

Distracted Sentries

by Michael Todd

**A Low-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne**

Month of the Dragon, 1338 (Spring)

**Module Number: CIT02
Release Date: 11/10/2016**

[Investigation, Role Play, Combat]
[Part one of **Preparing the Way**]

Many gather to venerate the ascension of a hero to the Celestial Heavens, but what walks in the shadows while other eyes are turned upward?

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Fantasy Flight Games. Scenario detail copyright 20XX by the author and Fantasy Flight Games. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without permission.

This module is written for the Legends of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Fourth Edition, originally published by Alderac Entertainment Group.

Please refer to the *Heroes of Rokugan 4: Champions of the Ivory Throne Campaign Primer* for information on how to run official campaign modules. In addition to the basic setting information and house rules for this campaign, it details the various administrative necessities of the living campaign. GM reporting is crucial to players' ability to engage with the setting and to increase their characters' influence.

Adventure Background and Summary

Yasuki Yashiki has had a long history of conflict, dating back to the 4th century when the Yasuki family left the Crane Clan and joined the Crab. The city and the surrounding area has been one of the most hotly contested pieces of land in the Empire, comparable to the rivalry of the Crane and Lion concerning Toshi Ranbo. Now just like Toshi Ranbo (home of the new Owl Clan), peace has finally come to Yasuki Yashiki.

Following the Third Yasuki War over a century ago, the Crab Clan were the undisputed governors of the territory. With their control cemented, the Crab began an expansion of the city, pouring koku and resources into the city without concern of having to rebuild after another conflict with their neighbors. The marketplace and docks saw the first improvements, solidifying the city as the primary trade hub of the Crab Clan. Then the Temple District was expanded with its centerpiece being a grandiose shrine housing the the famous statue depicting the Fortune of Wealth Daikoku and Lady Yasuki.

However, it is a newer structure that has brought the PCs here this day: one honoring the newest Fortune in Tengoku. Kasumi was a powerful Earth shugenja from the time just after the Second Day of Thunder that died valiantly protecting her fellow samurai in bringing down the usurper Otomo Mitsuhide and ensuring that Empress Toturi II could sit on the throne after her honorable father Toturi I. For her defense of the Toturi line, Toturi IX elevated Kasumi to the status of Fortune of Protection in 1332.

The elevation of Kasumi as a Fortune was also meant to give the Crab Clan a reason to celebrate and break the monotony of their eternal duty: the Shadowlands

had been quiet for years and Toturi IX understood that boredom was a dangerous enemy for the Empire's southern defenders. Little did the Emperor realize that the next few years would be quite eventful for the Crab Clan and the Empire ...

The death of Toturi IX and the elevation of his second son Toturi Shin-Zhu as Toturi X has cast a cloud of uncertainty over Rokugan, and a fearful populace have turned to prayer to calm their concerns. Therefore, the opening of a new shrine has attracted throngs of pilgrims and samurai to converge on Yasuki Yashiki.

Unfortunately for the local populace, an outside force has tricked one of the workers on the new shrine into delaying its opening to just after the annual 7-5-3 Festival. With so many people in the city for the festival and more pouring in for the opening of the shrine, the resources of the Yasuki Family (still recovering from the recent change in leadership) are taxed to the point of exhaustion. This has provided ample cover for spies and infiltrators to access the lands of the Crab Clan and the Empire...

Adjustments for higher insight characters:

This is a Low Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 1.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 2+):

The GM may increase the TN of various rolls in the mod by +5 at his/her discretion.

The Pekkles no Oni has Reflexes 4, so increase its Armor TN to 25 and Initiative to 4k4 .

Kenraku, the Bald Man has Stamina 4 and the Forest Killers technique, so increase all his damage rolls by 4 and adjust his wounds to the following:

Wounds: 19 (+0), 27 (+0), 35 (+2), 43 (+7), 51 (+12), 59 (+17), 65 (Down, +37), 73 (Out)

Upkeep

The events of the modules are certainly of primary importance in the lives of the characters, but many of them will have been working on a variety of tasks in the times between modules. At the beginning of the module, several things will need to take place (though some are obviously dependent on the actual needs of the PCs at the table).

Character Notes

The GM should take a few minutes to examine the players' character sheets in order to have an idea of the nature of the PCs at the table. It is frequently helpful to have a list of specific mechanics that come up in the course of the module determined at the start of the module so the GM does not have to slow down play to check and see which parts apply to which PC. These can be Advantages, Disadvantages, Schools, Skills, or any other particularly relevant mechanics.

- The Precise Memory Advantage
- Shadowlands Taint (At least one full rank)
- Lord Moon's Curse

News from the Empire

While the GM is looking over sheets, it's a good time to distribute the first player handout of most modules. The News of the Empire is an overview of the recent events of the Empire in a fashion that shares the ongoing story with the playerbase without requiring a Skill Roll or interfering with the actual plot of the module. Any plot-relevant Rumors will belong in the appropriate section of the module to be learned during play.

Inactivity

At the beginning of this module, PCs lose a point of glory. This point of glory loss cannot bring a PC's glory below their insight rank. The fame advantage increases their effective insight rank by 1.

Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module. The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** is 5*Character's insight rank (Minimum 5).

Crafting

The Crafting rules are detailed in the Campaign Primer, based largely on the Crafting rules in the core book (page 258). Unless explicitly indicated otherwise, a PC may only make one Crafting Roll per

module, and any Void Points or other character resources (spell slots, Luck, etc) spent on the roll do not refresh for the duration of the module. Any successful roll is noted on the provided sheet with the description.

Preparation Techniques

Techniques like the Agasha Shugenja or Yogo Wards do not quite fall under Crafting, but still can benefit from pre-planning and the Upkeep is a good opportunity. However, unlike Crafting, this is not the only time these Techniques may be used during a module – this is just a chance for the GM to remind the players and get it out of the way.

Ronin Survival

Life is difficult for ronin in the Empire at the best of times. PC ronin are no exception to this. At the start of the module, a PC ronin must roll **Hunting (Survival) / Stamina** at a TN of 15. Failure on this roll gives the ronin the Permanent Wound Disadvantage for the duration of the module. Koku may be spent on this roll to gain a Free Raise for every koku spent before the roll is made, or one Free Raise for every two koku spent after the roll is made.

Experience Expenditure

Finally, the players should be given one last chance to spend any experience they wish before the module begins. Unless the module specifically allows it, experience may not be spent during the adventure.

Introduction

The individual PC's will receive a summons from their lords, and will state that the Crab Clan has announced the long delayed Shrine to the Fortune of Protection is nearing completion and all Rokugan is invited to attend the event. The daimyo will explain that five years ago, Emperor Toturi IX elevated a Crab shugenja to be the Fortune of Protection for her past deeds in defense of the Toturi line of Emperors. Yasuki Yashiki was chosen as the site of the first Temple to the Fortune because of the time she spent here shortly after her gempukku... and the fact that it is a safer place for pilgrims to travel to, being so far away from the Great Carpenter Wall.

The Shrine to the Fortune of Protection has suffered several delays in its construction over the last several months, and since the Crab Clan have pushed back the opening of this temple two other times, the daimyo does not want to travel there in case it is not actually

finished. (In fact it had become a running joke by some of the Crab's detractors in the courts that the Temple would never open.) Nevertheless, it is appropriate for a representative of your clan to be present at the ceremony and the PC's have been charged with this duty. The daimyo will issue the appropriate travel papers and state that they must be in Yasuki Yashiki by the morning of the Fifteenth Day of the Dragon (April, in gaijin terms), which is the scheduled date of the opening ceremony.

Part One: Arrival

Overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay, the towers of Yasuki Yashiki gleam in the midday light of Lord Sun as swarms of Rokugani move toward the capital of Junkin province and the heart of the lands of the Yasuki Family. The weather is rather warm: Spring comes quickly to the southern parts of Rokugan and it has not rained in these parts in over a week. The gentle yet constant breeze coming off the ocean is a welcome change to the stagnant air present further inland.

The well-traveled roads are filled with samurai and peasant alike as the line snakes slowly toward the gates. The walls look new even to the untrained eye: Yasuki Yashiki and the city around it have grown substantially in the last two centuries and is now the third largest city in Rokugan (behind the capital Otsan Uchi and Ryoko Owari in Scorpion lands). At the main gate ahead, a very large Crab bushi in heavy armor supervises a half dozen other samurai as they examine travel papers and check carts before entering the city.

After nearly an hour in Rokugani time (two hour in real time), it is the players' turn. The delay is due to the large number of people entering the city, which the squad of Crab bushi are working through with haggard expressions. Anyone from the Owl Clan will find the process slower, as the guards examine their travel papers a little more closely before allowing them to pass: The Crab Clan's distaste for the Owl is present even here. Also, any non-Crab wearing armor will be turned away immediately at the gates: wearing armor in the lands of another clan implies that one does not believe the lords of the land can adequately protect travelers. (Ashigaru armor could be concealed under robes or a traveling cloak but it is still a **D3 loss of Honor**) Furthermore any barding on horses would also

have to be removed before the animals are allowed into the city.

