for every one of us.”

“Yes, and Kensei leads the campaign against us, too.”

“Still, We must fight to the last man.”

“Of course. It’s the only honorable thing to do.”

The men rushing toward the castle are getting closer. Should you join them? Or should you tell the guards to let you in, you support their side?





Tell the guards to let you in. [Click here.](#)



Join the samurai led by Kensei.  
[Click here.](#)



**Y**ou decide it would be safer inside the strong walls of Osaka Castle. The guards allow you to come inside. You see a samurai dressed in fancy battle armor across a courtyard. You walk to him. “Excuse me, sir,” you begin. “I’m looking for Miyamoto Musashi.”

The man turns and scowls at you. “A friend of yours, is he?”

You nod. Well, probably he *will* be, when you finally get a chance to really talk to him.

The armored samurai pulls his long sword. “A traitor!” he shouts. “He is a friend of Kensei.”

“Kensei? No, I said Musashi,” you say nervously. Other samurai turn to look at you.

Before anybody can move, however, there is a shout from outside the building. The door bursts open and men rush inside, screaming. Kensei’s forces must have broken through the castle’s defenses!

The battle is fierce but short. In a minute, all the defenders are cut down or captured. The leader of the attackers is Musashi! Of course! Musashi was also known as Sword Saint—or Kensei! He is looking at you. You smile. He doesn’t smile back. This isn’t the right time to introduce yourself, you realize. He thinks you are one of Toyotomi’s soldiers! He rushes toward you, both his swords held at the ready.

You turn and leap over a fallen man. Behind you, Musashi slips on something wet—probably blood. You get a few yards ahead of him. You don’t want *your* blood on the castle floor! You slide around



a corner, into an empty hall. Musashi is right behind you. He'll be on you before you can hide! Jump!



**Click here.**



**Y**ou back up, holding the staff in front of you. You realize that running away will bring you great dishonor. You won't impress Musashi that way. Honor is more important than life itself to a samurai. You'll have to fight, even if it means getting thumped on the head!

The man twirls his staff and laughs, leaping toward you.

You stumble backward, trying to think of a way to save yourself. A desperate idea pops into your head. You look around. Yes! That polished column is right behind you.

You jump back as the man attacks again. You circle to the side—there, the angle ought to be about right. . . .

The man spins to face you—and the bright sunlight reflects off the polished beam behind you into his eyes! He blinks and holds his staff up to block the glare.

You slide forward and swing your own staff at him, hard. It catches him across the shins. He howls and drops his staff! The polished oak stick clatters to the floor.

“Well done!” someone shouts from the doorway. You turn and see a samurai standing there—it's Musashi!

Suddenly there's a blazing pain in your head! The man behind you must have been so angry at his defeat that he's picked up his bow and hit you!

You feel yourself blacking out and you fall to your knees, then forward . . .



Awaken. **Click here.**



**Y**ou're standing outside a building made of thin strips of wood and sheets of paper. You're in the village of Ogura, on the island of Kyushu, in the year 1634. Musashi would be about fifty years old now.

A sign over the door says "One school—two swords." Musashi was the first samurai to use two swords in battle. This must be the school he started!

You knock on the door.

A man with his head partially shaved slides the paper door open. "Yes?"

"Please, sir," you say, "is this a place where one can learn the Way of the Samurai?"

The man nods. "Yes. We teach Bushido—the code of warriors—here."

"I would like to learn," you say.

He nods again. "Take off your sandals and come inside."

You slip the woven grass sandals from your feet and follow the man.

He leads you to a large room, where twenty students are practicing with bamboo swords and other weapons.

"This is our *dojo*, or training hall," he says. "Sit there. Like those students."

You see some young students near one corner. You start to sit cross-legged next to one. He whispers, "No, no, you must sit *seiza*, as we do."

You kneel down and point your toes out behind you, resting on

your heels. After a few minutes, your legs start to hurt—but you know you can't move.

The man who led you inside claps his hands, and the students all stop what they are doing.

“The Way of the Sword is the Way of the Samurai,” he says. “A samurai of honor is always prepared to die, whether death comes from an enemy in battle, a beautiful woman, or an old and trusted friend. Death is the only thing certain in life. It comes to all, and so there is no reason to fear it. Honor is important, death meaning nothing to a warrior!

“Our master, Miyamoto Musashi—”

You're in Musashi's school!

“—fought more than sixty duels before he was thirty years old, and he was never afraid to die. He sought only the Way. He did not worry about death or technique or anything except becoming one with his sword. He could do the Fire and Stones cut and the Flowing Water cut, and he once defeated in combat Sasaki Kijiro, a man much better trained, able to cut a swallow from the air with his sword.”

You listen carefully as the instructor talks about Musashi. You begin to understand something of the way he must think.

“—must always seek the Way of Water,” the teacher says.

The Way of Water!

“Water takes the shape of its surroundings, whether a river bank, an ocean bed, or a bottle,” he continues. “Stab at water with a sword, and it flows away, unhurt. This is the path you must learn—samurai must be like water.”

Just then, a man comes into the dojo. He is short but muscular.

The teacher stops talking. “Ah, here is Iori, who will now teach the advanced students the technique of the Eight Walls. The beginning class is dismissed.”

The students next to you stand up, and, after a second to work the cramps out of your legs, you do, too. They walk outside, and you follow them.

“This is very interesting,” you say. “When do we start learning how to use the weapons?”



One of them laughs. “Oh, not for months. You must listen and watch, to prove you are worthy.”

Months? That’s a long time. You’ve found out something about Musashi and his way of thinking, but you don’t know if you have months to wait around.

“How long does it take to learn, once we start?” you ask.

The boy laughs again. “Years. Maybe five, maybe ten.”

You don’t have that much time to learn about sword and stick fighting.

Now that you know a little about Musashi, you can try to find him again. But where?

As you and the beginning students leave the hall, you see one of the advanced students swinging a long stick around in the air.

The student next to you says, “That’s one of the techniques Master Musashi learned from the Zen priests at Hozoin,” he says. “Back when the priests still did such things. They are more peaceful these days. Now they sit and meditate for hours and concern themselves with spiritual things that require no movement.”

Hozoin? If Musashi was there as a student, he might be easier to talk to than as a warrior. “How long ago was Master Musashi at the Hozoin temple?” you ask.

“Oh, almost thirty years ago.”

You thank him and leave the other students, to find a place to be alone. You could jump back in time and try to find Musashi at the Hozoin Temple. Still, you know only a little about Musashi. Perhaps it would be better to jump back to the capitol city of Edo and try to learn more about him?



**Jump back 29 years to the Zen Temple at Hozoin, 1605. [Click here.](#)**



**Jump back 19 years to Edo. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou are sure which side in the battle you will take—the guard said that Kensei was leading the attack. Kensei means “Sword Saint,” the honorary name sometimes used for Musashi!

