

Leda and the Samurai

Vol 2

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Leda and the Samurai

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Leda and the Samurai

Vol 2

Guenevere Lee



2019

Leda and the Samurai

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Haiku

松嶋や
ああ松嶋や
松嶋や

*Matsushima, ah
Oh, oh Matsushima ah
Matsushima, ah*

芭蕉松尾
Basho Matsuo
(1644-1694)

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Acknowledgements

One of the first people to ever get interested in my writing, always asking to read whatever I was working on, was my older sister Sonya.

I often think about those weekends back in high school where we would hang out, staying up all night reading fanfiction or sharing story ideas with each other.

Sonya was always around to not only bounce ideas off of, but also to give really sound (and often brutal) feedback. I think about those early days of my writing a lot, and how crucial Sonya was.

So I just wanted to spend a moment and thank her.

Thanks Sonya.

Preface

Welcome to volume two of *Leda and the Samurai*! Just like with the first volume, I am putting this together right before attending a convention – Toronto Comicon this time! After a ridiculously cold winter (honestly, who has time for a polar vortex?), I'm so happy that convention season is once more upon us! I love meeting new people, and seeing all the amazing cosplay people design and wear.

This volume is particularly close to my heart. The idea for this story came from my time living in Japan. I lived in Sendai, which is about a 30-minute train ride from Matsushima. I was really excited to be able to describe this beautiful place in a fantasy story. I hope people will enjoy reading about these places as much as I enjoyed visiting them.

Although Matsushima and Sendai have changed drastically over the past 400 years, it's remarkable how many of the temples and natural sights I describe in this volume still exist (in one form or another. I will admit I took a slight liberty with Godaido Temple, which was actually built one year

after this is set). If you ever get a chance to visit the northeast of Japan (Tohoku), I highly recommend taking a day trip to Matsushima.

One of the main inspirations for this story in general is how while living in Japan one often gets the sense that the past is just around the corner. The mix of modern and ancient gives the entire country a very surreal feel.

Or maybe it doesn't, haha. Coming from a country (Canada) that has few buildings over a measly 100-years-old, it's very easy for my imagination to get carried away when I'm presented with such fantastic history and architecture.

So really this story comes from my own desire to capture that feeling of being somewhere in the middle of two completely different times.

-Guenevere Lee
February, 2019

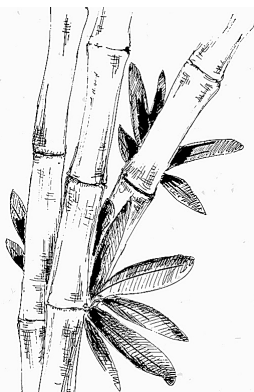
LEDA AND THE SAMURAI

弁之助

Bennosuke

第六章

CHAPTER 6



The bath water was almost unbearably hot, but that's just how Leda had always liked it. There was something about immersing herself in heat that made her feel at ease. She liked coming to the bathhouse, and feeling the silence around her. She breathed in the steam, sometimes letting her head slip under the surface. For a moment she could pretend that she existed somewhere outside of reality. But of course, she was outside of reality. Every time she woke up and looked at her room, or peeked into the garden and listened to the distant

unfamiliar sounds of feudal Japanese city life, she knew this wasn't reality. Not *her* reality.

She'd had time now to think about what had happened. She had been at Ben-nosuké's house for nearly two weeks. At first the doctor who'd removed the arrow from her arm came every day to check her wound. She spent most of her time in bed, thoughts of infection keeping her up when she should have been resting. She had never lived in a place where she couldn't just go to a drug store and get pain killers and sterilizers. She kept sniffing her arm, wondering what gangrene even smelled like, wondering if they would have to amputate it.

As the days continued the doctor came less and less and the pain became a dull feeling she sometimes forgot completely about. Her arm was stiff, and it was hard to lift anything with it, but she finally realized that she had escaped a serious life-threatening injury and that everything was going to be all right.

