

Winter Court: Toshi no Omoidoso

By Christian Ward

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

1341 (Winter)

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Role Play, Intrigue, Court

In the Lands of the clan of Rebirth, a single Soul hopes to find his.

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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

The Phoenix have been blessed with the Emperor's Winter Court for the first time in the reign of Toturi X. While the Phoenix would normally have selected Kyuden Isawa or another similarly large castle, Toturi X has made the unusual request of holding the Imperial Winter Court in the relatively small city of Toshi no Omoidoso. The Phoenix were flustered by this, but complied with the Emperor's demand.

While politics rule the day at Winter Court, it is not the only matter of concern. Akodo Godaigo, long thought to have been redeemed by his actions during the Clan War, has been wandering continuously throughout the last two centuries. This wandering, combined with his curse of Undeath, has left him largely insane. And thus, hearing that a descendent of the woman who cursed him has joined the Lion delegation in Toshi no Omoidoso, the cursed creature descends upon the city as well, hoping for respite for his actions.

His interruption of the court will, of course, be noticed by the PCs in time. At first it's somewhat subtle, but it will come to a head when an impatient Godaigo approaches Ikoma Kaname, the descendent. The altercation will catch the attention of the PCs, giving them a unique opportunity to perhaps save the Soul of a man who has been tortured in undeath for centuries...

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.

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

There is no Glory Loss for this Module. The reason for this should become clear very swiftly.

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 equal to their taint rank*5 (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 5. 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

Winter is the time for political intrigue within the Empire. So to is it that the PCs have earned a special invitation: An invitation to Winter Court in the City of Remembrance.

The City of Remembrance, the home to Matsu Hitomi's shrine. One of the most thriving coastal cities in the Empire has been chosen as the site for the Emperor's Winter Court. ***Descriptive box text bringing people into the castle***

As PCs walk through the castle, have all of them make an investigation (Notice) / Perception check (PCs with wary may go ahead and add their bonus). There is not TN for this check. Rather, all PCs except the PCs with the lowest investigation check briefly see something in the corner of their eye. The PC with the lowest check instead gets this:

As you walk through the hallways, you swear you hear the padding of feet. You look behind you, and at first you see nothing. But, as you turn around, you see a young boy, no older than 7 or 8, dressed in a fine kimono. But where a face should be, there is a terrifying skull face! The little boy tries to get as huge as his tiny body will allow him to, lifting his arms in challenge against you! "Rahhhr! I am Godaigo, the monster of Toshi no Omoidoso! Feed me candy or I will destroy you!"

The mask is, obviously, fake. Any PC who is uncertain and asks about Godaigo can make Lore (History) / Intelligence at TN 10. A PC with Lore: Legends, Lore: Lion or something similar automatically passes this roll. Hitomi was a proud Lion samurai who was tricked

by an unscrupulous Mirumoto into attacking a Lion castle. In the end, she refused and killed the Mirumoto, escaping eventually to Toshi no Omoidoso, where her former lover Akodo Godaigo found and slew her. Godaigo, in the end, was cursed with Matsu Hitomi's last words: "You will find no honorable death, betrayer! You will be cursed to walk the earth forever, without death as you are without honor!"

This is, obviously, just a small child. Allow the PC to deal with him as they wish. Regardless, after a few moments of interaction (and rushed if a PC tries to be violent towards a child), the following occurs:

"Musuko." A calm, but stern voice comes from behind. As you turn, you see a smiling woman of middle age, the barest hints of grey starting to show through her hair. She bows to you apologetically, but first regards the child. "Musuko. We are guests in this castle. I know you enjoyed the stories, but we should not be rude. Especially not to other guests.

The child groans unhappily. "Okasama! But isn't it your castle? You are the champion after all!"

The PC, should, of course, immediately recognize Shiba Korishima, the Clan Champion of the Phoenix. Korishima will gently chastise her child, stern but never harsh. She will then turn to the PCs (even if they drew steel on him):

"Thank you for humoring my youngest son, Samurai-san. We told him the story of this city, and as you can see, he has taken the story quite to heart." She bows to the PC and looks to her child, who quietly nods and comes to follow her mother.

Nothing else of particular interest happens before the PC's introduction to Court. The PCs are taken to rooms, allowed to bathe, but asked to stay within the castle until the opening ceremonies.

The gates to the main court chamber open, and you are ushered inside. As you enter, an Ikoma Bard loudly proclaims your name and deeds. It might, then, come as a surprise that the court regard you with a respectful nod... and immediately move back to what they were doing. Your name and deeds all appear to be considered normal, and the court pays it no particular mind.

At this point, the PCs have moved above the abnormal curiosity that they were in previous mods. They are beginning to become movers and shakers in the court and this should be made clear by how the PCs are now

treated by the NPCs. That said, the court is largely gathered as the PCs arrive, and they won't have time to talk to anyone before:

The doors to the side of the Court Chamber open, and as if on cue the entire court prostrates itself. First steps out the Elemental Council, led by the Master of Fire, Isawa Koraze.

Perceptive PCs (any PC with an investigation of 3 or higher) may notice that the Master of Water seems... particularly perturbed as he brings up the rear.