As you join Musashi’s men, you see a young man holding a long silk banner trip and fall. He is about to be trampled by the others. You slide to a halt on the damp ground and help the man to his feet.

A muscular man with a long mustache runs past you and grunts. “Good that you help your comrade!” he says.

You look at him. It’s Musashi!

You run after him.

As you do, you see a group of men run out of the castle to meet the attackers.

Musashi leaps to the front of his own troops and draws his swords. Most of the samurai seem to be carrying a long sword and a shorter one. The blades of Musashi’s swords glitter in the sunlight.

Musashi dances among the men from the castle, weaving his blades back and forth in circular patterns. He is as graceful as a ballet dancer or a gymnast. There are a dozen men, it seems, all trying to cut Musashi down, but his swords seem enchanted as they block every thrust at him. He doesn’t slow down as he swings his weapons. Everywhere he passes, men lie wounded, blood flowing from deep cuts.

The men from the castle turn and run from Musashi and quickly close the door to the castle behind them.

“Bring up the battering ram!” someone yells. “We’ll break the

door down!”

You watch as about thirty men begin to smash a giant log against the door. You find yourself standing next to Musashi. You can't ask him for his sword now—he'll need it for the battle yet to come. But this might be a good time to talk to him.

“Pardon me,” you begin.

“Ah, the one who helped the standard carrier,” Musashi says, cutting you off. “A brave act. But your motions seemed a little stiff. You should seek the Way of Water.”

You are about to ask him to explain more about the Way of Water, which you know is the way a samurai should move, when the battering ram suddenly crashes through the door to the castle.

“Hah!” Musashi yells, leaping forward.

Before you can move, he is gone.

You really don't know that much about how Musashi thinks. How will you talk to him, even if you find him at a quieter time? Maybe you should jump into the future, to a less violent time, and find a place to learn a few things about Musashi.

A samurai rushes past, swinging his sword and screaming a war cry. You duck as the sword just misses you. You need to do *something*; this battle area is dangerous.



Seek the way ahead in time, at a school in  
Ogura. **Click here.**



**Y**ou are walking on the road to Kyoto. The boy in the temple told you Musashi was going to the imperial capital. Kyoto is the imperial capital; Edo is the capital of the shogun, the deputy who rules for the emperor.

After a few miles, you come upon a blind man walking with a staff. You decide to walk with him a while. You tell him your name.

“Ah, a very interesting name,” he says. “My own name is Katsu Yoritomo; I am a masseur.”

“A masseur?”

“Yes. I give massages to rich ladies and lords.”

“But—but—you’re—” You stop, afraid you will embarrass him.

“—blind?” he finishes for you. “Yes. In a way. I cannot see with my eyes. I do have ears, a nose, my other senses, though.” He stops walking and cocks his head to one side. “Listen. Do you hear the cricket in the ditch by the side of the road?”

You strain your ears. You start to shake your head. You don’t hear any—Wait! There it is! “Yes, I hear it.”

“You are a traveler from far away,” he says. “I can tell from your voice and the questions you ask.” He goes on to describe how tall you are and how much you weigh.

You are amazed. “How can you know this?”

“I can tell your height by where your voice comes from. And your weight by the way you hit the ground. Never feel sorry for a man just because he has no eyes,” Katsu says. “He may ‘see’ more than you do!”

“And because you are a traveler, I will tell you why a blind man

can have money. Since I cannot ‘see’ the bodies of my patients, I must learn to be very clever with my hands. And since a naked lady shows me nothing, her husband has no reason to be jealous!” Katsu laughs loudly at this. “Sometimes people are very foolish, aren’t they?”

Before you can answer, you see three men approaching the main road from a side path. They don’t look very friendly.

“Some trouble ahead,” Katsu says. “Be on your guard.”

The three men come toward you. “Oh-ho!” one says. “A blind man and his friend! Could you lend us some money, pilgrims?”

You don’t have any or you would give it to them. You hope Katsu will give them a few coins so they won’t bother you. Instead, he says, “Honest men work for their money.”

Katsu must be very brave. A blind man won’t have a chance, you think, against three men with eyes, if they want trouble!

“Are you saying we’re dishonest?” one of the men says.

“Of course not. I merely say I have no money for the likes of you.”

“We will take your money then, fool!” The man reaches for Katsu.

The blind man lifts his staff quickly and jabs the attacker in the belly. “Oof!” the man says, as he doubles over, clutching the staff with both hands.

Katsu lets the staff go and stands barehanded as the other two leap at him.

You jump forward and snatch up the staff from the hands of the fallen man, who is groaning and trying to catch his breath.

One of the other men grabs at Katsu. Katsu catches the man’s outstretched arm, spins, flips him over his shoulder! The man hits the ground with a sound like a sack of rice being dropped from a tall shelf. Whump!

Meanwhile, you manage to swing Katsu’s staff up into the third man, catching him in a very tender spot. He clutches himself and backs away. Seeing his two friends are down, he turns and runs off, yelling.



You smile at Katsu. He is smiling, too.

A large group of men approaches. Katsu doesn't seem worried, so you hold your ground and watch them. Six men carry a large bamboo-and-cloth box up to where you stand. It is a palanquin, used for carrying people. The shutters on the side of the cart open and a fat man peers out.

"Bravely done!" he says. "I would have helped you, but we were too far away when the ruffians attacked."

Katsu nods. "I recognize your voice. You are Lord Takahashi, daimyo of the large estate east of here."

"Very clever, blind man! It is so."

"I gave your sister a massage once," Katsu says.

"Then you must come and give me one," the daimyo says.

Katsu whispers to you that the term daimyo is a title given to some samurai and it usually means the man is wealthy.

"I would, Lord Takahashi, but I must leave the Kyoto road here for a previous engagement, I am afraid."

"Ah, a pity. What about you?" the daimyo says, looking at you. "I can always use another brave person as a companion."

You shake your head. "I would, but I must go to Kyoto, sir, to find Miyamoto Musashi—"

"Musashi? I know of him. I even have a sword he once owned in my collection! Perhaps you would like to see it?"

Should you go with the daimyo? Or should you continue on to Kyoto to see Musashi fight?



**Go with the daimyo. [Click here.](#)**



**Continue on to Kyoto. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou decide to travel on the road to Edo, to try and find Musashi. Edo is the capital of the shogunate, you know, and the boy in the temple said the kendo matches were to be for the Shogun. So, you reason, Musashi must be going to Edo.

A fine rain starts to fall, hardly more than a mist, but cold. The road begins to get muddy. You slosh through puddles and wonder how far away Edo is, exactly. Maybe you should jump there and try to get ahead of Musashi.

“Aha!” a voice comes from your left. A group of raggedly dressed men, waving sticks and knives, is running at you from the trees.

Bandits!

You take off as fast as you can run through the mud. It is slippery and you almost fall, but the bandits aren’t doing much better. They have to wade through the same guck.