(If any PCs insist on keeping their armor on the guard will arrest and subdue them, forcefully if necessary. At no time will they use deadly force unless a player does so first. The gunso is a rank 4 Hida Bushi and his squad consists of a mix of rank 3 Hida Bushi and Hiruma Bushi.)

Provided they enter the city without incident, the players now have the freedom to explore the city, however time is limited. Lord Sun has nearly completed his descent from the sky and there is only about 1 (Rokugani) hour of daylight left. The first instinct many players will have is to visit the city governor and present themselves (it is an **Etiquette/Intelligence** roll TN 10 for players to remember this custom). Those that go to the famous Yasuki Palace (also known as Black Crane Palace by some) will be met by a functionary from the Yasuki family outside the palisade surrounding the castle who will collect the PC's chops and officially welcome them to the city. Players that ask to convey their greetings in person will be politely told that due to the sheer number of visitors in the city the governor will not holding court lest the presentations take up her entire day.

The next order of business should be for players to find accommodations for the night. Since they are lower ranking samurai, lodging was not secured for them ahead of time. Asking around requires either **Courtier(Gossip)/Awareness** or **Lore: Underworld/Awareness**. Depending on which skill is used, the players will gather the following information:

Courtier(Gossip)/Awareness:

- TN 5 - Almost all the inns in the city are full, and have been for days. Some samurai have taken to camping outside the walls instead of staying at "inferior" establishments,
- TN 10 - The city is overflowing because yesterday was the 7-5-3 Festival and tomorrow is the (long delayed) opening of the Shrine of Protection.
- TN 15 - *Daikoku's Outhouse*, a rather shady location near the docks, has a few rooms available. At least it did the last time this merchant was over there. He left because the sake was terrible.

- TN 15 - A boisterous Crab samurai is overheard complaining that the Shrine of Protection was delayed because they kept running out of supplies at key intervals and had to wait for more to arrive. He went on to say that allowing a non-Crab to be involved in the construction of the shrine was a terrible idea from the start.
- TN 15 - A pompous samurai is overheard complaining that the shrine was delayed due to issues among the Crab workforce, and that allowing a cripple to oversee the construction of such an important holy site was a terrible idea from the start.
- TN 20 - Crime has seen a small yet noticeable increase as of late as frayed nerves and exhaustion are getting the best of even the most mild-tempered samurai.

Lore: Underworld/Awareness:

- TN 5 - *Daikoku's Outhouse*, located near the docks, has a few rooms available. At least it did the last time this ronin was over there. He left because the shochu was terrible.
- TN 10 - The influx of so many people for two major events in such a short timeframe has stretched the sentries to the limits and people that smuggle stuff in and out of the city are making a small fortune.
- TN 15 - A lot of short-term work can be found around the warehouses near the docks, if you ask the right people.
- TN 20 - The (smart) smugglers know this profitable time will not last long so they are taking extra chances while they can.

PC's that want more information of the 7-5-3 Festival can roll **Lore: Theology/Intelligence**. Players that make a TN of 15 recall that it is celebrated to counteract evil spirits that target children, especially boys of 5 and girls of ages 3 and 7. (Those numbers are generally considered unlucky in Rokugan.)

Using this information, players can either spend the city camped outside the city, or they can take a chance on the shady location that at least will put a roof over their heads for the night.

Roughing It

PCs that choose to spend the night outside the city will not have any difficulty finding a suitable location to set up camp. It is a clear night and Lady Moon provides plenty of illumination despite being just half

full. Shortly after they do so, a woman in Unicorn colors will approach on foot, her horse following behind her. She (and the horse) will stop a respectable distance away before the Unicorn samurai-ko bows in greeting. *"I greet you. Would you be willing to allow another to camp near you?"*

Provided the PC(s) do not object, she will bow again before pulling a bedroll and a scroll satchel from off her horse's back. *"Domo arigato,"* she says. *"I am Shinjo Jingi, and it is good to meet another that likes to sleep underneath the stars."* Her horse makes a huffing sound. *"Hehe, and this is Kusu. She is happy to meet you too."*

The Unicorn is wearing simple attire: while it is functional and well-maintained, it is not the typical display of wealth one would expect from a member of one of the richest clans in Rokugan. Jingi will make appropriate small talk: she is in the area for the opening of the Shrine of Protection in the morning; she did not try to find an inn in the city because she prefers to sleep outdoors.

Daikoku's Outhouse

Tucked into an alleyway just inland from the docks sits a simple two-story building with a nondescript sign outside proclaiming that it is Daikoku's Outhouse. If players were not told there was an inn here it would easily have been missed.

Stepping into the establishment reveals a small antechamber that could hold no more than ten average sized individuals... and one man that takes up three of those spots. He snorts at the new arrivals, then speaks in a deep voice. "Rooms are 2 bu a night, payable up front. No refunds if you cause trouble and get kicked out." He smiles, showcasing a mouth with more teeth missing than present. "Pay for your drinks as you get them: no one runs up a tab here. Also, keep your hands off Hana, lest you lose them." After collecting the proper amount of coinage for the lodging he will step to his right, revealing the door his massive frame was blocking. "Enjoy yourselves."

Once entering the main room, the players' senses are immediately under assault in several ways: the room is painted in a gaudy assortment of colors, as if someone kept switching the palette of a blind artist.

The smell of alcohol is so omnipresent that players might think they could get drunk just by breathing the air. Voices are raised and laughter is boisterous, in fact the entire atmosphere is one of loud, raucous revelry.

At the center table is a gorgeous young man dressed in Mantis colors, and his voice is one of the loudest. ***“Hey Hana,”*** he bellows, ***“we have new arrivals! Everyone gets a drink on me! And I mean everyone, not just the newcomers!”*** Loud cheering echos off the walls, but players that roll **Investigation (Notice)/Perception** and make a 15 or higher realize that only the samurai present are cheering, not the merchants or members of the lower classes. Soon a young woman comes out carrying a tray of cups. As she drops them off one by one at the tables occupied by samurai throughout the room, players can see the dark circles under her eyes and the weariness in every step. However, she puts forth a radiant smile as she reaches the PCs. ***“A gift from Yoritomo-sama,”*** she said, her voice soft and clear. ***“We have been... blessed by his presence all day.”***

“Quicker woman,” the Yoritomo sneers, ***“they are not your only customers here!”*** The smile on her face cracks a little as she bows her head again to the players, then continues her circuit of the room.

As players scan the room, several things become clear. First, the drinks offered are very good sake, much better than the rumors led players to believe. Secondly, the exhaustion exhibited by the serving girl Hana is present in many other occupants in the room. In fact, the only person that doesn't look tired in the slightest is the boisterous Mantis. Finally, all the samurai have their weapons. This ranges from the kusarigama carried by the Yoritomo's yojimbo to a full daisho on the hip of a single Lion samurai sitting alone near the back. Other notable individuals present are a female member of the Dragon Clan sitting near the middle of the room that is intently writing into a pillow book in front of her, and a figure wearing a heavy cloak and hood whose features no one cannot make out sitting just to the right of the door.

The cloaked individual

While the PC's engage in conversation with the NPCs present, have all the players roll **Investigation(Notice)/Perception**. The PC that roll highest (provided it is over 15) realize that the person in the heavy cloak and cowl in the corner is studying a

random female PC intently. (If there are no female PCs at the table, he will look at Kitsuki Mieako). Due to the cloak and hood the person is wearing and the distance, PCs cannot determine if it is a man or woman. No weapons are visible, but the cloak could easily be hiding anything smaller than a dai tsuchi or dai-kyu.

Any conversation with this individual is included in a section below after the other NPCs.

The Mantis and his yojimbo

Provided players are polite, they will approach the Mantis and thank him for the free drinks.

The mantis sketches a bow from his seat, while his yojimbo will bow more fully. “Greetings! I am Yoritomo Shousen, courtier of the Mantis Clan.” The yojimbo will raise an eyebrow at his charge, prompting a glare from the seated man. “Fine, be that way,” Shousen sighs before amending his statement, “merchant patron of the Mantis Clan. Are you happy now Keibi-san?”

“Of course Shousen-sama,” the yojimbo says without any emotion at all. “After all, it has been three years since you were last in court. Which you were thrown out of as I recall.”

Shousen snorts. “The Asako are always so stuffy.”