Following the Elemental Masters is, of course, the Phoenix Clan Champion. But moments later, the rest of the Phoenix Daimyo take their places, all standing just next to the Dais before they themselves kneel.

Coming in next is a man just entering the prime of his life. Toturi Kazetora steps to the dais, his On marred only by the barest hint of a smile. Stepping in a moment later is the Emerald Champion, Doji Makibesu. It is impossible to fail to notice the look that Makibesu shoots to Kazetora as one stands to the right and the other stands to the left.

Finally entering is the young Emperor. Toturi X seems to have regained a certain level of regal bearing as he steps to the throne set for him, looking out to his audience and smiling. His voice is still soft, lacking the inherent authority one would prefer from an Emperor, but the increase of confidence is still notable. "Samurai of Rokugan. I am thankful that you would join us this Winter. Though the past year has been..." a momentary glance to his brother is too obvious not to notice, "an eventful one, I hope that these next few months can be a chance for common ground and peace to prevail." He offers a simple bow, and takes his seat on his throne.

Barely have you had time to rise after he sits down than a young woman has approached you. Dressed in the Colors of the Lion, she is a bright, smiling figure of a pretty Ikoma woman.

Part One: The Happenings of Court

As a court module, there are three months of time between when the module starts and when the module ends. There will be specific timed events throughout the module (specifically the investigation into Godaigo later and the specific court scenes), but otherwise the GM should feel free to use these scenes

as they need to. Each event has a notation on who can trigger it and what causes it to trigger.

Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll. Phoenix and Courtier PCs gain a free raise on this roll.

- 10: Conspicuous by their absence is any given leadership of the Unicorn Clan. While they have sent diplomats as expected, it is rare for there to be no representation from any of the Family Daimyo. The Unicorn have stated that in the wake of the tragedy of Shinjo Hazumi, the clan needs to keep its leaders in Unicorn lands in order to plan for the possibility of having to guide the Unicorn without Hazumi's leadership.
- 15: It is rare that there is any true animosity between the Mantis and the Crab, but the past year has created an unusual number of exceptional circumstances. Recent rumors of Crab ships disappearing near Mantis waters are not helping rising tensions.
- 15: It seems that tensions between the Masters of Fire and Water, Isawa Koraze and Norimichi respectively, have only increased in the past several months. While his influence within the council has lowered in the last few months, Norimichi is still very vocal about his displeasure to the Phoenix's place in Rokugan, believing that Koraze's insistence on pacifism and noninvolvement will only doom the clan.
- 20: The Emperor has been much quieter since his brother asked him to step down. While he has made no declaration towards his intentions, few believe he will ultimately follow his younger brother's advice.
- 25: That said, his lack of action does mean that the detractors of the man quietly being called the "Gaijin Prince" have very little new to point to that they can use against him.
- 30: Some are whispering that part of this silence is the result of Doji Makibesu. Rumors are starting to circulate suggesting that the Emerald Champion has taken upon himself to guide the Emperor in these trying times. Some have even been overheard as saying: "If it means he can live the rest of his reign in peace with little further damage, we can only thank the Heavens for such a boon."

The Interview

Early in the court, the PCs are invited to the Laughing Koi.

The Laughing Koi is one of the nicer inns in the city. As you enter, you are quickly accosted by a small man, smiling eagerly as he greets you. “Samurai-samas! Come! Ikoma Kaname-sama is eagerly awaiting you in our private dining room!”

You are led into a spartan, though still perfectly pleasant looking dining room. Inside, Ikoma Kaname sits in proper seiza. She rises effortlessly as you enter, bowing and inviting you to sit.

After a delightful meal of tempura, fine sushis, and sake, Kaname bows her head. “Samurai-samas, thank you for gracing this humble courtier with your presence. I have become fascinated with the stories of the last several years, and from what I have gathered, your names seem to appear in many of these stories. I was hoping that, perhaps, I could get a first hand accounting of these stories from the people who lived the experiences. I hope you do not mind just a little bit of prying as I do so.”

Kaname is entirely sincere, hoping to get glorious stories she can bring back to the Ikoma libraries. She takes the most interest in PCs who participated in the Battle of Kuda Mura. Allow each PC to tell a story from their experiences in the campaign so far (advise PCs to check with others if they want to use a module story to ensure they don’t spoil key module details). Those PCs may make a Perform: Storytelling / Awareness roll at TN 20. Success means that they earn a point of glory. They may call raises on this roll to earn additional glory (1 point for every 2 raises), and Ikoma bards gain 2 free raises on this roll.

At the end of the storytelling, Kaname will thank them for their stories.

Kaname smiles to you and bows her head. “Thank you for sharing, Samurai. If you do not mind, perhaps it would be permissible for me to share a story of one of my blessed ancestors?” Assuming you consent, she continues on.

“It is actually tied intrinsically to this place. Though I cannot claim Matsu Hitomi as a mother of one of my father’s, she never had kids, she did have a brother, who married an Ikoma and took that name. My family has always been proud to carry on Hitomi’s lineage, even if indirectly.

