

# The Lost Path

by Ben Frederiksen

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

Month of Akodo, 1342 (Fall)

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Investigation, Travel, Combat  
Part 1 of Shadowed Dreams

*A magistrate's assignment goes slightly off plan*

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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

This past spring the Emerald Champion agreed to induct several new emerald magistrates hailing from the minor clans, to allow the minor clans more say in the policing of their lands. Separately, a large group of ronin were allowed to build a small settlement near the border of Unicorn, Scorpion, and unaligned lands adjacent to the Shinomen Mori

Usagi Saito is one of those magistrates. While patrolling the borders of the Hare and unaligned lands, he came across evidence of a bandit attack. He followed the somewhat confusing trail back to a large village containing many men under arms. Believing them to be the bandits, he sent a message to the Scorpion, who had agreed to lend forces to protect the minor clan lands in case bandits threatened them.

When a group left the encampment, he followed them deeper into the forest. In the meantime, the Scorpion arrived and attacked, killing some of the inhabitants of the village and scattering the rest.

Otomo Yashi has been supervising the work of these new magistrates and is concerned about the sudden lack of reports from Saito. She requests that the PCs investigate the matter for her and find Saito if possible.

The PCs will first need to locate Saito, presumably by tracking his whereabouts through the destroyed ronin village, where they will encounter the Scorpion commander, Bayushi Gimon. Afterwards, they should realize that Saito has ventured further into the Shinomen Mori proper, where they will need to locate him without getting lost themselves. He will refuse to leave until he has dealt with the group of bandits that he has been tracking, so presumably the PCs will help him eliminate the rather large bandit gang who are holed up in the ruins of an ancient temple.

Emerging from the forest, the PCs will find that a group of Unicorn have arrived, led by Ide Kazuyuki. Finding the Scorpion in lands that they claim are Unicorn lands, not unaligned, Kazuyuki will have provoked a standoff, and it will be up to the PCs to determine how, or if, to resolve the matter before returning with Saito to Otomo Yashi.

## 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.

Check for the following advantages or disadvantages:

- Ally (Ide Kazuyuki). Touch of the Spirit Realms: Yume-Do,
- Sworn Enemy (Ide Kazuyuki), Phobia: any related to Fire, Forests or the Shinomen Mori, Cursed by the Realm: Yume-Do
- Identify the PC with the lowest honor

### 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

Time passes, and though the PCs' deeds will earn them a reputation, the Empire is a large place and lasting fame is a long-term goal not easy to achieve.

### **All PCs suffer an L3 glory loss.**

This cannot reduce a PC's Glory Rank to less than their Insight Rank, and the Fame Advantage increases their Insight Rank by one for these purposes.

### 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 Earth Roll is **20 for R3+ characters**, or **15 for R2 characters**.

### 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 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.

## Part One: The Festival

The early fall sun is warm and pleasant. In the western lands of the Empire the heat of summer has broken, and cool winds blow over the Plains of Thunder. Yesterday morning a large procession of monks and samurai from across the empire converged on Shinden Osano-Wo to celebrate the yearly Abare Festival. You

were part of those entourages, accompanying courtiers, dignitaries, and priests from your clans.

The temple complex is overflowing with people, and the inns surrounding it are at capacity. You have been staying a small inn on the edge of the city named the Red Kappa Inn.

As the sun sets over the Plains of Thunder, gongs beat, calling you to the Festival's opening. Every year the festivities are different, but always entertaining, befitting an event sometimes called the Fire and Violence Festival.

Give the players a few minutes to introduce themselves to each other, discuss interesting matters, and specify what kind of gear they're taking with them to the celebration. The lands are unaligned, and the temple is filled with sohei, so carrying battlefield weapons is not necessarily a faux pas though armor will likely be looked askance at.

If they wish they can also gather rumors at this time.

### Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll.

- 10: What do you think the monks are going to be up to this year? Last year they staged a big fight. I brought my hand wraps just in case.
- 15: I don't really understand why the Scorpion are attacking the Owl. They apologized. Doesn't make much sense to me.
- 25: A bunch of new magistrates have been coming through lately. Apparently, they inducted a large class of minor clan Emerald Magistrates a month or two ago.
- 30: The Crab and Unicorn have been raising shipping costs lately. Something about 'unexpected expenses.' If you ask me, they're just trying to take advantage of the Scorpion and their war.

The festival begins at the outer gate of Shinden Osano-Wo itself, a massive limestone edifice. Samurai, monks, and peasants are milling about expectantly as the sun sets over the village. In the square, two massive piles of wood have been gathered atop a bed of large poles.

The gates of the shrine crack open, and a pair of monks bearing lanterns somberly walk to the wood piles. With the beat of a gong and a loud shout, the monks cast the lanterns onto the wood, shattering them and igniting massive bonfires.

The gates of the shrine swing wide, and a troupe of sohei carry out a large palanquin bearing a collection of small shrines, set it down, then retreat into the temple. One of the monks points to the palanquin and shouts over the crowd, “Who will bear the shrine of Osano-Wo?!?”

The second monk speaks next, bellowing out “Who has the courage to tread the path of Osano-Wo?!?” while gesturing to the gates of the shrine, and the natural limestone walls and geysers that lie beyond.

The PCs have the option of joining the group carrying the palanquin, head inside the temple to the treacherous course, or simply stay outside to observe, drink, and enjoy the festivities.

### **Option one: Breaking stuff**

You, along with several other samurai and peasants, seize the divine palanquin and lift it onto your shoulders.

For a moment you are unsure of the next step in the ceremony.

The monk stands forth, and points to one of the pillars upon which rests a bonfire and bellows a cry. The others carrying the palanquin echo the monk’s cry and rush towards the pillar, as fast as their feet can carry them, and slam into it with a mighty crash. Sparks fly everywhere and the palanquin shudders, the shrine atop it threatening to crack open.

### **GM’s Note: This is an actual Japanese festival ritual.**

Roll Reflexes / Defense at TN 20 or take 1k1 fire damage from the sparks.

If a PC feels uneasy being asked to slam the shrine into walls and pillars, have them roll Lore: Theology / Intelligence at TN 15. A pass informs them that this is standard practice for this festival, venerating Osano-Wo’s Wrathful aspect as a force of destruction.

If the PC wishes to continue, have them roll Athletics / Strength, at TN 15.

Next, the bearers of the shrine begin to sing and chant at the top of their voiced and run towards the bridge overlooking the shallow river. With a massive heave, they pitch the palanquin down into the river, then leap in after it.

Seizing the palanquin, they begin smashing it against the pillars until the shrines atop begin to crack.

Flinging the palanquin down into the river does not require a roll, but successfully keeping your footing in the river requires Athletics / Stamina.

The peasants don’t seem have a very coordinated strategy for destroying the shrine, so it should be up to the PCs to command the group. There are wooden pillars with lanterns atop them, and a bridge slightly downstream with stone supports. Give the PCs the opportunity to think up a clever way to destroy the shrine.

Regardless, assuming the PCs do something reasonable, after a few swings, the shrine cracks, at which point it is expected that the PCs join the ritual chant. Perform: Singing / Strength (other skills may be used in place of Perform: Singing) at TN 15.

Whether or not the PCs are able to complete the ritual as bearers, eventually the shrine will break and be returned to the gates of the shrine.

The shrine atop the arc eventually cracks and splinters, sending bits of idols in all directions. With a resounding shout of triumph, the bearers run back to the monk, carrying the remains of the shrine on their shoulders.

The monk studiously examines the remnants of the shrine, then shouts over the crowd.

“The Thunderer is pleased! May none tempt his wrath!”

A small group of monks take the remains of the shrine back into the temple, and everyone in the courtyard, samurai and peasant alike, break into song, dancing, and drinking for the remainder of the night.

Any PC who successfully completes the ritual of the breaking of the shrine gains the Blood of Osano-Wo advantage for the remainder of the module.

There’s a big party. See below for more information.

### **Option two: Running like crazy**

The gates of the temple swing open, just enough to admit you, and beyond you can see walls of limestone, billowing geysers, and fields of naturally beautiful but likely very sharp stones.

“Blessed by the Thunderer are any that can reach his gates!”

First Obstacle: Maze

You, and a few other samurai and peasants start off at a run, initially dodging a geyser, and then making a sharp turn as the limestone walls between you and the temple-proper prove to be a confusing and winding maze, frustrating your initial attempts to reach the shrine. The once coherent group of runners breaks up and scatters in all different directions, trying to find the proper path to the temple

Hunting (Tracking) / Perception at TN 20 or Investigation (Search) / Perception at TN 30. Failure results in the inability to find the proper path, and the runner is forced to back track out of the maze.

Second Obstacle: Geysers

You reach an opening in the limestone maze and emerge into a field covered in bubbling puddles of water and open pits. Suddenly, a massive jet of steam emits from one of the pits, throwing boiling water, and the smell of rotten eggs into the air. You leap out of the way of the water as it crashes back to earth right where you were standing.

The other geysers bubble and stew, ready to erupt at any moment.

Give the PCs an opportunity to come up with something inventive to get across. Just running across is Defense / Reflexes at TN 25. For every 5 by which the roll is failed, the samurai takes 1k1 damage from scalding water. Otherwise, come up with a reasonable skill roll for their attempt.

If the PC does nothing to abate the stench, they must roll raw stamina at TN 10. Failure causes them to begin retching from the Sulphur in the air and forces them to return from the maze.

Final Obstacle: Pointy Rocks

Having past the geysers, the final gates of the temple are in sight. A monk stands at the far side of a field of open ground, which is covered in razor sharp limestone rocks.

Even through your sandals, the rocks threaten to cut your feet, and any fall could prove disastrous. But for better or worse, the objective is clear.

If they want to just dash across, Athletics (Running or Jumping) / Agility at TN 30.

Going slowly and taking their time, Meditation / Void at TN 30.

For every 10 by which the roll is failed, the samurai takes 1k1 damage. If they take more than 25 damage

this way, they have the *Lame* disadvantage for the remainder of the module. If they are conscious, they complete the trial.

If a PC finishes:

Breathing hard from the final trial, you reach the gate. The monk smiles and greets you. "I am Keinai, abbot of this shrine. You have completed the thunderer's challenge. Place your hand upon the gate and leave with his blessing. Or pass through and join our order, if you wish."

Any PC who successfully reaches the gates of the temple gains the *Blood of Osano-Wo* advantage for the remainder of the module. Alternatively, after the module they may choose to join the *Brotherhood of Osano-Wo* (Contact the Admin).

### Option three: Spectator sports

PC's are not forced to participate and can choose to simply drink sake (which is plentiful and free) and enjoy the spectacle. There is music being played and dancing occurring. Because this is technically a religious festival, there is less behavioral scrutiny for samurai and a lessened divide between the classes.

PCs are welcome to have fun in whatever reasonably appropriate fashion they choose.

## Part Two: I lost something

In the morning you make your way down to the common room of the Red Kappa Inn and begin eating your breakfast. It is acceptable, but frankly not of any sort of quality to be excited about. Still, it is filling, and there is yet another week of festivities in front of you.

The door to the inn slides open, and a middle-aged woman in the colors of the Otomo, looking both harried and extremely proper enters. She takes a moment to look around, adjusts the sleeves of her kimono, and seats herself at your table.

"Ah, good morning. I am glad I found you. I heard you were staying here." She pauses, noticing that you are in the middle of breakfast. "Ah, but where are my manners. I am Otomo Yashi, an administrator in the Emerald Office."

The innkeeper places a small plate of rice and fish in front of her, which she subtly pushes aside before continuing.

"I am led to believe you have some time on your hands, yes? If it would not be much trouble, the Imperial families have a small task which could use

some attention. Of course, I understand entirely if you have other obligations which would prevent you from assisting the Throne.” She raises a questioning eyebrow and looks to you for a response.

If the PCs wish to identify her, Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence at TN 20. She is a minor bureaucrat who collects reports from Emerald Magistrates, processes paperwork, and coordinates magistrate assignments.