Keibi smirks. “Were the Doji so stuffy too?” The yojimbo pauses, recalling. “Oh yes, they were actually.” Shousen nods with vindication while Keibi continues. “What about the Ide? They were not too bad and yet they threw you out too. The Kitsuki wouldn't even let you in. And then there was...”

“Alright, alright, alright!” Shousen exclaims. “You have make your point. Why do you insist on embarrassing me in front of our new friends Moshi-san?”

“Because you embarrass me everywhere else Yoritomo-san.” Keibi states matter-of-factly.

Pretending his yojimbo is not there, Shousen will turn back to the players. “Where were we? Ah yes, the sake. Do you like it? It is Honey Badger sake, a drink created by a fellow Yoritomo nearly two centuries ago.

He set up an expansive brewery in Balishnimpur and Rokugan has been better for it ever since.”

As same talk ensues, Yoritomo Shousen will reveal that he and Keibi has been in the city for over a week. (Keibi will pipe up and say that Shousen was thrown out of the last inn they were in and they ended up here.) He brought in a supply of *chitose-ame* (“thousand-year candy”) that quickly sold out during the 7-5-3 Festival yesterday, and now he is profiting off all the pilgrims here for the opening of the shrine tomorrow. He is quite happy with himself, which makes him rather insufferable to those around him. Keibi will mostly stay silent, except for the occasional snarky comment aimed at the Yoritomo.

The Lion

If anyone approaches the table with the Lion samurai at it, he will sketch a bow politely before offering the cushion across from him (if multiple PCs approach, he will offer it to a female character first if applicable). *“Greetings fellow traveler(s),”* he says in a rich baritone, *“do you come to bask in the glory of my greatness, or perhaps just to rest your weary legs?”* Players that approach him can roll **Lore: Heraldry/Intelligence** TN 15 to recognize him as Ikoma Hatashiai, the winner of the Topaz Championship 2 years ago. Hana then arrives with a new cup of sake and sets it in front of the Lion. The Ikoma winks at the girl, which sends her off smiling, before remarking *“Not that I would even consider lowering myself to that level, but being playful is never a bad thing.”*

Hatashiai is outgoing and friendly, although players can roll **Etiquette/Awareness** TN 20 to realize that he is studying the players and gauging their responses. Players that bring up that they are attending the opening to the Shrine of Protection tomorrow will get an acknowledgement that Hatashiai is in the city for the same purpose. Players that comment on the tired expression of the locals will get a smirk from the Lion, who said he noticed it too but since he just arrived in the city just before Lord Sun was at his highest so he wouldn’t know the cause. (He will also complain that he couldn’t find better lodging either.) Finally if anyone brings up the new Emperor, Hatashiai will state matter-of-factly that although he is the legitimate heir, one must wonder whether he was adversely

affected by his time in Balishnimpur and the gaijin influences there.

Crane PCs will get a slightly different response from Hatashiai, one of veiled contempt and dismissal. Hatashiai will be quick to bring up his accomplishments at the Topaz Championship where he defeated three consecutive Cranes en route to his victory in the iaijutsu tournament. However, the Ikoma will reign it in before becoming offensive, as if he doesn’t want to instigate an incident right now.

The Dragon

Conversely, players that go toward the table with the member of the Dragon Clan will be greeted by a soft yet clear voice as they approach. *“Konichi-wa friend(s),”* the female says without looking up. *“Just give me a moment please, you can sit if you like.”* Her brush strokes are precise as she finishes whatever correspondence she is composing. Nosy players can attempt to read what she is writing, but should be cautioned that this would be result in an honor loss as per a **Minor Breach of Etiquette D3**. Those that go ahead will see that she has been investigating some type of incident in the Dragon Heart Plain along the border of the Dragon and Owl clans, but cannot make out what occurred before she coughs and says *“Isn’t that behavior beneath you (clan)-san?”*

While waiting, players can note that the Dragon’s brown hair is tied into a maiden’s foxtail, signifying that she is unwed. Furthermore, there is a satchel full of scrolls setting on her left side. Once done, she will hold her hand above the pillow book palm down and mutter something under her breath, causing the kanji on the parchment to disappear before their eyes. PCs with the Spellcraft skill roll **Spellcraft/Intelligence** TN 15 (those with an Affinity to Air get a free raise) to determine that she cast a more powerful variation of the spell *Cloak of Night* to hide only the ink on the pages and not the entire book itself.

“Thank you for your patience,” she says with a bow after closing the book. *“These reports tend to pile up and I have to get them down whenever I get the chance. I am Kitsuki Mieako of the Dragon Clan. It is a pleasure to meet you.”* Now that players can clearly see her face there is a simple beauty about her features, and her eyes are green with a hint of silver around the edges. Conversation with Mieako will reveal that she is a yoriki for a Dragon Clan magistrate,

although she is not in Yasuki Yashiki for any investigation. Any comments concerning the rumors about the increase in crime or smuggling with pique her interest, but she will say that she cannot do anything officially and you should leave it to the local authorities. She will be polite and friendly, and will respond to flirtatious behavior from PCs of either gender with a smile but nothing more. (For those that attempted to read her notes, her responses are rather clipped and take on a more disappointed tone, as if she expected better from a fellow samurai.)

Provided conversation turns toward the opening of the Shrine tomorrow, Mieako will acknowledge she was in the city for that reason, and that it holds personal significance for her. Rolling **Investigation/Awareness TN 15** reveals that is a source of pride mixed in with a hint of sadness. If players ask, she will explain that a family heirloom has been donated to the shrine because it was originally given to her family by the Fortune during her mortal life. *“It is a set of prayer beads. They are made of jade and were a gift she gave to my ancestor to celebrate the birth of his daughter. It has been passed down along the women of my family ever since.”*

If there are any ronin PCs present, Mieako would politely inquire if they are under contract at the moment. Provided they are not, she will offer to hire one as her yojimbo for the duration of her stay in the city. Since she plans on being in the city for 2 more days, she will offer payment of 2 koku total. (This will also provide a reason for any ronin to be at the shrine when it opens the next day.)

The cloaked individual (part 2)

Any players that approach the figure cannot make out much more as they get closer, although the person will bow respectfully. *“My apologies -sama(s),”* a male voice utters. *“I am expecting to meet someone here and thought you might be them. I was mistaken and do apologize.”* The cloaked figure will continue to be polite if players linger, but every so often will glance over at the doorway the PCs originally entered from. Any questions asked will be met with vague responses, although the figure will comment (if asked) that he has been in the city for several months.

Maybe 15 minutes later, another person comes in thru the door the PCs entered and confidently strides toward the table with the cloaked figure. The

newcomer is slightly shorter than average, and although he too wears a cloak his bald head is exposed, revealing a network of scars crisscrossing his scalp. (Players that roll **Medicine/Intelligence TN 15** see the scars are relatively fresh, no more than a month old.)

(If players are not currently at the table with the cloaked man’s table, or didn’t notice him in the first place, they do not hear the upcoming conversation until the yelling starts, then the rest of the scene plays out normally.)

The cloaked figure seems agitated. “This was not the agreement. She was supposed to come personally. Where is she?”

“She is not coming.” the newcomer states matter-of-factly. “She is unhappy with you.”

“Unhappy?” the cloaked figure says, confusion in his voice. “I have done everything she asked.”

“Not well enough,” was the reply.

“Not well enough,” the cloaked man mutters. “Not. Well. Enough.” He slowly gets to his feet, revealing himself to be slightly above average height. “NOT. WELL. ENOUGH?!?!” He screams the last repetition, bringing silence to the rest of the establishment. “I did everything she wanted! I arranged a place for her to stay, got her the supplies she needed, even got you and your children into the city, just because your sister asked me to. And all to meet the timetable she specified! What. More. DOES. SHE. WANT?!?!”

The only sound heard is a soft chuckle from the second man. “She said you didn’t have commitment. That your passion was lacking. I see now that perhaps she was mistaken. Perhaps...” Now he rises as well. Dispute being shorter than the first man, he seems to tower over him. “Let us go my friend. She is waiting. I think now you are ready for the final step.”

The first man nods, his voice raspy yet returning to a normal volume. *“Hai, let us be off.”* He turns and allows the shorter man to lead him out. As soon as they have departed, the entire room explodes into the buzzing of conversations.

The reaction of the other NPCs to this display is mixed. Yoritomo Shousen is amused, saying he isn’t surprised that such drama revolves around a woman

and he is glad he isn't married. Moshi Keibi (after remarking that Rokugan is better off that Shousen is single) comments that the scarred man is dangerous and not to be trifled with. Ikoma Hatashiai says that such displays are unseemly, but he isn't surprised concerning all the frayed nerves in the city. Finally Kitsuki Mieako remarks that the cloaked man has probably gotten too emotionally involved with the mystery woman and that he has gotten in over his head.