“Of course, near every Samurai knows of how Hitomi gave her word to Mirumoto Turan, the scoundrel Daimyo, that she would perform any task he gave her.

Being the scoundrel that Turan was, he ordered my ancestor to attack her own Clan. Torn by her oath to him and her duty as a Lion, she sacrificed her personal honor for the Lion’s good and struck Turan down. After the Dragon pursued her, she finally found herself in this very city.” Kaname makes an exaggerated frown. “And that is where she was betrayed by her lover, Godaigo. Such a SCOUNDREL of a man, his own lieutenant cursed Hitomi with dark magic, and he himself struck her down. And so, this city was named Toshi no Omoidoso, the City of Remembrance. In honor of my beloved ancestor.”

She smiled, took a breath, and nodded. “I hope you enjoyed my story, Samurai. I am afraid the hour grows short, but I do hope I will be able to request your presence for this again.

Introduce Godaigo subtly spying on the Court from the Shadows, vanishing once a PC happens to notice him.

Court Scene 1

Who: All PCs

As you enter the court today, there is a curious sight. On the dais, just to the right of the throne, is a large painting. It depicts a phoenix woman, beautiful and powerful, standing between two armies: one Crane and one Lion. Just to her left, a Crane warrior has his blade raised, preparing to take her head, as a depiction of an ancestor is shown with his back turned to that Crane.

Isawa Koraze, the Master of Fire, and Isawa Norimichi, the Master of Water, both stand near the painting. “Ah,” Koraze begins, “See how harsh the brush strokes on Gosano’s blades are? It is clear that he intended to show the intensity of the strike, a damning statement on the needs for Violence.”

Norimichi interjects quickly. “Ah, but the harshness gives it a sense of strength and violence! I would pay more attention to the passivity in Toriiko’s face...”

The PCs should quickly realize that this is a game of Sadane. In particular, the Masters of Fire and Water seem to be using the game as a set piece to espouse their own points of view throughout the court.

PCs interested in the context of the painting may roll Lore: History / Intelligence at TN 15. If the PCs succeed, they may recall the story of the Battle of the

Broken Daisho. The battle was a violent conflict between the lion and the crane, interrupted when a phoenix army led by Shiba Toriiko marched between them. Toriiko refused to stand aside, telling the samurai “I will not live in a world devoured by pride, Kakita.” She was then struck down by the Kakita general when she placed her hand on her blade. In that moment, it is said that Kakita himself turned his back on the general, and in those moments both armies quit the field. The battle gets its name because after, the Kakita general sent the Akodo general his daisho, stating “I will retire to the Asahina Temples and try to build the world Shiba Toriiko will never see. With words, not blood.”

Other courtiers will begin getting in on the game of Sadane, with the PCs invited to do the same. At base, the TN of the highest rolling NPC will be 40, in support of the Master of Water. In order to sway the court’s opinion back in Koraze’s favor (or push it further into Norimichi’s), a PC will need to roll Games: Sadane / Awareness. They may substitute their courtier for Games: Sadane, but must call two raises to no effect in order to do so.

The game will resolve after the last PC has gone. If a PC performs better than the TN of 40, notate down which side of the conflict they are on (it is important to note, as providing the Master of Water even a bit of a foothold will cause consequences in the future). If a PC does beat a 40 on the roll, they will also gain a G7 glory gain.

The Story of Matsu Hitomi

Who: All PCs

Revisit the story of Matsu Hitomi in dramatic fashion. Paint Godaigo as remorseless villain. Kaname in particular is watching with interest

At the Laughing Koi Bar with the Emperor

Who: Any who go to the bar

During an evening where PCs are at the Laughing Koi (it does not have to be all of them, but it should be more than one):

The evening at the laughing Koi is a celebratory one tonight! Drinks typically flow fairly freely, but this

evening it seems that even the lowliest of lives has some thing from the top shelf. In the corner, you see two figures that you have not seen in the bar before. The first is an older Ronin, with a kimono that is almost out of place considering his lack of station. The second is similarly dressed, but unlike the other he wears a wicker hat that covers his whole face.

If the PCs go to talk to these Ronin, the older man will seem wary, but the hatted man will excitedly invite them to sit. He introduces himself as Reizan [some PCs may recognize this as the name Toturi IX carried before he took the thrown], along with his friend ‘Kobe.’ As they begin talking, notate to the PCs that the voice coming from the basket is clearly a poor attempt at disguise. Have them roll investigation (interrogation) / Awareness after a few minutes of chatting, but there is no actual TN. They will quickly realize that this is Emperor Toturi X in disguise.

After a few minutes of conversation, Reizan sets down his cup, looking to each of you in turn. “Samurai-samas, I know that it is not often that a Ronin turns to clan samurai for advice, but I was hoping you might be able to assist me. You see, I have recently come across a... significant surplus. It has never been in my nature to hold onto my own surpluses, and I was hoping that I would be able to use them in a fashion that would be beneficial to those less fortunate than myself.

