

Pearls of Wisdom

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**An Intro-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne**

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Combat, Intrigue, Introductory, Travel

The dreams of a Rokugani village on the edge of the Empire are filled with endless screaming. It will be up to the PCs to silence the ceaseless howling - or be forced to watch a community fall to madness.

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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.

GM's Note: *This adventure contains references to suicide and mental illness.* Consider giving your players a warning to this effect before play begins, so as to be certain all players are comfortable and able to enjoy the game at all times.

Adventure Background and Summary

Several months ago, the Bearers of Water tribe of the Yobanjin entered into a wary alliance with a faction within the military apparatus of the Merenae nation. This faction, eager to see Merenae's influence spread and the downfall of its neighbors, has offered a variety of valuables - including advances in metallurgy, new armorsmithing techniques, and even some firearms - to the Bearers of Water in exchange for knowledge of the unique flying wyrms that some Yobanjin shamans can summon and bind into service. Though this was initially simply a desire for a flying cavalry to deploy against Merenae's foes, a discovery by a Merenae cleric changed that - for the worse.

The cleric, Padre Rafael Torrido, is both a man of faith and an inspired machinist. One of the Merenae specialists sent to Yobanjin lands to learn about the wyrms, Padre Rafael discovered that the wyrms experience excruciating and constant pain after they are bound, and their agony has a spiritual resonance. As Padre Rafael believes the wyrms to be unholy creatures, fit only to be bound and serve the righteous, their suffering did not overly bother him, but he soon realized that it might be harnessed. Over several months of trial and error experimentation, Padre Rafael slowly developed a means of amplifying the wyrm's distress and projecting it outward, as well as shielding his allies from the effect. The result is an area more than twenty miles across where any intelligent mind experiences constant nightmares whenever it tries to sleep, hours of painful screams that strip restfulness away from any attempt at slumber.

Unfortunately, Padre Rafael's new weapon of psychological warfare is even more effective than he realizes. Though the Merenae and their Bearers of Water allies are protected against the wyrm's broadcasts, the surrounding Yobanjin tribes are not - nor are the Rokugani villagers just across the border. A small town called Yushosha Seido Mura has been suffering continual nightmares for several weeks; the effects of constant sleep deprivation are beginning to have lethal consequences. These consequences draw the attention of the rest of the Empire, and specifically of Naga scholar Moshi Saori.

Saori, hearing about the events in Yushosha Seido Mura, mistakenly concludes that the source of the psychic screaming might be a Naga Abomination, based on only partially-understood records of how Abominations affect the Akasha. Accordingly, she recruits the PCs to aid her in finding and capturing, or possibly killing, the Abomination.

The PCs have to first journey to Yushosha Seido Mura to learn more about what's happening to the residents, as well as receive permission to cross the border, once they learn that the dreams all seem to carry a sense of direction. They may do so either by convincing the local lord, Mirumoto Ganko, to admit that he doesn't have any plan for dealing with the situation, or by less honorable means, such as having themselves smuggled across the border by black market traders operating in Yushosha Seido Mura.

Once in Yobanjin territory, the PCs begin to make their way through the Great Wall of the North Mountains. As night falls, the group reaches the southernmost Yobanjin village. It has been heavily damaged, and if the PCs can make contact with the survivors, they learn that the villagers, members of the Carriers of the Fire tribe, have been experiencing horrible nightmares for weeks, and several of the villagers have gone mad from the psychic strain. Regardless, Saori has a Naga pearl that she believes will lead her to the Abomination, but it does not seem to be working. Instead, the dreams themselves provide the PCs with the direction they need. After struggling through the mountains, the group at last reaches Padre Rafael's workshop and laboratory.

Once there, they must battle through the Bearers of Water and Merenae defenders of the workshop before they can confront Rafael. The cleric can do little to stop the destruction of his work, and the PCs can take him into their custody, turn him over to the Carriers of the Fire, simply kill him, or let him go. Disappointed with the lack of Naga connection but pleased to have

ended this threat to the people of Rokugan, Saori leads the PCs back southward to the Empire.

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. Take note of any PC with Moshi Saori as an Ally or Sworn Enemy, as well as any Advantages, Disadvantages, or Skills they might possess related to gaijin.

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. However, as this is an Introductory module, there is no Glory loss for inactivity.

Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module. The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** will vary depending on the time frame. Failure on this roll causes the PC to gain a point of the Shadowlands Taint. If a character is growing close to being Lost (Shadowlands Taint Rank 4.5+) , it is recommended that the player have another PC ready to replace them.

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, any ronin PCs lose half of their koku. This cannot reduce their accumulated wealth below an amount of bu equal to their highest Skill.

Experience Expenditure

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

Introduction

The player characters begin the game at the Peace of the Morning teahouse, located in Toshi Ranbo wo Shien Shite Reigasho, more usually called simply Toshi Ranbo, the home of the Hantei family and capital of the lands of the Owl Clan. Each of the characters has been sent there at the command of their daimyo (or, in the case of ronin, at the offer of work offered by Moshi Saori herself) for the oh-so-exciting task of assisting the historian with her research for several weeks. If any of the PCs actually has Saori as an Ally, they might not be entirely pleased to learn that she requested them by name for this task, for all that it is theoretically an honor to be so selected.

The Peace of the Morning teahouse is as beautiful and tranquil as its name would suggest, suitable for an inn that has hosted members of the Imperial Court many times over the decades of its existence. As each of you is served a steaming and redolent cup of fine Yasuki tea, your host, Moshi Saori, smiles brightly at you.

Saori is short and dark-haired, dressed stylishly in a kimono that reflects both the white and brown of the

Owl lands you are visiting and the centipedes and mantises that are the symbols of her family and Clan. A shugenja's scroll satchel rests on her hip, bearing the mon of the Moshi family. A few lines around her eyes and stray strands of gray in her carefully-arranged bun are the only signs of age you can see.

"I'm afraid there has been a change of plans," she says apologetically. "As you are probably aware, the Phoenix Clan sealed its borders some months ago. I had hoped we would leave in the morning for the Library of the Fiery Centipede near Kyuden Asako, as that is a Moshi family holding that is merely located within the Phoenix lands. Centuries-old treaties and Imperial law both guarantee passage for Moshi samurai to and from the Library except in cases of open war between my Clan and the Phoenix. However, word has reached me that the Phoenix have chosen not to honor these obligations, and moreover, will not even offer an explanation for the refusal." Saori's mouth tightens briefly as she attempts to mask her anger before moving on. "Since my original intent has proven... temporarily infeasible... I have decided not to waste the opportunity presented by your presence. We will instead pursue a different research lead. Before I go into more detail, though, I would like to learn more about my fellow researchers."

Saori then asks each PC to introduce themselves and to tell one of their most Glorious accomplishments, beginning with any PCs she has not met before. She asks those she has met before to speak of any adventures or achievements they might have had since she last encountered them. Saori is a skilled conversationalist who enjoys learning more about people, but will regretfully move on to business fairly quickly.

"If you have not already heard of my reputation," Saori begins, "suffice it to say that I am one of the most learned scholars in the Empire about our allied people, the Naga. That said, however, what I know of them is significantly outweighed by what I do not." She shrugs modestly before continuing. "Four days ago, I received a letter from a correspondent of mine in the Dragon lands." She produces the letter, written in a workmanlike hand, and begins to read from it. "'Of special note to you, Moshi-san, is a rumor I heard today from the leader of one of my caravans. You've often spoken of the relationship between the Naga's peculiar shared awareness and the Realm of Dreams. I don't know if it's related to your studies, but you might be interested to hear that there is a village in the north of Kousou province called Yushosha Seido Mura that is currently being plagued by nightmares. My own

merchants said these nightmares came nightly - always of agonized screaming - each night they stayed there, and the residents said the nightmares had come each night for weeks.'"

