

# TOMO'S CHOICE

## CAST:

TOMO: Kami and mascot of Naka-Kon, missing since the yokai invasion

INARI: Kami of Harvest, future mentor to Tomo

AIKO: One of Tomo's Generals, wife of Hansuke

HANSUKE: One of Tomo's Generals, husband of Aiko

CHIORI: Miko for Naka-Kon and Tomo's best friend

TEA: Meggan & Tabitha: Followers/Friends of Tomo

RENA: Kitsune in human form, works for Inari

GENBU: aka Gen, one of the 4 celestial kami, Guardian of the North

1985, Overland Park, KS

## Act 1, Scene 1

A wind picked up forming a dust-devil and obscured a small area outside a large Japanese style house in the middle of a wheat field. When it cleared, a group of people were there...

Tomo's friends woke up scattered around Inari's back yard. A moment later Inari stepped out stretched and froze when he saw them. He began muttering to himself.

INARI: "Five hundred years without any house guests, then two unwelcome invasions." He took a closer look at them. "Wait... You look vaguely familiar. Who are you?"

The others looked around, confused. Who was this person? Why were they in a wheat field? Where were they?

AIKO: "White hair... Red outfit..." She looked at Hansuke. He looked back.

HANSUKE: "Inari?"

Inari looked at Hansuke curiously. "Have we met? ..."

Everyone seemed surprised... was this really him? This wasn't the version of Inari they were used to. Instead of traditional Japanese attire, he looked like he was a member of a Japanese rock band. His short, shaggy hair was now long and a little teased at the roots for added volume. He was also wearing a little eyeliner that gave him an edgy yet bored look.

CHIORI: "We're looking for Tomo. Suzaku sent us to find her." She barely finished her sentence before a sneeze erupted from her and she got a tissue from her pocket.

Aiko said a distracted "bless you" for Chiori's sneeze.

INARI: "...did you say Suzaku? That's a name I haven't heard in an eon or so. I wonder how she's doing..." He folds his arms over his chest, thinking. At the same time, seeming to forget his newly arrived visitors.

CHIORI: "Inari. Do you know where Tomo is? Could you take us to her, please?" Her eyes were big, pleading and clearly worried.

TEA: "And while you're at it... tell us *where* we are." They were looking around, trying to find a landmark or something to get their bearings. As far as the eye could see, there were rolling hills and fields of different grains growing.

HANSUKE: "What year is it?" He looked around, finally noticing that their clothes had changed as well as Inari's.

AIKO: "What's up with these clothes?" She and the others had also noticed that their clothes were different. Like something out of an old magazine or catalog.

Inari rolled his eyes and rubbed his temples as if his guests were giving him a headache and then answered. "Ugh, time travelers... Welcome to Overland Park circa 1985." He checked his watch and continued; "Tomo should be at work."

TEA: "Tomo has a job? Doing what?" They had known the young phoenix for a long time and had never known her to really be interested in anything except her duties to Naka-Kon. What kind of a job would she have?

HANSUKE: "Can we really trust him?" Ever since he first met Inari, he had never really liked the capricious kami. He was there for Tomo's 'trials', and how Inari had sent Yamato to test them.

Everyone looked at Chiori, now apparently their leader. Nervously she looked around and seemed to find her resolve. Standing and dusting off her new clothes, she turned to her friends.

CHIORI: "What choice do we have?"

The rest of them nodded agreement, stood, and turned to Inari as he led them around the house to a spacious garage and a couple of vehicles. He went to the one that would fit them all, a minivan with a red custom paint job and got in.

INARI: "All aboard."

Chiori took the front passenger seat and once everyone was settled, they headed out towards the city.

## **Act 1, Scene 2**

Inari arrived with the group of time travelers to The Arcade where Tomo is supposed to be working. A young woman in a red and black plaid skirt, black top, zebra striped belt, and jean jacket looked up when they came in.

TOMO: "Hey Inari... "

She pauses when she sees Chiori and the others, and then runs towards her friends. Her joy at seeing her friends was palpable. In her haste to join them, Tomo bumped into one of the customers causing him to spill his drink. She nearly knocked Chiori over with an energetic hug.

TOMO: "Chiori! I... I can't believe it! You're here!" Tomo's friends were completely shocked and were rendered speechless. Chiori gave Tomo an awkward hug, clearly not recognizing her.

Inari moved over to stand with another pair of people watching with interest from a counter near where Tomo had been a moment before.

INARI: "Hey Rena, yo Gen how's it cruisin?" The two respond half-heartedly as they continue eavesdropping on Tomo and her visitors.

Tomo was starting to feel hurt that her friends were acting so unfriendly until it dawned on her that her appearance had changed in the time jump. "What's wrong, why are you acting so weird? ...Oh right, I look different... It's me, Tomo!" She clearly had some explaining to do.

CHIORI: "Tomo?" She looked intently into Tomo's eyes and finally felt a spark of recognition. "What... How... Why do you look so different?" The change was clearly too much for her to grasp with all of the other information she had been dealing with up to that point. She felt dizzy and leaned on a chair back.

Gen to Inari "What's all this noise?"

INARI: "I have a hunch. Things are about to get" he pauses "*interesting...*"

RENA: " I know your definition of 'interesting'... "

GEN: "Me too. Sounds fun." Genbu checked her watch and sighed. "Fill me in later. I gotta jet."