You trip and fall, splashing face down in the mud just off the road. You look up just in time to see one of the bandits swinging a stick at you! You roll over and quickly get to your feet.

You run as fast as you can and manage to lose them. Soon you’re back on the main road, but you’re confused now. You can’t tell which way is the way to Edo.

The rain stops, and the sun comes out. A group of men approaches, carrying a big bamboo-and-cloth box. It is a *palanquin*, used for carrying people. You wave, and the palanquin stops next to you.

“Excuse me,” you say. “Which is the way to Edo, the imperial capital?”

The fat man laughs. He leans out of his palanquin and points *both* ways down the road.

“Edo is this way,” he says, “but the imperial capital, Kyoto, is *that* way. Edo is the capital of the shogunate.” He seems very pleased to have an opportunity to correct someone.

It seems you were going the wrong way!

“I am hoping to attend the Shogun’s kendo matches,” you say to make sure. “Where will they be held?”

“In Kyoto, not far from where I live. I am Lord Takahashi. I am a *daimyo*, very wealthy, very important. My estate is to the east of here. Perhaps you have heard of me?”

“I have not heard as much of you,” you say slowly, “as you undoubtedly deserve.”

The daimyo smiles. “Why are you going to see the kendo matches?”

“I am looking for the famous ronin, Miyamoto Musashi.”

“Musashi! I know of him. I even have a sword he once owned in my collection! Perhaps you would like to see it?”



Follow the daimyo. [Click here.](#)



**Y**ou're in Kyoto. The upcoming kendo, or sword tournament, is the major event of the year. There is a very festive air about the town. Old men and boys walk through the narrow streets carrying banners of bright silk. The shopkeepers have their wares out for display—woven sandals, big hats shaped like baskets, rice balls.

It seems the competition won't be for a few days. You decide to get a job, to earn a place to stay and eat until the matches. You ask a man at an inn if he has any work for you.

"Ah, yes, we will have many visitors for the Shogun's tournament. You can serve *sake* to the samurai and tradesmen."

Sake, you learn, is a kind of wine, made from rice. It must be served heated, so the owner of the inn wants somebody who can move quickly to serve it before it cools.

The day before the kendo matches begin, you are hurrying back and forth, serving sake to a group of well-dressed samurai.

The men drink a lot. Soon they are drunk. They brag about what wonderful fighters they are and how they will win the tournament for the Shogun.

One of the men, whose name is Kinju, laughs. "My first match is to be against some dog of a ronin called Musashi," he says, waving his cup. "More sake!"

You hurry to fetch more hot wine for him, so you can hear what he says. Musashi must not be very famous yet, in 1605.

"I hear he's pretty good," one of the other men says.

"Yes," says another, "a tough opponent."



Kinju gulps half his cup of sake. “Maybe so,” he says. “But I have a plan. When he drinks the cup of ceremonial wine before our match, he will be drugged!”

“Clever,” says one man.

But the other man says, “That doesn’t seem quite right, somehow.”

Kinju stares at the man. “Oh? A real samurai is always ready for anything! A real samurai would not drink drugged wine! If he drinks, it’s *his* fault!”

Kinju’s friends nod. “True.”

“Right. A real samurai is always alert for danger.”

You shake your head. That reasoning seemed wrong to you. This Kinju is going to cheat, the way you see it.

“Has Musashi arrived in the city yet?” one of Kinju’s friends asks.

“Oh, yes. He is staying at some disreputable inn near the actors’ school, the House of Leaves, near the grove of holly trees.”

“Better hope he doesn’t find out about your plan.”

Kinju laughs drunkenly. “Oh, he won’t. I have two men watching him. If anybody tries to talk to him before the match, my men will handle them!”

You hurry back to the kitchen. What should you do? Should you warn Musashi of the drugged wine? Certainly he would be grateful to you if you did. But what of the two thugs watching him? What if they heard you trying to warn Musashi? They might slice you into pieces! What should you do?



**Warn Musashi. [Click here.](#)**



**Say nothing. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou walk with the daimyo to his estate, happy to see if he might actually have a sword which belonged to Musashi. You walk along side the palanquin, in which the fat man is carried by his men.

“I am always glad for company,” he says. “Travel is so *boring*.”

You don’t say anything. So far, your travels have been anything but boring.

“Even a great man such as myself must travel like a common ronin. That’s hardly fair, don’t you agree?”

Before you can say anything, he starts talking again.

“Ah, if only I could trust my worthless sons to handle my business for me! But no one is as capable as I. It is a pity. Don’t you think it is a shame there are so few brilliant men such as myself?”

You start to say something, but the daimyo starts talking again. You’ve never heard anybody brag so much or talk so much! He says he has a sword that was Musashi’s. As long as you’re here, you might as well take a look at it.

After a long day of walking, you arrive at the daimyo’s estate. The house is large, though it doesn’t look like a castle. You are glad for a chance to rest.

After you have cleaned up and eaten a supper of soup, vegetables different from any you’d ever seen, rice, and a variety of fish, the daimyo shows you his collection of weapons. He has spears, bows, strange devices made of balls, chains and sickles, and many swords. One blade he holds up in a black wooden sheath. “The sword of Musashi, the famous wandering samurai,” he says.

You don't want to make him angry, but you want to know how anybody can tell the sword really belonged to Musashi. You say, "A man such as yourself can easily see such things, but how would an ordinary person such as myself know this sword belonged to Musashi?"

The fat man smiles. "Ah, it is very simple, you see."

The daimyo takes a little hammer and what looks like a dull nail. He begins to tap something in the handle of the sword. After a few seconds, a thin bamboo peg comes out of the sword's handle, which is made of rayskin wrapped in a diamond-shaped pattern of silk cord. The handle comes off, showing the *tang*, or end of the sword.

He points at the tang. "See? The maker inscribes the metal."

You look. It says, "Made for Miyamoto Musashi by Kanemitsu in the month of Hachigatsu, 1603. Passed the silk test."

Ah, you remember the silk test. So Kanemitsu *did* make a sword for Musashi soon after you visited his shop. Only now—how will you get the sword?

You go to bed—a cotton mattress called a *futon* with a thin blanket—still thinking about how to get the sword. You don't have any money. Could you work for the daimyo and earn it? You shake your head in the darkness. Not likely. The daimyo has all the money he needs. Why should he give you the sword, which he obviously thinks is one of his most valuable pieces?

You doze off, still worrying about what to do. You awake suddenly an hour or so later. You strain your eyes and ears but can't see or hear anything. Yet you're sure you sensed something.

You get up and tiptoe down the hallway. Nobody else seems to be awake. You walk to the big room where the daimyo has his collection of weapons. It's dark and quiet.

You must have been dreaming, you think, as you leave the room to go back to bed.

