Akagi

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Japan, Tokyo. The year is 1958. The country's economy tries to stand up on its feet once again. In these hard times, people more than ever go to gambling to solve their problems.

The very night you arrive here, a 13-year old boy named Akagi Shigeru will knock on a door of a faraway mahjong parlor, having just barely escaped with his life from a foolish game of chicken. A legendary game will take place, starting a myth of the genius who have descended into darkness. One way or another, you will be there to witness it. His impossible, unbelievable play. From there? Who knows. It's your life, do what you will. Observing the boy is a good idea, mind you. He is anything but boring.

The spirit of gambling permeates the air. Embrace it, and decide your fate!

Origins:

Age and gender are not really important here. Start with those from the last jump.

Weekend Player is free. Others are 100.

Weekend Player

Your hands are shaking, you mind is a mess. The cigarette smoke in the air burns your lungs. The yakuza in front of you is grinning.

You are in a heavy debt. The result of this game decides whether the people around you cash in your life insurance.

You are losing. Winning the farthest thing away from your mind, the only thing you dare to hope for is but a pause, a slightest reprieve to at least get your thoughts together.

For a moment, there is no sound in your ears but rain. Suddenly, the door to the outside is knocked on.

You are saved.

There are no memories associated with this option, save your circumstances. Akagi is going to juggle your life like there’s no tomorrow. Do let him, will you?

Official Player

Sheesh, that's a lot of money to bet on a game of mahjong. But that's none of your business. You'll just sit here on the sidelines and deal your tiles, as neutral as possible. No reason to cause an upset when playing, not with yakuza and stakes like that involved.

Still, the poor guy in debt is losing bad, and seems to be on a verge of heart attack.

But you can't help him.

For a moment, there is no sound in your ears but rain. Suddenly, the door to the outside is knocked on.

And the matter is well and truly out of your hands.

A person of simple tastes in life, official and not quite as official mahjong games are exactly where you go to get that extra cash for when the honest worker's wage is not enough. One doesn't win a fortune against yakuza, but they don't mind losing a paltry month's worth to a nameless guy once in a while.

Today, you were asked to participate in a game as a favor. You weren't told the stakes were quite THAT high, but that doesn't change much, in the end.

Yakuza Rep Player

Huh. The boss is not that bad in mahjong. For him to call you for a debt extortion game... What the hell?

But hey. That's what you do. Doesn't matter who you play as long as money is involved, right?

And so you arrive through the damned rain, and get pointed to the seat.

In a minute, you are staring at your opponent - a white haired, young guy with a piercing stare. Confidence fills you.

You are doomed.

A reputation player for Yakuza, you get called in for a regular gambles with huge bets. Stable, if small winnings got you in good standings with others in the family.

The only origin to arrive to the parlor after Akagi, you wouldn't know what to expect. Good luck.

Rich Man

And here you thought that would be a fun way to spend a night.

Seriously. When you heard there was a high stakes game, that's not what you expected. Oh well, might as well observe. Not that there's much to observe, what with the victim over there losing any pretense of skill.

...Hm. The door is being knocked on. Are they expecting someone?

The legendary night is only just starting.

An affluent person in these hard times, you obviously have ties with Yakuza. Tonight, you, as a respected face around these parts, were asked to observe a game of mahjong to witness the winner and testify later if needed.

The only origin to not play the first night, you can relax and watch the legend be born.

Perks:

50% discount for fitting Origins. 100 is free.

- Know-How (Free):

One doesn't go swimming without limbs.

As a necessity, you get knowledge of basics of mahjong - rules, hands, the process and some usual tricks. Also with it comes a measure of ingrained skill at actually playing the game, ranging from the rookie Weekend Player to the professional Rich Man.

Weekend Player

- 100 A New Chance

Even the strongest players are laid low by a stroke of bad luck.

A boost of fate's affection most call luck - a necessary thing to have in a world where one mistake can upend everything you have. Not something to marvel at, but failure will wait a few instants more before swallowing you whole anyway.

- 200 The Essence of Gambling

The true meaning of gambling - a meaningless death.

In the end, gambles inevitably destroy the gambler, but not many understand the fact quite as clearly as you do. The realization has its perks - now, no matter the stakes or possible price to pay for the failure, you will not falter. You will be on top of your game, even as you have a knife pressed against your throat.

- 400 Not Enough, Never Enough

Greed ruins. But where would we be without it?

People gamble because they desire more. That, is a fact. But sometimes, the loser does not gamble in good faith. This little thing, though, lets you enforce the terms of the game, making the loser incapable of reneging on the bet. Remember, however, two things - loser may very well be you, and one cannot make good on a bet one doesn't have or can not give. A mundane person can't give you their soul, after all.