There is a brief pause before he continues. “Unfortunately, it has been pointed out to me that perhaps I had not previously been applying my surplus most beneficially. I used to be fairly certain, but a friend suggested that, perhaps, my choices were hurting more than they were helping. And so now, while I am still resolute in my wish to assist those less fortunate, I find myself in a position where I am unsure of how best to implement my wishes. So I am curious, Samurai-samas, what would you do if you have plenty to give? Where is the first place you would offer that money?”

This is completely a role play scenario. Toturi X is not looking for a permanent answer, but instead is simply trying to hunt for some ideas that he might be able to implement, and to understand where his own subjects might be coming from. A PC who makes a particularly compassionate response could receive up to 2 points of honor for a display of compassion.

As long as the PCs are not dismissive of the young emperor, he will join them for a while in partying and carousing. Eventually, though, his companion (a

Hidden Guard Seppun who keeps him very much sober), reminds him that they have ‘a prior appointment’ and leads him back to the castle.

As the scene is wrapping up, having the involved PCs roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 30. Any who succeed catch the following:

A figure catches your eye for a brief moment. In the far corner, a singular figure stands staring out into the distance. The figure is wearing full armor, though there is no noticeable heraldry. Before you can even move in his direction, the figure is gone, and there is no trace of the person.

If the PCs ask around, no one will admit to having noticed or recognizing the figure. In the middle of the revelry, most seem to legitimately not have seen anything... though a few will clearly be simply not

Court Scene 2

Who: All PCs

winner of TN 30 iai (focus) / void faces off against Shiba Yori

Yori stats: Iai 8/void 4/Awa 4/Ref 5. Shiba 4. 1 rank of luck, only spent if other PC lucks on focus. Yori will have spent 2 void points before the finals if there are more than 1 PC at the table with an iai of 7, but otherwise will be completely fresh for the duel.

While quiet and unassuming, Yori will calmly announce that her dedication to victory on behalf of the Master of Water. This stuns many of the Court, who whisper among themselves about this. If a PC is facing her, they might opt to do the same, dedicate their victory to the Master of Fire... or perhaps do nothing. Much like the Sadane tournament, moving in one way or the other will sway things in one direction. Should Yori or a supporter of the Master of Water win, their victory causes the court to begin to whisper a bit more about the influence that Norimichi is starting to command.

Yori’s iai card:

Stats: Iaijutsu 8. Air 5. Void 4.

Assessment: 10k6 w/Emphasis. If she has all four void, she will void twice for 10k10+2. She will ask for a PC’s reflexes.

Focus: 10k10+11. If she wins assessment by 10 or more, increases to 10k10+19.

Strike: 10k8+4. Strikes for 7k2 damage. If a PC has reflexes 3 or less, she will call 3 raises for damage to help her take the lowest results possible, and with sufficient free raises will called shot to barely cut their sleeve.

Reward: G6 glory if KTING Yori. G4 if making to the finals and losing. G9 if duel is won

Part Two: A Ghost Story

It is not until the final month of winter before Godaigo’s patience thins. His patient stalking finally gives way to confronting Kaname

The PCs are invited to one more opportunity to tell stories with Kaname at the Laughing Koi.

Ikoma Kaname has invited you to the Laughing Koi one more time before Winter’s end. As you arrive at the Koi, however, the proprietor seems just a bit... nervous. Still, however, he leads you to the private room where Kaname awaits.

Or would await, if the room was not a disaster area. The tea room table has been thrown against a wall. The daisho stand in the corner has been knocked over, and the window leading outside has been completely destroyed.

If the PCs investigate, they can find the following information with a roll of investigation (search) / perception:

- TN 5: This room is very messy. The proprietor of the Laughing Koi should be ashamed.
- TN 10: Her Daisho is missing from her Daisho stand. In the aftermath of such a struggle, it seems at least a bit unusual that a perpetrator might take the time to steal it.
- TN 15: Despite the obvious struggle, the window was broken from the inside, not the out.
- TN 20 (automatic if a PC specifically searches around the windows): There is a small blood trail that does seem to lead towards the “Mantis” District

Ideally, PCs should realize that she has gone out the window and moved to follow. Unfortunately, it will be hard to meaningfully follow the blood trail passed “Mantis Town.” The PCs could doggedly attempt to keep following the blood trail, but doing so would require a Hunting (Tracking) / Perception at TN 35. This may be made as a cooperative skill roll, but only one person may make the actual roll. If they succeed, proceed to part 3.

If they lose the blood trail, all is not lost. The PCs have found themselves in an eerily quiet Mantis Town, normally a city that never sleeps. If the PCs want to find someone who could explain this, they can make Lore: Underworld / Awareness at TN 15 or Sincerity (Honesty) or Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness at TN 25.

After some conversation, the PCs are able to finally find someone who is able (willing) to talk.

The man you see before you is an older man, easily cresting his 50s. He is resting on a cane, eyes staring out into the distance with a certain... haunted expression. He bows low to you, respectful despite himself.

The old man is glad to answer any questions the PCs have. The most important that PCs could have, though, is if he saw what happened to Kaname (or anything similar):

The old man takes a breath and nods. “Ah, hai. I saw what happened. Strangest thing I ever saw, I did. A young Lion woman was chasin’ a man in a suit of armor. She seemed angry, but the man was just interested in runnin’. There was definitely somethin’ not right about that man, though. I didn’t get a good look at him, but he was glowin’ around the face. Natural people don’t do that.”