As you turn, there's a tiny sound behind you, no louder than a creak of a floorboard. You freeze. Somebody is in the sword room. You can't see who it is, but now you're sure of it. You wait silently.

After what seems like a long time, you catch a quick glimpse of

movement. It's a black form, sliding silently along the far wall. You try not to make any noise. A window is slid aside, and in the moonlight you see a figure dressed in black, carrying a sword in a sheath. The figure slips silently outside.

You look around. You hurry back into the room as the window shuts behind the black silhouette. Somebody has stolen something. . . .

Musashi's sword—it's gone!

You open the window in time to see the figure in black running across the road. What should you do? Go after the thief alone? Or wake the daimyo and his samurai to get help? The thief is moving pretty fast. Decide now!



**Chase the thief. [Click here.](#)**



**Wake the household. [Click here.](#)**



**T**hief!” you yell. “Help—! Thief!”

After a minute, men rush into the room where you are, their swords drawn. The daimyo waddles in, dressed in a long silk sleeping robe, looking very upset.

“What is going on?” he demands.

“A thief!” you say. “All dressed in black! He took the sword—” You point at the wall. There is an empty spot where Musashi’s sword stood on a carved wooden rack.

“Ninja!” the daimyo says. “And you must be helping them!” he screams. “You asked to see the sword! They came to steal it while you are here! You are a spy!”

You shake your head. “No, you’ve got it all wrong—!”

“I want this spy’s head mounted on a pole outside my bedroom window!” the daimyo shouts.

The samurai leap at you. You stumble backward and hit the window, then tumble over the ledge outside. Somehow you manage to land on your feet. You turn and run for your life.

Behind you, you can hear the daimyo’s samurai shouting. You hurry across the dirt road and into some trees. As you are stumbling about in the dark, you trip on a root and fall, smacking your head into a thick tree trunk, hard. Ow! You feel dizzy. You might pass out, and if you do they will catch you for sure! Should you jump to a place where your head can be taken care of? Or should you try to find the thief who took Musashi’s sword?



**Jump to safety. [Click here.](#)**



**Try to find the thief. [Click here.](#)**



**T**he ninja march you toward the tiger pit. You've fished around in your pockets, but you didn't bring any matches. Too bad. You could have lit a match in the darkness, maybe, and scared them.

You hear a growling sound which turns into a roar.

What is that?

One of the ninja laughs. "Our pet is hungry tonight!"

You swallow, but your mouth is dry. Are they serious? Is there a *real* tiger? In a pit?

They are serious. You can make out a big beast walking back and forth in the bottom of a deep hole in the ground. You smell the animal odor as the ninja march you to the edge of the pit. You can't see three feet into the pit anymore, but you can still hear the tiger growling for his supper: you.

"Jump in," one of the ninja says.

Jump in? Does he think you are just going to hop into a pit with a hungry *tiger* in it? "No, thanks," you say.

A hand slams into the middle of your back, hard. You are falling into the pit!

You hit bottom and your feet sink into the soft dirt.

Across from you, barely visible in the darkness, you see the tiger move. He makes a sound halfway between a cough and a growl. The smell of the big cat grows stronger. He takes a couple of steps towards you.

A cloud covers the moon just then, and the pit gets completely dark. You can hear the tiger getting closer, but you can't see him.



This means the ninja can't see you, either.



**Jump back to the road to Kyoto.**  
**Click here.**



**M**usashi can take care of himself, you figure. You decide to wait until after the match before you try to talk to him.

The day of the tournament arrives. Along with thousands of others, you wait for the matches to begin. You read a sheet of paper explaining the rules which is nailed to a post near where you are standing. The fights will be with wooden swords; a match will be won when one man is disarmed, knocked out, or gives up.

After several exciting matches, the main event—as far as you are concerned—begins. Musashi against Kinju.

Both men bow to the Shogun, who is sitting in a special box near the edge of the fighting field. Then the two fighters face each other.

Musashi stands with the tip of his wooden sword held at eye level, while Kinju holds his sword over his head. As you watch, you notice that Musashi seems to wobble a little. He must have drunk the drugged wine.

Kinju must also see Musashi wobbling. He charges!

At the last instant, Musashi leaps to one side and swings his sword at Kinju's head. Wood meets bone, and Kinju falls like a rock!

Musashi bows to the Shogun, then takes something from the inside of his kimono and puts it by Kinju. You strain to see what it is.

It's a cup. It must have held the drugged wine. And Musashi didn't drink it; he only pretended to, so Kinju would think Musashi was drugged! The cup is a message to Kinju—when he wakes up!

As Musashi leaves the arena, you quickly hurry toward him. You catch up with him as he is walking down a side street. “That was a very exciting fight,” you say.

Musashi grunts.

“I was afraid for a minute you might have—” You shut up, but Musashi is looking at you funny.

“Afraid I might have what?” he asks.

“Nothing.” You don’t want to tell him you knew they were going to try to drug him and you didn’t warn him.

He starts to walk faster.

“Can I go with you?” you ask.

“No. I travel alone,” he says.

You stop and watch him walk off. He’s leaving Kyoto! This won’t do at all.

You come up with a plan: You’ll follow him at a distance. Then, later, you can explain what you’ve come for. Surely he is a reasonable man, he won’t be angry with you for that?

Long after it is dark, you find yourself shivering in the cold. Musashi has a warm fire going at his campsite, in the middle of a clearing in the woods. Quietly, you tiptoe forward, to get warmed by the fire.

“Hah!” he suddenly screams, leaping up, both his swords out and pointed at you. “So, you are back! And you knew about the drugged wine at the match, too, didn’t you?”

“I—uh, that is, I—er—”

“Never mind! I don’t like people who come out of the darkness!”

You turn and run.

You run around a tree and try to catch your breath. You’d better jump in time, fast, or be cut down by the man you’ve come to find.



**Jump back in time. [Click here.](#)**



It's after dark before you can get away from your chores at the inn. You get directions to the House of Leaves, where Musashi is staying.

The inn is much smaller and older than the one you're working in. You don't see anybody who might be watching Musashi.

You go inside and ask the owner where Musashi is. He points to a room nearby, with a wood-and-paper sliding door.

You knock at the door.

"Yes?"

"I'm looking for Miyamoto Musashi," you say.

"You've found him. Come in."

At last! You slide the door open, bow, and go into the room.

Musashi is sitting, eating rice from a wooden bowl with chopsticks. He nods at you. Then, as you watch, he stabs with the chopsticks at the air above the rice and comes up with something that looks like a raisin. With a flick of his wrist, he tosses the dark object to the floor.

It isn't a raisin. It's a fly. Musashi is so fast he can catch a fly in midair, using chopsticks!

"How may I help you?" Musashi asks.

"I've come to warn you—!" you begin.

Suddenly the sliding door is shoved open! Two men with swords are standing there. "Aha!" one says. "We've got you!"