Presumably all the PCs agree to hear her task. If any don’t, she will sigh and remind the reticent PC that the Otomo would be both grateful for their assistance but if they decline, she will understand and inform their daimyo of her “understanding”. If the PC persists in declining, that PC is free to take 2 XP and leave the module.

With your agreement, she nods. “Excellent. I have a slight issue. As you may or may not know, several new Emerald Magistrates hailing from the minor clans were inducted this year, have completed their training, and are now in their first assignments. I am responsible for collecting their reports and forwarding them appropriately. Two weeks ago, I received a report from one of those magistrates, Usagi Saito, regarding a matter about some bandits. I have had no further reports from him. I am... concerned. I would appreciate it if you would undertake to locate Saito-san, or at least provide a report of his current condition.”

She withdraws a letter from her obi and slides it across the table. “This is the last report I received from him. The peasant who brought it to me said Saito gave it to him near the border between the Scorpion and unaligned lands. I have also prepared you appropriate travel papers. For the duration of this investigation, you will be considered yoriki of the Emerald Office.”

Give the players **Handout 2**.

Yashi will answer the PCs questions, if they have any.

- **How long has Usagi Saito been an Emerald Magistrate?**  
Two months. He was inducted due to an agreement the Emerald Champion made to include more Minor Clan samurai in the Emerald Magistrates.
- **Is Saito a good magistrate?**  
He is a skilled warrior and a determined investigator. Before becoming an Emerald Magistrate, I believe he was a local magistrate in Hare lands.

- **Have there been other bandit problems in these lands?**

Saito reported finding a destroyed caravan a week or two before this one, and the magistrates in minor clan and Scorpion lands have both reported increased bandit activity along the edge of the Shinomen Mori.

- **Who was with Saito?**

Saito normally retains three doshin, Satahana, Kotone, and Akamatsu. Akamatsu delivered the letter the letter to me, so presumably the other two are still with him.

- **How often does he normally report?**

Saito sends reports more often than most other magistrates I’ve supervised; about once a week. He also doesn’t normally send his reports via his doshin.

- **Can we wear armor?**

Yashi arches an eyebrow at you, “You will be locating a magistrate who was lost tracking bandits in unaligned lands. I would expect you to do so, yes.”

- **Is there anyone else he may have called for assistance?**

Yashi taps her chin for a moment before responding. “Well, there was an agreement made between the Scorpion and the Minor Clans regarding assistance against bandits. I suppose he may have called upon them.”

Once the PCs have finished asking questions, give them a chance to prepare to head for the Shinomen Mori, then proceed to Part Three. The local market doesn’t sell many goods, but basic travel supplies can be acquired (basic provisions, camping supplies, etc) as well as a variety of weapons.

If the PCs wish to question Akamatsu:

- **How long have you been working with Usagi Saito?**

About three years. I’ve been working with him since he was a magistrate in Hare lands.

- **Where was the incident?**

Near Tadaroki’s bridge, about maybe 15 miles from here?

- **What happened?**

We found a set of three wagons. They seemed fresh, and Usagi-sama was excited.

A bunch of caravans have been attacked lately, and I think this is the first time they’ve left a trail. He’s been after these bandits for a while.

- **Which direction did he go?**

Northwest, towards the forest.

- **Is Saito a bushi?**  
No, he is a priest of the Kami.

If the PC's question Akamatsu about Saito's methods, she doesn't know much beyond that he is good at catching bandits and sometimes prays to the kami for clues. She thinks Saito is an honorable man, and clearly looks up to him.

## Part Three: Losing at Oregon Trail

Travel across the Plains of Thunder is remarkably easy. Though storms sit perpetually on the horizon behind you and the air is humid, somehow the sky above you is always clear while you cross the rocky terrain. By late afternoon the Shinomen Mori comes into view, and nightfall approaches as you reach the main road traveling from Zakyo Toshi in the south to Seiketsu Pass in the north. A small wooded glade surrounds a narrow bridge, and the destroyed remains of three wagons lie alongside the road near the bridge.

Lord Sun begins to dip near the horizon, golden light filtering through the trees and playing across the glade, as the calming sound of the stream crosses the rocks below the bridge.

Tracks cover the area, and the road appears well-used although no other travelers are currently in sight. A few mounds of dirt sit just off the road, looking both recent and suspiciously out of place.

There are clear tracks leading off Northwest that will not be difficult to follow.

Once the PCs have completed their investigation, based on Saito's last report it should be obvious which direction to go. If they want to travel on the road, give them a not-so-subtle reminder about Saito's report (they should still have the handout). The PCs can investigate several different things in the area:

### The wagons

The wagons lie in a discarded heap near the road. Two on the south side of the bridge, and one on the north. Searching them requires Investigation (Search) / Perception:

- TN 10: The wagons have been thoroughly ransacked for anything of value.

- TN 15: The wagons were dragged to their current position from the road.
- TN 25: Based on the design of the wagons, they were clearly carrying a large quantity of supplies and trade goods. Based on the wear patterns, they were heavily loaded and probably headed north.
- TN 30: A small piece of cloth is stuck to a broken piece of metal on one of the wagon wheels; it bears a mon displaying a bird's claw or talon. A Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence at TN 30 recognizes this as the mon of The Iron Talons, a large ronin band based near the Shinomen Mori.

### Tracks

The area is covered in tracks. Some old, some fresh. Perhaps a clue remains. Hunting (Tracking) / Perception, or Investigation (Search) Perception with a -10 penalty:

- TN 10: The road has clearly seen some caravans in the time since the attack. A few fresh tracks look like someone pulled the old wagons off the road then returned to the road.
- TN 15: A set of tracks about a week and a half or two weeks old circle the area, go to the dirt mounds, then head off northwest away from the road.
- TN 20: There is a second, faint set of tracks leading from under the bridge up to the road, then heading off northwest as well.

### The bridge

The bridge covers a sharp dip in the road, perhaps fifty feet across. Below, a creek brings water from the Shinomen Mori east towards the lands of the Scorpion. It babbles slightly as it passes over sharp rocks. Investigation (Search) / Perception:

- TN 10: The bridge is exceptionally sturdy and well made. From its architecture, it is likely Scorpion in design.
- TN 20: There is significant space under the bridge, and the river looks quite quick over this area; it is no wonder a bridge was constructed here to enable trade. Without the bridge there would not be a good crossing nearby in either direction.
- TN 25: There are hand holds on the pillars, clearly added well after the bridge's construction and tracks around the base of the pillars. Whomever attacked the caravan

clearly did it by lying in wait underneath this bridge.

### **The dirt mounds**

Digging up the dirt mounds is largely a function of time. There is no roll to do so, it's simply tiring manual labor, especially if nobody brought a shovel (if the PCs investigated the wagons already, there is a spare shovel in one of the wagons).

Underneath the mounds are a pile of bodies. They have obviously been given only rudimentary funeral rites, and instead of being burnt properly their heads were simply cut off and buried separately.

Manipulating the corpses is ritually unclean, so performing a thorough search without some form of countermeasure will cause a D4 honor loss. Searching them (Investigation (Search) / Perception) will reveal:

- TN 10: They are all male. There are about 12 corpses total.
- TN 15: While the bodies are still clothed, all belongings of any value have been taken.
- TN 20: Three of the dead are ronin and have the callouses common to swordsmen on their hands. Their swords are not present.
- TN 25: One of the dead peasants has a chop in his pocket bearing the mark of Yasuki Chokin. Any PC with any ranks of Commerce will recognize this as a common practice used by caravan leaders to identify their samurai patron.

If any PC has ranks in Lore: Anatomy or at least two ranks in Medicine they will also notice that the bodies were beheaded well after their death, then buried in a hurry.

### **Presumably the PCs eventually decide to follow the trail northwest:**

The trail leads northwest, away from the road, and towards the Shinomen Mori. After a few hours of travel, you are forced to stop for the night on the plains, within sight but perhaps still a mile away from the forest proper. The air is warm and humid, and a few hours after dusk a light rain begins to fall. Fortunately, it is more cooling than soaking, and your tents easily keep you and your possessions dry.

However, during the night, you are awoken as the wind begins to howl and whip outside your tent. An intense flash of lightning brightens the night and is followed immediately by a monstrous peel of thunder.

The rain hammers down hard on your tent, growing in intensity with each passing moment. Outside, your horses neigh and whine loudly, pulling at their posts. The winds threaten to tear away your tent, and the sounds of thunder grow closer. Lightning flashes once more, for a moment making the night as bright as noon. What do you do?

The storm threatens to seriously disrupt the PC's camp. There are a variety of options available, depending on how the PCs want to address the threat of the storm.

### **Secure the Horses:**

The horses neigh and whine, pulling at their lines, bucking and heaving against the stakes. A rope snaps, and the horses threaten to bolt into the night, away from the lightning.

Animal Handling / Awareness at TN 20, or Animal Handling / Willpower at TN 25. In an emergency, Strength / Jujitsu at TN 40 could wrestle a fleeing order to the ground. Failure results in a horse escaping into the night, unless the PC is willing to stand in the way of the horse and physically block it in, which will instead result in 3k3 damage.

If no PC secures the horses, and there are horses, one randomly determined bolts and flees, never to be seen again.

### **Secure the Gear:**

The wind tosses your spare gear hither and yon, and lightning strikes arc from the clouds to the ground all around, searing temporary images of the plain around you into your eyes as you try to prevent your supplies from being destroyed by the storm.

Either – Raw Perception at TN 18, or Raw Reflexes at TN 20 to gather up most of your supplies before they are blown away or destroyed by the storm.

On a failure, you still can gather up some supplies, but a near miss by a lightning bolt leaves you scorched, resulting in 3k3 damage (1k1 if they have Blood of Osano-Wo). The PC may choose to take a direct hit instead of a graze, if so, it is 4k4 damage (2k2 with Blood of Osano-Wo), a scar in the location of their choosing, and they add 'Mark of the Thunderer' to their character sheet under Advantages.



If no PC secures the gear, their food supply will be scattered and destroyed, resulting in the need to Fast if they don't secure a new food source.

(Fasting causes the inability to regain void points from rest, and after two days causes a +5 TN penalty to skill rolls, physical trait rolls, and Spell Casting rolls. See Page 89 of Core for more information).

Once the PCs reach the forest, they could conceivably forage for food (or ask the Scorpion, who are quite willing to share) with a Hunting (Survival) / Perception roll at TN 20 each day.

### **Secure the Tents:**

The storm is lashing at the tents, pulling up guylines, leaving stakes fluttering in the breeze at the end of ropes. Amid the storm and darkness, it is difficult to catch the lines while avoiding being lashed. Defense / Strength at TN 20, failure causes damage equal to the amount you fail by, though you secure the tents regardless of role result.

If no PC secures the tents, most of them will blow away, resulting in all PCs who don't have Blood of Osano-Wo being Fatigued for next few days (until after the encounter with the bandits).

### **Pray:**

In the absence of any plan, sometimes divine providence is the best solution. Praying to Osano-Wo in the midst of the storm is difficult but not impossible. A prayer made using Lore: Theology / Awareness or Intimidation / Willpower at TN 35 will abate the Thunderer's wrath, and that PC will not lose any positions or suffer any ill effects of the storm.

Failure invites the thunderer's wrath, resulting in a lightning strike causing 4k4 damage (2k2 if they have Blood of Osano-Wo) and leaving a scar on a location of the PC's choosing. Have them add 'Mark of the Thunderer' to their character sheet under Advantages.

### **Challenge:**

If a PC is specifically foolhardy, brash, or otherwise insane, they may simply decide to challenge the Thunderer to do his worst. Ask them to describe the challenge they are issuing to the Thunderer, pause for a moment, then they are struck by lightning; there is no need to roll, "success" is automatic. The PC endures a lightning strike causing 4k4 damage (2k2 if they have Blood of Osano-Wo) which leaves a scar on a location of the PC's choosing. Have them add

'Mark of the Thunderer' to their character sheet under Advantages.

If a PC comes up with something not in this list in response to the storm, set an appropriate challenge. The storm is meant to challenge their resolve and present an inconvenience, rather than to be strictly lethal.