If PCs ask where he went, he can tell them easily enough, letting them know he last saw them running south past the docks, and onto the beaches of Toshi no Omoidoso.

Part Three: A Traitor’s Reward

Presumably, the PCs will figure out that Kaname has been taken, and eventually will track Godaigo to the Coast just outside the city.

The snow is placid, almost peaceful as you find your way out of the city. Following the information you

have to go on, you head south. The fresh snow is already starting to cover up any tracks that could have been made in the last couple of hours. Thankfully, however, the single set of tracks that seem to lead just off the road are easy enough to follow.

Eventually, after nearly an hour’s trek south, two indistinct forms become clear in the distance.

PCs might wish to stealth here. Allow them a Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility roll at TN 35. If a PC succeeds, should the PCs opt to combat that PC will be able to attack Godaigo as if his Reflexes were 0.

“Please! Only you can do this!” A male voice, somehow both yelling and pleading, can be heard. Your approach sees two forms: the first, a figure in heavy armor, who is blocking attacks coming at him with relative ease.

“After so many centuries, don’t you understand? I have lived for so long, and the blessing of death ever eludes me. If you could just... all I need is your forgive...” As your footsteps hit his awareness, the armored samurai begins to turn the battle such that he can face you. As he does, the figure in the armor defies expectation: instead of a man, you see simply a skeleton with bright, burning flames where eye sockets should be. “Samurai!” He calls out, and his doing so surprises Kaname, who turns to regard you as she realizes that you are there.

“Samurai,” the skeletal figure continues. “If you would just allow me a moment to explain myself. I am Godaigo, and I need your help.”

“You are a monster,” Kaname cuts back, “what could I possibly help with?”

Akodo Godaigo is seeking the aid of Kaname, and perhaps by extension the PCs. He has been denied rest for centuries, and the ordeal has left him quite insane. Assuming the PCs don’t attack him immediately, they are welcome to discuss things with him:

Why did you attack Kaname?

“I didn’t, or at least I didn’t even intend to. When I appeared to her, she attacked me, and so I fled back here. I’ve no intentions except to ask for her help, but she certainly has Hitomi’s fire.”

“Didn’t you find peace after <pick x event>.”

“Alas, despite rumors to the contrary, the curse of my former Love continues to haunt me. Believe me, I have tried many things to seek atonement and rest. I even

attempted to commit seppuku. The act is... less effective, lacking a proper belly.”

What do you want?

“What every samurai wants, and what I have been denied. Death. Most seek a death with meaning, one that serves their lords... I am finding I am no longer quite so picky. And my options ever continue to dwindle. But this woman, she carries Hitomi’s blood! And if anyone has the capacity to lift this curse that is laid upon me, it would have to be someone with her blood!”

So why take her out here?

Godaigo... frowns. Or at least, does the closest thing a skeleton can do to frowning. “this is... the place that I killed her. The place where my curse began. And, I hope, the place where it will end.”

Ultimately, the PCs simply need to get Godaigo to go. How they do this can certainly take many forms.

If the PCs decide to fight him (perfectly reasonable, since he is by all appearances a Shadowlands tainted monster), he will give them one chance to reconsider... to beg them to reconsider, noting how this is pointless and he will simply be back in a few months even if they destroy his body. But instinct will ultimately take over (he does want to get this done today), and he will fight. He will not fight to kill PCs, but will give preferential treatment to any PC who tries to take Kaname away... courtier or not.

Ultimately, in order for combat to be successful, the PCs will need to destroy his body utterly. If his body still exists, his natural healing will simply bring him back up within a few minutes. He may, though, try to play dead once he is back up... at least long enough to get healthy again before he resumes the fight. In order to destroy his body, they will need to kill him while also doing at least 30 wounds to him with a fire spell. If he has been “killed,” they can instead either utilize a torch to burn his body, or cast summon fire to do the same.

Godaigo

Cursed Immortal

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 5 (Insight Rank 12)

Initiative: 10k7

Armor TN: 25 (35 in armor) **Reduction:** 10

Wounds: 115 (“Dead”)

Attack: 10k7 (+5 to one roll/round) (Katana, Simple)

Damage: 8k2 (Katana)

Air 4 Earth 6 Fire 5 Water 4

Honor: 5.1 Taint: 4.1 Glory: “10”

Primary Skills: only the most relevant Skills (highest for the character, most likely to come up in play) need to be listed

Advantages/Disadvantages: not all NPCs need either
Special Mechanics:

Fear 3 (Triggered only after combat begins)

Undead: Akodo Godaigo is immune to all status effects besides mounted or grappled, and is unaffected by wound penalties. He also is unaffected by spells and abilities that target his rings and traits

Cursed: Beyond the obvious “going insane,” Godaigo’s curse prevents him from dying. Godaigo heals 10 wounds at the beginning of every round. If “killed,” this increases to 10 wounds every minute. If his body is destroyed, it will return some time after the Court, still searching... haunting...