Tomo's other friends had gathered closer to hear the explanation of why their friend looked different. Unfortunately, Tomo wasn't very good at explaining it.

HANSUKE: "So what you're saying is that the stress of resisting Nurarihyon's spell caused you to change?"

TOMO: "That's the basis for it. I guess it's a self-defense thing."

AIKO: "So like camouflage?"

At Tomo's nod, her friends had to look at each other and shrug. At that moment Tomo noticed Genbu on her way out.

TOMO: "Bye Gen." She waved to Genbu and turned back to her friends regaining her earlier excitement. "I still can't believe you're here!"

INARI: "Tomo, you'd better get that cleaned up..." He glanced towards the mess she caused when she rushed over to her friends.

TOMO: "Oh right, why don't you wait for me at the diner? I'll be there in 15"

INARI: "I'll show them the way." He ushers the group back to his van.

End Act 1

## **Act 2**

A few days later Chiori and Tomo were at The Arcade with their friends. Despite all of their trying, no one has been able to get Tomo to talk about why she didn't want to go back to their present. She's aware that it wasn't the correct time for her, but refused to leave. Chiori and her friends seemed to be losing patience with Tomo. The other kami and kitsune were staying out of it, with little or no advice.

CHIORI: "Tomo, we've been here long enough. Can we go back yet?"

TOMO: "Nope." She was concentrating hard on the game she was playing.

Hansuke waved at Chiori to come over to where the group of them were sitting. He had an idea. Knowing that Tomo, like most kami, have a weakness for games, they would only get home if they took a chance that she would accept a direct challenge. Everyone agreed to the plan and they walked over to Tomo, making sure not to surround her and make her feel trapped.

HANSUKE: "We know you don't want to go, but we need to get home. What if we challenge you to a game? One on one, winner gets to choose whether we stay or go."

At that question, Tomo's concentration had been interrupted and she lost the game she was playing. With a frustrated sigh she turned to her friends.

TOMO: "You're on. You pick, but be warned, I've mastered each of these games." As she spoke, she gestured to the game cabinets throughout the room. She ended in a confident stance, arms crossed, and a smug look on her face.

HANSUKE: "Great, I choose 'Pac Man'. Let's do this!" He put his hand out to shake, but before they could...

INARI: "No." Everyone jumped a little at his seemingly sudden appearance. No one had noticed him walking up.

Tomo looks at him in shock, then was visibly annoyed. "What do you mean, no? Why not?" Her patience was wearing thin as well.

INARI: "That's too easy. *I challenge you Little Bird... to 'Janke*n'. How do you respond?"

Tomo's friends stare at each other and look expectantly at the two of them.

MEGGAN: "Janke

n?" A slightly confused look at the unfamiliar term caused her to ask no one in particular. Her friend Tabitha answered.

TABITHA: "Rock, paper, scissors..." Meggan nodded in understanding and mouthed a silent 'oh'.

TOMO: "When I got here, *I was but the learner, now I am the master.*" She strode out of the circle of friends and stood in front of Inari. Genbu went to stand in as their referee.

GENBU: "You know the rules. At 'pon' you show your hand. Due to the seriousness of this contest, it will be **single** elimination." Inari nodded.

Tomo looked stunned and was about to object. It was almost always the best two out of three. The looks in the other kami's eyes told her that it was this or nothing. Inari and Tomo shook hands in agreement then took up their stances.

INARI and TOMO: "Saisho wa guu" [pause] "Janke

n pon!"

(NOTE: Saisho wa guu means 'fists first'. Janke

n pon literally means 'beginning with stone' since the players start with a closed fist.)

Both throw out paper.

GENBU: "Aiko desho!" (Aiko desho means it is a tie.)

INARI and TOMO: "Janke

n pon!" Both throw Scissors.

GENBU: "Aiko desho!"

INARI and Tomo: "Janke

n pon!" Tomo throws rock. Inari throws paper.

TOMO: "No! Please... Best of three?"

INARI: "Technically that *was* three Little Bird." His expression gentles and he puts a hand on her shoulder. "Isn't it time for you to return home? Why are you fighting so hard to stay when I know you're homesick?"

Tomo begins to cry. "I am, but... I really like it here, it's fun and ... safe. I guess I'm just afraid of another fight or invasion. The last few years haven't exactly been easy."

GENBU: "The fighting is because of your Phoenix powers. You aren't supposed to have them. There's only supposed to be one phoenix and that's Suzaku. The other kami want your powers sealed, but we've convinced them to let you train into your power. You'll have a limiter set on you until you are ready for your full power. Once the limiting spell is in place, things should settle down."

TOMO: "But what if it doesn't. How am I supposed to protect my friends?"

INARI: "There is more to you than your Phoenix powers. Your friends have been through much and are still trying to help you. You won't be alone."

Chiori and the others have gathered closer.

Tomo looks at her friends. Breathing deeply, she takes a tissue from her pocket and wiped her face and nose with it. "You're right. It *is* time. How do we do this? I don't exactly have magic slippers."

Everyone groans at her lame pun.

CHIORI: "Everyone get around us, put a hand on me or Tomo and concentrate on home. Tomo take out your necklace and concentrate..."

Chiori takes another necklace with a gem out from under her shirt. Holding it with one hand she takes hold of Tomo's hand with the other. "We're not losing you this time. Alright. Let's go back to the future."

They disappear.

**End Scene**