Curious players that try to follow the pair can roll **Investigation(Notice)/Perception**. Those that make at least a 15 can find a double set of footsteps just outside the door to the inn. Following the footsteps require a **Hunting (Tracking)/Perception** roll at TN 20. All players will lose the trail in the cobblestone around the warehouses to the north. However the player with the highest roll will notice something unusual: a third set of footprints seems to be following the duo. Although they look to be that of a child, the tracker will see that the footprints become larger and the strides longer before the trail is lost completely.

Returning to the inn, the rest of the night passes uneventfully.

Part Two: The Grand Unveiling

The next day starts early with all the bells in the Temple District begin to ring as the first rays of Lord Sun's light reach the city. It seems the entire city has turned out for the opening of the Shrine of Protection, and the only reason you can reach it is because their invitations from their lords warrant squads of Crab bushi to ferry them through the crowds.

The Shrine of Protection is a breathtaking structure, one that looks like a natural rock formation jutting up from the earth into the city. Standing just over two stories tall, it is the second largest temple in the district (behind the Temple celebrating the Fortune of Wealth Daikoku and Lady Yasuki that was built a century ago.) Players that roll **Engineering (Construction)/Intelligence** and make a TN 15 can see that the building is made entirely of stone imported from across Crab lands.

The entryway is an ornate torii arch carved into the rock surrounded by a flock of nightingales in flight. A feeling of serenity washes over the players as they enter, signifying the shrine has already been consecrated. (Any players will a full rank of **Shadowlands Taint** or more will become sick just by entering the structure: the corruption within their body revolted by the purity of the holy site.) Inside, the shrine opens into a large round space with something in the center covered by a large piece of cloth.

Along the walls are regularly spaced alcoves, each with a pedestal nestled inside. The first pedestal holds a sake cup, then the next one holds a very old looking scroll satchel. On the third pedestal rests a set of prayer beads made of jade. Between the alcoves along the walls are exquisitely done frescos that showcase a short woman in Crab Clan colors. The first scene depicts her in battle: vibrant green light pouring from her outstretched hand striking down a nameless foe. Another mural shows her shielding others from the attacks of a giant with a red aura. Looking upward, inlaid into the ceiling is various multicolor stones arranged like the stars in the night sky over Rokugan. Near the back of the room are two doorways, both currently closed. (For those that investigate, the left one leads to a storage room, while the right is the monk's sleeping quarters.)

Several people are scattered around the circular room. Standing in front of the covering in the center of the room are two people. The first is a female of the Crab Clan, a harsh individual wearing Kuni face paint. Quietly talking to (and towering over) her is a large monk with a shaved head in saffron robes. Near the entryway is another Crab, a woman who is leaning heavily on a cane, the family mon of the Kaiu visible on the front of her kimono. (Any can tell that without the cane she would have difficulty standing at all.) Off to one side is a gangly male of the Crane Clan, the Kakita mon flanked by his long black hair. He seems to be looking everywhere but at the people present, as if he is inspecting the room for any defect or flaw. Also present are some familiar faces: the Lion Ikoma Hatashiai is standing near the back, looking over one of the murals, while Kitsuki Mieako hovers near the alcove where the prayer beads lay and is discussing something with Shinjo Jingi. Surprisingly to those that camped outside the city, the Unicorn is wearing a jade green sash across her torso, signifying that she is in fact a Jade Magistrate. Finally there is a male Scorpion

wearing crimson shugenja robes standing near the pedestal with the sake cup.

A few minutes after everyone has arrived the monk will step forward and bow deeply. His voice is strong and robust as he speaks to everyone present. "Greetings samurai, and welcome. I am Engo, Master of the Hidden Mountain and I have the distinction of being named the caretaker for this shrine. It is my hope that all Rokugani will assemble here and heal the wounds of the recent past. This place will be a symbol of that healing, for it is culmination of months of work which united those of two clans that met on the battlefield just 3 years ago." He motions behind him and the Crab with the cane and the Crane step forward in unison before bowing. "Allow me to introduce Kaiu Biruda and Kakita Kazaru. Kaiu-san is the main architect of this shrine, one she designed literally from the ground up. Kakita-san is the artisan personally responsible for the mosaics and sculptures that adorn this holy site. Let their hard work be recognized and their contributions bless our Empire for years to come."

The monk steps to his left, then motions toward the Kuni. "Now to speak more about our celestial patron, allow me to introduce the daimyo of the Kuni family, Kuni Yuzumi."

The Crab daimyo steps forward and bows stiffly. It is clear she is relatively young for one of her station, no more than 30 years old. The scowl on her face seems to be permanently etched into her features, and one wonders that if she has ever smiled in her life. Now that she is looking forward, players can notice that her face paint seems to attract attention to several prominent scars rather than trying to hide them. Her voice is surprising soft when she speaks, but none can miss the strength present in her as she does so.

"Today we venerate the Fortune of Protection, Kasumi," she begins with no preamble. "Kasumi's life was dedicated to the protection of Rokugan, and it was in the name of that protection that she sacrificed her life for our Empire. Today, we remember the life that, she gave, and the protection that she provides us all as a Fortune." Yuzumi concludes with a bow before stepping backward to the covering and pulling it to the ground. Revealed is a life-sized statue of a woman standing on a boulder. She is an exact match to the figure painted on the walls: her white Kuni face paint with jade green accents, her dark robes flowing

backward as if an unfelt wind pushes against her. Her left hand clutches a scroll close to her chest while her right hand extends forward wielding a straight-bladed, double-edged sword that is pointed at some unseen enemy. (The sword is also made of stone: it is not a real blade.)

The monk Engo looks over at the Kuni Family Daimyo: clearly he was expecting more from her in terms of a speech. With one not forthcoming, Engo will clap his hands together and bow deeply to those in attendance. "Again, that you for coming here this fine day and may the Fortunes always guide your path."

With the ceremony over, players are free to interact with those present or examine the shrine further.

The NPCs that players met the night before will linger around, allowing players to continue any conversations they may have had from before. The only noticeable difference is in the Lion.

The onlookers stare at the statue, awe and wonder plan on their faces. The NPCs that players met the before will linger around, praising the shrine in general and the statue in particular. One exception to this is the Ikoma: he is studying the sculpture, his face inscrutable. (If players ask him about the statue, he will just nod absently and continue to gaze at it.)

The monk Engo will make the rounds of those in attendance, talking to everyone in turn. Despite his large structure, he is no more threatening than a stuffed bear and has a jovial expression on his face. Even though it is not polite to ask a monk about his former life, Engo will not take offense and will confirm he was a samurai before and that is good to be in Crab lands again. (Although he looks to be newly retired, in fact he has been serving in monasteries for 15 years.) He is delighted with the completed shrine and is glad the PCs were here to witness the unveiling.

If any players have the disadvantage Lord Moon's Curse, Engo will quietly approach and say this to them: "*Yours is a heavy burden to bear. Steel your soul and you can overcome it.*"

The architect Kaiu Biruda is circling the newly revealed sculpture, each step a labor in itself. Players can join her and she will stop to make conversation.

"Good day (clan)-san," she will say as she bows. *"It is magnificent, isn't it?"*

Those wanting to examine the statue more closely can roll **Artisan: Sculpture/Intelligence**. Those that roll 10 or higher would expect something of this high quality to be showcased in the Imperial Palace or other place of great renown. Those that roll 15 or higher can see the great amount of attention to detail was put into this piece of art, even down to the individual chisel marks that flow seamlessly like ripples on fabric. In short, this is a masterpiece and could be considered the defining work in an artisan's life.

(Anyone with the advantage **Absolute Direction** can immediately tell that is the sword arm is pointing westerly across Earthquake Fish Bay, into Crab Clan then beyond into the Shadowlands. Players that roll **Sailing(Navigation)/Intelligence** and get a 15 or higher can use the star pattern in the ceiling above to determine the same thing.)

She will go on about the statue as long as players let her. If players ask about Biruda's injury, she will say her right leg was crushed during a construction accident a few years ago. *"I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, simple as that,"* she will remark candidly. *"However I have no regrets, for it made me really appreciate what I do have. In fact, I would not be as good as I am now if it hadn't happened."* If players offer to heal her (either doing it themselves or thru connections) she will politely decline.

If a male PC with Dangerous Beauty talks with Biruda, she will become slightly flirtatious, asking if they had any plans for the evening. *"I bet I can drink a pretty thing like you under the table,"* she would whisper. *"What would I do then?"* she continues with a wink.

The Crane Kakita Kazaru will talk to anyone that approaches, looking rather smug in all the praise he is receiving concerning the artwork present. *"Yes it is a beautiful piece,"* he will muse, *"although what I am planning next will be even grander."* (If any PC has **Inner Gift - Lesser Prophecy**, they will suddenly get a sense of dark foreboding concerning that comment.)