She looks up at you all, eyes bright with both enthusiasm and worry. "My friend is correct: the Naga all partake in a group consciousness called the Akasha, and I do believe it is connected to Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams. Moreover, this reference to continual screaming sounded familiar, and after some reviewing of my own records, I located the information. I believe Yushosha Seido Mura might be plagued by a Naga Abomination."

Abominations, she goes on to explain, are twisted and corrupted Naga whose origins remain obscure, at least to her, but that are usually encountered north of Rokugan proper, often in the lands of the Burning Sands. They possess numerous physical deformities, including possessing legs rather than the snake tails of ordinary Naga, and are without exception deeply hostile to any and all life, Naga or otherwise. And every reference she's ever found to them in Naga writings mentions their effect on the Akasha: an endless scream.

"I have no way to be certain, at least not yet, nor do I know why this Abomination would be affecting the dreams of humans as well as Naga, but regardless, we cannot miss the chance to investigate. During my research, I have collected and discovered the uses for several Naga pearls, the focus objects they use for their magics. In my possession is one I believe I can use to lead us directly to an Abomination, if we can get close enough. This is more than a historical curiosity, however; my friend also says that several local farmers have fled to escape the dreams, and no one has had any restful sleep in weeks. These people are suffering, and we may be able to help them."

If a character meets a TN 15 on an **Intelligence / Medicine** roll, they can recall instances of poor souls who were cursed by Yume-do not to be able to sleep; without exception, if the curse is not lifted, death - often preceded by terrible insanity - is the rapid result.

A Centipede's Wrath

If one or more of the PCs has Moshi Saori as a Sworn Enemy, she offers them only the barest civility throughout the introduction scene. She will not violate courtesy, but considers the PC's presence here to be an insult from their daimyo, one she will answer in kind when the opportunity presents itself. In the meantime,

however, she intends to focus on the bigger challenges facing her and the group over petty personal grievances. That said, however, she will not cast Rejuvenating Vapors or Path to Inner Peace on any Sworn Enemy she possesses, and any time she uses the Medicine skill on them she will keep low dice. Moreover, at the adventure's climax, she will take more direct action against them, as detailed in "An Ill Wind" in Part Three.

Part One: The Nightmares of Dragons

The next morning, the PCs and Saori depart for Yushosha Seido Mura, also known as Champion's Shrine Village. On the fastest horses Saori can provide - a crossbred stock of native Rokugani "ponies" and Unicorn-supplied riding steeds - the trip to the Dragon border takes about a day, and it is another two to reach Yushosha Seido Mura. The village is one of the northernmost in the Empire, and high in the foothills of the Great Wall of the North Mountains to boot, so Saori makes certain that each PC has suitable clothing for the climate. Saori's travel papers, identifying her as a scholar and historian, carry no small amount of weight with both the Owl and the Dragon, and the first two days of the journey pass smoothly. On the second evening, though, near the edge of Kousou Province, the PCs each experience vague, troubling dreams that they cannot quite recall on waking. Though there is no effect as yet, it is a portent of what is to come.

The following day, just before noon, the PCs arrive in Champion Shrine Village. Yushosha Seido Mura occupies a steep-sided valley, with a single road snaking through it to the east and west. On the northern slope of the valley, a small keep overlooks both road and village, while to the south, a large samurai's estate dominates the view. In the center, at the heart of both the village and the valley, is the shrine to former Dragon Clan Champion Togashi Yokuni which gives the village its name. (It is said by the locals that Yokuni was born in this village, and even that Yokuni himself once visited the village and the shrine built to honor him during his rule.) It looks to have perhaps three or four hundred residents, and for a town of its size, possesses a surprising number of inns and teahouses - an artifact of the town's location on the only road to reach Shiro Togashi from the east. Outside the village, the valley slopes are terraced for farming for most of a mile in every direction.

When the group arrives in Yushosha Seido Mura, Saori presents her mon and the PCs' chops to the Mirumoto guards at the edge of the village, then sets

the PCs to learning what they can about the nightmares while she makes arrangements for their accommodations.

Questioning the locals reveals several pieces of information automatically. Indeed, it is difficult not to notice the intense, almost painful malaise that hangs over the village and its people. The PCs can quickly confirm that the nightmares have plagued the town for almost a month now, and are all basically the same: endless, unceasing screams of purest suffering. No one seems to be spared them, and it is rare for anyone to get more than one night's sleep in three, however fitful and unpleasant. Many of the village's houses now stand empty, as their owners have simply fled with their families to escape the continual mental onslaught. In addition to the agonized cries, however, the villagers all mention a sense of direction - the impression that whoever or whatever is crying out is somewhere to the north, beyond the border of the Empire.

Beyond this, PCs may attempt an **Investigation (Interrogation) or Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll to learn more of the happenings in Yushosha Seido Mura. Dragon PCs gain a Free Raise on this roll.

Rumors

- TN 10: The local lord, Mirumoto Ganko, has been struggling to address the crisis afflicting his people. He has called upon the monks at Yushosha Seido to intervene, but their efforts have so far proven fruitless.
- TN 15: Ganko is an extremely prideful and stubborn man; though he cares deeply for the people of his province, he makes it a point to resolve problems within his lands without calling on outsiders, even the rest of the Dragon Clan, for aid.
- TN 20: The crisis is even worse than it appears at first glance: two locals have committed suicide in the last week, and several more were injured when an exhausted forester failed to secure several logs stored on one of the valley slopes. Ganko does not want this information being spread around, though.
- TN 25: The Yobanjin tribes across the border have stepped up their raiding in the last couple of months, and suspicions are high that they are somehow behind the plague of nightmares as well. Ganko has publicly bemoaned the Dragon Clan's concentration of forces in the south, especially the Heaven's Flame archers who would normally be stationed in the valley's northern

keep; without them, though, any counteroffensive against the tribes is unlikely to occur.

When the PCs meet back up with Saori again, in the nearly empty main room of the Champion's Rest inn, she asks what they have learned and listens carefully to their reports. When she learns that the locals all report a sense that the screaming is coming from somewhere to the north, she nods, seeming unsurprised. "I did not expect an Abomination could have entered the Empire without being discovered," she admits. "It lurking somewhere in the northern mountains makes sense. However, we will have to request permission from Mirumoto Ganko to cross the border. Hopefully, that will be a simple matter." Her expression suggests she has doubts.

Restless Dreams

Saori requests an audience with the daimyo via a letter, and just before dinner, receives a reply that she may present herself and her companions at his residence the following morning. That night, however, the PCs experience the full power of the nightmares for themselves.

Each PC may roll either **Meditation / Void** or **Raw Earth**, TN 10. On a failure, they are Fatigued the next day (+5 to all TNs) and cannot recover any spent Void Points or spell slots. Void Points cannot be spent on this roll. A character with Touched by the Realm: Yume-Do may roll twice, becoming Fatigued only if they fail both rolls. As it happens, a character with Cursed by the Realm: Yume-do suffers no additional penalties beyond what is listed above, as they are somewhat used to having nightmares every night.

Regardless of whether they succeed on the roll, each PC experiences the same nightmare: one of drifting through a dark, fog-shrouded void, while all around, a voice screams endless agony. It seems impossible to escape or hide from the sound, as it bores into the dreamer's mind, leaving no freedom and giving no respite. And even in the midst of the intense, oppressive sound, there is a sense of direction, leaving each person feeling as though they could point directly at the source of the sound when they woke.