## **Part Four: The Battle Site**

In the morning you carry on, and the trail of the magistrate and bandits reaches the forest's edge by mid-day. The trees tower high above you, but the path into the Shinomen Mori seems well worn. By no means could it be called a road, but it is more than wide enough for horses or a cart to traverse.

The tracks follow the trail, but something catches your eye as you prepare to enter the forest. A tanto, stuck in a tree. As you approach, your horses begin to whine and buck, threatening to bolt backwards away from the forest.

Everyone on a horse or driving a cart must make a Horsemanship / Willpower roll at TN 20. Failure causes the horse to refuse to allow itself to be ridden into the forest (it will have to be walked in). Failure to at least get a 10 on the roll causes the rider to be thrown, taking 2k2 damage.

Understanding why the horses are spooked is a little more complicated; magic or having ranks in Lore: Naga (TN 15) are really the only ways. Calling upon the kami and asking appropriate questions will reveal that 'Not Men Not Animals with Bad Smells came this way not long ago'. The PCs are free to speculate what that means – in point of fact a small group of naga crossed the trail for entirely unrelated reasons a few days ago. Their smell is spooking the horses.

The PCs can examine the tanto easily enough; it is clearly of Hare manufacture and has red and white wrappings around the handle. No effort was made to conceal it.

- Craft: Weaponsmithing / Perception at TN 25 reveals a discernable maker's mark on the kabuto-gane (the handle cap). It was made by Usagi Saito.
- Asking the kami about the knife will reveal, in the cryptic fashion of the kami, that Saito left it here about two weeks ago on purpose,

as a marker in case anyone was following him. Saito had two other people (his doshin) with him when he did.

The tracks into the forest seem to follow the path, and a Hunting (Tracking) / Perception roll at TN 15 will confirm that. If someone rolls a 25 or higher, they will discern that Saito began to move more cautiously and stealthily after crossing into the forest proper.

The PCs are free to enter the forest stealthily if they wish. If they do, have them make a cooperative Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility roll. This does not cause an honor loss, given the circumstances. Having a cart or (non-Shinjo Scout) horses causes a -10 penalty to the result.

Making your way into the Shinomen Mori proper is a strange experience. The leaves rustle, and the trees sway, but you cannot discern any breeze. The trail twists and turns for an hour, and golden sunlight filters through the canopy, throwing alternating bright shafts of light and deep shadow across the forest. Soon, the trail you have been following opens into a wide clearing, and two things immediately strike you. First, the clearing holds the remains of a village. Many wooden buildings, several training grounds, and even a small stable.

The second remarkable sight in the clearing are many Scorpion samurai, some obviously on guard duty, others milling about, and a few tending to a fenced in area containing people that are obviously prisoners of some sort.

If the PCs snuck up on the camp and rolled at least a 35 on their cooperative stealth score, then the Scorpion have not noticed them, and they can take a moment to decide what to do. If they wish, they can sneak around to the far side of the village and pick up the trail again, heading west, deeper into the Shinomen Mori. If so, proceed to Part Five. Otherwise, they are greeted by Bayushi Gimon when they approach the camp. Make clear that due to the overwhelming number of Scorpion present, simply attacking them is not a feasible option.

Presuming the PCs eventually decide to approach the Scorpion:

You cautiously approach the ruined village, and one of the Scorpion calls out a greeting. “Ho there, samurai.” Two men and a woman in black and red armor come trotting up, their swords in their saya. They give you short bows, and the woman removes her helmet, revealing a slim black mask around her eyes and nose

and letting her long hair spill out. She looks you up and down then speaks with a curious note in her voice. “Afternoon. I’m Bayushi Gimon. Didn’t expect to see anybody coming this way. Did the magistrate send for you? If so, we’ve got the situation under control.”

Bayushi Gimon is willing to answer any polite or reasonable questions the PCs have. She will be slightly confused as to why they are here and do her best to diffuse any aggressive tension; she does not want to cause an incident over the matter of some bandits. If the PCs want to poke about for evidence or clues, she welcomes them to it, and assigns one of her guards (Bayushi Sho) to assist them.

### Questions the PCs might have for Gimon:

- **Why are you here?**  
Gimon smiles and withdraws a letter from a pouch on her armor bearing a broken emerald seal. “Orders from an Emerald Magistrate. Said there was a bandit encampment. Under the authority of his office and because of the agreement between the Scorpion and Minor Clans to deal with any bandits threatening them, he requested that we come and eliminate them. So, we did. A good number fled into the forest, but we took the town. They put up a hell of a fight though.”
- **When did you get here?**  
“About a week ago.”
- **Who are you?**  
“I’m Bayushi Gimon, gunso in the Scorpion army, 9<sup>th</sup> Legion. These are my troops. We were assigned to guard the western border and respond to any calls for aid from the Minor Clans.
- **What happened here?**  
“We got orders to deal with a bandit encampment at this location. We scouted the place and it matched the description exactly, so we waited until nightfall and took the village. Fighting was heavy; they were a lot better trained and equipped than I expected, but we had surprise and superior skill. A good number fled into the forest, but we rounded up the non-combatants after the fighting was over. Figure we’ll hold them until the magistrate gets back and figures out what to do about them.”
- **These aren’t bandits they’re ronin!**  
Bayushi Gimon holds up her hands, “If you want to call an Emerald Magistrate a liar, that’s between you and Usagi Saito-sama. I had orders, I carried them out. You want to tell someone those orders are wrong, you can

take it up with him. The Scorpion pledged to defend the minor clans from bandits, they said bandits, so here we are.”

- **Who are these people? / Who are the prisoners?**

“Bandits. Whole village of them. After the fight, we rounded up the ones that seemed like non-combatants. They claimed to work for a ronin band, but whatever, bandits are bandits, ronin or not.

Figure we’ll let the magistrate sort them out when he gets back. We’ve been feeding them from our rations and making sure they’re taken care of, but we only have enough food for another week out here. After that…” she shrugs her shoulders “Well, we’ll deal with ‘em like bandits and head back for Scorpion Lands.”

- **Where is the magistrate / Usagi Saito?**

“Couldn’t say. I have a letter from him, says he was going to keep following the trail of the bandits, heading west. My trackers say there’s a trail that heads west out of town, so that much matches up, but my orders were to come in and clean up this camp. So, until he gets back, we get new orders, or we run low on food, we’ll stay here.”

- **Who delivered the letter to you?**

“One of Usagi Saito’s doshin; Kotone. Unfortunately, she was killed in the attack on the bandit encampment. Saito would have been proud of her valor, but I do not relish having to deliver news of her death to him.”

- **There are a lot of buildings here / this is very sophisticated for bandits.**

Bayushi Gimon rubs her chin, “Yeah, that’s been bothering me ever since I got here. Bandits are almost never this organized. Either the forest killers or similar are comin’ back in a big way, or somebody missed something big. Normally they don’t grow this size before someone notices.”

She shrugs her shoulders, “Maybe they’ve only been hitting small caravans, and nobody thought to look in the forest. Couldn’t say.”

- **Can we have some food?**

Bayushi Gimon rubs her chin, “I don’t see why not. You’re yoriki of the Emerald Office, seems to me that it would be impolite of us not to share. A handful of days of food more or less isn’t going to make a difference to us.”

If a PC wishes to see the orders Bayushi Gimon received from Usagi Saito, give them **Handout 3**.

### **Things around town:**

The bandit village has largely been cleaned out, but the level of organization is exceptional for outlaws. There are storehouses, training grounds, a dojo, an archery range, a stable, and facilities for all the tradesfolk that are normally required for maintaining a massive force of bandits, a large group of ronin, or perhaps a small army. There still some clues left to be found, if the PCs go looking for them.

### **The smithy:**

The smithy is exceptionally orderly and well stocked.

The village smithy is a large building for a peasant workshop, meticulously organized. A variety of metal ingots are stacked in one corner, a few tools and weapons in another, with small paper tags describing the work to be done attached to them, and a few more mundane products such as horseshoes and pots sitting unfinished near one of the two forges.

The forges are cold, and the Scorpion seem to have largely ignored this building since a thin layer of dust has begun to accrue on everything inside of it.

Let the PCs explore in their own fashion, since nothing here is actively hidden, but rather its mundanity might result in the PCs not choosing to look at it

### **The forges:**

The forges are cold but well maintained. There is enough space for two smiths (or one talented smith) and a handful of apprentices to work.

One forge was clearly dedicated to the production of weapons, and the other more mundane goods. A nearly finished katana, requiring only the final assembly of fittings, sits on one of the forges. Any PC with ranks in Artisan: Swordsmithing (or that can make an Artisan: Swordsmithing / Perception check at TN 20) can tell that this katana is of exceptional quality but bears no maker’s mark. Further, it is made of high-quality steel.

The other forge was dedicated to the production of tools and mundane goods, such as horseshoes. If a PC wishes, they can steal the three horseshoes sitting beside the forge.

### **Supplies / Materials:**

The storeroom and cupboards are very orderly. A variety of metals are present, iron, copper, brass, tin, and others. There is also a single bar of a very strange silvery-white metal which is difficult to identify (if the PCs ask Kai what the metal is, he has no idea).

The quantity, quality, and type of metals are conspicuously beyond what is normal for a village; this is clearly enough to produce weapons and armor.

Battle / Intelligence at TN 25: While one smith and one forge would likely struggle to keep up with the workload, there is enough supplies here to outfit a very large ronin force; significantly larger than the number of ronin observed so far in the village.

Commerce or any relevant Artisan or Craft skill / Intelligence at TN 20: One set of steel ingots are very high-quality material, sufficient to produce exceptional katana or armor. If a PC makes a 35, they will realize this is kiau steel, though it is suspiciously bereft of any markings indicating such.

### **Finished products / weapons:**

There are a variety of stacked completed products; most are mundane tools for a village such as shovels, wheels, barrel bands, and the like. There are a couple simple weapons; spears, arrows, and the like. There are no completed swords or suits of armor.

### **Personal effects:**

The room in the back of the blacksmith's shop, almost a tiny cubby, is full of the personal effects one might expect to see from a blacksmith in a village this size; a variety of work clothes and protective gear.

There are two unusual objects within the room, though both will take some searching to find (Perception / Investigation (Search)).

TN 20: Under the bed, not hidden but more pushed out of the way, is a series of sketches clearly discernable as designs for katana and breakdowns of the various fittings and components necessary to build them.

TN 35: Under a loose board in the floor, a daisho is hidden (this belongs to Kai, and before him his father). The saya is lacquered in a deeply faded green, and the blades are at least a couple hundred years old. If a PC thinks to check, there is a maker's mark, but it is completely obscure.

If confronted with the objects, Kai will admit they are his. He doesn't have much need of his own swords, so keeps them out of the way (and is slightly ashamed of them), and the sketches he will happily acknowledge that he has been trying to improve his sword designs.

### **The bookkeeper's house:**

The bookkeeper, Kabo, functioned as the 'headman' of the village, even though Atsumoro led the ronin. In addition to doing the accounting, he supervised the peasants and kept the village running smoothly.

Unlike almost every other place you've been in this village, the headman's house is a mess.

Not the kind of mess that indicates a careless search, or a panicked flight. The kind of mess made by a

human who refuses to ever throw away a piece of paper or note, and who has no intention of ever consolidating or organizing any of that information.

Every surface in the front room is covered in paper. Books, notes, letters, scraps of information, even what looks like the remains of a box of vegetables turned over and scribbled on.

The living quarters on the other hand are spartan, small, and contain only the very basics of a peasant's hut, almost monastic.

### **The desks:**

The desks, end tables, and the dinner table, and one area of the floor are covered in papers. All of them are clearly related in some way to the running of the village. Cost of rice. Amount of timber sold to a merchant last spring. Some money the ronin received for guarding a caravan this summer. Two weeks ago, three sheep were sold. Papers without end.

Making sense of the papers requires 3 ranks in the Commerce skill, or a Commerce / Intelligence roll at TN 20. If someone pieces together the finances, the village is clearly running a mild surplus of koku. Which is a little odd for the sophistication of the village; a slight surplus should probably not explain a village of this size and with this many amenities.