While talking to the Kakita, players that were at *Daikoku's Outhouse* last night with Precise Memory will realize that the Crane has the exact same voice as did the cloaked figure in. Other players can roll **raw Intelligence TN15** to come to the same conclusion.

If players make that connection and bring it up, the Crane will look confused and say that he has never been there before. (If the players want to see if he is lying, they can roll **Contested Investigation/Awareness**. No matter what the players roll, the result will be that he is telling the truth, which he is... because this is an imposter posing as the real Kakita Kazaru.)

If anyone asks about the technique he used to make any of the artwork, Kazaru will simply thank his sensei and change the subject (another sign that this is an imposter, because he has never painted or sculpted before).

Finally there is the Scorpion, who has been milling around the entire time. If any PCs approach him he will give the customary greeting. *"Morning, have you had your rice today?"* After a bow, he will continue. *"I am Yogo Azakeri, it is good to make your acquaintance."* His mask covers his entire face and is made of polished lacquer. There is a depiction of an open scroll painted across his right cheek and a small horizontal line where his mouth would be. Azakeri's green eyes shine through the sockets and they seem playful: like those of a cat toying with a mouse. (Players with Intelligence of 2 will get the feeling that he is talking down to them, as if he sees them as not on his intellectual level.)

The Scorpion is a student of a wide range of topics and can hold a conversation about nearly anything the PCs bring up (even the Shadowlands, but PCs that talk about that will lose 2 points of Glory for bringing up a taboo subject in public). Concerning the current matter, he will talk about the history of the Fortune, even mentioning that she was married to a Scorpion before her death.

During conversation, the Scorpion will remark that the sake cup he is standing near was full of sake before the ceremony started but now it is empty. He will then casually ask if one of the PCs talking to him drank it. (He knows they didn't, he is just gauging their responses.) Regardless of what the players' reply is, Azakeri will say that the cup has been refilled twice before and each time it has turned up empty, then he will muse *"She did enjoy her sake..."* before chuckling. (Curious players can move the sake cup if they want, but no amount of investigation will determine where the sake is going.)

After the conversations wind down, the Kaiu will limp over to the Kakita. “Kazaru-san, we have worked together on this project for months,” she says, loud enough for all to hear, “and yet you never allowed me to see this statue until now. You repeatedly said it wasn’t finished, that is wasn’t ready. We missed deadline after deadline, postponed the opening of this shrine twice, and I privately questioned your dedication to this project...” She trails off, then bows very deeply to the artisan. “Seeing this... your completed work... I am ashamed of myself for ever doubting you.”

The Crane smiles. “Please rise Biruda-san,” he says, a slight rasp in his voice. “Doubt is a sin we all must combat. I take no offense in your admission.”

(Players that did not talk directly to the Crane can now realize he was the cloaked man from the night before by making the same **raw Intelligence TN15** roll. Having Precise Memory is still an auto success.)

However before anyone else can say anything, the Lion steps forward. “That is good that you do not take offense to her Crane-san. Unfortunately for you, I take offense with you and your statue.” The Ikoma’s voice containing a menacing edge to it.

The color drains from the Kakita’s face as he turns toward the angry Lion. “What... what do you mean Ikoma-sama?” he stammers.

“This is your work?” Hatashiai says, pointing at the sculpture. When the Crane doesn’t deny it, the Lion sneers. “That weapon in her hand: it is straight, not curved. Please explain to all of us why you have depicted a Fortune of Rokugan wielding a gaijin blade?”

“It is not a gaijin blade.” Kazaru blurts out. He seems to be on the verge of panic, like a man that would rather be anywhere but where he is standing at the moment. He starts to stammer. “It is a representation of the ancient sword that she wielded.”

“A likely story.” the Lion interrupts, sneering. “Or perhaps you cannot properly sculpt a correct Rokugani blade? Perhaps your faulty craftsmanship is all the “renowned” Kakita Artisan Academy can muster these days.”

The Kakita’s face is now as white as a funeral robe as the Lion presses forward. “Which is it Crane? Did you craft this blasphemy on purpose, or was is an accident that showcases the ineptitude of your sensei and school?”

Players can interject at any time to diffuse the situation. Players that roll either **Lore: Katana/Intelligence** or **Craft: Weaponsmith (Katana)/Intelligence** and make a 15 or better realize that the weapon shown in the statue is a *tsurugi* (broadsword), which is an ancient precursor to the katana. Otherwise players could roll **Lore:History/Intelligence TN 15** to recall that the tales revolving around Kasumi did say she carried an ancient straight-sword which dated from before the Dawn of the Empire.

(As players are trying to talk the Ikoma down, have players that are participating roll **Investigation/Awareness**. Those that beat a 15 realize that the Lion is using his interpretation of this statue as justification to embarrass the Crane Clan in general and has no issue with the Kakita personally or his statue.)

To get the Ikoma to relent requires either an **Etiquette(Courtesy)/Awareness** or **Sincerity/Awareness** roll versus a TN 20. (Either emphasis for Sincerity could apply, depending on how the PC role-plays it.) Intimidation or Temptation could be used, but raise the TN to 30 (he is a rank 2 Ikoma Bard), and are worth both a D2 honor loss, and an I1 infamy gain. The GM should feel free to award Free Raises for good roleplay and/or logical arguments that counter the Lion’s claims. Success will make the Ikoma acknowledge that perhaps he was mistaken and will vow not to speak on this subject again. However he will not apologize under any circumstances.

If the players cannot talk him down (or do not speak up), the Lion will draw his wakizashi and strike the statue, defacing it. **“There. Now it is a true testament to the “skill” of the Kakita Family.”** (This grave insult will certainly not go unanswered in the years to come...) Regardless of how the issue is resolved, the Lion will storm out of the shrine afterward. The Crane will just stand there, eyes closed and unnaturally still.

Engo the monk will walk over to him, concern plain on his face. “Kazaru-san? Perhaps you should take a minute to... regain your composure.”

“Hai,” Kazaru says, his eyes fluttering open. “That sounds like a good idea.” He pauses, looking at the two doors in the back of the temple. “Ummm...”

The concern on the monk’s face deepens. “Is something wrong?”

“What? No...” the Kakita trails off, heading to the door on the left.

“Kazaru-san...” the Kaiu calls out, hobbling up beside the monk. “That door is to the storage closet.”

Kazaru pauses without a word. His shoulders slump slightly as he wanders over to the other door, opening it smoothly and heading inside before closing it behind him.

“The Lion must have affected him greater than I feared.” Biruda says. “Kazaru-san has essentially lived here for months. His mind must be very clouded to walk to the wrong door like that.”

By now the players have probably figured out that something is wrong with Kakita Kazaru and will want to talk to him. Give them a few minutes to collect their thoughts and decide how to talk to the Crane before the monk offers to check on him.

Engo the monk walks over to his quarters and scratches lightly on the screen. “Kakita-san?” Concerned, he slides it open only to reveal that the Crane is gone...

Part Three: Will the Real Kakita Please Stand Up?

“What do you mean, he’s gone?” Kaiu Biruda exclaims. “There is no other way out of that room. I should know, I built it. I mean, there is a small window but it is just for ventilation. No adult could fit through there.”

When players examine the monk’s quarters, they find it simple and bare of any decoration. A tatami mat lays along one wall with a small, unopened chest at the end.

There is an incense burner underneath a small window along the back wall. The window is indeed too small for an adult to get through, although maybe a child could have squeezed through it....

Have players roll *Investigation(Notice)/Perception*. Players that roll 10 or higher will find scuff marks indicating that someone (or something) did squeeze through that window recently. If anyone rolls 20 or more, they will find a small drop of an inky, black liquid on the table with the incense burner, just below the window, that doesn’t seem to belong there.

Kuni Yuzumi is not happy, and she wants answers. “*I don’t know where that Crane is, but I want him found. And I want you to do it.*” She orders the PCs. Gone is any nervousness players sensed in her earlier, as she is taking charge of the potentially very bad situation.

Kaiu Biruda is at a loss. “I don’t have any idea Kuni-sama. If he wasn’t here, he was over at the warehouse district meeting with suppliers.” She pauses for a moment. “Well he did leave the city once, said he needed some supplies that he couldn’t get locally. He was only gone for a day or two. And I saw what he brought back: paints and some stone cutting tools. Nothing I considered unusual.”

“Well he doesn’t have that much of a head start.” Yuzumi states, turning back to the PC’s. “Kaiu-san and I will stay here while we will await your report.”

Players may want to ask one of the remaining NPCs to assist them. Either Kitsuki Mieako and Yogo Azakeri are more than willing to do so, but will defer to the players for all decisions. Both NPCs have an Investigation/Perception roll of 8k3, but should only be used if all players fail their rolls. Also neither one will participate in combat.