Incorporeal: as a complex action, Godaigo can go incorporeal for up to one minute. During this time, he cannot be targeted by any actions, and cannot be harmed in any way. Additionally, he gains 5 free raises on stealth rolls. He cannot interact with the world around him during this time.

Significant Dice Pools: if the NPC is likely to be called on to roll for specific tasks, like dueling or social resistance rolls

Alternately, PCs could attempt to persuade him to accept his curse and leave Kaname be. This is... intensely difficult, and most forms of argument will simply be a nonstarter that will not move him either way. In order to do this, a PC would have to persuade him that the current course of action is only more damning to himself, and only serves to prove Hitomi right. Even then, the baseline TN for this is 70, and poorly thought out statements will only increase the TN in increments of 10.

Finally, the PCs can try to persuade Kaname to offer Godaigo the forgiveness he craves. As soon as a PC suggests that Kaname should consider it, have them roll Lore: Theology / Intelligence. Shugenja PCs reduce all TNs by 10.

- TN 10: It’s hard to say if something like this would work. There is no record of a curse being lifted in such a way (not that there is much of a precedent for Godaigo’s curse beyond his own exposure to it).
- TN 20: That said, if anything is going to work, Godaigo is correct that someone with a strong connection to Hitomi, or Hitomi herself, would have to do it.
- TN 25: Of course, what would happen to Kaname if she lifted the curse? Surely Hitomi

would not look kindly upon a descendent who did so.

- TN 30: That said, if one could ask Hitomi herself, she would most certainly be able to lift the curse. But that would take a Sodan Senzo to even potentially be able to accomplish.
- TN 35: That said, there is some precedent for Shiryō and other honored spirits being able to be entreated in places that have spiritual significance to they themselves. Hitomi's death site would be a place of significance to her. Someone would need to serve as a sort of anchor for her, but with proper work, it could be done.

If the PCs do not particularly care about Kaname's spiritual wellbeing, they are certainly welcome to simply persuade her to forgive Godaigo. In order to do so, they will need to appeal to her sense of honor. She will be resistant, he is of course without honor, but a strong appeal and either Sincerity (honesty) or Courtier (manipulation) / Awareness at TN 35 will convince her that it is time to let go of old grudges.

Ikoma Kaname finally regards Akodo Godaigo with a long, contemplative expression. Finally, she nods her head and speaks. "Akodo Godaigo. My ancestor was wronged by you, in a way that cannot be forgiven. However... it is time to set grudges aside. In this, I release you. May your next life be filled with the Honor you lost during this one."

For a moment, nothing seems to happen. Godaigo's face seems to lose hope... somehow. But then, His form begins to dissolve. He looks to you, nodding his head in the moments his bony neck is still able to support it. "Thank you... you have given me a gift that I do not deserve. But perhaps I can learn to deserve it next..." before he can finish his thought, his form becomes as dust.

Kaname seems weakened for a moment, but steadies readily enough. "Ok," she whispered. "It is done." Somehow, the woman seems crestfallen, as if something has been lost.

If the PCs do determine that they wish to attempt to call upon Hitomi, the issue becomes no easier, but... perhaps more rewarding.

The first thing that is needed is that the PCs need to provide Kaname blessings and encouragement. She is not necessarily hard to persuade as a base, but PCs the more persuasive PCs are, the more receptive she will

be to Hitomi's spirit. Mechanically, those PCs will need to role play and then make a social skill roll (likely sincerity or courtier) at TN 25. For every two raises the PCs make, they provide one free raise to the ritualist.

There are three ways to complete the ritual itself.

- A Kitsu can simply make a base commune roll with any element. The TN is 10 and no raises are required.
- Alternately, any number of shugenja can combine to make commune spellcasting rolls to finish the ritual. However, due to the higher difficulty of trying to call upon a spirit without the benefit of a Kitsu, the commune spell must be made as if it were a rank three spell instead of rank 1. In addition, the shugenja will need to make a total of five raises. The free raises provided by the social rolls to prepare Kaname may be used for one of these raises.
- Finally, if there are no more shugenja, a PC will need to make a prayer to Hitomi to call her down. In order to do this, the PC will need to make a Lore: Theology roll, using a ring as opposed to a trait. The TN for this roll is 45, affected by the ritual free raises as above.

PCs may attempt these options up to twice. If they do not succeed after the second attempt, Hitomi will not further listen to their prayers and they will need to utilize one of the other options.

Assuming the PCs succeed:

Kaname's head bows low, her eyes rolling briefly into the back of her head. A soft, golden glow outlines her form, and as she lifts her head, her eyes have taken a soft, golden glow. Kaname stands somewhat straighter, and the voice that leaves her lips is not hers.

Hitomi looks down at Godaigo for several long moments, but she does not speak to him. "I cursed this man nine hundred years ago... near to the day. And now you bring me here, why? To plead forgiveness for his Sins?" Her eyes move away from the cursed man, moving to each of you in turn.