At TN 25, they find tax records, bearing the appropriate stamp of an Emerald Magistrate, showing they paid Imperial taxes last year, as well as taxes to the Unicorn.

If a PC has 5 ranks of Commerce, or the Mathematics emphasis, or rolled a TN 30, after almost an hour of work, a pattern becomes clear. There is an unexplained jump in the 'town repair fund' with no corresponding source for the money approximately once a month, sometimes small, sometimes large, and it is then marked as spent to construct some of the larger projects in the city.

### **Living quarters:**

The living quarters are very plain. There is a cot, a small trunk full of simple clothes, and a tiny shelf filled with prayer beads and tiny wooden carvings of the fortunes.

If the PCs search thoroughly (Perception / Investigation at TN 40), they will locate a hidden panel, containing a large box full of koku, along with a sheet of paper listing names and numbers, along with one entry labeled 'Talons'.

(Kabo was effectively acting as a bank for some of the ronin, along with the ronin band itself. While it might be suspicious that it was hidden, this was simply a safety precaution. Though the PCs have no way to know that, they may surmise some or all of it)

### **The barracks / stables / dojo:**

All of these locations have been largely cleaned out of clues as well as personal effects. The Scorpion have commandeered them temporarily for the housing and provisioning of their own troops. The best way to describe them is 'professional'. They appear to be high quality facilities, out of character for ronin, and have been well maintained and organized.

### **Talking to the Prisoners:**

The guards snap to attention if the PCs approach the fenced. If the PCs explain that they want to talk to the prisoners, the guards will allow them to do so, under supervision.

You approach the fenced in area, and most of the bandit-peasants look down, avoiding your gaze. One however, a middle-aged man, runs up to the edge of the fence. "Hey, hey! Samurai! You've got to get us out of here. There's been a mistake, we're not bandits. My name is Kai, I'm the blacksmith here and..."

One of the Bayushi guards cuts him off with an imperious glare and a stern warning, "Hey! Pipe down, bandit. Enough of your lies."

The guards turn to you and make a gesture of apology. "Sorry about that, samurai-san. This one keeps yelling that he's not a bandit, trying to convince us to let him go. Been lying about it since we rounded them up."

If the PCs wish to question Kai, he will inform them of the following:

- **Who are you?**  
"I'm Kai, I'm uhh, the blacksmith here in town."
- **Are you bandits?**  
"No, no! We're the Iron Talons of Justice! We fight bandits and protect the forest! I think boss-man intends to take on the Forest Killers one day. There's been a mistake!"
- **Who is your leader?**  
"Atsumoro! He's strong and a great leader. But he has been out on a job for the past couple weeks. While he's gone Kyuhime is in charge."
- **What happened here?**  
"Most of us were cleaning up for the night, or had already gone to sleep, when suddenly there were Scorpion everywhere. They killed most of the guards. A few folks got out while Kyuhime held the Scorpion as long as she could, but the others mostly went down fighting."

- **Who got away?**  
"Uhhh I didn't really see. I know Kabo, the headman, got away. So did Norite; he and his horse are hard to miss. Norite tried to teach the other ronin to ride but uhhh most of them were bad at it. I think a few others got away too, I'm not sure."
- **Who is Kyuhime?**  
When Atsumoro is gone, Kyuhime oversees defense. Think she was maybe a unicorn in the past? She's really good with a blade and a great shot. Or I guess, was."
- **Did you see a magistrate / Usagi Saito?**  
"No, no sama. The only magistrate that ever comes by here is Nozomi-sama, and she hasn't been around in months."
- **(If the PCs have visited the Smithy and noted the quality of the steel) Where did you get high quality steel?**  
"Atsumoro got it for me. I told him I needed something better to work with to forge good blades. Pig iron is great for tools and domestic equipment, but it won't stand up to combat. A few weeks later he came back with some really good stuff."
- **Who made the swords / where did you learn to swordsmith?**  
"My father taught me to smith swords! He was good, did it all his life. I'm pretty sure he used to be a clan samurai, long ago. I... probably shouldn't speculate. But I've been making replacement blades or new blades for the folks whose swords get worn or broken."

Presumably the PCs will eventually decide to follow Usagi Saito's trail out of town.

Under no circumstances with Gimon agree to release the prisoners without orders from Saito. She does her best to be understanding if the PCs are insistent that she made a mistake, but orders are orders and she can't very well release suspected bandits. Fighting the Scorpion is tantamount to suicide, due to their superior numbers and degree of entrenchment. Discourage the PCs from attempting to free the prisoners via guile or violence (there is no reasonable way for them to sneak the prisoners out, they are heavily guarded).

## **Part Five: The Forest**

From the village, the trail leads west, deep into the heart of the forest. The forest is quiet, with only the rustle of the leaves far above your heads and the sound of your own footfalls echoing along the trail.

As you walk, you get the unshakeable sensation that you are being watched, every step monitored as you travel towards your quarry.

Investigation (Notice) / Perception, Wary applies, at TN 25. Success spots a group of small beings with three eyes on triangular faces, watching you from the boughs of the trees. PCs that have any ranks in an appropriate lore can easily recognize these as Kodama, which are not inherently malicious. If the PCs try to fight them, they automatically flee. Mostly they're just creepy.

The trail leads you deep into the Shinomen, past coiling vines, massive old trees, and down into dark gulleys thrown into shadow by the thick canopy above your heads. Travel is slow, but steady, and you walk for many hours.

As night falls in the forest, the path opens onto a small clearing. A bit of grass has been tamped down here, there are many tracks, and a small fire pit. Nearby, a quickly flowing creek feeds a small pond, the crystal-clear water betraying the presence of a few fish and sparkling stones at the bottom.

As the sun sinks below the trees, travelling any further into the forest at night strikes you as inadvisable.

If a PC wishes to investigate the camp site, Investigation (Notice) / Perception or Hunting (Tracking) / Perception:

- TN 15: The fire pit was clearly used recently, within the last day or perhaps two.
- TN 25: A medium sized group, maybe 10-15 people, came through here recently, but did not stop to camp. Their tracks enter the clearing and then leave the far side.
- TN 30: About two people likely camped here. There are not enough tracks circling for a large group. They followed the larger group of tracks deeper into the forest.

The stones in the river are just shiny, polished by the water, and have no specific effect. The water is clean and pure and seems safe to drink with reasonable precautions.

Presumably the PCs will stay the night here. If they press on, the following still occurs, it just occurs wherever they happen to camp.

If any PCs are specifically on watch, they will unexpectedly fall asleep without realizing it to join the communal dream. Alter their box text appropriately.

It is a snapping noise that first rouses you from your slumber. Or maybe it is the heat on your face. Tiny beads of sweat beginning to form on your brow.

You jolt awake, you for a moment wonder if you overslept. All around your tent is light. But it is not the sun.

The trees of the Shinomen Mori are ablaze. The sky to the north flickers as the flames lick and jump from tree to tree. Only the path back to the south seems clear of the flames, and with each moment the air on your face grows hotter.

From the north, stumbling out of the blaze, badly burnt, is a man in the white and red of the Hare clan, being the sash of an Emerald Magistrate. Just as he is about to make it to the clearing, a tree groans and collapses, pinning Saito to the ground.

Saito looks up to you, and gasps out a single word, "Flee" then collapses.

What do you do?

It is up to the PCs how to respond to this sudden situation. It is in fact a dream, but one that feels extraordinarily real. It is an illusion created by a particularly powerful Baku (a dream spirit), who has an interest in frightening the PCs but is repulsed by self-sacrifice. Feel free to ad-lib as necessary. Play up the frightening nature of the forest fire, the fire's rapid spread and immediate danger (necessitating quick judgement to avoid being engulfed), or any other scary aspects that you think may play to your specific table of PCs.

The PCs can run away, help Saito, pack up, or investigate the situation.

Saito is pinned under a particularly heavy tree, so emphasize that the PCs must either be clever to free him, or risk significant personal injury. It is not necessarily a matter of dice or specific skills, but feel free to request skill rolls suitable to the solution the PC is employing (Engineering, Athletics, Raw Strength, etc). The situation should grow ever more dire and personally dangerous for the PCs as they try to rescue Saito; give them multiple opportunities to turn and flee, leaving Saito for dead.

Trying to discern the cause of the blaze is largely fruitless, though it is obvious it started North of the PCs' current location and towards the edge of the Shinomen Mori, based on the direction of the wind and where the fires are most intense.

If the PCs attempt to calmly pack up camp, the fire should begin growing closer and closer, throwing

them into further jeopardy every moment until they either must help Saito, or flee south.

If more than one PC flees, pick one or two, and have a mishap occur. A fall twists an ankle, a foot is caught under a tree root. A branch falls and hits them, knocking them down. They lose their footing and slide into a ravine. A situation they can't easily get out of themselves, but that their companions could save them from. Then see if the other PCs save the ones that fell.

If all the PCs run, and don't stop to help each other if they fall:

You flee back to the safety of the southern forest, leaving the blazing fires behind you. You run for what feels like hours. Then you spot it, sitting ahead of you on the trail. A strange, massive, red-skinned creature. It sits, with four armored arms folded across its lap, elbows resting on four katana. It smiles at you.

You awaken with a start. It all seemed so real. But the night is cool, you are still in your tent, and there is no light beyond that of Lady Moon high in the sky. You settle back and resume your rest.

The dawn comes early, and with it a strange rattling noise reaches your ears. You start out of your tents, and search for its source, just in time to see a small furry creature go running off towards the tree line, carrying an object in its mouth. Wait, that's one of your wakizashi!

If all the PCs run, but manage to flee together

You flee back to the safety of the southern forest, leaving the blazing fires behind you. You run for what feels like hours. Then you spot it, sitting ahead of you on the trail. A strange, massive, red-skinned creature. It sits, with four armored arms folded across its lap, elbows resting on four katana. It regards you with a cool look, then turns away.

You awaken with a start. It all seemed so real. But the night is cool, you are still in your tent, and there is no light beyond that of Lady Moon high in the sky. You settle back and resume your rest.

The dawn comes early, and with it a strange rattling noise reaches your ears. You start out of your tents, and search for its source, just in time to see a small furry creature go running off towards the tree line, carrying an object in its mouth. Wait, that's one of your wakizashi!

If at least some PCs help Saito, especially if some suffer injury while doing so:

Usagi Saito fades away, replaced with a strange, massive, red-skinned creature. It sits, with four armored arms folded across its lap, elbows resting on four katana. It sneers at you, a look of disgust and contempt.

You awaken with a start. It all seemed so real. But the night is cool, you are still in your tent, and there is no light beyond that of Lady Moon high in the sky. You settle back and resume your rest.

The dawn comes early, and with it a strange rattling noise reaches your ears. You start out of your tents, and search for its source, just in time to see a small furry creature go running off towards the tree line, carrying an object in its mouth. Wait, that's one of your wakizashi!

Only PCs with Touched by the Realm: Yume-Do will have regained Void Points. PCs with Cursed by the Realm: Yume-Do will find themselves with no Void Points available at all, regardless of how many they had previously. If a PC suffered injuries from the blaze, they retain some of those injuries (up to and including filling the Healthy wound rank, but no more than that).

GM's Note: If a player wishes to use Divination to understand the dream, the tea leaves or chicken bones (or other methods of divination) will show a single kanji: Betrayal

Raw Reflexes at TN 18, or Athletics (Running or Jumping) / Reflexes at TN 25 to catch the small creature before it can flee into the forest. It will automatically dodge any attacks directed at it.

A Lore: Spirits / Intelligence or Lore: Animals / Intelligence at TN 20 identifies the animal as an unusually large red panda, which seems to have grabbed a wakizashi in its mouth (choose the Lowest Honor PC) and is scampering off with it.

If no PC succeeds, the creature disappears into the forest.

If a PC catches it:

The creature drops the wakizashi with a shriek, throwing its paws into the air in surprise. It twists and tries to nip you, and upon failing to do so, yells in a voice like that of a small child, "Let me go! I am

Akodo Godaigo, let me go and give me candy or I will curse you!”