If players ask where the window leads to, the Kaiu will show them. Outside at the back of the shrine is a small alcove built into the structure: it looks like a ledge in the rock face. On the ground below the ledge is another drop of the inky, black liquid. (If no one found the first drop inside, it will require another *Investigation(Notice)/Perception roll TN 15.*) This droplet is smeared slightly, as if the person it dropped from jumped from the ledge and kept running. The direction of the droplet points westward toward the warehouse district.

The warehouse district should be the first place the players want to look: combined with the trail of black liquid it was where they lost the trail of Kazaru and the bald man last night. For tables that haven't put the pieces together yet, they can ask the people around the shrine what they saw: the Shrine of Protection is a huge draw and the area is full of people waiting their turn to get inside. No roll is needed as several people saw the person jump from the ledge and can point the players in the correct direction.

What players may or may not realize yet is that this is not the real Kakita Kazaru they are chasing: he was replaced last night by whatever made that third set of footprints after leaving *Daikoku's Outhouse*. The plan was for the imposter to make a public appearance as Kazaru then quietly disappear, but the Lion's charges had unnerved him enough to decide to escape. (The imposter had never been in the shrine before, so he didn't know which door led where and guessed wrong.) As soon as the screen door was closed it shape shifted into a human form small enough to get through the window and crawled out, leaving the scuff marks and a little bit of its blood. It jumped down in child form and made its escape. (A running child would not be as noticeable as an adult, but there were too many eyes in the area for everyone to miss the event.)

The Warehouse District

Lord Sun is high in the cloudless sky as the players travel through the city. Just north of the docks, slightly uphill sits a collection of large, squat buildings used for storage of goods while awaiting transportation to their next destination. The roads here are made of cobblestone which can handle the weight of the carts being moved better than dirt, especially under rainy conditions.

While exploring the warehouse district, have the players roll ***Investigation(Notice)/Perception***. Those that roll a 15 or higher will see a familiar face: the bald man whose head is covered in scars. He is entering the large door to a one-story building, closing the door behind him.

Players can follow him inside, or they might look for an unconventional way inside: maybe through a window or the roof. Studying the building from the outside will find several windows they could easily fit through, but all of them have been covered to prevent

prying eyes from seeing inside. There are no other doors visible. If players want to go through a window, it requires an **Athletics(Climbing)/Agility roll TN 10** to get through without falling. Failure causes the player to take 1k1 wounds (non-exploding), and alerts the people inside that someone came in. Climbing onto the roof is a little harder: **Athletics(Climbing)/Agility roll TN 15**. Any player that falls takes 1k1 wounds, but doesn't alert the occupants inside. Players up there can find a skylight roughly in the middle of the roof.

No matter how players gain access to the building (whether door or window), the scene is the same. The warehouse is mostly empty: whatever supplies were here are long gone leaving almost nothing to hide behind (only the evenly spaced support columns provide any cover at all, just not enough for anyone to hide behind fully). Light pours in from the skylight, illuminating three people. One is the bald man with the scarred head. Kneeling before him is Kakita Kazaru... and Kakita Kazaru. Both copies of the Crane appear to have their hands bound and their mouths gagged. (If players are looking down from the skylight, they can only see the tops of the people's heads and shoulders.)

If players try to sneak in quietly, have them make a **Contested Stealth(Sneaking)/Agility** roll versus the bald man (rolling 5k3) and the imposter (rolling 3d10).

If all the players success on the Stealth roll, then the following conversation may not happen, depending on player tactics.

Provided at least one of the players is noticed (or if the players just walk forward), the bald man will call out to them:

“Greetings samurai. Welcome to our going-away party.” He will circle around behind the kneeling Cranes, a parangu (machete) resting on his shoulder. “I warned my mistress that this weakling would eventually give away our operation, and last night he did so with that little outburst in the inn. She left this morning at first light with the others, while I stayed behind to clean up.”

“He has been useful though, helping us smuggle our master's cargo into the city. He was so easy to seduce with her charms... but alas he became too attached to her and wanted more.” The bald man sneers. “Now he has, and is, nothing.”

Players not on the roof can roll **Investigation(Notice)/Perception**. Those that make a TN 15 will notice the Kakita on the players' right will close his eyes slightly, as if in irritation, at the mention of cargo. (It is the imposter, and did not like being referred to as cargo.) Players that roll 20 or higher will see the Kakita on the players' left open his eyes in despair at the being calling nothing. (This is the real Kakita Kazaru.)

"Although this is fun, I do not have all day. I have to catch up with the others after all." The bald man will say, standing between the two and raising his sword. "Choose, or I will choose for you."

Although players may want to try to persuade the bald man from his course of action, he is locked in: no pretty words or bribes of any type will dissuade him.

Have players roll initiative.

If the bald man rolls the highest initiative, the bald man will sneer in disgust. *"Come now samurai, am I so terrifying that you are frozen by the sight of me?"* He will also hold his action until a PC gets into melee range (as will the imposter).

During the combat, the bald man will lose himself into a state of bloodlust, lashing out at the PCs he considers most dangerous, leaving the weaker ones to mop up later. His maniacal laughter will echo off the walls as if he is thoroughly enjoying himself. As he gets into wound penalties, he will switch into Full Attack stance in an attempt to finish off the party quicker.

The imposter will join the melee as soon as a player gets close enough to attack him with his hands. However, the first time it is struck, the wound will bleed black, inky blood. Its true nature revealed, it will change shape into that of a young boy with white skin and red eyes. Players can roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence TN 15** to realize it is a Pekkle no Oni. Success on the roll will also remind them that Pekkle no Oni explode upon death and anything caught in the small blast radius could become Tainted.

The real Kakita Kazaru will attempt to act at Initiative 0 (zero), struggling against his bonds. He has no weapons, but does know that the imposter is a shapeshifter (although not an oni) and will warn the

PCs if given the chance. If freed, he will escape the warehouse and wait outside the door.

Once the bald man is dead, the Pekkle no Oni will attempt to flee, although it will take 2 full move actions to escape: one to get to a window, and another to go through it. Once outside the warehouse, it will change forms again and the players will have lost it.

Kenraku

The Bald Man

School/Rank: True Ronin / Insight Rank 1

Initiative: 4k3

Armor TN: 20 (23 in armor) **Reduction:** 3

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 45 (+17), 51 (Down, +437), 57 (Out)

Attack: 5k3 (Parangu, Complex)

Damage: 4k2 (Parangu)

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 2
-------	---------	--------	---------	--------

Reflexes 3	Agility 3
------------	-----------

Honor: 0.1	Status: 0.0	Infamy: 1.2
------------	-------------	-------------

Primary Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 1, Intimidation 2, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth/Overconfident

Shadowlands Taint: 0.7

Pekkl no Oni

The Imposter

Initiative: 3k3

Armor TN: 20 **Reduction:** 0

Wounds: 20 (+5), 30 (+10), 40 (+15), 65+ (Out, Explodesz)

Attack: 4k2 (Claws, Complex)

Damage: 4k2 (Claws)

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 2
Awareness 4	Intelligence 4	Perception 3	

Special Mechanics: Blackened Claws Shadowlands Power

Redistributive Taint: When a Pekkle no Oni is killed, it explodes in a cloud of inky black smoke ten feet in radius. All creatures in range must roll a raw Earth roll at TN 10 or gain 1d10 points of taint (this taint gain does not explode).

Significant Dice Pools: if the creature is likely to be called on to roll for specific tasks, like stealth or tracking

Kenraku is a devoted, faithful yojimbo to his master. He will save a void point to act even while down, and won't stop fighting until killed (if captured, he will do

everything he can to continue fighting. Even if he is, he will not betray his mistress).

The Pekkles no Oni, however, is not nearly so devoted. When Kenraku dies, or it has reached 40+ wounds taken, it will scream and attempt to flee. On the first round, it will reach a window, 40' away from the PCs. On the second, it will leap out and change forms to blend into the crowd, effectively making it impossible to catch without spells that could specifically hunt it down.

Once both adversaries are defeated (or the Pekkles no Oni escaped), Kakita Kazaru will thank the players profusely for being rescued:

“-Samas, I cannot thank you enough for rescuing me from those creatures. That... thing arrived shortly before you did and warned my captor that it was almost caught back at the shrine.” His head will drop in shame. “I cannot believe I allowed Kamiko-chan to use me for such a purpose.”

Kazaru will go on to explain that he met the woman he called Kamiko several months ago, shortly after he arrived in the city to begin work on the Shrine of Protection. He is rather sketchy about how exactly he met her and it will take sufficient prodding and stern looks from the PCs before the Crane admits that it was in a brothel in the city and that he was a client of hers.

As he grew more and more infatuated with her, Kamiko began to request things of him. They were small at first, although it is clear to the Crane now that she was using him for her own purposes.