At this point, it is up to the PCs to decide if they are going to speak on Godaigo's behalf. PCs could lean into the good he has done for the empire, or that eternal torture is little different than damning him to Jigoku. To convince him, they will need to make a Courtier (Manipulation) or Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness

roll. The base TN for this roll is 35, modified in the following ways:

- Reminding her of the good he has done for the Empire since her death: -5
- Making allusions to her punishment being more damning than even Jigoku's punishment: -5
- Making allusions to the fact that he was once her lover: +20
- Suggesting that Honor demands eventual forgiveness: +5
- Begging compassion for a tortured soul: -5

If the PCs fail:

With a final harrumph, Matsu Hitomi leaves without another word. The glow is gone from Kaname's form, and Godaigo looks at her, searching for something that would hint at his own forgiveness. But there is none to be found.

Godaigo rises from his kneeling position. He looks to you all and nods. For a moment, his expressionless face seems to somehow exude a thankfulness for your assistance. But it is gone but a moment later. And Godaigo begins to walk. Towards the water. Without stopping, soon he is up to his knees in water. It is not long before the form of Akodo Godaigo disappears into the sea.

However, if the PCs succeed:

It takes several moments for Hitomi to finally speak. Her eyes do not leave Godaigo as she considers everything you have to say. And then finally, she nods. "Nine hundred years it has been, and my rage has consumed you in all that time. Vengeance is a path that Samurai pursue, but my vengeance against you has sated."

Hitomi moves into position beside Godaigo, drawing Kaname's sword and holding it aloft. "Draw your sword, Samurai." Godaigo nods, his hand moving to remove his chest and stomach plates. As you might have come to expect, there is no stomach, no belly for him to cut. But he mimes the actions of seppuku anyway, his skeletal face setting into a stoic appearance as he does. As the third cut is pantomimed, Hitomi brings the blade down against his neck. His head is easily severed.

Slowly, the body of Akodo Godaigo begins to dissolve into dust. As the fire leaves those eyes for the last time, his skull moves to speak two final words, the fires

intent on you. "Thank you." As the final remnants of Godaigo vanish from Ningen-Do, so too does Hitomi leave Kaname's body, leaving only you and her standing on the beach.

At this point, the PCs

Conclusion

Court Scene 3

Who: All PCs

PCs will be invited to participate in a Sumai tournament, if they so wish. [Box text] Have the PCs roll Jiujutsu (Grappling) / Strength. If at least one PC makes at least a 40, the PC with the highest roll will earn the opportunity to face Yasuki Kamnan, the current favorite for the title of ozeki.

For the finals of the tournament, should it come to that, the tournament is resolve in three rolls:

Assessment: Jiujutsu / Perception. With a success (the TN is 10+5*insight rank, same as iaijutsu), the PC may learn the enemy's strength (6), Jiujutsu (8), Void (5), or void points remaining (3). If a character wins by 10 or more, they gain a +1k1 to the focus roll. Kamnan's roll is 10k5.

Focus: Jiujutsu (Grappling) / Void. The center stance bonus applies as normal, however instead of adding 1k1+ void, both users add 1k1+strength. Success in the focus will figure into the strike, as noted in the strike. Kamnan rolls 10k8+6 on this roll. If he wins the assessment by 10, this bonus increases to 10k10+10.

Strike: Jiujutsu (Grappling) / Strength. This is a contested roll made by both parties. Center stance bonus applies as normal. In addition, the winner of the focus roll gains a +1k0 bonus for every 10 points he beats the TN by. The winner wins the Sumai. Kamnan's base roll is 10k10+8. Add 2 to his roll for every 10 he beats his opponent in focus by.

If a PC defeats Kamnan, he earns the title of ozeki, which earns him G15 glory.

Around the conclusion of the Sumai, the following scene happens:

Quietly, Yasuki Ranmaru and Yoritomo Arashi have been talking. This quiet conversation has seemed to slowly raise in tempo and tension. "I have told you, Yasuki-san, I know nothing of these matters."

“That is interesting, Yoritomo-san. That you might suggest that crab trade is being disrupted at a time where our relationship is at it’s worst. How many others have the strength to take down a crab ship?”

“You say this, and yet I can tell you that we’ve no reason to sink Crab ships. We pay our considerations and tithes to the Crab the same as any other. And there is nothing to gain from us attacking the Crab.”

Ranmaru sighs, and pointedly looks toward the dais. “Do you not, Arashi-san? Certainly it is not wise to break the crab tithe, but I see only evidence. Our ships enter into Mantis lands, and they do not come out. What am I supposed to think in such a situation?”

Arashi nearly explodes in anger at the suggestion. “That... we are the Sons of Kaimetsu-Uo, son of Hida! We know your clans duty better than any other, and you so brazenly suggest that we-“

“Enough!” Arashi’s anger is interrupted from the Dais. Doji Makibesu steps down from his typical spot next to the Emperor, regarding both men with annoyance. “This is hardly the time or the place, Samurai-sans, for such displays. Surely, Arashi-san, you can understand the need to set a better example for the younger members of our court.” Arashi sinks at the admonishment. “If you would please, then, Arashi-san. Perhaps a visit to the Laughing Koi would do you better than exclaiming your frustrations here.”

Arashi looks stunned at the suggestion. But he bows, nonetheless, clearly unwilling to challenge Makibesu’s authority. And without another word, he storms out of the court.