When the PCs awaken, Saori - though looking rather worse the wear herself - can supply two castings of Rejuvenating Vapors for the PCs. She will also share the scroll for the spell if any PC is capable of casting Rank 2 Water spells.

Asking the Kami: It may occur to PCs within the area of the nightmare plague's effects to consult the kami

for information via Sense or Commune. Unfortunately, since the effect's source is technological and psychic, it has nothing to do with Rokugan's elemental spirits, and they can't really help. (This is the issue the monks at the Champion's Shrine have run into.) Most of the kami don't even know anything is wrong at all; Air kami know that the local humans aren't sleeping well but have no idea why. All do confirm that, as far as they know, it's not magic.

In the Dragon's Court

On the following morning, Saori and the PCs travel up the southern slope of the valley to the residence of Mirumoto Ganko for their audience.

Mirumoto Ganko does not look well. He is a strong-looking man, just above average height, with a neat goatee beginning to turn gray and a severe topknot likewise streaked with silver. In other days, he might have been imposing. Now, though, his dark eyes are sunk deep in his face, the circles beneath them a purple so intense as to be almost black. His kimono, likely well-tailored once, hangs a little loose, and there is a slight tremble in his hands as he gestures for you to approach.

Saori looks a touch wary as she steps forward, bowing deeply and offering Ganko a gift: a carving of a Mantis kobune, made from rare oak timber from the Moshi lands that give the wood a fiery red hue. For a long moment, Ganko stares at the carving almost blankly, before giving himself a shake and beginning to reach out and take it. At Saori's sharp intake of breath, Ganko jerks back, shaking his head, before stumbling through a refusal of the gift, as etiquette demands. Saori offers it again, is refused, and then a third time, until at last Ganko accepts it with an approximation of the proper courtesies. He seems only vaguely aware of how close he came to offering Saori a deep insult by not first going through the two refusals.

Setting the carving aside on a small table, Ganko leans forward on the low, stool-like chair that occupies the central focus of his receiving hall. The room is decorated in understated finery, showing a distinct preference for military-themed artwork and furnishings, including several swords on wall racks and two sets of armor displayed on stands. It is the room of a respected and successful military commander, made all the more uncomfortable by the signs of weakness in its owner.

“What business brings you to my province, Moshi?” asks Ganko, a hint of exhausted gravel in his voice. “Your letter spoke of a boon you wanted...?”

Saori bows her head in acknowledgement, but uses the motion to again hide a brief look of concern on her face. “Yes, Mirumoto-sama. I have a theory about the cause of your province’s recent... difficulties... and I would like your permission to cross your northern border with my entourage,” and here she gestures toward you all, “in hopes that we may resolve it for you.”

A spark of anger appears in Ganko’s eyes. “Surely, Moshi,” he says in a dangerous voice, “you do not mean to suggest that I am incapable of handling my own province’s problems.”

Saori’s eyes go wide, and she glances desperately at you.

The PCs now have the chance to persuade Ganko to let them help without offering his very touchy pride any insult. In order to do so, they must first attempt **Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness** rolls, TN 15, to avoid giving any offense. The group as a whole must get one successful roll per PC, but players may call Raises: each successful Raise counts as another successful roll, so more skilled characters may be able to cover for their less socially-adept allies. (Be sure to offer any player who rolls the chance to Raise.)

If the group achieves the necessary successes, they can then attempt to actually persuade Ganko to grant them permission to cross the border. First, any player may attempt an **Investigation / Awareness** roll, TN 15, and again they may wish to call Raises. On a success, the character recognizes that Ganko’s military history and inclinations mean that he responds well to martial analogies or references, allowing them to substitute their Battle, Kenjutsu, or Iaijutsu Skill for their Courtier Skill for the purposes of the Cooperative Roll below. On a Raise, the character also realizes that Ganko’s fatigue and difficulty concentrating present an opportunity to manipulate him more effectively, but also increase the risk that he will lose his temper. If the PC who declared the Raise is the character to actually make the persuasion roll, they can gain a Free Raise, but if they choose to do so and fail the roll, Ganko’s reaction escalates significantly, as described below. Each additional successful Raise increases the number of Free Raises that PC can receive if they choose to (the risk does not increase any further).

To persuade Ganko, one PC must make a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll, TN 30, or TN 35

for tables of 6 or more. This can be a Cooperative Roll (as described on pg. 81 of the *L5R 4E Core Book*), with one PC as the lead and any others adding their Ranks in their Courtier to the total of the roll. *Remember that a PC must actually make an attempt to persuade Ganko in order to make this roll or assist in it.* An assisting PC may also spend a Void Point to add their Air Ring as a bonus to the roll as well; thus a character with Courtier 2 and Air 3 could add +2 to the total of the roll or spend a Void Point and add +5, while someone with no Courtier and an Air Ring of 2 could still spend a Void Point to give a +2 to the roll. The GM is encouraged to give Free Raises or free uses of Void Points for well role-played arguments. If an assisting PC (not the player actually making the roll) succeeded on the Investigation / Awareness roll above, they can instead add their Battle, Kenjutsu, or Iaijutsu skill to the total of the roll.

If the lead player succeeds on the roll, read the following:

Ganko takes several long, calming breaths before speaking. “It is the responsibility of a provincial lord to watch over his lands. If your theory is correct, Moshi-san, then the source of this plague lies beyond my lands, and I cannot claim sole responsibility over it. Do what you must, Moshi-san, and may the Fortunes grant that you end this curse swiftly.”

If the PCs cannot persuade him, however, his reaction depends on whether or not the PCs include a bushi with at least two Ranks in Iaijutsu. If so, and if the PCs managed to offend him by either failing the initial Etiquette rolls or using the Free Raise described above, his reaction is detailed below in “Two Swords Fall From Heaven.”. Otherwise, Ganko’s reaction is as follows:

Ganko rises slowly from his chair, glowering down at all of you, his hand gripping the hilt of his katana tight enough to make his knuckles pale. “My province is my responsibility, Mantis, and you may be assured that I will do whatever is necessary to protect it. See to it that you are on the road to Heibeisu by noon tomorrow, or you will find my hospitality greatly diminished. Am I understood?”

Move on to “A Little Smuggling Among Friends” or “The Quiet Option,” below.

Two Swords Fall From Heaven

If the players did fail the Etiquette roll or made use of the Investigation-based Free Raise and failed the

Courtier roll anyway, and there is also a bushi in the group with at least two Ranks in the Iaijutsu Skill, Ganko's reaction is more violent:

Ganko rises slowly from his chair, glowering down at all of you, his hand gripping the hilt of his katana tight enough to make his knuckles pale. "My province is my responsibility, Mantis, and I will no longer sit quietly while you and your followers insult my devotion to my duty and my ability to perform it. Meet me with steel, or abase yourself at once."

Saori is no warrior, so in order to meet Ganko's challenge, she will need to appoint a champion from among the PCs. This champion must be a bushi. If any PC volunteers, she will accept them; if not, or if more than one PC does so, she will select the one with the highest Iaijutsu Skill, favoring Mantis, then Kakita or Mirumoto characters over any others.

(Note: a duelist PC may wish to simply challenge Ganko for the right to cross the border without waiting for matters to reach this point. Although Ganko's Status of 6.0 would allow him to simply disregard any such challenge, his unstable emotions mean he can be easily provoked into agreeing to a duel.)

As the matter is serious but not one of life or death - at least, not immediately - the duel will be to first blood. Ganko is a skilled warrior and, though not renowned as a duelist, is more than merely competent. As a Rank 3 Mirumoto Bushi, under normal circumstances, he would likely easily outmatch any Rank 1 PC. These, however, are not normal circumstances. Although Ganko is indeed Fatigued, his extended period of exhaustion has been especially damaging to his ability to maintain focus and clarity of thought - exactly the capacities most required of an iaijutsu duelist. Therefore, rather than the usual mechanical effect of Fatigue, for this duel, Ganko's Traits and Rings are considered 2 lower.