This creature is obviously not Akodo Godaigo. Any PC with ranks in Lore: Spirits, Lore: Spirit Realms, or who can pass Lore: Spirits, Spirit Realms, or Theology at TN 15 can identify this creature as a particularly small Tanuki, a denizen of Chikushudo. Furthermore, Tanuki usually don’t possess the power to curse people.

If the PCs release it, it will immediately bolt for the forest and disappear, though without any stolen possession.

Otherwise it will answer some basic questions:

- **What is your actual name? / You are not Akodo Godaigo.**  
“I am so... okay no I’m not. My name is Danzaburou. It was my grandfather’s name but he’s not around anymore. One day I will be big and strong like him.”
- **What are you doing here?**  
“I live here! This clearing is my home. I live in that tree over there. It’s a very nice tree. It is big and sleepy. Sometimes the tree’s three eyed baby comes out and plays with me.”
- **Why did you try to steal my wakizashi?**  
“It was shiny, and I wanted it for my tree. Shiny things make trees better. Three Eyed Friends like shiny things.”
- **Did you see any samurai / a magistrate come through here?**  
“Yes, red and white man came through maybe a day or two ago. There was a nice girl with him! She was friendly and gave me candy. I like candy.”
- **Did you see any bandits from through here?**  
“What’s a bandit? I did see a big group of humans come through a few days ago. They looked mean so I hid from them.”
- **Are there any dangers around?**  
“Me! I am very fierce!” The tanuki gives a very tiny roar. “No, not that I know of. This clearing is nice and safe and there are tasty fish to eat. That’s why I live here.”

Presumably the PCs will eventually let the Tanuki go, and it will flee into the trees. If they are kind to it or give it candy, it will give them an Elm Leaf. Which does nothing immediately but looks cool.

## Part Six: Lost Temple

You break camp and continue down the trail. The freshness of the tracks and their obviously slow, deliberate pace reassures you that you are getting quite close to your quarry.

By the end of the first hour, the trees of the forest close in on the trail, making it somewhat claustrophobic and forcing you to march single file. You round a bend and spot a tree that has fallen across the trail. The red and white wrappings are quite stark against the brown bark of the tree; another knife plunged deep into the trunk.

Just beyond the tree is a strange sight; what used to be a clearing, now slightly overgrown, and within it stands the ramshackle remains of a large grey stone temple. The architecture is the distinctive style of the brotherhood of Shinsei and the path leading to the temple’s door shows signs of recent use.

The PCs have time to prepare themselves in whatever way they choose. The temple is relatively small, there is the main shrine, three small back rooms, and a basement.

Tanomoshi, the monk, will be in the shrine room meditating. The bandits will be waiting in the temple’s basement, and Saito will be spying on the bandits from the stairs.

### Main Entrance / Shrine room:

The wooden doors to the shrine swing open easily in the morning sunlight, throwing light into the dim entryway of the temple. Candles light the interior of the large central shrine, which is surprisingly free of dust and dirt. The pleasant aroma of incense reaches your nose.

The main room is empty, save for a single figure; an old man, clad in the saffron robes of the brotherhood. He sits, facing away from you, praying quietly in front of the large statue of a fortune that dominates the far end of the room.

Three smaller doors lead away from this room, one on each side of the hallway, and one barely visible behind the depiction of the Fortune.

Any PC with ranks of Lore: Theology or that can roll a Lore: Theology / Intelligence at TN 25 will recognize the Fortune of Trust, Shinrai.

If the PCs attempt to sneak by Tanomoshi (TN 40 to avoid him noticing them), he will pretend not to see them. He approves of their use of stealth to evade a harmless old monk, as it further justifies his beliefs about samurai.



Otherwise, he will greet them once they enter:

The monk turns as you enter the temple. “Good morning, samurai. Please, come in. A strange day to have so many visitors. This one is Tanomoshi. Would you care to join me in prayer?”

If the PCs join Tanomoshi in prayer he will provide them with incense, and extra prayer beads if they did not bring their own. After praying, he will smile:

After praying for a few minutes, Tanomoshi smiles and nods  
“It has been a while since I’ve had clan samurai to pray with. Thank you for indulging me. I presume you did not make the trip this far into the woods to visit my shrine though. Therefore, I suspect you have questions. I am happy to assist you, I only ask in return that you help me with one question, surely no burden for honorable samurai as yourselves.”

Presuming the PCs agree, continue to Questions for Tanomoshi. If they don’t, he sighs and resumes praying quietly.

If they decline to pray:

Tanomoshi sighs pointedly.  
“I understand. Samurai business is always in a hurry. I presume therefore you have questions. I am happy to assist you, and I only ask in return that you help me with one question, surely no burden for honorable samurai as yourselves

Presuming the PCs agree, continue to Questions for Tanomoshi. If they don’t, he sighs and resumes praying quietly. Threats or violence will not sway Tanomoshi to help.

Questions for Tanomoshi:

- **Who are you?**  
“I am Tanomoshi, I am the keeper of this shrine.”
- **Who is the temple dedicated to?**  
“Shinrai, the Fortune of Trust.”
- **What are you doing here?**  
“I pray, I maintain the shrine, I provide spiritual counsel to those that visit, I meditate upon the tao. Also, I grow vegetables in my garden out back. Tending vegetables is so calming, don’t you think?”
- **How long have you been here?**  
“About five years.”

- **How do you survive out here?**  
“I grow most of my own food, but another monk visits twice a year with some supplies for me. Also, there are some ronin that travel through on occasion that donate some extra supplies.”
- **What happened to the temple / the burnt room?**  
“I don’t know for sure. Best I can tell there was a fire here, long ago. Long before I got here. I’ve done some work to restore the temple with the supplies I have or can make.”
- **Why is one of the rooms locked?**  
“I don’t know. It was locked when I first arrived.”
- **Where did the magistrate go?**  
“He went into the storeroom, in the back. He hasn’t come out yet.” Tanomoshi points to one of the three doors, the one on the left.
- **Did you see any bandits from through here?**  
“Bandits? No. There is a group of ronin that sometimes visits my temple. They came through last night, prayed, put things into the storeroom, and stayed for a time. Brought me some supplies and donated a few koku.”

An investigation (interrogation) / awareness at TN 40 will indicate that Tanomoshi is shading the truth. He doesn’t know the ronin are bandits, even though he has suspicions, which he is omitting.

- **Who are the ronin / bandits?**  
“The leader of the ronin, best I can tell, is a man named Atsumoro. He is very kind, generous, and pious. He donates to the temple and prays when he visits; once every couple weeks or so. I don’t know the names of the other men. They use the cellar sometimes to store provisions and such.”
- **Have you had any nightmares / dreams about forest fires?**  
Tanomoshi looks at you confused. “No. That seems like a strange question. Why do you ask?”  
Though he is not aware of it, Tanomoshi’s school technique has protected him from the creature’s influence and so he has not had any of the strange dreams.

Once the PCs have finished asking Tanomoshi questions, he will ask them a question. Based on your judgement / knowledge of the PCs, ask each of them either:

- 1) “Samurai are servants of their lord, yes? They say to be a samurai is to serve. If your lord decides it is in his interest to discard you as a servant, say, to blame you for something you did not do in order to enhance his own standing, has he betrayed you? Or are you simply being a good servant by accepting his lies? What would you do were something like that to happen?”
- 2) “You meet a man on the road, and being Compassionate, you offer to escort him to his destination. As you travel, you discover through happenstance that he is a criminal. Are you honorbound to see him to his destination, or are you honorbound to arrest him? If you arrest him, do you consider that a betrayal?”
- 3) The kami are all around us, all the time. They are old and wise. But we do not listen to them in the matters of law. Doesn’t this seem wrong? Why would we not trust their word? What would you say about a magistrate that executes criminals based on the testimony of the kami, rather than the testimony of humans?

Tanomoshi will debate the answers each PC gives, and if any of the PCs disagree with each other will point it out and try to get the PCs to discuss their disagreements. His objective, if possible, is to get the samurai to argue amongst themselves. If not, he at least wants them to feel vaguely uneasy and less self-assured.

Tanomoshi will never admit it, but he spends most of his time contemplating the betrayal of trust, and the role of dishonesty and betrayal in Rokugan. He is of the opinion that most samurai will betray Bushido and their principles in the right situation, and further that a person’s true character shows through in times when they are confronted with betrayal. This is borderline blasphemous, and he knows it, so will never ever say it aloud.

**Meditation chamber (locked):**

In the rear of the shrine, the entrance to the meditation chamber is well marked by a placard, but the door is secured shut by a dusty metal padlock. No footprints in the dust lead to this room.

Breaking the lock can be done with Raw Strength at TN 30. Opening it requires either Sleight of Hand\* / Agility at TN 15, the door can simply be disassembled with Craft: Engineering / Intelligence at TN 20, or a successful attack with a Heavy Weapon dealing at

least 30 damage can smash it (TN 20 to hit, because it’s metal).

\*may not be rolled unskilled.

If Tanomoshi is asked about the meditation chamber or the lock, he’ll shrug and say it’s been locked as long as he’s lived here. He’s never bothered trying to open it.

If the PC’s bypass the lock and enter:

Opening the door reveals a fire-blackened and soot stained chamber. While the space was clearly austere while it was in use, fire has charred the stone walls and burnt away any decorations or flammable objects within the room. Just on the other side of the door lie three blackened and time-worn skeletons. There is no smell of charred hair, and there is a slight patina of dust covering everything in the room.

About a hundred years ago one of the monks in this temple locked the other three monks inside this room and set it on fire (see: Kabo’s Journal).

**Investigation (Search) / Perception:**

TN 5: There are three bodies in here. There was some sort of fire, probably.

TN 10: Nobody has been in this room since the time of the fire.

TN 20: One of the bodies is still clutching a set of somewhat melted prayer beads.

TN 30: There seems to be an irregularity in the burn pattern in one of the corners; there is a small area of

**Medicine / Perception:**

TN 10: These bodies burned to death.

TN 15: These bodies have been dead for almost a hundred years.

TN 30: Two of the corpses are male, one is female. All were at least 50 years old at time of death.

TN 35: There is a small golden tooth, partially melted, in the mouth of one of the male corpses.

PCs with any spiritual Advantages or Disadvantages related to Yume-do will feel vaguely uncomfortable so long as they are in this room.

It is unlikely the PCs will have a means to detect such, but this room is haunted, though by what should be outside their capacity to determine. The creature that dwells here is exceedingly powerful and very good at staying hidden.

**Monk’s quarters:**

While austere, as might be expected for the living quarters of a monk, this room is noticeably large. It clearly once provided sleeping facilities, small cubbies for personal effects, and general living space for several monks. Most of the room is covered in dust, except for one small alcove with a immaculately made futon, a stack of spare clothes, and a tiny cooking stove.

This is where Tanomoshi sleeps, cooks, and bathes. It is largely uninteresting, though the PCs can rifle through his possessions if they wish. There is nothing specifically interesting or incriminating; they are the expected possessions of a monk, things like prayer beads and a copy of the tao.

If the PCs insist on searching the dusty, unused areas, they can make an Investigation (Search) / Perception roll at TN 40. Failure uncovers sleeping and living areas that have not been used in perhaps a hundred years or more.

On a success, the PC will find a hidden journal, jammed into the slates underneath one of the unused futons. Give the PC **Handout 4: Kabo's Journal**.

If a PC asks Tanomoshi about the journal, he has legitimately no idea what it is or who wrote it. He's never seen it before.

#### **Storage room:**

The storage room is a simple space; large and wide, it once housed all the supplies, both mundane and religious, that were necessary to provision a temple containing a handful of monks. Now the shelves sit mostly empty, beyond some simple foodstuffs and the barest and most threadbare of religious supplies for the upkeep of the shrine.

On the far side of the room, a conspicuously large wooden door sits in the far wall at a low angle, presumably leading down to a cellar or basement of some sort.