“One day she asked me for a favor. She said that she needed someone big.” Kazaru said, his eyes darkening with revulsion (at himself mostly). “She said her brother had run afoul of the Crab authorities and she needed a way to get him and his three children back inside the city. So I fabricated a reason to leave the city, said I needed more supplies, and arranged a meeting.

“That is when I met Kenraku and those... things.” Kazaru continued. “I didn't know what they were, they just looked like pale children. Still, I smuggled them into the city with a wagon of supplies and dropped them off with Kamiko before I returned to the shrine.”

If players ask when he discovered the truth, Kazaru will (honestly) say it was the night before:

“Kenraku-san and I were returning from that inn when I felt someone following us. I turned around and saw my own face staring back at me.” The Crane shuttered. “That grin... so evil. Then Kenraku knocked me out. I woke up in that warehouse. Kamiko was there, and the other two “children”. I remember her words. ‘You were... useful to me. Were. Now the children and I must move on. We have an Empire to explore. And chaos to cause.’ I... I...” Kazaru's words trail off.

Kazaru will give a description of Kamiko: relatively short stature; long, jet black hair; dark grey eyes. Also although she looked about the same age as Kazaru, he always felt she was older somehow.

Once the players are out of questions, Kakita Kazaru will accompany them back to them to the Shrine of Protection.

Conclusion

Back at the Shrine of Protection, Kuni Yuzumi will explode in anger when told that the Kakita had been impersonated by a Pekkles no Oni... and that it had been here in the Shrine of Protection. (“It was HERE! Right beside me and I didn't know it!”) She will be slightly satisfied if the players were able to kill the demon in the warehouse. (Agents of the Kuni will be sent to the warehouse to ensure no residual effects of the Pekkles no Oni's death linger.) Yuzumi will ask who was responsible for killing the oni, and whomever struck the killing blow will be Noticed by Kuni Yuzumi.

If the Pekkles no Oni escaped the combat, Yuzumi will quickly use her authority as the ranking Crab to lock down the city so that no one enters or leaves. After two days of searching and (questionable) investigative tactics, the Kuni are resigned to the fact that the Pekkles no Oni had escaped before the lockdown went into place.

Whether or not the oni escaped, Yuzumi will rigorously test Kakita Kazaru for signs of the Taint, which he will relent to without objection. Provided a

Pekkle no Oni did not explode near him, Yuzumi cannot find any sign of the Taint. (In truth, Kazaru acquired more than a few points of Shadowlands Taint during his dalliance with Kamiko, just not enough to reach a full rank.)

The Shrine of Protection sees lots of traffic in the days and weeks to come. (Even if the statue inside is damaged, the shrine will remain open. The Crab would lose too much face if they had to keep it closed any longer.) The populace look for solace in these uncertain times, while storm clouds gather on the horizon...

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: 1 XP
Good Roleplaying: 1 XP
Protecting the statue from defacement: 1 XP
Saving Kakita Kazaru: 1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Favors

If the PCs save Kakita Kazaru (even if they persuade him to commit Seppuku afterwards), the PCs gain one favor.

Honor

If the PCs insist on Kazaru committing seppuku, they gain H7 Honor.

Glory

Saving Kazaru gains the PCs G2 glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

As noted above, a PC who manages a killing blow against the Pekkle no Oni will be noticed by Kuni Yuzumi.

GM Reporting

- 1) Did the Shrine to Kasumi get defaced?
- 2) Did the Pekkle no Oni die?
- 3) Did the PCs persuade Kazaru to commit Seppuku?

The GM must report this information by February 10, 2017 for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Kaiu Biruda

Glory 2.1, Honor 4.3, Status 2.8

School/Rank: Kaiu Engineer 3

Advantages: Hero of the People, Precise Memory, Seven Fortunes' Blessing - Ebisu

Disadvantages: Lameness, Permanent Wound

Kaiu Biruda is an outgoing and cheerful young woman, one that has not allowed adversity to stop her, even though it has slowed her down considerably. A freak construction accident left her left leg nearly useless, forcing her to rely on a cane to walk or stand.

Even though she will never climb mountains again, she has persevered like a true Crab. Gifted with both a keen intellect and a vivid imagination, she has designed several of the newest structures in Crab lands. Biruda still likes to get her hands dirty and assist the work crews as she can, and the peasant laborers love her for it. Among samurai she is playful and friendly. Get a couple of cups of sake in her and she might even challenge you to arm wrestle...

Kuni Yuzumi

Glory 6.1, Honor 3.1, Status 7.0 (Kuni Family Daimyo)

School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 4/Toritaka Exorcist

Advantages: Elemental Blessing - Earth, Leadership, Wary, Way of the Land (Twilight Mountains)

Disadvantages: Disturbing Countenance, Driven (destroy the Shadowlands)

Kuni Yuzumi has only been the daimyo of her family for a few years, replacing the former one after he was killed fighting the Shadowlands. Yuzumi was a natural choice to be his successor as she is both an experienced shugenja as well as being exceptionally skilled on the battlefield. Unfortunately Yuzumi's skills do not extend to administration and she has begun to lean more and more heavily on her hatamoto for the day-to-day operation of the Kuni Family.

Scarred during her gempukku in Toritaka lands, Kuni Yuzumi wears her face paint to accentuate the damage done to her face instead of hiding it. Although she and her fellow Crab see it as a badge of honor, it is quite unsettling to members of the other clans. Yuzumi has not smiled since she became daimyo and has vowed to end the threat of the Shadowlands once and for all: to safeguard her Empire and to avenge her beloved fallen predecessor.

Kakita Kazaru

Glory 5.2, Honor 6.4 (3.4), Status 3.1

School/Rank: Kakita Artisan 3

Advantages: Perceived Honor (3 ranks), Silent

Disadvantages: Disbeliever, Fascination - Gaijin, Lechery

Kakita Kazaru is a naturally gifted artist, well skilled in both painting and sculpture. His works have begun to be showcased in prominent locations, portraying the beauty of the samurai soul and their heroic nature.

However Kazaru's chosen art is one that he keeps for his personal use. He is an exception actor, rivaling the Scorpion in his ability to disguise himself so he can indulge his baser desires without sullying his public persona. At first it was safe things, but as months have gone on the simple things are not enough for him and he pushes himself to take greater and greater risks... and still his thoughts grow darker as he delves deeper into his self-created shadows.

Kitsuki Mieako

Glory 3.2, Honor 7.1, Status 2.5

School/Rank: Dutiful Disciple Shugenja 3 (Affinity Air/Deficiency Earth)

Advantages: Friend of the Elements - Air, Irreproachable

Disadvantages: Low Pain Threshold, Soft-Hearted

Kitsuki Mieako is an oddity among the Dragon Clan: a member of the Kitsuki family that is a shugenja. For reasons unknown, all the women in her direct line dating back to just before the Clan War can speak with the air kami, and Mieako is the latest (and currently only) member.

Specializing in defensive magic, she serves as a yoriki to a clan magistrate and uses her talents to determine if a crime scene or witness has been magically tampered with. She is outgoing, friendly, and a pacifist at heart. Still she understands that sometimes decisive action is required... even if the memory of those times keep her awake at night.

Ikoma Hatashiai

Glory 7.1, Honor 5.2 (3.2), Status 3.2

School/Rank: Ikoma Bard 2 (Topaz Champion path)

Advantages: Great Potential - Iaijutsu, Perceived Honor (2 ranks), Prodigy

Disadvantages: Cursed by the Realm - Yomi, Dark Secret

The winner of the Topaz Championship 2 years ago, Ikoma Hatashiai has the potential to be the finest duelist to ever come from the Lion Clan. Hatashiai defeated three consecutive Cranes en route to his victory, which came as a complete surprise to all considering he was not even supposed to be at the tournament. He was a last minute replacement after one of the other Lion contestants was injured in an accident on her way to the event.

Since then Hatashiai has continued to impress those that cross his path, and the sharpness of his blade is nearly matched by his intelligence and wit. Like a true Ikoma he is boisterous and outgoing in public, quick to drink and hit on a beautiful woman. However he always maintains control of himself, and if anyone else is offended by his behavior... well Hatashiai has yet to lose a duel in over two years so problems do not stay problems for long.

Moshi Keibi

Glory 1.8, Honor 6.3, Status 2.0

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3

Advantages: Paragon - Duty, Wary

Disadvantages: Black Sheep, Can't Lie

Moshi Keibi is the long suffering yojimbo of Yoritomo Shousen, having been paired with him for over 5 years with no end in sight. An honorable man, he does his duty like a proper samurai should and would die for Shousen if necessary. He will throw the occasional jibe at his charge in an attempt to keep him in check... with mixed results.