That doesn't mean he is a pushover, however. It will take both luck and skill to defeat him. Ganko's dueling dice pools, modified by his exhaustion (as well as Center Stance, as appropriate) are as follows:

Assessment 5k1; **Focus** 8k4+6; **Strike** 8k4+6 (damage 5k2); **Armor TN** 21. Ganko spends Void Points (already included) on his Focus and Strike rolls, and has the Focus Emphasis.

If Ganko loses, the simple fact of his failure stuns him enough that he almost meekly agrees that Saori and her entourage can leave freely, using the same words of

permission as if he had been successfully persuaded. This is the case even if the PC does not keep low damage dice, as would be honorable, though a PC who takes that course will suffer a D2 Honor loss. The winning PC gains 3 points of Glory.

On the other hand, if Ganko wins the duel, his weariness and lack of focus manifests in another fashion. Although the duel is to first blood and as noted above it is traditional in such encounters for the winner to deal the least amount of damage possible, Ganko's control is not what it should be. He will keep dice that result in damage roughly equal to one Wound Level against his opponent (ideally 10-13 Wounds for an Earth 2 PC, 15-20 Wounds for an Earth 3 opponent). Even if the PC spends a Void Point or otherwise reduces the damage they take, Ganko's lack of control shocks him to his core, striking deep with both shame and dishonor.

Ganko stares at his katana, stained dark with blood, as though he has never seen it before. Suddenly, he drops the blade as he would a viper about to strike. His eyes, wide with a mix of horror and humiliation, move toward you, but he cannot meet your gaze. "I... I am not... I did not mean..." he babbles. His eyes dart wildly around the room before coming to rest on his sword once more. He slowly picks it back up, producing a cloth and beginning to clean it in a mechanical, rote fashion. He tries to speak again, sounding only slightly more in control. "I have shamed myself, and am shamed again that I did not know how far I had fallen. You have my permission, Moshi-san. Please, do what I cannot and protect my people."

He looks at his opponent and bows quite deeply to them, much more so than propriety would demand, and calls them by their family name, adding the -san honorific. Ganko's remorse leaves him feeling deeply indebted to the duelist he injured, granting that PC an additional Favor for this module. However, having lost the duel, the PC will not receive any further Glory gains in this module.

Enter Atashuke

Regardless of how Ganko responds to the attempt to persuade him or the duel's resolution, the following scene occurs immediately afterward:

The charged moment is interrupted by a small sound from the door at the hall's far end. Through a sliding panel, a young woman, at least ten years Ganko's junior, enters the room. Her eyes are unfocused and red, puffy as though she has wept recently, and her fine

kimono hangs askew, her obi barely tied enough to hold it on. She looks around the room, confusion thick in her expression, before she finally sees Ganko. “Ganko...?” she asks, almost plaintively. “I tried to sleep, but the sound... it only stops when I’m awake, but... I can hear it... all the time, I think... am I sleeping? Are you? Does it stop when you wake up, brother?”

Ganko moves to her swiftly, his hands gentle as he turns her away from you and back toward the door. “You need to rest, Atashuke-chan. Come, let me take you to your room.”

She shakes her head violently, but without the strength to resist Ganko’s guidance. “No, no, no,” she murmurs, still shaking. “The sound is there... it’s waiting there, Ganko... please, don’t make me go back to it...”

Mirumoto Ganko pauses only long enough to look back at you and say, “You may leave me now,” before he and his sister disappear through the doorway and are gone.

A Little Smuggling Among Friends

If the PCs could not persuade Ganko and did not get into a duel with him, there remains one more possible option for crossing the Imperial border without significant risk, an option that comes to them shortly after noon on that same day.

After their meeting with Ganko, Saori returns with the PCs to the Champion’s Rest to consider their next move. As they sit in the inn’s common room and discuss their options, One of the inn’s servers approaches and offers Saori a letter. She opens it, then looks up at the young man with a startled expression. He nods toward the door, and the group turns to see a hard-faced, middle-aged woman in peasant’s garb give them a short, determined nod before slipping out of the door. If any PC attempts to follow, she is out of sight by the time they reach the street. Although the PCs can question the server, Torei, about the woman, he claims to have never seen her before, and that she simply offered him two zeni to bring them the message.

Saori shows the PCs the latter (Handout #1). After allowing them to read it, she simply asks, “Your thoughts, my friends?”

Any PC whose player makes a TN 10 **Lore: Law / Intelligence** roll knows that, while trade with the Yobanjin is not entirely banned, it is highly regulated

and only permitted via officially-designated Imperial representatives. These smugglers are without doubt violating Imperial law. That said, the letter’s mention of “friends” suggests that arresting them will not be an easy matter - it is likely that, if the PCs try to involve the provincial authorities, word will reach the smugglers before any arrests can be made, and they will simply go to ground. The PCs can attempt to arrest Kambe and Ontoqu when they meet them, but they have no legal authority to do so. Kambe and Ontoqu will not resist - Kambe merely says she is disappointed in them - but if brought to Ganko’s magistrate, she says there is no smuggling organization and she lied in the letter so that Saori would believe she had a way through the mountains, as she might not have trusted a half-Yobanjin guide otherwise. Kambe receives a fine for plotting to cross the border illegally, but nothing more, and the matter becomes moot with “A Sister’s Death,” below.

On the other hand, Moshi Saori has a Mantis’ view of smuggling - which is to say, she’s not nearly as judgemental as many Rokugani would be. She is willing to accept the offer of aid in pursuit of her research and the hope of ending the nightmare plague, but the PCs will need to agree. She does not push them to do so, but does her best to make it clear that she’s open to the idea without saying outright that she doesn’t care all that much about smugglers.

Accepting a smuggler’s aid and crossing the border illegally results in a D3 Honor Loss. If the PCs agree to the smuggler’s proposal, they only have to do as the letter says and meet their unknown correspondent at midnight at the village’s edge.

Assuming they do so, Saori and the PCs find two people waiting for them: the hard-faced woman from the inn earlier, now wearing the daisho and carrying a yumi as well, and a short man with a tanned, weather-beaten face and a heavier, solid build. He carries a thick staff that could easily serve as a weapon, but is clearly intended primarily for use as a hiking aid. Both are dressed in thick layers of fabric in preparation for the coming trek and have heavy travel packs on their shoulders.

The woman introduces herself as Kambe and apologizes for the indirect communication. “It can be tricky making new... friends... in my line of work,” she explains. She also introduces her companion as Ontoqu. Ontoqu’s name matches his appearance, and he confirms in a deep voice - much deeper than his size would have suggested - that he is half-Yobanjin. “I serve Kambe-sama as an interpreter and guide, when she requires it,” he explains, keeping his eyes down,

“and would be honored to provide the same service to you as well.” There is no trace of an accent in his Rokugani.

Kambe goes on to explain that she’s visited several contacts among the Yobanjin in recent weeks, and as bad as things are in Yushosha Seido Mura, they are much worse across the border. “I keep myself moving,” Kambe says somberly, “so I’ve been able to get some decent sleep a few times a week. Anyone who doesn’t have that luxury has been going slowly mad, and I wish I were exaggerating. Regardless of what you think of gaijin, no one can look at what’s happening over there without wanting to do something about it.”