The storage room has a wooden door covering the entrance to the stairs down to the large cellar where the bandits make their lair. The door is thick and while the PCs may think they need to be stealthy, it quite effectively muffles any sound they make unless they do something exceptionally loud upstairs. It is obvious this is a door to a cellar. It is opened with an iron pull-ring.

Otherwise the room contains the monk's food and basic religious supplies such as incense and some basic oils. If the PCs want to rummage around, they

can steal a couple weeks' worth of unappetizing food if they are okay with the moral implications of stealing from Tanomoshi.

If Tanomoshi is with the PCs and they think to ask, he will confirm that the bandits make their lair in the cellar. Otherwise, a simple Investigation (Search) / Perception or Hunting (Tracking) / Perception at TN 10 will confirm that there is a good deal of foot traffic through this room and down into the cellar.

#### **The stairs down:**

You make your way down the stairs into the gloom, and a hazy fog fills the air, obscuring your sight. The passage comes to a landing and you almost trip over the slim man in the red and white kimono lurking on one of the landings, intently watching something going on further below. Next to him is a woman clutching a spear, wearing the brown of a peasant and a green armband clearly marking her as a doshin.

The man hastily puts his finger to his lips, and leads you back up the stairs before speaking.

"I am Usagi Saito, and I've been tracking these bandits for weeks. Who are you and what are you doing here? Shh, keep it quiet or they'll hear you."

Presuming the PCs explain themselves; Saito will nod and explain what he's doing here.

Saito nods, and still speaking in a low voice explains, "A couple weeks ago, I found a caravan that had been ambushed by bandits. I followed them until I found their camp. I sent a message to the Scorpion to deal with the village, but the ones that attacked the caravan had only stopped briefly, likely for resupply. I've been following them through the forest and tracked them to this temple. They're down those stairs, I assume this is a storehouse for them."

"I've been listening to them all morning. Few minutes ago, a second group showed up and they started arguing. There must be another entrance to this place. Best I can tell, either they're not happy about the shares of the loot, or one set tried to conceal some of the loot from the other. It sounded heated. With you here, if you're willing to assist me, I figure we'll sweep in and seize the lot of them as soon as they start fighting amongst themselves. Otherwise, well, Satahana and I will do it ourselves. What do you think samurai?"

If the PCs have questions for Saito, he can answer them now. Saito speaks very quickly, when possible in short clipped sentences.

- **What are you doing out here?**  
“Like I said, I’ve been tracking the bandits that hit that caravan. There have been a bunch of attacks on caravans out here lately. I’m not surprised there was a whole village of them. Maybe didn’t expect that many though.”
- **What did you do about the village?**  
“I sent Kotone back with a letter for the Scorpion. They pledged to deal with bandit attacks on the minor clans for us. I certainly didn’t have the troops to take on a village of that size.”
- **Did you see the Tanuki?**  
“Yeah. Satahana played with it for a while. It was cute and quite helpful, once I convinced it to not steal my extra knives.”  
The young woman next to Saito beams happily.
- **Those weren’t bandits / That was a ronin village / Are you sure those were bandits?**  
Saito gives you an angry look, “Of course I was sure. If it were a ronin village, it would be on the maps. Besides, I found an armband at the attack site that matches the symbol the villagers were wearing, and a couple of the bandits up ahead have it on too. It was them.”
- **How many bandits are there?**  
“In the first group? Maybe 13 or so. But another five showed up and started an argument, so that should cut down their numbers some.”
- **Are there any other dangers around?**  
“Not that I’ve seen. If you leave the Kodama and their trees alone, I think this part of the forest is pretty safe.”
- **Do you have a plan?**  
“Yup. We wait for them to start fighting amongst themselves, then once they come to blows, we swing in and clean up whomever survives.”

If the PCs want, they can propose an alternative plan, or accept Saito’s. If they decide to accept Saito’s plan, they should make a cooperative Stealth (Ambush) / Agility roll, which causes no honor loss given the circumstances. Saito will add his skill rank of 3 to whomever is making the roll but will not make the main roll himself.

Saito will not return with the PCs without dealing with the bandits, unless they kidnap him, in which case

adjudicate matters as best you are able, realizing that kidnapping an Emerald Magistrate is outside the scope of reasonable behavior and should be exceedingly dishonorable. Saito will do his best to fight the PCs off in such a case.

If the PCs decide not to help Saito, he and Satahana will attack the bandits alone and die.

If the PCs have forced or ‘convinced’ Tanomoshi to assist them against the bandits, he will grudgingly accompany them down the stairs. If they don’t keep an eye on him before the fight (use your discretion) he will slink off as the ambush begins. If forced (again, use your discretion) to participate in the fight, he will flee if that is at all possible, either back up the stairs and then out into the forest, or past the bandits through the back entrance. If somehow (use your judgement), he is completely prevented from reasonably fleeing, he will fight on the side of the bandits against the PCs. His stats are in the appendix.

## Part Seven: Smokey and the Bandits

As you return to your vantage point at the landing, you can see that the bandits have already begun to fight amongst themselves. A few lay on the ground, already dead or dying, and the original group of 13 has been narrowed to fewer than 8. Of the other group, only one remains, fallen to his knees and bleeding from many wounds. A massive mountain of a man, with an armband displaying the now-familiar talon mon. The leader of the bandits, a short man, stands at eye level with the fallen huge warrior, and you can hear his words clearly, “You are a fool. There is money to be made, and your cut was fair. Besides, the koku was going to a cause, and now I have to clean up after your greed.”  
The giant tries to reply but can only cough up a bit of blood before the shorter man jams a knife into his throat.

The TN to surprise the bandits is 22. Otherwise the bandits act at normal initiative.

There are bandits equal to the number of PCs minus 1, plus Atsumoro. The extra bandits will square off against Saito and Satahana, who will be fine on their own.

If the PCs are all or majority rank 4, the Ronin Bandits have 7k3 damage and Atsumoro has 4k3 damage (see below). If the PCs are all or majority rank 2, then all the Ronin Bandits (except Atsumoro) already have their healthy wound rank filled.

On the first round of combat, Saito will cast Wall of Earth to close off the back entrance to the cellar, preventing the bandits from escaping. The bandits will then fight to the death, refusing to be taken captive. If the PCs do take captives, Saito will show no interest in questioning them, and instead pronounce a sentence of death and Satahana will execute them.

### Atsumoro

A ronin scout with a wide range of skills

**School/Rank:** Generic Ronin Bushi 1-3.

**Initiative:** 7k4

**Armor TN:** 31 (Ashigaru, dual wield knives) \*

**Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 10k3 (Kama, Simple, reroll 1's)

**Damage:** 4k2 (Kama)

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3

Honor: 1.0 Status: 0.0 Glory: 2.0

**Primary Skills:** Athletics 3, Hunting (Tracking) 5, Kenjutsu 3, Knives (Kama, Aiguchi) 7, Stealth 5, Ninjutsu 3

#### **Special Mechanics:**

When suffering a wound TN penalty, may roll Earth during Reactions at TN 5 + 5x wound ranks to ignore wound penalties until next Reactions stage.

+TN when outnumbered, equal to (Enemies – Allies), max of bonus of +6.

Simple Action attacks with katana or knife.

Free raise on Extra Attack.

(High) – Keen Instincts - +0k1 to damage with a Katana or Knife.

### Bandits

Ronin bandits

**School/Rank:** Ronin Bandit, Insight Rank 3.

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Armor TN:** 23 (Ashigaru) **Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 10k3 (Katana, Simple, reroll 1's)

**Damage:** 7k2 (Katana)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2

Honor: 1.0 Status: 0.0 Glory: 0.5

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Katana) 5

#### **Special Mechanics:**

Ronin Bandit - +2k0 to attack rolls when fighting magistrates or other enforcers of the law.

(High) – Keen Instincts - +0k1 to damage with a Katana or Knife

## Part Eight: The Long Road Back

With the bandits defeated, Usagi Saito spends a few minutes looking through the remains before he returns his attention to you. “Yeah, these are definitely the ones that attacked the caravan.”

He pulls a wrapped object from one of the bandit's packs and tosses it at your feet. The blade of a katana pokes through the packaging. “Crab blades disassembled for transport. Meant for Unicorn lands I'd imagine. They probably stashed the armor they stole as well; I figure if we poked around, we'd find it. Maybe some raw materials as well. But I know that maker's mark, those are Kaiu weapons. Maybe not the good stuff, but still pretty good.”

The PCs are free to poke around at the bodies. They all have high quality weapons, and most bear the armband showing the talon insignia.

A search turns up a large amount of koku and obviously stolen goods, including raw crab steel, armor, weapons, rice, and other trade goods.

If the PCs wish, they can talk to Saito about the ronin village. Given what he has seen, he is less sure that the village was entirely bandits, but clearly there was bandit activity based out of the village, so he remains confident that dispersing them was the right decision.

If a PC gets into a long debate with him about it, his opinion on the matter can shift slightly, and a strong argument will cause him to begin to waver, though he will say that he wants to ‘think about it a while’, and is mostly quiet on the trip back to the ronin village.

### The Ronin Village

The road back through the forest seems... easier than the first time. Like the trail wants you to follow it. No branches are underfoot, no roots trip you.

Night falls early, and the sounds of the forest are quiet. The light of dawn splashes over the lush green of the trees, and you notice familiar landmarks. The ronin village is less than an hour away.

As you travel, in mid-morning and perhaps a few minutes away from the village that you left a few days before, a loud sound fills the forest. The unmistakable sound of horses, many many horses.

You quicken your pace and emerge into the clearing to find a strange sight. One side of the glade is filled with

Unicorn samurai, mounted and armored, some with blades drawn and hanging loosely by their sides. The Scorpion are likewise in battle stances, bows strung though not drawn, and many hands resting on swords.

Bayushi Gimon stands facing a man with a long drooping mustache who wears the colors of the Ide. She shouts through her mempo, "I told you, Ide Kazuyuki-san, I had orders from an Emerald..."

The Ide cuts her off, "These are Unicorn lands, Scorpion. You have no right to be here, and you have no right to commit violence against those who dwell here. These ronin had our permission to be here. You are the criminals here."

Gimon notices you, turns slightly, and points to you, "There, there is the magistrate. He and his companions will explain."

Saito blanches white, and takes a step back, clearly unable, unwilling, or maybe simply unready to face such a fraught spotlight.

The Unicorn and Scorpion are in the middle of a standoff, and Usagi Saito does not wish to intervene personally. In fact, it is virtually impossible to get him to do so as he is doing all that he can to avoid panicking and fleeing.

The PCs can ask questions of either side, but neither Gimon nor Kazuyuki are in the mood to be polite and are quite clearly close to blows.

#### Questions for Bayushi Gimon:

- **What happened?**  
We were waiting for the magistrate to get back, and a few minutes ago the Unicorn came charging in with weapons draw. They wanted us to attack, but we held, so Kazuyuki has been shouting at me since and trying to arrest us.
- **What did your orders say?**  
Here (give the players **Handout 3** if you haven't already). They are quite clear. An Emerald Magistrate asked us to come and clean up the bandits, so we did.
- **What does Kazuyuki want?**  
He wants to arrest all of us, and apparently to drag us back to Shiro Moto for a trial. He's trying to start a war.
- **Are you willing to compromise?**  
Compromise? I'm not willing to let my troops be arrested on the say-so of some Unicorn clan magistrate when we're on orders in unaligned lands.

- **Can you leave?**  
Sure. Saito-sama wants us to march out of here, we'll go. But I don't think the Unicorn want to let that happen. Heck, the Unicorn want the prisoners they can have them.
- **Are you sure these were bandits?**  
They've sure been claiming they aren't bandits, but the alternative is being strung up so that doesn't count for much. But it also wasn't my call to make. An Emerald Magistrate said they were, so they are. If the Magistrate and the Unicorn want to quibble over it, then it's their call.
- **Are you sure these are unaligned lands?**  
The letter I got from Saito was clear, these are unaligned lands, and the maps I had on me show the Unicorn border is slightly north of here and doesn't extend this deep into the forest anyway. So, yeah, these are unaligned lands.