- 600 Gambler's Demon

After ten years pass, you notice something cold and eager slithering in the back of your head. Something deeper than your instincts is taunting you, to gamble the greatest of things on the

ficklest of games. And you'll win. Every time. In any game of luck, skill and emotions, fate will bend over and moan in ecstasy.

...But is that really the point? What IS the point then?

This one will grant you gaming luck unimaginable. Any mundane gamble you enter will see you draw all the right cards, discard all the safe tiles, fire all the safe revolver cameras and roll all the good dice.

But that luck, is cursed. Cursed with a fate of never stopping gambling. Never finding a worthy opponent. Never losing ever again...

Is that truly your desire?

Official Player

- 100 A New Day

In this line of "work", you don't win big without playing for a looong time. Only tired and desperate people bet big money. And the only way to get that money, is to NOT be tired when they are.

You are granted enough endurance of mind and body to play for hours, perhaps even days on end. Rather than reinforcing the body, it is your mind that gets more of a boost, retaining its clarity even after a long, thought-numbing ordeal.

- 200 Fool Me Once - Anti-Cheater

The best way to win quick and easy? Catch your opponent cheating. There's always a risk of screwing up and making a wrong call, though…

You get an insight into your opponent's body's small movements, but rather than know if he has a good hand, you can catch these tell-tale signs of an unsavoury behaviour. Sleight of hand, others feeding him information from behind your back, marked tiles… You're much more likely to catch all that, and more.

- 400 Closed Kan

There are more ways of deception than just blunt cheating, of course.

Now this one? This one breaks through lies. Lies of betting everything on a worthless hand, lies of building a nuke out of wood, lies of making a bum look like a known criminal… You know. Bullshit.

- 600 Faker's Mind

Luck is fickle. What does it matter how much you win, as long as you never lose? And you don't need no bitch of a fate to do that.

Luck? Psychology? Who needs that, when you have numbers?

Have a full package - perfect memory, peak of the possible calculation abilities, and a feel for probabilities. Never make a move that has no chance of success. Then again, lady luck tends to turn her behind to those who spurn her like that...

Are you sure?

Yakuza Rep Player

- 100 A New Fate

Losing is bad, when you're gambling with money that is not yours. But losing your composure is worse. Don't.

A will to continue playing even in the worst possible circumstances. A will to take risks. A will to not bawl your eyes out after losing a portion of your little finger. The small stuff.

- 200 Fooled You Twice

Sometimes, you just have to think out of the box in order to win. And, well...

Cheating. You are a skilled cheater. Quick mind, quicker fingers and no shame. Are you proud of yourself?

- 400 Open Reach

Of course, nobody likes getting caught cheating. Even a blind idiot would manage to catch you at some point. So, some creativity is in order.

Your confident scowl strikes confusion even into the most bull-headed or insightful of people. You'll always have something up your sleeve to their eyes. Of course, there is no need to do something COMPLETELY stupid, like playing poker without even looking at the cards. Weirdo.

- 600 Blind Master's Sight

...But. For all the talk of conniving criminals, Yakuza are not all cheat, steal and threaten. One doesn't get high up without brains to go with that.

Mahjong is kind of like life. Complicated, and with sudden stuff coming out of nowhere. You, though? You never lose track of what is going on. Every tile discarded by all players, every frown

and smirk they let slip, every glance they throw at their hand… You take note of every detail that crosses even the very edges of all of your senses. Why, if you were blind, you'd probably manage to keep the entire field in your mind, and play like that!

But, knowing just how much your opponent thinks he can crush you, without having any idea exactly what that glint in those eyes of his means…

Is it really that useful?

Rich Man

- 100 A New Way

Betting one's fortune on a gamble? Ridiculous! But, I guess it would make things easier…

You have your way with words. People will find themselves more open to a suggestion of betting the outcome of a conflict like, say, an ownership dispute or the like, on a game. Be warned, of course, that it doesn't make people any more likely to actually honor the bet, merely giving you more moral ground to stay on if you win.

- 200 Blood Money

...Insane. Betting money is one thing, but a life?! You're out of your mind, surely!

Well now. This is interesting. Now, as long as all sides involved agree, they may bet their life or even their very soul on the outcome of the gamble. Optionally, if the game involves points, the players' life force can be tied to those, flowing away as their luck dwindles. If needed, the bet can even be one-sided, enabling you to bet, say, some money against some poor schmuck's soul.

- 400 Tiles of Glass - See through people/Surface thoughts

People tend to do that - get more emotional, more afraid, even as stakes grow higher and higher...

People are like an open book to you. The more emotion they show, the easier it gets to predict their next move, to "guide" them to make a rash decision or to say the exactly right word at the right time to break them. Careful, for people tend to break in some wholly uncomfortable ways...