As soon as the introductions are done, Kambe leads the group up the slope, away from the castle. She and Ontoqu seem to have no trouble with the darkness under a bright Lady Moon, and after perhaps an hour of angled climbing and scrambling, the group reaches what looks to be an old mine entrance. There is no sign that it has been worked in living memory, and Kambe confirms that, although it was once a working gold mine, that was some centuries ago and it was never more than marginally productive to begin with. “It has two very useful traits, however,” she says. “First, no one really remembers it’s here, and second, there is an entrance part way around the mountain, facing the pass and out of sight of Mirumoto-sama’s patrols.”

The Quiet Option

It is also possible that the PCs will simply decide to try to sneak across the border on their own. Though difficult, this is not impossible; each PC would need to succeed on a **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility** roll, TN 20, to avoid the Mirumoto patrols, but a skilled shinobi can aid their allies using the Cooperative Skill rules found on pg 81 of the *LSR 4E Core*. Failure causes the group to be forced to turn back or risk being seen and arrested by the Mirumoto.

As with being smuggled across the border, attempting to cross the border illegally is a D3 Honor loss, regardless of their success or failure. At the GM’s option, if the party attempts to sneak across the border early enough in the day, Kambe might still reach out to them even if they fail on their own.

A Sister’s Death

If the PCs have not been given permission to leave Yushosha Seido Mura - or found their own way out - by the morning after their meeting with Mirumoto

Ganko, a runner from the governor’s residence delivers a message for Saori at mid-morning. Give the PCs Handout #2.

It is signed by Mirumoto Ganko and bears his personal mon, enough to serve as travel papers for the Mirumoto guards. Before the PCs can depart the village, rumors reach them that Atashuke committed jigai, the non-warrior noble’s suicide, overnight.

Part Two: To Heights Undreamt

Whether the PCs next rest before or after they leave Yushosha Seido Mura, their players again experience the nightmare of screaming and must once again make TN 10 **Meditation / Void** or **Raw Earth** rolls the next time they sleep, applying any penalty they might be suffering for Fatigue and needing to reach a TN 20 in order to recover any Void Points spent specifically on this roll, or be Fatigued and unable to recover Void or spell slots. (Note that if the players have spent Void Points earlier in the day, such as during the PCs’ meeting with Mirumoto Ganko, those Void Points are recovered as long as the player manages to hit the TN 10.) The next morning, Saori has only one Rejuvenating Vapors she can offer, as she herself is Fatigued and did not recover all her magic. Remember that a character who is already Fatigued increases their TN penalty by an additional +5 for every day that passes without useful rest.

Having traveled and slept in two different places, the PCs may wish to attempt to triangulate where the screaming is coming from. They can do so with a **Commerce (Mathematics)** or **Craft: Cartography / Intelligence** roll, TN 25. With a third night’s sleep (after reaching the Yobanjin camp), the TN is only 15, and Saori will automatically succeed if no PC does.

Regardless of whether they travel on their own or are guided by Kambe and Ontoqu, the path (it cannot be called a road) across the border travels along the Zankyou Pass for several hours’ slow walk for the horses, climbing for almost its entire length. The border itself is marked by a pair of tall stone cairns flanking the pass floor, but is otherwise indistinguishable from any other section of the path. If guided by Kambe and Ontoqu, the scramble down from the mine entrance intersects the path on the northern side of the cairns, but still a long distance from the pass’ peak.

The temperature drops steadily as the group climbs, proving Saori's foresight in preparing cold-weather clothing. If need be, there is a decent campsite about halfway along the pass' length, and if the group met with Kambe and Ontoqu at midnight, they will need to make use of it or face **Raw Stamina** rolls, TN 10, to avoid further Fatigue. The camp is chilly but otherwise safe.

Sunset is fast approaching when the PCs reach the far side of the pass. As the group descends, Saori produces from her traveling pack a massive, gleaming white pearl, easily the size of her palm, and begins concentrating on it intently and occasionally speaking short phrases in an alien, sibilant tongue (the Naga language, as can be confirmed by asking her). Whatever effect she might have been hoping for, though, fails to appear. After perhaps a minute, Saori tries and fails to hide her frustrated expression and replaces the pearl in her pack. If asked, she confirms that the pearl is the Naga artifact that she believed could locate Abominations, but either her research is incorrect or it is not working for some reason.

Camp **Fire**

At the base of the pass, in a small valley flanked by tall peaks on three sides, is a Yobanjin camp.

Much like similar camps in the Unicorn lands, the campsite is large enough to be a small village, but has only a tiny handful of permanent structures. Most of the buildings are actually collapsible tents of various sizes, from one- or two-person tents similar to Rokugani designs to large, square tents a dozen paces to a side, made of silk, with peaked tops and heavy woven tassels. In all, the camp looks large enough to have once supported perhaps as many as two hundred people.

Now, though, it is a desolation. Collapsed and burnt tents far outnumber standing ones, and there are bodies - only a small number, thankfully - scattered amongst the ruin. It is clear from a glance that whatever happened here was recent; many of the tents still smolder, and as you approach, you can make out a few survivors searching the wreckage, for other survivors or valuables or perhaps simply hope. All are Yobanjin, most wearing thick cloaks lined with fur, but the most disturbing thing about them is their eyes: each wears the same glazed, confused stare that you last saw on Mirumoto Atashuke.

The Yobanjin people are on average a bit taller and noticeably stockier than Rokugani, but the most

obvious differences are in their clothing and hairstyles. While Rokugani considers the flesh of the dead, including leathers and furs taken from animals, to be spiritually unclean, almost everyone in this camp wears heavy leather cloaks lined with fur, along with hats and boots made of the same materials. Where Rokugani often wear kimono that reach their mid-thigh or longer, along with hakama pants that tie at the waist, the Yobanjin wear much shorter tops, reaching only a handspan or so below their armpits, with pants and skirts that are belted over their ribs. A similarly-short vest is common as well, usually only just long enough to cover the top of the belt. Many also wear long, open coats, also made of leather, and most of the decorations in the fabrics are made of raised stitches, rather than dyed into them in the Rokugani fashion.

The men by and large have their hair pulled up in a topknot, but it is a simple bun rather than carefully folded back along their scalps in the samurai style, and none have shaved the tops of their heads as a samurai traditionally does. The difference in women's hairstyles is even more obvious: Rokugani women very rarely braid all their hair together into a single tail, preferring to keep it up in various ways that can signal social or marital status, but a lengthy braid is the dominant mode among Yobanjin women, often extending most of the way down their backs.

Most of the Yobanjin immediately turn to flee as soon as they see the approaching Rokugani, who do not have a positive reputation here. However, a few watch with vacant expressions. It is all too easy to believe they likewise believe the Rokugani are a threat to them, but are simply past the point of caring anymore.

If the party is being led by Kambe and Ontoqu, they head directly toward the camp, though the PCs and Saori at this point are not obligated to follow. Without them, it is entirely up to the PCs whether they choose to investigate the camp; should they choose to, they will meet Kambe and Ontoqu there, trying to aid the survivors.

Here among the Yobanjin, Kambe and Ontoqu are both noticeably less deferential to samurai, but not in any sense that suggests discourtesy - it is more than they seem to feel less isolated or ostracized among the Yobanjin tribes than Rokugani's rigid caste system, and are therefore more comfortable in general. Despite her daisho and yumi, Kambe is clearly not treated by these people the same way other samurai are. Ontoqu's Yobanjin heritage is also much clearer here, and though he looked a bit stocky next to Kambe in the Empire, here he looks much more wiry in comparison to the tribespeople.