Musashi looks at the two men. "Is there some problem?"

The man who spoke before nods. "That one," he says, pointing at you. "That one insulted our honor. We demand satisfaction!" He

puts his hand on his long sword and glares at you.

Musashi looks at you. "Is this true?"

You shake your head. "I never saw them before!" But you know who they are. They are Kinju's men!

"There seems to be a mistake," Musashi says quietly.

"No mistake!" the man by the door says. "Come along, you!"

You turn toward Musashi. "Sir, I came to warn you about a plot—"

"Silence, dog!" the samurai by the door yells. "Another word and I'll cut you down where you sit!" He pulls his sword from its sheath and takes a step toward you.

"It isn't polite to pull a sword in another man's room," Musashi says.

"This matter does not concern you," one of Kinju's men says.

Musashi raises one of his thick eyebrows. "You come into my room, disturb my meal, insult my guest, and it does not concern me?"

Suddenly Musashi is on his feet, his own sword out and pointed toward the two men. "You have a choice," Musashi says, "you can leave or you can fight."

The two men look at you, then each other.

Musashi looks like a statue, he is so still.

"You will be sorry!" one of them says to you, as they turn and hurry outside.

Musashi puts his sword away and looks at you. "Now. You had something to tell me?"

Quickly you explain about the drugged wine Kinju plans for Musashi to drink. Musashi laughs. "So. He would try anything to win. A good samurai!"

You don't understand. "But—but—that's cheating!"

He smiles at you. "No. All is fair in a contest. A samurai who isn't prepared for anything deserves to lose."

You shake your head.

"Still, it was good of you to warn me. I am in your debt, for you might have saved me a great loss of honor. Will I see you at the contest?"

You nod. "I'll be there."



“Good. We will talk again.”

You smile at him and turn to go. You’ve made the right choice. You’ve had a chance to talk to him, and now he is friendly toward you, at least. After the contest, you can see him again, get to know him better, and maybe figure a way to get him to give you his sword.

As you start to leave the inn, you stop in the hallway. The two thugs from Kinju might be there waiting for you, to try and get even.

One thing you’ve learned about being a samurai is that one must be resourceful at all times. You see some old rags lying in a pile. Quickly you dress yourself in them, so you look like a beggar. If the two men are out there, they won’t recognize you now!

As you walk away from the inn, you see the two men. They glance at you, then back at the door. Good! You’ve fooled them.

Then, one of the men calls to you. “Hey, beggar, did you see anybody else about to leave?”

“No, sir,” you mumble, trying to disguise your voice.

“Wait a minute. You sound familiar. Let’s see you without those rags on your head!”

Quickly, you scoot away.

“Hey! It’s—”

“After that cowardly tale-teller!”

The two men chase you.

The streets are full of twists and turns and narrow alleys. You dodge and run aimlessly, trying to lose them, but they are still behind you.

What should you do? So far, you’re on the right track. Should you jump away from these men, or keep running and try to lose them?



**Jump out of danger. [Click here.](#)**



**Try and lose them. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou run through the woods where you saw the figure in black go. Maybe you can catch the thief and somehow get the sword back. Maybe the daimyo will think well of you and offer you a reward—perhaps even the sword itself!

There! Just ahead, you see a shadowy figure move in the moonlight. Carefully you slow down and move from tree to bush, hiding so he won't see you.

You lose sight of him, so you hurry a little. Where did he go?

“Hah!” somebody says behind you. “Did you think you could follow a ninja?”

You spin around and see a figure in black—black shirt, black pants and a black hood covering his head except the eyes. The figure in black holds the sword of Musashi in one hand and a wicked-looking dagger in the other.

You turn to flee, but you're surrounded by black shapes. There are a dozen ninja all around you, each holding a dagger or sword, all of them pointed right at you!

Before you can begin to think of what to do, the ninja grab you and tie you to a tree. The one who stole the sword of Musashi comes to stand in front of you. With a sudden motion, he pulls the hood from his face—

Only it isn't a *him*, it's a *her*! The ninja who stole the sword is a woman. She laughs. “Too bad,” she says, “you would have made a good ninja; you followed me very well—for an ordinary person. But ninjas can move through walls, walk on water, and leap six feet straight into the air. Didn't you know that?” She turns and walks away.



You don't like the sound of what she said. Too bad? You *would have* made a good ninja?

Before you can get loose from the ropes tying you, three ninja come and do it for you. Each holds a dagger a few inches away from you. "This way," one says. "To the tiger pit!"

Tiger pit? You've got to do something! You have a desperate idea. You aren't tied, so you reach into your pocket. If only you had some matches . . .



**If you chose matches as one of your items,  
[click here.](#)**



**If you didn't choose to bring matches,  
[click here.](#)**



**Y**es, you have the matches! Since it is pretty dark, the ninja holding you captive don't see your sneaky movements as you pull the box of matches from your pocket. This will be a surprise—matches weren't invented until the nine-teenth century. Slowly and carefully, you manage to take one of the matches from the box. When a cloud covers the moon for a second, you act. You strike the match and wave it at the ninja!

“*Aiiee!*” one yells.

“A demon! It has fingers that burn!”

Before they can decide to whittle you with their big knives, you pull several more matches from the box and begin tossing them all around you.

“It spits fire! A Kami demon! Run!”

The ninja all take off in one direction. You take off in the other—the ninja won't stay frightened for long.

After a minute, you have a pretty good head start on them, but you don't slow down.

You hear them coming again. You spin around, looking for a quiet place to jump in time.

The ninja are almost here. Jump, quickly.



**Jump back in time to find shelter.**  
**Click here.**



**Y**ou find yourself in a huge garden. It seems to stretch on forever, with an ocean of flowers sweetening the air around you. Reds, blues, greens, yellows—there are thousands of flowers! In the distance, beyond some trees, you see a large, columned building with a roof of green and blue tile. Near the building, you see several men and women walking. Their faces are covered with powder. The men wear tiny pointed beards on their chins, and the women have long hair and painted arched eyebrows. Their silken robes and strange hats make them look like lovely birds. No one wears a weapon.

Well. This certainly isn't Musashi's time, you realize.

You walk through the garden, looking at preening peacocks and other colorful birds. This is one of the most beautiful places you've ever seen.

You come around a corner and see a lady sitting on a bench.

She looks at you. "Who are you?" she asks. "What are you doing in the imperial garden of Heian-kyo?"

You don't know what is proper or important here, so you bow slightly and say, "I am a traveler, here to refresh my eyes with the beauty of Heian-kyo."

The woman smiles. You see that her teeth have been painted black. "I am Lady Murasaki Shikibu," she says. "I have been amusing myself by writing a tale of court life in Kyoto. Would you like to hear part of it?"

You nod.