Everything, save for the fact that she was in the wrong time.

Appendix

This is just a quick reference guide for some of the things, people, and places mentioned in *Leda and the Samurai*. For a more in-depth look at the history and mythology surrounding Edo Era Japan, then check out the podcast *Historical Fantasy*.

Bokken 木剣 Wooden practice swords, used in kendo (剣道).

Calpis An amazing drink that has a rather unfortunate sounding name in English. Seriously, say it out loud.

Champlain, Samuel de In 1603 he travelled to the new world, where he founded New France (modern day Canada).

Chonmagé 丁髷 The topknot worn by samurai.

Daimyou 大名 A feudal lord.

Daté Masamuné 伊達政宗 In 1600 Daté Masamuné founded the city of Sendai, and became the most influential feudal lord in Tohoku.

Drake, Francis An infamous British sailor, or pirate, depending on whom you ask. Died of dysentery in 1596.

Edo 江戸 The Japanese time period between 1603-1868, marked by the rise of the shogun Tokugawa Iéyasu.

Futon 布団 A thin mattress, usually laid out on tatami mats.

Elizabeth Tudor (Regina) Queen of England from 1558 until her death in 1603. Her reign was a golden age for England.

Geta 下駄 Wooden sandals with cloth thongs.

Geisha 芸者 An entertainer trained to dance, play instruments, and be excellent conversationalists. The life of any party.

Hakama 袴 A type of trousers tied around the waist and worn over a kimono.

Hirose River 広瀬川 A 45km long river that winds through Sendai.

Kanji 漢字 Chinese characters adopted into Japanese writing.

Katana 刀 A traditional curved blade around 60~75cm long.

Kimono 着物 A gown of two or three layered silk robes, tied at the waist by a thick, stiff sash called an obi.

Matsushima 松嶋 One of the three most beautiful views in Japan, with over 260 pine-covered trees dotted around the bay.

Godaido Temple 五大堂時 The current temple was constructed in 1604, but a temple has stood on the small island in Matsushima Bay since 807.

Kané Island 鐘島 Bell Island. When waves hit the arches on the island, it echoes and sounds like bells.

Kamé Island 亀島 Turtle Island.

Kujira Island 鯨島 Whale Island.

Niou Island 仁王島 Niou are two ferocious protectors of Buddha.

Oshima 雄島 Male Island.

Sengan Island 千貫島 This tall jagged rock has a single pine tree at the top. Daté Masamuné's favourite island.

Yoroi Island よろい島 Named after a piece of katabira armour that covers the shoulder. Resembles a wave.

(O)Mikuji 神籤 Fortunes, written on paper, sold at temples and shrines.

Ninko ニンコ The name combines *nin* from *ninja* 忍者 and *ko* from *neko* 猫.

Obi 帯 A thick, stiff sash used to secure a kimono or yukata at the waist.

Reda レダ In the Japanese writing system our *r* and *l* sounds are interchangeable. レダ can be read Leda or Reda, but I use Reda just to show that they're pronouncing her name slightly differently.

Samurai 侍 A class of nobles who serve a daimyou.

Senseki Line 仙石線 A trainline that runs from Sendai to Ishinomaki.

Sashimi 刺身 Sliced raw fish. Sushi, but without the rice.

Sendai 仙台/千代 The largest city in Tohoku, founded in 1600 by Daté Masamuné.

Shamisen 三味線 A three-stringed instrument played by plucking the strings with a plectrum.

Shogun 将軍 The traditional leader of the emperor's army, and the head of state during the Edo Era.

Tanabata 七夕 A festival traditionally held on the seventh day of the seventh month, where two mythical lovers are allowed to cross the sky and be together.

Tatami 畳 Traditional mats made from weaving rice straw.

Torii 鳥居 Gates, usually painted bright red, which mark the entrance to Shinto shrines.

Tokugawa Iéyasu 徳川家康 The shogun who united Japan in 1603, bringing stability for over 200 years.