If the PCs decide to speak to the Yobanjin, Ontoqu will translate for them so that the samurai can learn what has happened to them over the past few weeks. His Yobanjin is as free of accent as his Rokugani, and he transitions so smoothly between them it seems impossible to know which might have been his first language. With his help, the PCs quickly learn that the nightmares suffered by the Rokugani across the border have been felt here as well, but on a much greater scale. Everyone is experiencing hallucinations, some continuously. Several people have died outright, their bodies having just stopped working. Others have suffered grievous accidents, experienced psychotic breaks, or had other injuries to body, mind, or spirit. The most recent calamity was the fire, caused just a few hours ago when one of the Yobanjin men briefly passed out, falling into his own campfire; the pain roused him, but he then spread the flames as he screamed for help and thrashed about.

These Yobanjin are members of the Carriers of the Fire tribe, and all of them lay the blame for the nightmares at the feet of one of the other Yobanjin tribes: the Bearers of Water, a harsh and unforgiving group even by Yobanjin standards. While the Carriers of the Fire settlements in the area have all been devastated by the nightmare plague, the Bearers of Water have instead increased their raids against the other tribes, showing no signs of fatigue or distress. There has been no meaningful resistance, and the Bearers of Water are only growing bolder. The Carriers of the Fire have no idea how the Bearers might be creating the nightmare plague, but if the PCs show the slightest inclination toward stopping it or confronting the Bearers of Water, the Yobanjin in the camp will literally beg them, desperate tears flowing, to do so.

The final piece of information the Carriers of the Fire can offer is where to go. Before the nightmares began, Carriers of the Fire scouts had seen a new structure being built in the mountains to the east of the camp, roughly five miles off. It is most of an entire day's travel in the mountainous terrain, but the Carriers are certain it is the source of their suffering. During the affliction's early days, the Carriers of the Fire assembled a war party to assault the fortification, but were driven back by its defenders with significant loss of life. The Carriers warn the PCs that some of the defenders were neither Yobanjin nor Rokugani, and fought with weapons the Carriers had not seen before - they refer to these metal weapons as "dragon staves," thanks to the thunderous roars and gout of flame they produce when used.

Ontoqu, if present, volunteers to lead the PCs to the location, and Kambe volunteers to go along. Though both are lawbreakers in terms of Rokugani trade restrictions, both also feel deep compassion for the Yobanjin's suffering and will do what is necessary to help. If the PCs do not speak with the Yobanjin, Saori attempts to use her pearl again, once more without success, and then is forced to rely on the direction sense the PCs gain during their next nightmares.

The PCs and their companions will need to sleep once more before heading into the mountains, with the same consequences as before. Once again, Saori has one Rejuvenating Vapors available to cast on a PC the next morning.

High Risk, High Reward

Passage through the mountains requires first a TN 15 **Hunting (Trailblazing) / Perception** roll in order to find a safe path. Only one PC can attempt this roll, but can use the Cooperative roll rules to gain aid from the other players, just as when they confronted Mirumoto Ganko. In this situation, a Void Point allows the PC to add their Water Ring to the total of the roll as well as their Hunting Skill. If Ontoqu is with the party, he succeeds on this roll automatically. Failing the roll causes the Athletics and Defense rolls below to increase their TNs by +5. The rolling player may declare Raises if they wish; each successful Raise reduces the TN of the following rolls by -5 instead. (TNs can go to 0, in which case a PC with no penalties need not roll, but since some PCs might be suffering Fatigue, even a TN 0 roll might not be guaranteed to succeed.) Ontoqu will not Raise.

Travel through the mountains, even with a good path to follow, is grueling and dangerous. Only extremely skilled riders should attempt to guide their steeds from the saddle; otherwise, the PCs would be well advised to lead their horses on foot. As they climb, balance, and scramble along the steep cliffs, each PC must attempt a series of rolls: an **Athletics / Strength** roll, TN 15; an **Athletics / Agility** roll, TN 10; and finally, an **Athletics / Stamina** roll, TN 15. A character with Ranks in Athletics can aid their allies with the Cooperative rules found on pg 81 of the *L5R 4E Core Rulebook*. Each failed roll results in a fall or dislodged rocks that cause 1k1 (non-exploding) damage to the PC and also risks a brief drop from a cliff or the like. Mounted PCs substitute their Horsemanship for their Athletics, but the TNs are +10, and the damage to both horse and rider on a failed roll is 3k3 (exploding). After failing one of these rolls, the PC must attempt a **Defense / Reflexes** roll, TN 10; failing this roll causes another 2k1 damage. The party has tied ropes

to one another, so no greater falls occur. Should a mounted PC fail the Defense roll, however, they take the 2k1 damage, but their mount suffers a fatal fall or breaks a fragile limb and will need to be euthanized.

There is time between each check for PCs or Saori to use the Medicine Skill or cast spells like Path to Inner Peace on wounded characters. Saori rolls 7k4 for Medicine checks and will usually try to Raise at least once. She also is willing to cast Path to Inner Peace up to twice, rolling 7k3 for her Spell Casting roll. Keep track of characters that have received Medicine treatment and how many castings of Path to Inner Peace Saori uses, as it will affect the resources Saori and the PCs have available during the battle in the following scene.

Part Three: The Screaming Wyrms

Lord Sun is only a finger-span's width above the western peaks when you at last see your goal: a stone fortification perched atop one of the shorter mountains in the area. It looks like nothing you have seen before, a castle of hard lines and heavy stone, without any of the grace or beauty of a Rokugani castle's flowing arcs. It is not large, however, just two stories tall and perhaps 20 paces on a side. The encircling stone wall is no more than half-finished, wooden scaffolding visibly supporting it in several places. Most strange is the tall spire of metal extending up from the castle's roof, a thin spike that glints in the late afternoon light like a frozen shaft of sunlight.

"Is this it?" Saori muses aloud, and it is easy to understand her perplexity. Such a structure could not possibly hold more than a dozen or so people for more than a couple of days, even in the restrained accommodations soldiers are used to. A few small Yobanjin-style tents can be seen through the gaps in the wall as well, but it is hard to believe that a dedicated group of warriors from one of the other tribes would not be able to easily take the fortress with only minor losses.

With the group's goal in sight, Saori proposes a swift attack with minimal warning. She believes she can strip the building of most of its defenders with a single, well-aimed spell, but only if the strike can be performed before sunset, when she - as a Moshi School Shugenja - will lose access to many of her most powerful battle spells. There are roughly 30 minutes left before the sun disappears behind the western mountains.

There is enough time before then for the PCs to perform at least a small amount of reconnaissance and planning. Any character attempting to scout ahead briefly may attempt a **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility** roll, TN 15; if they fail, they do not reveal the group's presence, but are unable to get close enough to learn more without being discovered. On a success, however, they can learn the number of Yobanjin warriors within the wall (eight), the nature of their armaments and armor, and the exact location of the guards and tents. They also notice a large wooden frame built next to the northwestern corner of the castle, partially covered with a heavy, oil-soaked linen cloth (making it waterproof) and filled with more than a dozen heavy wooden barrels stacked on their sides like casks of sake. A character who has encountered gunpowder before, such as a PC who fought in the battle interactive "Blood on the Waves," may make a **Lore: Gaijin / Intelligence** or **Raw Intelligence** roll, TN 15, to identify the contents. A successful scouting foray grants a Free Raise to any Battle check the PCs might next attempt.

Whether they are able to scout the opposition or not, the PCs have the opportunity to set some basic tactics in place before they begin their assault. This requires a **Battle (Skirmish) / Perception** roll, TN 15. A PC with the Tactician Advantage gains a Free Raise on this roll. On a success, the PC may grant themselves and their allies one of the following three bonuses in the upcoming skirmish: +5 to their Initiative roll; one Free Raise on an attack roll made in the first round of the battle; or -5 to the Armor TN of their enemies on the first round of the battle. Each successful Raise allows the PC to choose an additional option for their party. The PCs may not benefit from the same option multiple times, but more than one PC may attempt the roll.