She begins to read to you from a sheet of flowered paper. Several

other people who pass by stop to listen, but none of them look like samurai. The story is from a work called *The Tale of Genji*, a novel. The lady reading mentions the date. It is almost six hundred years before Musashi's time. This *Tale of Genji* you're hearing must be the first novel ever written, in Japanese or any language.

"—and so the demon said, 'I will grant you your wish—'" Lady Murasaki reads.

It is an interesting story, and the lady reads it well, but you are terribly tired from all the time-hopping you've done. You can't help yawning.

Lady Murasaki stops reading and stares at you in horror. You hear people all around you gasp. They turn their faces away. What did you do?

"Barbarian!" a man says.

"Shameful!" a woman says.

You realize they meant your yawn. But you meant no disrespect; you were just tired, that's all.

"You must leave Heian-kyo at once!" a man says, pulling on your arm. "A civilized person would never do what you did!"

You are shocked. How can they get so upset over a yawn? What a strange place this is. You wonder what would have happened if you'd sneezed.

The man takes you to a gate on the edge of the city. "Go," he says. "We are not savages here!"

Starving peasants and beggars rush toward you as you pass through the gate.

"Some food, kind one!"

"Please, a few coins!"

"A pass into the land of the cloud-dwellers!"

You shake your head. "Sorry," you say. "I don't have anything to give you."

"Liar! You came from the city; you must be rich!"

"Give us money or we'll take it from you!"

A beggar close to you waves a heavy wooden bowl at your face. Another man next to him swings a stick at your leg. You jump back.



They are all moving toward you. They think you're rich, and mean to steal your money! When they find you don't have any, they might be really angry. They might beat you to a pulp!

You turn to run back into the city, but the heavy wooden gate is shut—can't go that way!

You sprint around a bamboo shack, the beggars only a few steps behind. This is a terrible place! The rich stay in a beautiful city, practicing writing and fancy manners, while the poor are forced to live outside, barely living at all.

And those poor are after you now!

It's time to get back to Musashi's day. You know he'll be at the Kyoto kendo matches in 1605. You don't see any samurai here anyway—you must be back before they existed. You duck down a dark street.



**Jump ahead 600 years. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou face Miyamoto Musashi, the greatest swordsman of all time, and take a deep breath. He has told you he owes you his life and offered you a reward.

“I—I—would like your sword,” you say.

Musashi glares at you. “My sword? You ask for my soul! I would paint a picture for you or carve a statue, I would jump into a fire for you, but—my sword? No one who knows anything of samurai would ask such a thing! I was wrong about you!”

“I’m sorry,” you reply, but you’ve made Musashi angry. He turns away from you.

“I travel alone from now on,” Musashi says. “Leave me.”

He walks away.

“Wait!” you reply. You walk after him. “You don’t understand!”

“I understand well enough,” Musashi says. “You have no honor. Leave, or face my blade!”

You stop. Not again! Musashi is a violent man; he angers easily. Once more you have irritated him. To keep following him would be foolish and dangerous. You realize you still don’t know enough about him. You need to learn more, somehow. Where better than his school, where he and his students teach the Way of Water?



**Jump forward in time to 1634. [Click here.](#)**



**S**o, you decide, stealing is wrong. Somehow you will have to convince Musashi to give you his sword. It probably won't be easy, but better than swiping something which doesn't belong to you. Honor, after all, is the most important thing to a samurai like Musashi. Stealing certainly isn't honorable.

After a couple of days, Musashi's sword is ready. You start off on your travels.

As you are leaving Kyoto, you and Musashi are suddenly attacked by a band of six men. It is Kinju!

You still don't know much about samurai fighting. You know Musashi won't be killed—but *you* might! Should you stay and fight, or hope to meet up with Musashi again later on?



**Stay and fight. [Click here.](#)**



**Jump ahead ten years. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou arrive in a rice field on the island of Kyushu on May 19 of the year 1645. You are near a large castle which sits atop a tall stone support. A girl working in the rice field tells you the castle belongs to Lord Hosokawa.

“Tell me, do you know if the swordsman Miyamoto Musashi lives around here?”

“Oh, yes,” she says, bending over the flooded ground to pull weeds from the rows between the rice plants. “Well, at least he used to live around here. He was a guest of Lord Hosokawa for a long time, until two or three years ago, I think. He left in 1643, to go and live in seclusion.”

You take a deep breath, then sigh. So close, and you’ve missed him again!

“Do you know where he went?”

“I’m afraid I don’t. So sorry.”

You walk away, puzzled. The book said he lived here. Could the writer have made a mistake?

Musashi spent his last years living in a cave! You walk back to the girl in the rice field and ask if there are any caves in the area. She nods and gives you directions. It’s a long walk, but you know you are on the right track to accomplishing your mission.

Eventually you find several caves which run into the side of the hill. You check out two of them, but they are empty. In the third, however, there is a dim light.

There, under the glow of a tiny lantern, you see Miyamoto Musashi. He is nearly bald now. His face shows his age, through the



wrinkles and lines around his eyes. But when he looks up, his vision seems to be sharp. He sees you instantly.

“Come to bid me farewell?” he says. “I am going to leave this earth today. I am not afraid,” he says simply, and you know this is true. “Come a little closer, so I may see you.”

You walk a few steps closer. The cave is damp and cool. In the faint light, you can see a stack of writing paper, pens and ink, and Musashi’s swords—two of steel, one of wood.

“I did everything I wanted to do in this life,” Musashi says. “I followed the Way of the Sword faithfully.”

“I know,” you say. You have observed that in your travels.

He squints at you. “I know you. But you have not changed in almost forty years! Are you a spirit? A Kami?”

“No,” you say. “I am a traveler, from a place you have never heard of. I have a mission.”

“Which is?”

You take a deep breath. You will be honest with him. “I am to bring back one of your swords. The sword of the greatest swordsman in all of Japanese history.”

He smiles. “I did my best, but I was not so great.”

Musashi closes his eyes and grows very still. Has his final moment come? You watch for a minute, but he doesn’t move.

You shake your head. What should you do? He won’t need his swords any longer. He did tell you when he no longer needed them, one of them would be yours, didn’t he? If he’s just passed on, without giving one to you, would it be proper to take it? You can easily accomplish your goal and jump back to your own time before anybody discovers Musashi.

On the other hand, taking his sword is like stealing. Musashi’s whole life was based on honor and stealing surely isn’t honorable. Should you just leave him as he is, even if it means failing in your mission?



Take one of the swords. **Click here.**



Turn around and leave the cave.  
**Click here.**



**T**he men attacking you seem to be everywhere! Their swords flash brightly in the morning sunlight. You back away, swinging your wooden staff, hoping to keep from getting cut to ribbons.

Musashi is leaping about like a madman. His sword moves so fast you can only see a blur! Musashi is facing one of the last fighters when Kinju, who has been playing dead, hops up behind him.

You have only a second. You jump at Kinju and bring your staff around in a short arc, slamming it into his sword, and knock it from his hands!