- 600 Rich Man's Terror

...and this terror, this horrifying realization of how close death is to them! Exhilarating. The best feeling in the world.

As you stoke the flames of fear in people's hearts, their suffering gives you power. The more horrifying you are, the more powerful you get. Your wounds heal, your body hardens, your mind sharpens… Their hope withers.

...Still. In the end, only the weak can truly feel fear.

Are you truly that unsure of yourself?

Items:

- Mahjong set (Free)

A simple box containing enough supplies for a 4 player mahjong game. Nothing fancy.

But toss in 100 CP, and there'll be two tricks to it - before the game, you can make however many of them transparent to everyone, for additional spice. And, if you want, they can be completely invulnerable to magical cheating. You'll probably need that at some point.

- 200 Energy Drinks

A miraculous substance, praised on high by many and all Japanese workmen. Energizes mind and body. Beware of side effects. Infinite supply.

- 200 Perfectly Fair Dice

A very much mundane looking pair of dice. Of course, they have a curious trick to them - when two people throw them against each other, no matter the rules, they will fall in favor of the one who has more strength of will, confidence and desire to win, in that particular order of importance. No matter the odds. Can be shaped to have however many sides you want, and are completely impervious to any cheating. I'm sure they'll help you out at some point. Or, screw you over. One or another.

- 300 Revolver

A simple revolver, with a couple of tricks to it. It will never run out of bullets, but will only ever have one at a time in a random one out of its six cameras. I'm sure you'll figure out how that can be useful.

Drawbacks:

Maximum 600 to get from here.

- 100 - Can't find the exit

A spirit of this age of gambling possesses you, as fitting for the scene. So many opponents, so much excitement, so many games to play… Though all things considered, at this time there isn't much difference between being addicted to gambling and having a death wish.

- 100 - Sans hand

Be it dishonor, idiocy or getting caught cheating, you don't have a hand. Comes with all the trouble a disability would bring.

- 100 - Japan, year 58

You are now male for the duration of a jump, and can not turn into a female. More, you won't encounter ANY females important in any way. They won't play mahjong, they won't be officials of any sort… Oh well.

- 200 - Fair? Fair enough

You have to admit - all these powers of illusion, luck and x-ray vision? That's just not fair. Away with them! You can have them back after the gamble is over, though.

- 200 - Akagi

Over the course of his life, Akagi Shigeru will not lose a single gamble against anyone, no matter the circumstances. And now? That includes you. All your fancy powers, luck and skill will be useless against him. He WILL win. Sorry about that.

- 200 - Jittery

Your mind just can't grasp the flow of the game, your shaking fingers threaten to knock the tiles over at the first opportunity… The games will be a challenge.

- 300 - Darkness of another sort

Blindness. The one sense most crucial to mahjong, and you lack it, with no way to see in any way. Better hope you have someone to support you in you day-to-day life.

- 300 - You poor schmuck

Lady luck REALLY hates you. You better become a genius cheater, or getting anywhere will be… A miracle. At best.

- 300 - Slip once. Just once.

Every gamble you enter into - you have to win, or die. Simple as that. Here's to hoping you won't take to throwing dice. Or face Akagi. Good luck.

Notes:

- Gambler's Demon only starts working after the ten years pass. It also only works on games/gambles - things like coin toss or dice throw that are not part of a bigger competition, poker, mahjong… Things like that.

- The Demon is also partly tied to to your lust for gambling - the more reckless you are, the more lucky you get. Should you choose to get rid of the "addiction" granted by this perk, it's effect will be greatly lessened, but will return as you get emotionally involved into any game. Should you stop feeling that emotion altogether, this perk will stop working. ...But you probably have worse problems to deal with in this case.

- Blood Money works on souls and lives ONLY.

- Blood Money can work even against soulless beings, working with their "essence".

- Blood Money doesn't give you an ability to actually do anything with the soul won, turning it into a gambling chip. Figure that out yourself.

- You can have Sans Hand drawback's points for free if you are one-handed as it is.

- A tip: don't pod Akagi just yet.

Timeline of important events:

- 1958: The first game. Akagi vs Yakuza, defending a man heavily in debt.

- 1958, some weeks later: Akagi vs Ichikawa, the blind mahjong master, with the boy betting the aforementioned man's debt once again. Afterwards, Akagi disappears.

- 1963, five years later: Appearance of Fake Akagi and reappearance of the real one. Akagi saving the fake's ass in a game with an utterly insane bet, as it gets doubled again and again.

- 1964, another year later: Fake Akagi dies. Akagi nearly dies in a faraway dice parlor. Akagi vs Washizu Iwao in a game of Washizu Mahjong, with Akagi betting his own blood. Nearly dies. Twice.