Once the PCs' plans are in place, they can begin their assault. After the group has crossed about two-thirds of the distance between their planning ground and the castle, Saori produces a scroll and begins to chant a mighty prayer to the kami.

As the last words of Saori's prayer cease to echo off the mountainside, the sky suddenly roars to life in a stunning display of fury. Brilliant streaks of lightning crash downward, seeming almost to form the shape of a human fist larger than the castle itself, ready to smash the building to rubble. Just before the thunderous blow falls, however, the bolts suddenly bend and skew sideways, striking not the castle's roof but the tall metal spire extending upward from it.

For a brief, agonizing instant, your minds stagger under the onslaught of painful mental screaming, the same sound that has tortured your dreams for days - but you are wide awake, and consciousness offers no escape. Then the sound in your minds stops, and a breath later the southwestern wall of the castle seems to just vanish, transmuted into an expanding cloud of dust, stone, and wooden flinders. Even at this distance, the shockwave knocks you back a step and sand blasts your eyes with taifun force.

Even as you recover, a second explosion follows the first, this time coming from the northern part of the castle. This is a bloom of red and black flame, sending thick clouds of greasy smoke into the air. A single, burning barrel arcs over your heads and explodes well before landing.

Even Saori is stunned by the results of her spell, but it seems obvious that she has given you every possible opportunity to launch your attack, and the holes in the half-finished wall are just a few dozen paces away.

The players face no opposition until they are inside the outside wall of the fortification. At that point, however, a small group of Yobanjin raiders, along with a couple of the surviving musketeers, stumble out of the smoke and ready themselves to stop the PCs' advance.

There are three Bearers of Water raiders and two Marenae musketeers for a table of 4 PCs. Add one additional raider for every PC beyond 4. The raiders begin the combat 15 feet away from the nearest PC; they enter Full Attack on the first Round of combat, but prefer to spend Raises for combat maneuvers, especially Disarms, over extra damage. The musketeers, who begin 40 feet away from the nearest PC, will fire on the first round, aiming for the two targets wearing the heaviest armors, before setting aside their guns and drawing their rapiers to enter melee. None of the enemies have any Void Points remaining, having spent them to survive the explosions.

Bearers of Water Raiders

Air	Earth	Fire	Water	Void
2	2	2	3	2
Integrity 3		Status -5		Glory 0
Initiative: 3k2		Attack: ring-sword 4k2 or 6k3 Full Attack (Complex); thrown spear 4k2 (Complex)		
Armor TN: 18 (11 in Full Attack)		Damage: ring-sword 5k2; thrown spear 4k2		

Reduction: 1

Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)

School/Rank: Yobanjin Raider 1

Techniques: *Roar of the Avalanche* (add +Water to Armor TN when in Full Attack, Free Raise to Disarms with a ring-sword)

Skills: Athletics 2, Hunting 1, Investigation 1, Swordsmanship 2, Stealth 2

Outfit: Yobanjin ring-sword, throwing spears (equivalent to nage-yari), light armor

Marenae Musketeers

Air	Earth	Fire	Water	Void
3	2	2	2	1
Integrity 2		Status -9		Glory 0
Initiative: 4k3		Attack: musket 5k3; rapier 5k2		
Armor TN: 25		Damage: musket 6k3; rapier 3k2		

Reduction: 3

Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)

School/Rank: None (Insight Rank 1)

Special Abilities: *Musket Fire* (Gunfire provokes a Fear 2 effect against Rokugani the first time it occurs in an encounter. All firearms ignore bonuses to Armor TN and Reduction from armor and natural toughness. Muskets require 3 Complex Actions to reload.)

Skills: Athletics 1, Battle 1, Craft: Sailing 2, Defense 2, Firearms 2, Horsemanship 1, Investigation 2, Swordsmanship: Rapier 3

Mastery Abilities: add Swordsmanship to Armor TN against Small melee weapons

Outfit: musket, rapier, breastplate

During the battle, the PCs can call upon Saori, as well as Kambe and Ontoqu if present, for aid. Ontoqu will enter the fight alongside the PCs in melee with his staff, while Saori and Kambe hang back, using spells and archery to battle from afar. Each Round, during the Reactions Phase, each of the three NPCs can be called upon to assist one PC on the following Round. The assisting NPC grants the PC +0k1 to either one attack roll or one damage roll on their turn. Saori can instead cast a healing spell to restore 5k2 Wounds to one PC at the start of their turn; however, she can only do so three times, minus one for each time she cast Path to Inner Peace earlier in the day. No PC can receive aid from more than one NPC in one turn.

Shooting a Musket: Rokugani characters without the Firearms Skill cannot load a musket, but it is possible that the PCs might have a chance to get their hands on a musket that is still loaded. Firing such an unfamiliar weapon requires a certain amount of luck in addition to aim; unless the wielder has seen a firearm or crossbow used before (such as during “Blood on the Waves” or after one of the musketeers has already fired), the PC must spend either a Void Point or a use of Luck to figure out the trigger mechanism and have even a chance to hit their target. (The GM should feel free to trigger a character’s Unluck to have them shoot themselves in the foot or leg, rolling appropriate damage.) If they are allowed to roll, the PC makes an unskilled Firearms / Reflexes roll as normal. Effects that can grant “phantom” Skill ranks apply, but the PC still cannot explode 10s. The DR is 4k3 and adds the character’s Perception to the damage rating in place of Strength. This is not technically an Imperial crime, as the characters are outside the Empire, but it is nonetheless a D3 Honor loss.

An Ill Wind

If one of the PCs is Saori’s Sworn Enemy, she will under no circumstances assist that PC. If the ronin Kambe has accompanied the party, Saori additionally sees an opportunity to try to strike out against her hated rival. On the first time Kambe is called upon to aid a PC in such a situation, Saori casts Arrow’s Flight on her arrow. Instead of the benefit Kambe would normally apply on the following turn, she instead finds herself dealing 4k2 damage to Saori’s Sworn Enemy. If she actually means to aid that same PC, her damage is inflicted before the character makes their roll, and the roll suffers any relevant Wound Penalties that might have just accrued. Kambe is horrified by what just occurred but blames herself, believing the shot to have been an accident and failure of her own abilities. When the battle is over, she offers the most humble and contrite apologies, volunteering to accept any punishment the PC deems to mete out. She is adamant that it was her error, and will strenuously, even violently, defend Saori from any accusations that the shugenja could have done anything. Saori, for her part, recommends leniency for Kambe and plays the sympathetic advocate, but will happily sacrifice a ronin in pursuit of her vengeance if it comes to that.

The Machinery of the World

Once the battle is over, Saori will aid any injured PCs. No one else comes to challenge the group, and both the nearby ground and the parts of the castle’s interior that are visible through the ragged gaps of broken

stone reveal scattered bodies, both Yobanjin and Marenae. Much of the building is still burning, but Saori will cast Extinguish to put out enough of the flames to make it safe to enter.

The northern half of the building appears to have been a series of storerooms and a small mess hall on the first floor and a soldier’s barracks on the second; the southern half was just one large space, the full two stories tall and with no internal walls. Within that larger area are the only two beings still alive within the castle.

One is a massive dragon-like serpent, taking up a third of the whole room, floating in the air but bound around with thick rings of bronze every couple paces of its length. An array of fist-sized translucent white crystals, flickering faintly with a dying inner light, are mounted across the top of each ring. More crystals are attached to the wyrm’s head, part of a complex working of metal tubing and wires that wraps around its skull and is held in place by two thick iron spikes driven into its temples.

