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Opening extract from  
**Ninja: First Mission**

Written by  
**Chris Bradford**

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# NINJA

## FIRST MISSION

by

Chris Bradford

Illustrated by Sonia Leong

For Stella, a little fighter

All proceeds from the sale of this book are  
being donated to help fight her cancer battle

[www.forstella.org](http://www.forstella.org)

For more information on Chris and his  
books visit:

[www.chrisbradford.co.uk](http://www.chrisbradford.co.uk)

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## Chapter 1

# Floor-boards

Japan, Year 1580

I wait under the floor-boards.

I've been hidden here for over an hour,  
lying still as a stone.

My name is Taka. This is my first mission  
as a ninja and I must not fail.

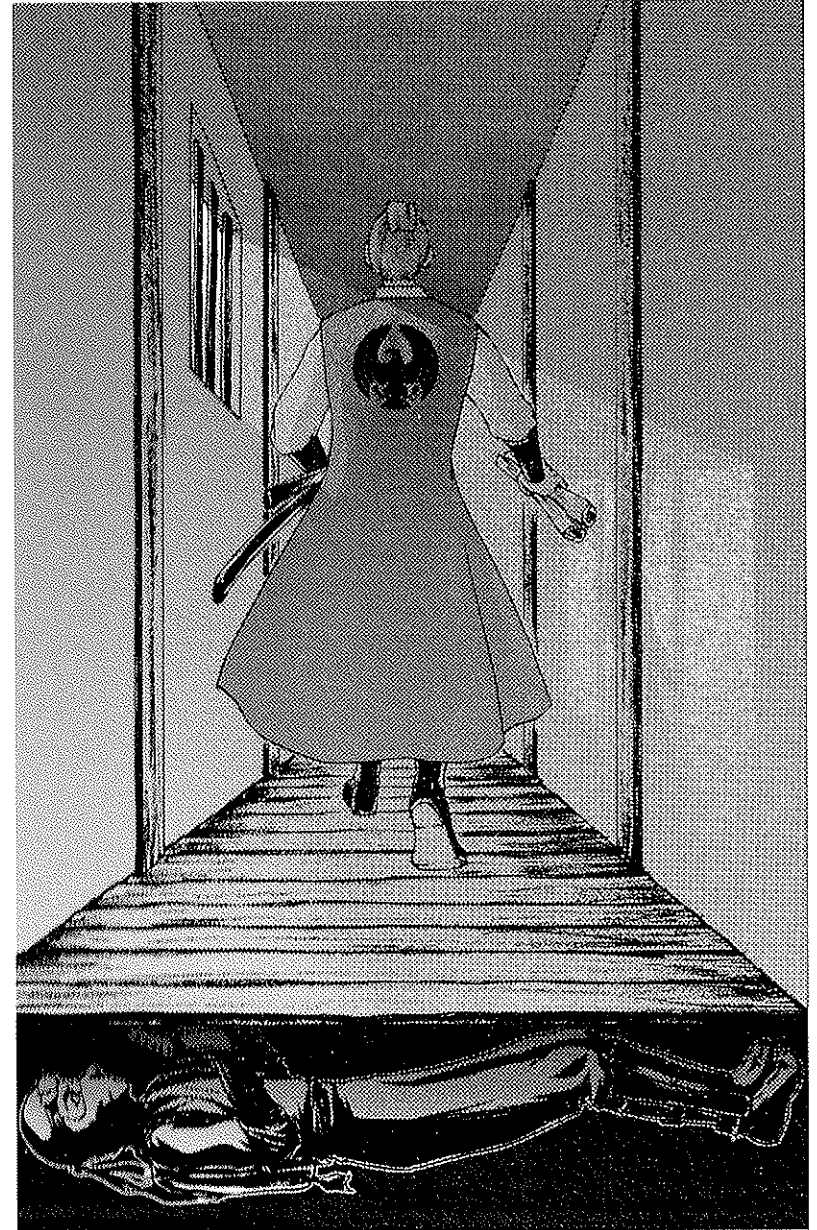
I hear a door slide open and look through the crack in the floor-boards. I watch as a man crosses the room; his feet pass close to my face. He wears a gold silk robe with the crest of a black eagle on his back. He carries two samurai swords on his hip. Across his right cheek is a long red scar.

It's Lord Oda – the samurai warrior I've been waiting for.

The war-lord doesn't know I'm here. He can't see me under the floor. He sits down on his bed. In his hand, he holds a scroll of paper. He begins to read it.

"I never dreamed such things were possible," he mutters to himself.

After a few minutes, he puts the scroll into a wooden box by his pillow. He lays his swords beside his bed, blows out the candle and goes to sleep.



Outside, a full moon has risen over the castle. Its pale light shines through a small window and onto the cruel face of Lord Oda. Lord Oda is the sworn enemy of the ninja. My task is to stop him destroying our clan.

*Now is the time.*

I push softly at the loose floor-board above me and climb out of my hiding place. Using my ninja stealth skills, I cross the room without a sound. In the darkness I'm almost invisible. My black clothes and my hood turn me into a shadow. Only my eyes show.

As I draw close to the samurai lord, I see my hands are shaking.

*Can I really do this?* I ask myself.

I've been training to be a spy and an assassin all my life. But I'm still only fourteen. Have I learnt all the skills I need

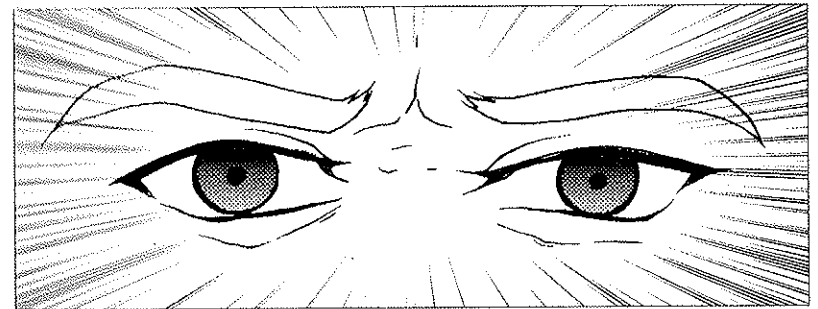
for this mission? Perhaps I *should* have waited for Cho. Can I save our ninja clan all on my own?

I have to prove myself. Tonight.

I'm now so close to Lord Oda, I can hear him breathe. As I reach out, my arm blocks the moonlight shining onto his face.

A small but fatal mistake.

Lord Oda's eyes snap open. For a moment, we stare at each other in shock.



Then he screams, "GUARDS!"