#### Questions for Ide Kazuyuki:

- **What happened?**  
The Scorpion have invaded our lands and attacked residents of our territory. A few of them made their way to a waystation after the Scorpion's illegal invasion and reported the situation, so I gathered forces to arrest these Scorpion criminals.
- **So, these aren't bandits? / Who are the villagers?**  
No, they are a ronin band, the Iron Talons. They have been fighting local bandits and training. The Unicorn granted them permission to settle these to make their home. The Scorpion must release their prisoners at once.
- **What do you want?**  
The Scorpion are all under arrest and must come to Shiro Moto to face trial. The prisoners must be released and allowed to either rebuild their village or join their compatriots in the North.
- **Are you willing to compromise?**  
No. The Scorpion **will** come with us. They have murdered the citizens of our lands. If they refuse, then they will die.
- **Can you leave?**  
I will not leave without satisfaction. This matter will be resolved, one way or another.
- **Are you sure these were Ronin / they seemed like bandits?**  
Yes, I am positive. Surely, a force that has done nothing but train to fight bandits would

not turn to banditry itself. That is preposterous.

- **Are you sure these are Unicorn lands?**  
Of course, I am sure. I have a map right here which shows our territory going well south of here. This village is well marked upon it.

It is up to the PCs to support one side or another, to try to convince both sides to stand down, or to simply leave without resolving the conflict.

If the PCs seem stumped, they can feel free to roll Lore: Law at TN 15. Success informs them that both sides have a point; these are likely Unicorn lands, which makes the Scorpion's actions technically illegal, from a certain point of view. Likewise, the Scorpion have a reasonable claim that they were acting under the authority of the Emerald Magistrates.

Once they have chosen a side to support, there are three basic ways to convince the other to leave. Talking them down (ineffective against Gimon), a duel to the death against their commander, which Usagi Saito can authorize on the spot, or a pitched battle between the two sides.

If the PCs seem to be taking unreasonably long to decide, Ide Kazuyuki will lose patience with the situation and demand that Usagi Saito answer for his actions, challenging him to a death duel. The idea of a duel frankly terrifies Saito. The PCs can either opt to fight on Saito's behalf (see: Team Scorpion – Duel), or they can argue that Saito has a year and a day to answer the challenge and leave in a hurry (see: Slink off).

### **Slink off**

You and Usagi Saito turn, and leave the village, letting the two sides continue their argument. Soon, the sounds of battle fill the air, and then stillness once more. You make your way back to Shinden Osano-Wo completely untroubled.

You slink off without resolving the situation.

### **Stand down**

Convincing both sides to stand down is exceptionally difficult. Both commanders believe they are in the right, and to a degree they both are. Emphasizing this, or another well-spoken argument will garner a free raise. The roll to convince both commanders to stand down and leave peacefully is Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at TN 55.

Success:

After a long pause of glaring at each other, Bayushi Gimon seems to crack first. "I acknowledge that our intelligence in this matter could have been faulty, Unicorn-san. My orders were clear, and I followed them, and I make no apologies for that, but perhaps they were based on a misunderstanding."

Kazuyuki smiles, almost smirks, but with a glance at the magistrate composes himself, "I understand. I agree that you had what you believed to be valid orders and are not the responsible party. I will be filing a grievance with the Office of the Emerald Magistrates."

With a glare at Usagi Saito, the Ide turns and walks off. The bushi of both sides seem to breathe a small sigh of relief.

Failure:

The only consequence for failing this option is the PCs must make another selection, which could be to support one side or the other, or to simply walk away.

## **Team Scorpion**

### **Talking:**

Convincing Ide Kazuyuki to stand down is difficult. Both commanders believe they are in the right, and to a degree they both are. Ide Kazuyuki is also supremely confident in his own abilities and judgement, smugly so.

Emphasizing that the responsible party is Usagi Saito, not Bayushi Gimon, is probably the most effective way and will result in a Free Raise. Also, presenting evidence that the ronin camp did in fact harbor bandit activity will offer a Free Raise.

The roll to convince him to stand down and leave peacefully is Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at TN 50.

Success:

After a long pause of glaring at each other, Ide Kazuyuki's resolve seems to crack. With a glance at the magistrate he nods his head. "I understand. I agree that you had what you believed to be valid orders and are not the responsible party. I will be filing a grievance with the Office of the Emerald Magistrates."

With a glare at Usagi Saito, the Ide turns and walks off. The bushi of both sides seem to breathe a small sigh of relief.

Failure:

The only consequence for failing this option is the PCs must make another selection, which could be to support one side or the other, or to simply walk away.

### Duel:

Ide Kazuyuki smirks as Usagi Saito draws a circle in the dirt. "So, which one of you will I kill to prove that I am right?"

### Ide Kazuyuki

An overzealous magistrate of the Unicorn, tall and conventionally handsome. **He uses his scimitar if attacked in the open, or his katana in a duel.**

**School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 3

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Armor TN:** 20 (25 in armor)      **Reduction:** 0 or 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 9k4 + ½ opposing wound penalties (Katana or Scimitar, Simple)

**Damage:** 7k3 (Scimitar) or 7k2 (Katana)

Air 3    Earth 3    Fire 4    Water 3    Void 4

Honor: 5.5    Status: 3.0    Glory: 5.0

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 5, Iaijutsu 5, Lore: Law 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Lore: Heraldry 6

**Advantages/Disadvantages:**    Social    Position (Unicorn Magistrate), Swift 1

**Special Mechanics:** Moto Bushi 3

**Significant Dice Pools:**

Assessment: 8k3

Focus: 10k5+9 or 10k6+9 (assessment win)

Strike:8k3 (uses the 1k1+4 bonus on damage)

If the PCs win:

The Unicorn stare for a moment at the corpse of Ide Kazuyuki at your feet, collect his swords, then as one turn and ride off.

Bayushi Gimon removes her mempo, and sighs. "I had hoped it would not come to that but thank you for resolving that with a minimum of bloodshed. I will be reporting the Unicorn's actions to my superiors."

If the PCs lose:

Kazuyuki laughs aloud, "As I said, and as the Celestial Heavens have ordained, my position is correct. Surrender now, Scorpion!"

Suddenly, a massive cloud of smoke blasts forth from one of the buildings, and you and most of the Unicorn double over coughing.

When it clears, the Scorpion are gone.

Kazuyuki looks around, enraged, then his eyes fall upon you and Saito, "Criminals!" before he can take another step further, Usagi Saito steps between you and the Ide. "We are leaving, Ide-san. You have no claim against these samurai."

Kazuyuki rocks back on his heels before spitting out "I will be informing my superiors about what happened today. The Emerald Champion will hear about this." The Unicorn turn and ride off.

### Skirmish:

If the PCs start a fight with the Unicorn, the Scorpion will draw swords and fight alongside them. The situation devolves into a chaotic melee, and the PCs find themselves facing off against Ide Kazuyuki and (PC's - 1) Moto Bushi. If the PCs are all or majority rank 2, there is two fewer Moto Bushi. If they are all or majority rank 4, the Moto Bushi are wearing Riding Armor and so have an additional 7 armor TN while mounted.

### Moto Guards

**School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 3

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor)      **Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 9k4 + ½ opposing wound penalties (Katana or Scimitar, Simple)

**Damage:** 7k3 (Scimitar) or 7k2 (Katana)

Air 3    Earth 3    Fire 4    Water 3    Void 4

Honor: 5.5    Status: 3.0    Glory: 5.0

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 5

**Special Mechanics:** Moto Bushi 3

If the PCs win:

Eventually the Scorpion surround the remaining Unicorn, before Bayushi Gimon suddenly calls a halt.

She removes her mempo, and shouts to the Unicorn, "There is no need for further bloodshed. Your leader is dead. Take his swords and withdraw."

The Unicorn pause and nod in agreement. The Scorpion help them collect the swords of the dead, and



then without another word the Unicorn turn and ride away.

If the PCs lose:

The Unicorn surround the remaining Scorpion, preparing to finish them off.

One of the Unicorn yells out, “Surrender now, Scorpion!”

Suddenly, a massive cloud of smoke blasts forth from one of the buildings, and you and most of the Unicorn double over coughing.

When it clears, the Scorpion are gone.

The Unicorn looks around, enraged, then his eyes fall upon you and Saito, “Criminals!” before he can take another step further, Usagi Saito steps between you and the Ide. “We are leaving. You have no claim against these samurai.”

The Unicorn rocks back on his heels before spitting out “I will be informing my superiors about what happened today. The leaders of my clan and the Emerald Champion will know what you have done.”

## Team Unicorn

### Talking:

Talking Bayushi Gimon down is impossible. She will not allow her troops to be taken hostage by the Unicorn.

### Duel:

Bayushi Gimon sighs as Usagi Saito begins to draw a dueling ring in the dirt. “I did not wish to see the matter end like this, Samurai-san. But if this is what will save the lives of my troops, then so be it.”

### Bayushi Gimon

A Scorpion commander of middle rank, sent to eliminate a bandit village

**School/Rank:** Bayushi Bushi 4

**Initiative:** 9k5

**Armor TN:** 30 or 35 (Light Armor)

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 9k4 + 5 (Katana, Simple, reroll 1's)

**Damage:** 7k2 (Katana)

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 3

Honor: 4.0 Status: 3.0 Glory: 4.0

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Iaijutsu 3, Courtier 2, Etiquette 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 2, Battle 4, Investigation 3

### Special Mechanics:

+5 Armor TN against any opponent with lower initiative.

Free raise on attacks.

Once per round, choose a target. If you hit, they are fatigued. Reactions TN 25 Earth to end.

Simple action Melee attacks

### Significant Dice Pools:

Assessment: 7k4

Focus: 7k4+3 or 8k5+3 (assessment), voids (included)

Strike: 7k4 (uses the 1k1+3 bonus on damage)

If the PCs win:

The Scorpion watch in disbelief as their commander lies on the ground at your feet.

The Unicorn surround the remaining Scorpion, preparing to force them to come to Shiro Moto to stand trial. Suddenly, a massive cloud of smoke blasts forth from one of the buildings, and you and most of the Unicorn double over coughing.

When it clears, the Scorpion are gone. The only Scorpion that remains is the corpse of their commander at your feet. Kazuyuki strokes his mustache thoughtfully then nods at you. “I will be informing my superiors about what happened today. Thank you for your assistance in doing what was right. Carry the Fortunes.”

If the PCs lose:

The Unicorn stare for a moment at the corpse of your compatriot at Bayushi Gimon's feet, then as one turn and ride off. Ide Kazuyuki glares at you over his shoulder as he does so.

Bayushi Gimon removes her mempo, and growls in a low voice. “Take your magistrate and go. I will be reporting your actions to my superior, but I am sure this incident was caused by the Unicorn.”

You can feel the eyes of the Scorpion on your backs as you leave the village far behind.

### Skirmish:

If the PCs start a fight with the Scorpion, the Unicorn patrol will draw swords and fight alongside them. The situation devolves into a chaotic melee, and the PCs find themselves facing off against Bayushi Gimon,

and (PC's - 1) guards, half of the guards round up use katana, the other half use bows and fleshcutter arrows. If the PCs are all or majority rank 2, there is two fewer Bayushi Guards. If they are all or majority rank 4, the Bayushi Guards are Rank 4 and can make Simple Action attacks with their Katana (not their bows).

### Bayushi Guards

**School/Rank:** Bayushi Bushi 3

**Initiative:** 7k4

**Armor TN:** 25 or 30 (light armor)

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 9k3 + 5 (Katana, Complex) or 9k3 + 5 (Bow, Complex, doubles target's armor TN bonus)

**Damage:** 7k3 (Flesh cutters) or 7k2 (Katana)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2

Honor: 3.5 Status: 1.0 Glory: 2.0

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 5

**Special Mechanics:**

+5 Armor TN against any opponent with lower initiative.

Free raise on attacks.

Once per round, choose a target. If you hit, they are fatigued. Reactions TN 25 Earth to end.

If the PCs win:

The Unicorn surround the remaining Scorpion, preparing to finish them off. Suddenly, a massive cloud of smoke blasts forth from one of the buildings, and you and most of the Unicorn double over coughing.