If PCs are interested, they can roll Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness at TN 25. A success means they realize that Arashi is not lying. He knows nothing about the Mantis ships.

Kaname is absent from much of the rest of court, still recovering from her ordeal with Godaigo. Nonetheless, as the court is ending, the PCs will receive a missive from her thanking them for their assistance. As the snow begins to thaw, the PCs are sent away quickly. Even now there are already many duties to attend to..

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: 1

Good Roleplaying: 1

PCs humor Kaname’s desires to get to know them: 1

Kaname is rescued from Godaigo: 1

Total Possible Experience: 4

Favors

If the PCs successfully rescue Kaname, they gain 1 favor.

Honor

If the PCs sincerely assist Godaigo, each PC who does so gains H9 Honor.

Glory

The glory for all competitions are detailed in their individual places.

If the PCs successfully summon Hitomi and persuade her to forgive Godaigo, Ikoma Kaname speaks well of them, providing them with a G5 glory gain.

Allies and Enemies

Any gained Allies should be listed on the Player Handout with NPC names, so that the players have access to the correct spelling. It is preferred that Allies be listed with Influence first and Devotion second (as in the core book) for purposes of consistency.

Sworn Enemies default to 3 points for NPCs roughly equal to the PCs in power level, up to 5 points for more significantly skilled or influential characters.

Other Awards/Penalties

This information will commonly be recorded on the player’s mod sheet, and can include Advantages being purchasable or Disadvantages being gained as well as other specific effects or one-use benefits.

GM Reporting

- 1) Did the Master of Water seize a bit of power (claim political victory in the sadane competition)?
- 2) Did Yori win the iaijutsu competition?
- 3) If a PC won the iaijutsu competition, did they declare on the Master of Water’s behalf?
- 4) Was Godaigo destroyed in combat?
- 5) Was Godaigo allowed true death?
- 6) Did Hitomi redeem Godaigo?

The GM must report this information by (date three months after release) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: Guests at Court

Yasuki Hatsue
Kakita Okiku
Togashi Inori
Matsu Teruyo
Ikoma Kaname
Tsuruchi Fumihiko
Hantei Iwane
Shiba Yori
Bayushi Akanishin
Ide Kazuyuki

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Samurai of the Empire,

Dreaded news from the Unicorn Lands. I am afraid we still have not received any word of the lady Shinjo Hazumi having woken up. While her body still lives, not even the most potent of water magics have been able to rouse her from her slumber. Speculation is rampant, but the Unicorn leadership have turned inward to figure out what to do to lead the clan going into the Winter. The Unicorn have stated that they are deliberating on what to do about this matter, as the attempted assassin is the son of the Tonbo daimyo, but one might pray that cooler heads will prevail with the Dragon and Unicorn being allies.

Not all news is unpleasant, of course. The impending birth of an Imperial Heir is blessed news in these times. One might expect that our lady the Empress will give birth as the snow thaws, and this Courtier looks greatly forward to hearing of her successful birth.

Oh! A note of interest. The new temple to Shoan, the Fortune of Orphans, is under construction in the Dragon city of Yasamura. In the wake of the tragedy of Shinden Horiuchi, that we can undo some of this tragedy is only a blessing.

-Otomo Yusuke

Gift notes:

The Mantis are Favored by Military due to gifts received at Gencon, granting all Mantis PCs a 1k1 bonus to a damage roll once during this module

The Crane are Favored by Court due to gifts received at Gencon, granting all Crane a single free raise during this module that can only be used on a social roll. This free raise can be spent after the roll is made.

Player Handout #2: List of NPCs

A note on the NPC list: While the Daimyo here are listed, in most instances they will likely not be available for conversation barring an event that demands their presence or without good cause (and a Courtier / Awareness Roll of 40).

Yasuki Ranmaru – Yasuki Family Daimyo: The ever charming and enigmatic Yasuki Daimyo has been busy as of late. Upon the death of Hida Oturi, Ranmaru has been working overtime trying to ensure that supplies and provisions are taken care of for the Wall. His presence at the Imperial Winter Court is simply another extension of that.

Yasuki Hatsue – Wily Trader: One of the Crab's most capable Quartermasters, Hatsue has been drafted to assist Ranmaru in his dealings, largely as a glorified accountant. She is known for being a shrewd merchant and very talented at finding rare merchandise at great prices all throughout the Empire.

Shiba Yori – Talented Duelist: Yori is becoming known as one of the toughest duelists in the Empire, Shiba Yori is starting to get a reputation for her efficiency in Shi Duels. She has to this point killed more than two dozen samurai, nearing 15 Kakita in her list.

Ikoma Kaname – Pleasant Courtier: A slowly rising star within the Lion Courts, Kaname is a talented bard and known orator. Honorable to a fault, but never one to deny a drink, Kaname is quickly becoming a favored face of the Lion.

Soshi Hizoko – Soshi Family Daimyo: The Soshi Family Daimyo projects an outward appearance of lacking concern for the going ons of the court. While she spends much of her time in meetings, she would much rather spend her days playing the flute in the gardens... or playing the Game of Letters with an interested party.