How he ended up paired with a lout like Shousen is a mystery to most, but many would guess it has to do with Keibi's strained relationship with his own family.

Yoritomo Shousen

Glory 2.3, Honor 4.0, Status 2.7

School/Rank: Yoritomo Courtier 3

Advantages: Crafty, Dangerous Beauty, Wealthy (3 ranks)

Disadvantages: Failure of Bushido - Compassion, Unlucky

Yoritomo Shousen has not set foot in a sanctioned court in Rokugan in nearly 3 years. Although Shousen is rather pleased with this (courts are too stuffy and rigid for his tastes), the real reason is because his superiors do not want him embarrassing the clan again. Members of the Yoritomo have a stereotype of being pushy and bossy, yet

Shousen takes those tactics to the extreme. The list of people he has alienated far exceeds his remaining friends, and the clan leadership have decided that Shousen is better at making the clan koku than he is at representing them.

Peasants and even the heimin that work for him are nothing more than tools to expand his burgeoning trade network. All his contempt for the lower classes have blinded him to the fact that he (and the clan) would be even richer if he treated his underlings with even a portion of the respect they are owed.

Yogo Azakeri

Glory 1.7, Honor 1.9, Status 4.1

School/Rank: Yogo Wardmaster 3

Advantages: Heartless, Read Lips, Sage

Disadvantages: Bad Fortune - Yogo Curse, Rumormonger

Yogo Azakeri is a learned scholar and trusted advisor to the Yogo Family Daimyo. He has knowledge on a wide range of topics and will gladly share his insights to those that ask his opinion.

His mask is polished lacquer with a depiction of an open scroll painted across his right cheek. Both sockets are open, allowing his brilliant green eyes to shine through. Azakeri is unmarried and happy about it. The demands of a home life would only serve to distract him from his duty, and besides physical pleasure was never that appealing to him anyway.

Shinjo Jingi

Glory 2.1, Honor 5.5, Status 4.5

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 3/Jade Magistrate

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Quick Healer, Social Position - Jade Magistrate

Disadvantages: Ascetic, Contrary

Shinjo Jingi is one of the newest Jade Magistrates in Rokugan, having earned her post after years of service with the Jade Legion. Attractive and out-going, Jingi has a forceful personality and often injects herself into nearby events. Despite this, none can question her skill and dedication to duty.

Although coming from one of the richest clans in the Empire, Jingi doesn't understand the fascination many have with wealth and its trappings. Her simple kimono protects her from the elements just as well as a fancy one, and her scroll satchel is functional and well taken care of, so why does it need to be ornate.

Engo, Master of the Hidden Mountain

Glory 1.3, Honor 5.7, Status 4.0

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3/Temples of the Thousand Fortunes Monk 3

Advantages: Balance, Large, Seven Fortunes' Blessing - Jurojin

Disadvantages: Bad Fortune - Lingering Misfortune, Forced Retirement, Lord Moon's Curse (5 pts)

A lifetime ago, the man now known as Engo served along the Kaiu Wall. Like all things, that came to an end and he was forced to leave his fellow samurai behind and start anew as a monk. Fifteen years later, the winds of fate have brought Engo home to Crab lands to serve as the caretaker for the Shrine of Protection. Those that served with him before would immediately recognize Engo now... if they were still alive.

Gone is the immense sorrow that plagued Engo when he first entered the monastic life. The nightmares have ended and his jovial nature has returned. Now he faces each new day with a smile and without fear of what might be.

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Joyous news! The coronation of Emperor Toturi X went off with no issues at all! For a joyous three days, the Empire rejoiced in the coronation of their new Empire, and now we may look forward to what comes next.

Ikoma Shabiko, the Ikoma Family Daimyo, was invited by the Imperial Court to tell our Emperor the story of the death of Lord Toturi IX. It is a tragic tale to be sure, and I am told that the detail that Ikoma Shabiko-dono told the story with was of such impressive quality that our Emperor himself near wept at the spectacle.

The only Daimyo that were not present at this presentation were the Crab Clan daimyo. The official word I have heard from Yasuki Ranmaru-dono is that the Clan felt no need to listen to a story that they had already lived. One imagines that hearing again of the death of his father is a thing that Champion Hida Oturi-dono would desire to avoid... but one cannot help but wonder if that is the only reason for his absence.

Not much has truthfully happened since the Coronation, but that is not surprising after only a pair of months. The Unicorn seem to be reacting to some grand news of some form, but I have not been able to confirm anything quite yet.

With Honor
Otomo Yusuke

Player Handout #2: List of NPCs

Kaiu Biruda

Glory 2.1, Honor 4.3, Status 2.8

Kaiu Biruda is an outgoing and cheerful young woman, one that has not allowed adversity to stop her, even though it has slowed her down considerably. A freak construction accident left her left leg nearly useless, forcing her to rely on a cane to walk or stand.

Kuni Yuzumi

Glory 6.1, Honor 3.1, Status 7.0 (Kuni Family Daimyo)

School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 4/Toritaka Exorcist

Kuni Yuzumi has only been the daimyo of her family for a few years, replacing the former one after he was killed fighting the Shadowlands. Yuzumi was a natural choice to be his successor as she is both an experienced shugenja as well as being exceptionally skilled on the battlefield. Unfortunately Yuzumi's skills do not extend to administration and she has begun to lean more and more heavily on her hatamoto for the day-to-day operation of the Kuni Family.

Scarred during her gempukku in Toritaka lands, Kuni Yuzumi wears her face paint to accentuate the damage done to her face instead of hiding it. Although she and her fellow Crab see it as a badge of honor, it is quite unsettling to members of the other clans. Yuzumi has not smiled since she became daimyo and has vowed to end the threat of the Shadowlands once and for all: to safeguard her Empire and to avenge her beloved fallen predecessor.

Kakita Kazaru

Glory 5.2, Honor 6.4, Status 3.1

Kakita Kazaru is a naturally gifted artist, well skilled in both painting and sculpture. His works have begun to be showcased in prominent locations, portraying the beauty of the samurai soul and their heroic nature.

Kitsuki Mieako

Glory 3.2, Honor 7.1, Status 2.5

Kitsuki Mieako is an oddity among the Dragon Clan: a member of the Kitsuki family that is a shugenja. For reasons unknown, all the women in her direct line dating back to just before the Clan War can speak with the air kami, and Mieako is the latest (and currently only) member.

Ikoma Hatashiai

Glory 7.1, Honor 5.2, Status 3.2

The winner of the Topaz Championship 2 years ago, Ikoma Hatashiai has the potential to be the finest duelist to ever come from the Lion Clan. Hatashiai defeated three consecutive Cranes en route to his victory, which came as a complete surprise to all considering he was not even supposed to be at the tournament. He was a last minute replacement after one of the other Lion contestants was injured in an accident on her way to the event.

Moshi Keibi

Glory 1.8, Honor 6.3, Status 2.0

Moshi Keibi is the long suffering yojimbo of Yoritomo Shousen, having been paired with him for over 5 years with no end in sight. An honorable man, he does his duty like a proper samurai should and would die for Shousen if necessary. He will throw the occasional jibe at his charge in an attempt to keep him in check... with mixed results.

Yoritomo Shousen

Glory 2.3, Honor 4.0, Status 2.7

Yoritomo Shousen has not set foot in a sanctioned court in Rokugan in nearly 3 years. Although Shousen is rather pleased with this (courts are too stuffy and rigid for his tastes), the real reason is because his superiors do not want him embarrassing the clan again. Members of the Yoritomo have a stereotype of being pushy and bossy, yet

Shousen takes those tactics to the extreme. The list of people he has alienated far exceeds his remaining friends, and the clan leadership have decided that Shousen is better at making the clan koku than he is at representing them.

Yogo Azakeri

Glory 1.7, Honor 1.9, Status 4.1

Yogo Azakeri is a learned scholar and trusted advisor to the Yogo Family Daimyo. He has knowledge on a wide range of topics and will gladly share his insights to those that ask his opinion.

His mask is polished lacquer with a depiction of an open scroll painted across his right cheek. Both sockets are open, allowing his brilliant green eyes to shine through.

Shinjo Jingi

Glory 2.1, Honor 5.5, Status 4.5

Shinjo Jingi is one of the newest Jade Magistrates in Rokugan, having earned her post after years of service with the Jade Legion. Attractive and out-going, Jingi has a forceful personality and often injects herself into nearby events. Despite this, none can question her skill and dedication to duty.

Engo, Master of the Hidden Mountain

Glory 1.3, Honor 5.7, Status 4.0

A lifetime ago, the man now known as Engo served along the Kaiu Wall. Like all things, that came to an end and he was forced to leave his fellow samurai behind and start anew as a monk. Fifteen years later, the winds of fate have brought Engo home to Crab lands to serve as the caretaker for the Shrine of Protection.