Tycoon (Taikun) 大君 Literally meaning great lord, it's another name for the shogun.

Wakizashi 脇差 A traditional curved blade around 30~60cm long.

Yukata 浴衣 A gown of one or two layered cotton robes, tied at the waist by a thick, stiff sash called an obi.

Notes

I've taken a few liberties in how I write out Japanese in romaji (the alphabet). Generally when Japanese is written out in romaji, what are seen as confusing or redundant vowels get cut (i.e. arigatou becomes arigato). I have never liked this, since the presence of that extra vowel at the end does in fact change the pronunciation, and sometimes even the meaning of a word. Sometimes this vowel is replaced with an h or an accent, both of which are limited because they don't indicate which vowel was taken out. I have kept all vowels intact, as it were (so words like arigatou are written as arigatou). That being said, I have kept the shortened version of proper nouns (Tokyo instead of Toukyo). This is just to avoid confusion. I included accents on some vowels to indicate that the vowel should be pronounced (for example, Daté is pronounced "DA-tay and not like the English word "date").

Within the text words spoken in *italics* are being spoken in Japanese. A sentence in italics following a Japanese quote is the English translation.

The symbol used in the scene breaks, the large circle surrounded by eight smaller circles, is one of Daté Masamuné's sigils, or *mon*(紋). It is inspired by the navagraha, or nine celestial bodies. It is sometimes called the nine-planets by the people of Sendai.

References

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Glossary

Aoba 青葉 Literally blue leaf, but in this case actually means green leaf. Originally blue and green were synonyms in Japanese.

Ara あら Not a proper word, but rather a sound someone makes when surprised.

Arigatou ありがとう Thank you.

Chan ちゃん See San

Chotto ちょっと Literally means a small amount, it is also used when someone is hesitating or does not want to explain something uncomfortable.

Da だ A very informal, and in some cases rude, way to end a sentence.

Daijoubu 大丈夫 All right/I'm fine.

Damé だめ No way/Don't do that.

Desu です The regular/formal way to end a sentence.

Doushité どうして Why?

Eto えと A sound one makes when thinking, similar to *um* or *uh*.

Eikoku 英国 Japanese word for England.

Funé 舟 Ship.

Gaijin 外人 A mildly insulting term for a foreigner.

Gomen ごめん Sorry.

Gozaimasu ございます Literally means to be, but is used as a suffix to make something more polite.

Hai はい Yes.

Hayaku 早く Fast.

(O)Hayou おはよう Good morning.

(O)Hisashiburi お久しぶり A long time/Long time no see.

Hontou 本当 Truth/Reality.

Ié いえ No.

Igirisu イギリス Katakana reading of English.

Ikou 行こう Let's go, very informal.

Imasu います To be, used when talking about living or moving things.

Irrashaimase いっらしやいませ A greeting used by store clerks, very polite.

(O)Jama お邪魔 Hindrance, in the way.

Jin 人 Person.

Jinja 神社 Shrine.

(O)Jou お嬢 A very respectful term when speaking to someone else's daughter.

Kaetté 帰って To return.

Kara から From.

Karé 彼 Him/That man.

Kun 君 See San

(O)Kyaku お客 A customer/guest.

Matté 待って Wait.

Mirai 未来 The distant future.

Mo も Also.

Mochiron もちろん Of course.

Mori 森 Forest.

Nasai なさい Literally to do, used as a suffix to make a sentence more polite.

(O)Negai お願い Please.

Neko 猫 Cat.

Ni に At/In/On/To.

Nyan ニャン A pun combining the sound a cat makes (nya) with the suffix chan.

Oni 鬼 Demon.

Sama 様 See San

San さん(**Sama/Kun/Chan**) Suffixes added to the end of a name to be more polite.
Sama is the most polite, kun is used for young boys, and chan for young girls.

Shimasu します To do.

Sou desu そうです That's right.

Wa は Used to define the subject.

Wakarimasen 分かりません I don't understand.