When it clears, the remaining Scorpion are gone. Kazuyuki strokes his mustache thoughtfully then nods at you. "I will be informing my superiors about what happened today. Thank you for your assistance in doing what was right. Carry the Fortunes."

If the PCs lose:

Eventually you find yourself surrounded by the Scorpion, unable to fight your way out of the encampment.

A scorpion bushi removes his mempo, and growls in a low voice. "Take your magistrate and go. I will be reporting your actions to my superior, but I am sure this incident was caused by the Unicorn."

The Scorpion glares at the corpse of Ide Kazuyuki, lying in the dirt as you leave the encampment far behind you.

## Conclusion

If the PCs return to Shinden Osano-Wo with Usagi Saito:

Otomo Yashi listens quietly to your report, her hands carefully folded.

After you finish, Usagi Saito nods in agreement. Yashi takes a sip of tea and then nods in return. "I appreciate that you found Saito-san alive and well. Thank you for your service, samurai. Doubly so that you assisted him in completing his investigation. The imperial families commend you. I hope the rest of the season finds you well."

She stands up from the table at the inn and walks swiftly out the door. Unfortunately, you have missed the remainder of the Abare festival, and the time has come for you all depart for your respective lands. The various entourages are abuzz with how enjoyable the festival was. Apparently, the monks put on a great spectacle of taiko drumming, sake, fireworks, and dancing. Everyone that attended was in awe.

If Usagi Saito was killed (because he fought the bandits alone):

Otomo Yashi listens quietly to your report, her hands carefully folded and her face an expressionless mask.

Her voice betrays no emotion as she finishes a sip of tea. "Well. It is unfortunate that Saito-san was killed, but death in the line of duty is no dishonor. I appreciate that you did all you could to find and retrieve him. Thank you for your service, samurai. I hope the rest of the season finds you well."

She stands up from the table at the inn and walks swiftly out the door. Unfortunately, you have missed the remainder of the Abare festival, and the time has come for you all depart for your respective lands. The various entourages are abuzz with how enjoyable the festival was. Apparently, the monks put on a great spectacle of taiko drumming, sake, fireworks, and dancing. Everyone that attended was in awe.

If after the resolution of the Scorpion / Unicorn standoff the PCs choose to confront Saito with the knowledge that he caused the death of innocent Ronin, he will at first be resolute; he was sure they were bandits, and besides, who cares, they were just ronin.

Appeals to Compassion are unmoving, however, he can be swayed by arguments that he failed as a

magistrate. Convincing him of such requires a roll of Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at TN 45. Feel free to add one free raise if you feel the PC has made a strong argument that he has failed his responsibilities or position.

If swayed, he will agree to either step down as a magistrate or commit seppuku in remorse after delivering his report to Otomo Yashi, depending on the preference of the convincing PC.

## The End

### Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 XP
Good Roleplaying:	1 XP
Finding Usagi Saito:	1 XP
Resolving the Unicorn / Scorpion Standoff:	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	4 XP

For the purposes of the fourth XP, any conclusion to part 7 other than 'Slink Off' is considered 'Resolving the standoff', regardless of which side wins or if the PCs themselves lose.

#### Favors

If the PCs return Usagi Saito alive, they receive 1 Favor.

#### Honor

Assist Otomo Yashi: H4

The GM may grant up to 2 extra points of Honor to a PC for actions not detailed in the module, though no PC should gain more than 2 points in this fashion.

#### Glory

Defeating the bandits:	G4
Killing Ide Kazuyuki:	G5
Losing a duel or skirmish to Ide Kazuyuki:	L2
Cheating in a duel or skirmish with Ide Kazuyuki:	I8

#### Allies and Enemies

If the PCs resolve the standoff in favor of the Unicorn, and they had Sworn Enemy: Ide Kazuyuki, they may remove it from their sheets.

#### Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs kill Ide Kazuyuki, they gain Noticed: Moto Sartaq if they did not already have it.

If a PC steals the kiau steel or the silvery-white metal from the blacksmith, contact the **Admin**.

#### GM Reporting

- 1) Was Ide Kazuyuki killed?
- 2) Did Usagi Saito survive until he made it back to Shinden Osano-Wo?
- 3) Was the Scorpion / Unicorn standoff resolved, and if so in favor of whom?
  - a. Not resolved
  - b. Scorpion
  - c. Unicorn
  - d. Both sides talked down.
- 4) Did Usagi Saito (select one):
  - a. Remain a magistrate
  - b. Commit seppuku
  - c. Step down
  - d. N/A (died before reaching Yashi)

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

## Appendix #1: NPC stats you shouldn't need

### Tanomoshi

A crazy monk

**School/Rank:** Order of the Wind 3

**Initiative:** 7k4

**Armor TN:** 25 (29 in Defense Stance)

**Reduction:** 0

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

**Attack:** 10k3 (Unarmed, Complex)

**Damage:** 3k1 + Kiho (Unarmed)

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 4

Honor: 1.0 Status: 0.5 Glory: 0.0

**Primary Skills:** Athletics 5, Stealth 5, Jujutsu 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 6, Investigation (Interrogation) 5

**Special Mechanics:**

Essence of the Wind - Any effect that targets you and attempts to influence your behavior, whether it be a spell, a courtier Technique, a social Skill or Advantage, or any other mechanic, requires an additional Void Point to take effect. (However, this can bypass the normal limit on spending one Void Point per Round for enhancement effects.)

Kiho – Liar's Strength (Mystic, Internal) – Gains rolled and kept dice on all unarmed damage rolls equal to the difference between the target's Honor Rank and 5. (So 1k1 to Honor 4 or 6, 4k4 to Honor 9 or 1, etc)

### Usagi Saito

An inexperienced Emerald Magistrate

**School/Rank:** Fuzake Shugenja 3

**Initiative:** 7k4

**Armor TN:** 32 (Ashigaru, defense stance)

**Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out)

**Attack:** 8k3 (Aiguchi, Complex)

**Damage:** 4k1 (Aiguchi)

Air 4 Earth 4 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 3

Honor: 3.5 Status: 4.5 Glory: 3.0

**Primary Skills:** Athletics 3, Hunting (Tracking) 5, Knives (Aiguchi) 5, Stealth (Ambush, Sneaking) 3, Lore (Law) 1, Spellcraft 5, Investigation (Search, Interrogation) 5, Defense 2

**Special Mechanics:**

When casting a spell that heals wounds or cures poison or Illness, can expend Earth spell slots for free raises.

Affinity Earth / Deficiency Fire.

Relevant spells: Earth Becomes Sky, Embrace of Kenro Ji-Jin, By the Light of the Moon.

Use your judgement as to whether Saito would or would not have a specific spell. In general, he has spells that assist him with investigations and combat. He frequently relies on the kami to help him find criminals and determine guilt (even though he shouldn't), because frankly his knowledge of the law and proper judicial procedure is sketchy at best. He has no scruples about using ambushes, fleeing if overmatched, and generally not fighting fair.

## **Player Handout #1: News From the Empire**

Samurai of Rokugan,

The late summer months have been busy! I will spare you the news of rebuilding which is common to every town and city along the coasts, for such discussions would take more time than either of us have to spare.

In recognition of the unfortunately canceled Annual Kyuden Gennai Fireworks Festival, the Dragon, at the direction of the Imperial Herald, have sent a group of hanabi exhibitors to the Phoenix to ensure that despite the loss of their castle, they are still able to hold their annual festival. Several venues are being considered to host the festival until Kyuden Gennai can be rebuilt.

The Unicorn have declared a plan to march through the Dragon lands to aid the Owl in their war with the Scorpion. Imperial Chancellor Otomo Kazuko has responded by 'suggesting' Imperial Arbitration of the matter; apparently the Unicorn swore a year of peace with the Dragon and so their intended path might cause them dishonor by accidentally failing to live up to their word. Hazumi is publicly incensed with this development, decrying 'imperial meddling' and 'abuse of position' by the new Imperial Herald. Still, the Unicorn have not marched, though supposedly they stand ready to do so.

I apologize, I have tried my best to bring you the news that I am sure you are most interested in hearing, but I was unable to acquire any information at all about the state of rebuilding in the Phoenix lands. Apparently the Phoenix are turning away anyone they determine to be 'nonessential to rebuilding our homes.' Turning that many Monks and Samurai away has caused quite a stir! In his wisdom, Seppun Kazetora has declared that he will travel to Kyuden Isawa, to find a way that these people might resume their religious pilgrimages.

Like the air after a storm, tensions between the Crab and Mantis seem to have finally broken. Both sides seem to have taken a step back from war, and neither committed to any military engagements this summer. The Shogun has sent the 4th legion to aid the Mantis in their rebuilding, and the Yoritomo have publicly stated they will commit additional ships to "law enforcement activities" to ensure safe travel until any remaining navigational hazards have passed.

It is with great pleasure that I further inform you that plans are in motion to provide housing for any refugees displaced by the decimation of the Phoenix coastline. The herald organization and the Dragon have been preparing a plan to open the Dragon borders and locate a suitable site for anyone needing to find succor or a new place to live after the great tragedy. Bushido demands that we demonstrate Compassion in both Word and Deed, after all.

Carry the Fortunes my friends,

Otomo Yusuke

## **Player Handout #2: Usagi Saito's Report**

Otomo-sama,

I hope this report finds you well.

I have come across another destroyed caravan in the unaligned lands. Three wagons, completely shorn of anything of value. All members of the caravan seem to have been killed or fled. A few small fires still burned, so I believe this attack was quite recent. I suspect the involvement of bandits.

Unlike the last one, they have left enough of a trail that I believe I can follow them. It seems to lead North, towards Scorpion lands or perhaps the Shinomen Mori.

I will send a follow up report in a few days.

Carry the Fortunes,

Usagi Saito

### **Player Handout #3: Request for Aid**

Bayushi-san,

I hope this letter finds you well.

Under the terms of our agreement with the Scorpion, I am formally requesting military aid to deal with a bandit encampment that threatens unaligned, minor clan, and Scorpion lands.

Approximately 10 miles northwest of Tadaroki's Bridge, or 4 miles east of the Grey Stones, there is a path into the Shinomen Mori. The path is clear, and I have marked the entrance with a knife.

In the unaligned lands, two hours travel into the forest, you will find a large bandit village. Please see that it is destroyed or that the bandits are scattered.

I am continuing in pursuit of a smaller group of the bandits; I believe they are related to an attack upon a caravan. I shall rejoin you at the site of the bandit encampment once I have dealt with the smaller bandit group.

Carry the Fortunes,  
Usagi Saito, Emerald Magistrate

<Seal of the Emerald Magistrates>

## **Player Handout #4: Kabo's Journal**

The pages describe the life of the monk Kabo, and from the dates it was written over a hundred years ago. The first pages contain his ruminations on the tao, the meaning of trust in Rokugan, and how faithfulness and reliability are reflected in Bushido.

A few pages in, the journal begins to mention strange dreams, repetitive nightmares. Dreams about running through the forest, fires, and the other monks abandoning him to be lost in the forest, or him being forced to abandon them as the forest fires consume them.

Eventually, Kabo mentions talking to the abbot about the dreams, and beginning to drink a calmativ tea. For another twenty pages, the book resumes very dry and scholarly topics. Kabo begins writing detailed perspectives on what loyalty means to all of the Great Clans of Rokugan, and how they could improve their karma through increased diligence. A notable exception is the Lion clan, for which Kabo has nothing but praise, and holds up as a model for the other clans. He has particularly uncharitable things to say about the Crane, as he views them as just as disloyal as the Scorpion, but believes they hypocritically hide it behind the barest trappings of honor.

Then the descriptions of the dreams begin to return. The forest fires, and Kabo begins to mention seeing a strange red four-armed figure, over and over in his dreams. Kabo talks about how fire has begun to occupy his waking thoughts and emphasize how fire is an interesting reflection of the concept of loyalty; it is both a servant of humanity and its enemy. But fire is always loyal to its own nature as fire.

Eventually, the journal ends on an ominous note about 'knowing what he has to do'.