Musashi drives the other men away and turns to face Kinju, who now only has a short sword to defend himself. Kinju backs away, only to trip and fall! Musashi stands over him, his two swords raised.

“Please don’t kill me!” Kinju begs.

Musashi spits on the ground in disgust. “No, I won’t kill you—I wouldn’t dirty my blade with the blood of a coward!”

You and Musashi walk away.

As you are walking, he turns to you. “You saved my life back there. How can I repay you?”

This is your chance. You can ask him for his sword as a reward; after all, he owes you his life.

But should you?





Ask Musashi for his sword. [Click here.](#)



Keep quiet about the sword.  
[Click here.](#)



**T**he two thugs chasing you expect you to run. Therefore, you might be able to lose them by standing still! You see a deep doorway in a mud-and-bamboo building. You skid to a stop in front of the door, jump in, and press yourself against it.

The men chasing you run past a few seconds later. After a few minutes you don't hear them any longer. You sigh in relief and head back to the inn where you work.

The day of the Kendo tournament arrives. You watch the early matches until Musashi comes out to face Kinju. Both men are armed with wooden swords. The match will continue until one man is disarmed, gives up, or is knocked out.

By now, Kinju must know that Musashi won't be drugged. Kinju is very cautious as he circles to his right, his wooden sword held over his head.

Musashi keeps his sword with the point held at eye level, extended in front of him.

Both men shout and leap at each other. Musashi knocks Kinju's sword to one side and cracks Kinju on the shoulder. Kinju drops his blade—Musashi has won!

Musashi turns to bow to the shogun. While Musashi's back is turned, Kinju suddenly leaps up, grabs his sword, and swings at Musashi from behind! At the last second, Musashi turns and slams his sword into Kinju's belly. The man doubles up, and Musashi whacks him on the head, knocking him down.

Musashi bows to the Shogun again and strides away from the arena.



You hurry after him. “Musashi!”

He looks at you and smiles. “Ah, my friend from the inn.”

“Are you leaving Kyoto?”

“Yes.”

“May I travel with you?”

He looks thoughtful for a moment. “Normally, I travel alone,” he says, “but because you did me a service, you may walk with me for a while.”

You grin. You are closer to accomplishing your mission—Musashi thinks of you as a friend.

Musashi wants to have his sword sharpened and polished before he leaves Kyoto. It will be a couple of days before the work is done. You return to the House of Leaves with him. He tells you of some of his adventures while you wait for the return of his sword. The sword polisher has given him a blade to use until his is done, so he is armed.

The next night, you are out for a walk by yourself, while Musashi is asleep in the room, and you think of something interesting. Musashi’s sword is at the polisher’s. You could sneak over there and take it, and nobody would know. Musashi has a new sword to use, so he probably wouldn’t even miss it, and the sword polisher has plenty, too. Should you? It would save a lot of time and nobody would be hurt. Or should you keep traveling with Musashi?



**Go to the polisher’s shop. [Click here.](#)**



**Travel with Musashi. [Click here.](#)**



**M**usashi has just offered you a reward for saving his life, and you are tempted to ask for his sword and end your mission successfully. But you know a samurai's sword is his "soul," and you don't want to offend Musashi by asking for too much. Instead you smile and shake your head. "No reward," you say. "It was the right thing to do, a matter of honor."

He smiles at you, then nods. "Good," he says. "Spoken like a true samurai." He notices you staring at his sword. "You like this blade?"

You swallow nervously and nod. "Yes."

"Then one day, when I no longer need it, it will be yours."

You suck in your breath. He's just told you he will give you the sword! But when?

How can you ask, without sounding greedy? "I am honored," you say, "but when would a samurai no longer need his sword?"

He smiles more broadly. "Another samurai would know," he says.

Before you can say anything else, he says, "I must travel alone for a time. You understand this?"

You nod. You aren't sure if you do, but it must have something to do with his travels on the path seeking the Way of Water.

"Farewell then, my friend. Someday we may meet again." You watch him leave.

When does a samurai no longer need his sword? How can you find out?

Perhaps you should jump ahead in time to a library in Edo and

see what was written about Musashi by different historians. Or you could jump back to Kyoto to learn more about samurai.



**Jump to Edo, 1870. [Click here.](#)**



**Jump back to Kyoto. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou arrive in the city of Kyoto in 1605—but after a moment realize it is far too early in the year for the kendo tournament. You are about to time-jump a few months ahead when you see a crowd of armed samurai go by, talking loudly. A single samurai stands by himself at the door to a large building, watching the others leave. You walk toward the lone man.

“What is going on?” you ask.

The samurai spits into the street. “They are going to the duel,” he says. “We are all in shame at the Yoshioka sword school! A single man, Miyamoto Musashi, has made us all look like fools!”

Musashi is here! Maybe you can save yourself a time-jump and talk to him. “What—ah—happened?”

The samurai shakes his head. “Musashi challenged our head instructor to a duel. He wounded Seijiro near to death, so it becomes a matter of honor and revenge to us. Seijiro’s brother Denshichiro later challenged Musashi and was killed for his trouble! Musashi is a devil! Now, only young Hanshichiro—a boy of thirteen—is left to uphold the family honor.”

“You mean a boy of thirteen will face Musashi?”

“Oh, no. He had to issue the challenge, to be honorable and proper, of course, but the students will fight for him.”

“You mean a student will take his place? But how can one student do what two teachers failed to do?”

“Not one student—*all* the students! Musashi cannot be permitted to escape! While he lives, we can have no honor!”

You know honor is most important to these people—but where

is the honor in a whole school fighting one man?

Still, your mission is to collect Musashi's sword. If he is going to be here, you might as well try to find him.

The samurai gives you directions to the duel.

At the outskirts of town, you find a small stand of pine trees near a rice field. There you see a large group of men. It is nearly dark, and the men seem to be scattering and hiding as you watch.

Under a large pine tree near the center of the grove, you see a young boy, wearing battle armor. Eight men surround him, all samurai with two swords in their belts. The boy must be Hanshichiro.

It is a trap, you realize. There are twenty or thirty men hidden, waiting. Musashi won't have a chance!

Someone coughs, from up in the tree over the group around the boy. You look up and see a man holding a musket. You get a chill, and not just from the night air. They aren't taking any chances.

"Hah!" somebody yells. Suddenly a single man leaps into the middle of the group under the pine tree. He is holding a wooden sword, which he swings back and forth like a club, so fast you can hardly see it move. Before the men can react, he has knocked down four of them. You suck in a quick breath and gasp as you see him whack the boy, hard! Hanshichiro drops to the ground like a sack of rice.

The man with the wooden sword screams again and throws the wooden blade to one side. Then he draws both his steel swords and begins to dance in circular motions through the men, the blades whirling. The men fall back, drawing their own swords.

Musashi! He has jumped into the middle of the trap! He had to be able to see it was a setup. Why did he risk his life?

Musashi turns and runs through the rice fields. Some of the screaming samurai follow him; the rest gather around the fallen boy.

You lean against a tree and shake your head. This is all very confusing. True, the men of the Yoshioka school weren't being very fair—twenty or thirty to one!—but for Musashi to attack the boy

. . . well, that was pretty brutal. The more you see of Musashi, the more you recognize what a dangerous man he really is.

Musashi couldn't have missed the fact that the duel was a trap—there were samurai all over the place in plain sight—yet he jumped right into the middle of them. More honor, you think, a matter of keeping face, of not looking like a coward.

You've lost your chance to talk to him, though; he's gone. Well, you know where he'll be in a few months: at the kendo matches.



**Watch the Kendo matches a few months from now. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou walk quickly through the streets of Kyoto, toward the sword polisher's shop where you know Musashi's sword is.

If you hurry, you can have the sword in a few minutes.

Over the shop door is a sign which says, "Souls polished here." This means swords, you know, because the sword is considered the "soul" of the samurai.

The door is unlocked. You carefully go inside.

A small lamp near the window casts enough light for you to see the inside of the shop. There are racks of swords, dozens of them, waiting to be sharpened and polished. It might take a few minutes to find Musashi's.

After a few minutes, you stop looking. You can't tell one sword from another. They all look alike, and the only way to find Musashi's is to look at them all! It might take half the night.

"Who's that?"

You jump. Somebody's coming!

The sword polisher comes into the room, carrying a long sword. "A thief!" he yells, when he sees you. He raises the sword.

He's between you and the door, so you can't get out that way! And all his work with the care of blades must have given him some knowledge of how to use one. What are you going to do?

Quickly you run to the paper lantern hanging in the window. You blow the light out, and the room turns black.

You hear a whipping sound, a whoosh-whoosh coming from right in front of you. It must be the polisher, cutting back and forth



with his blade! He's coming your way!

He can't see you in the dark, but sooner or later, he's bound to connect with that sword. This was wrong of you, planning to steal Musashi's sword. Stealing is not the way to complete your mission; it's not honorable, and it's gotten you into real danger.



**Jump back in time. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou reach for the long steel sword.

Musashi won't need it.

Suddenly the old man's eyes flick open. He stares at you. Before you can move, he whips up the short sword and pulls it from the sheath! You try to jump to one side but you can see the blade will skewer you in another second! Your foot knocks the small lantern over and it gets dark, but that won't stop Musashi's thrust, you know.

“Good-bye, thief!” Musashi says.

Jump, jump, *jump* now!



**Click here.**



**Y**ou jump ahead in time to Edo, in the year 1870. Musashi wrote a book when he was an old man, called *A Book of Five Rings*, all about his way of thinking. Maybe he wrote something in the book about what happens when a samurai no longer needs his sword.

Edo has certainly changed since you saw it last. The city is big and sprawling. The buildings are bigger and closer together. You ask a boy selling newspapers for directions to the best library in Edo.

The paper boy tells you that the city is no longer called Edo but has been renamed Tokyo.

Another strange thing you notice: There don't seem to be any samurai walking around. The boy tells you that the wearing of two swords has been forbidden by law.

It starts to rain as you walk toward the library. You make it before the downpour starts.

You find *A Book of Five Rings* and begin to read. Musashi has divided his book into five parts: Ground, Water, Fire, Wind, and Void. Each section deals with a different aspect of sword fighting. He talks about strategy, about ways to cut with the sword, about how to stand and move.

As you read, you realize there is more to the short book than just simple instructions on how to fight. For instance, when Musashi says to keep calm and alert at all times, you realize he means more than just when fighting.

The book is interesting, but there doesn't seem to be anything in it about when a samurai no longer needs his sword.



Wait. That famous quotation—“The sword is the soul of the samurai”—maybe that’s the key. When would a samurai no longer need his soul? Why, when he no longer needed a body in which to keep it!

You look at the book again. There’s a section at the end, written by somebody other than Musashi, which talks about Musashi’s life. It says he lived in Ogura, on the Japanese island of Kyushu, from 1634 until his death in 1645, at the age of 61. That’s where you need to go!



**Jump to Kyushu in 1645. [Click here.](#)**



**Y**ou turn to leave the cave.

“Wait.” It’s Musashi’s voice!

You face him. “I thought you were—”

Musashi smiles. “Yes. A final test for a student,” he says. “If you had elected to steal my sword, you would have paid for it with your blood. But you thought I was dead, and yet you still didn’t take what you came for. Such is the mark of a samurai—a person of honor!”

You look at him.

“Come here,” he says.

You approach him.

He points at the swords. “Which one would you like?”

You smile. “It doesn’t matter.”

He picks up the wooden sword. “In the last twenty years, this is the one I used most.”

The wooden sword is shaped like the steel ones, only much thicker. The polished wood—ash or oak, it looks like—gleams in the light of the lantern.

Musashi continues talking. “To a student of the Way, the size or shape or material of the sword is unimportant. What matters is the spirit. Metal will rust, wood will rot, but the spirit cannot die.” He puts the wooden sword down. “I am through with this life. Maybe I will start another in some other place and time. Take which sword you will.”

This time when he closes his eyes, you know Miyamoto Musashi has truly gone to his final rest. But you aren’t sad, because he wasn’t sad. As he said, he did all he wanted to do in life, and few people could say that.



You reach down and pick up the wooden sword. It is still warm from the touch of Musashi's hand. You salute Musashi with the sword and walk slowly out of the cave.

You have accomplished your mission. And you've learned about the Way of the Sword and the code of honor of a samurai.

**MISSION COMPLETED.**

# DATA FILE

Page 8: Do you know where Musashi might have been in 1615?  
Check your data file

Page 11: What's in a name? Check your data file.

Page 19: How old was Musashi when he fought his famous battles?  
Do you know what year it is?

Page 31: The emperor lives at the Imperial capital.

Page 36: Samurai value honor above life itself, and cowards are  
treated harshly.

Page 40: Who is Kensei? Check your data file.

Page 49: You can learn more about Musashi from Musashi himself.

Page 55: Can the Daimyo's sword help you to complete your  
mission?

Page 60: Which is the more honorable thing to do?

Page 74: If you jump away from these men, you also jump away  
from Musashi

Page 84: Courage will impress a samurai.

Page 88: Things are not always what they seem, but stealing is  
never honorable.

Page 91: A samurai may value his sword more than his life.

Page 94: Stealing is not honorable and may not be so easy as it  
seems.

Page 96: Some questions are better answered in a library.

## About the Contributors

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STEVE LEIALOHA, illustrator, spends most of his time writing, drawing and inking comic books with occasional forays into advertising, film production and book illustration. He is a native of San Francisco, where he lives in a Victorian house with several artists and numerous cats.