The other is another Marenae man, neither armed nor armored, lying slumped against the southern wall. That wall is covered by more complicated metalwork, tubing and wires and crystals and gears and more, all connected to the wyrm’s restraints on one end and to the thick metal spike that travels up through the ceiling. In place of the weapons and armor the soldiers possessed, this man is wearing a long brown robe, tied at the waist with a rope belt, with strips of red cloth sewn at the neck and the ends of the sleeves. A red cross overlaid by a pair of concentric circles is stitched into the right breast of the robe, and the same symbol is forged in iron, hanging on a chain around his neck. Surprisingly, this man’s head has been shaved across the top, almost in the samurai fashion, though without a topknot to go with it.

Both the man and the wyrm are badly injured, bleeding from many wounds, but neither is in immediate danger from them. With samurai standing over him, the gaijin assumes he is about to die, and reacts with a kind of hopeless defiance. As he considers himself to be a widely-read and cosmopolitan scholar, the man speaks Senpet, Ivindi, and Yodotai, as well as Yobanjin and of course Marenae. This allows Ontoqu to translate if he is present, or Saori otherwise. A PC who speaks any of these languages obviously can do so as well.

If Ontoqu has accompanied the PCs, he is familiar with some basic information about the flying wyrms: he explains that they are magical creatures brought into existence by Yobanjin shamans and are always created

alongside a control amulet. By shattering the amulet, the wyrm can be simply destroyed, dissolving back into whatever elemental substances had spawned it. A TN 30 **Lore: Gaijin / Intelligence** also reveals this information. If the PCs learn the importance of a wyrm's amulet, they can quickly locate this wyrm's amulet in a set of brackets on the southern wall, more metal wires clipped and wired to it. Destroying it can be done with any number of different variations on simple violence and requires no roll. As soon as it is destroyed, the wyrm does dissolve as promised.

Without such information, it is not much more difficult to either kill or free the wyrm; it cannot meaningfully resist, and the machinery is far too damaged to hold up under much ill treatment either. If freed, the wyrm will tear itself free of the rest of the metalwork and fly off. If killed, it dissolves in much the same way as if the amulet is destroyed, but it issues soundless cries of pain as it fades away.

If the PCs choose to speak with Torrido, whether before or after they deal with the wyrm, they find him recklessly boastful. Believing himself likely to die in short order, his eyes blaze with a fanatical light as he defiantly explains his actions.

“My name is Padre Rafael Torrido, anointed of the blood of Kharsis, shepherd of the flock of Marenae, and court machinist to Their Majesties Elías and Fernanda. I have spent many years learning the natural laws and hidden truths of the world, the greatest of Kharsis' creations, and thanks to my knowledge, I was the one chosen to lead an expedition to this desolate realm, that I might study the creation of the savage flying wyrms and master their power in the service of Their Majesties' armies. It was trivially easy to bribe this backward people to share their secrets - it took little more than a few trinkets of smelted iron and a flintlock or two.. During my researches, I discovered that the wyrms are in constant agony, and that this agony possesses a psychic resonance. My genius is such that I quickly learned how to amplify and project this resonance outward, turning this one unholy abomination into an unstoppable weapon of the righteous! More, I learned how to protect my allies from its effects, so that we need not fear its power.” He weakly gestures toward a corner of the ceiling, where another piece of metal has been placed, this one a shallow bowl with a crystal in the center, tilted such that the opening and crystal point toward the rest of the room.

“My calculations were... precise, but perhaps I... overestimated... the suitable power inputs to the psychic resonator. It should not have drawn the

attention of your 'Emerald Empire.' My orders did not include antagonizing your sensitive prides.”

The PCs do not have the technological or mathematical foundations to understand Torrido's work, though they are free to take samples and writings if they wish. Saori takes a few items as well. They can locate some notes that, with a **Commerce (Mathematics)** or **Craft: Cartography / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, allows them to confirm that Torrido underestimated the reach of the “psychic resonator,” and he truly did not intend for it to affect Rokugan - at least, not yet.

Conclusion

What the PCs choose to do with Torrido is up to them. Options include killing him right here, turning him over to the Carriers of the Fire for whatever justice they see fit to mete out, or bringing him back to Yushosha Seido Mura to face Rokugani justice - in any of these scenarios, Torrido's life is swiftly ended. They might also choose to let him go, but without his allies or most of his notes or work, he has little choice but to return to Marenae in failure and disgrace. In any event, he will not trouble Rokugan again.

Regardless, Saori leads the PCs back across the border as soon as possible, with Kambe and Ontoqu splitting off to continue their work aiding the Yobanjin at the devastated camp. Though the tone of his greeting depends on whether the PCs crossed the border with or without his permission, Ganko welcomes them back to Yushosha Seido Mura and acknowledges their efforts on behalf of his people and the Empire, forgoing any consequences for illegal activities that might have occurred in the group's departure from his province. Many of the villagers have already found themselves recovering after a few good nights' sleep, and normalcy is beginning to restore itself in Kousou Province.

After a restful night in Yushosha Seido Mura, to help the group return to its own sense of normalcy, Saori leads to PCs south to Otsan Uchi, so that the notes and artifacts she and the PCs recovered from Torrido's laboratory can be turned over to the Imperial Archives for study, in case the technique should ever be turned against Rokugani once again.

Concealed Carry

As a reminder, possession or use of gunpowder weapons in the Empire is a capital crime, with most samurai simply killing such a heretic and lawbreaker

on sight. PCs who think they can smuggle a musket home with them should be strongly discouraged from doing so by both Saori and the GM - should a PC insist on doing so anyway, they suffer the appropriate lethal consequences without any hope of reprieve. Such a PC can still earn XP for this module toward their new character, in hopes of encouraging a wiser reincarnation on their next turn on the Wheel.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 XP
Good Roleplaying:	1 XP
Getting Across the Border Without Mirumoto Atashuke Dying:	1 XP
Destroying the Psychic Resonator:	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	4 XP

Favors

Ending the nightmare plague earns each PC one Favor. As noted above, a PC who is defeated by Ganko gains an additional Favor, but no Glory.

Honor

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

As much of the adventure occurs at the edge of the Empire or beyond, word of the PCs' efforts does not spread far. Destroying the psychic resonator and ending the nightmare plague earns each PC a G4 Glory gain, unless they were defeated by Ganko in the duel.

Allies and Enemies

All PCs who do not have Moshi Saori as a Sworn Enemy gain her as an Ally (Inf 1, Dev 1), or give her +1 Devotion if they already had her as an Ally. If a PC with Sworn Enemy: Moshi Saori has played all three of Legacy of the Ancients, and Pearls of Wisdom, and The Ruins of Shiro Fukurou, Saori develops a grudging respect for the PC's ability to withstand her efforts against them; they may buy off the Sworn Enemy without spending Favors.

Handout #1 -
A Mysterious Letter

We have good friends in many places, Moshi-sama, and some of those friends have told us of your encounter with Mirumoto Ganko-sama this morning. He can be quite difficult to deal with in the best of times, and we are very aware that these are not the best of times. We want to help you.

There are those among the Yobanjin tribes that pay well in gold for certain valuable items of Rokugani make; while we wish no disrespect to the Emperor, the edict placed against foreign trade renders these otherwise worthy Yobanjin helpless to fulfill their needs. This is a tragedy we strive to correct, in our own small way. Despite our slight disagreement with official policy in this one matter, we too are residents of this area, and as it suffers, we suffer. Moreover, there is even greater suffering in the northern mountains, beyond the gaze of Rokugani eyes. If you can stop this, then you have our pledge of aid.

Should you wish to cross the northern border without Mirumoto-sama's knowledge, come to the northeast edge of the village, at the foot of the valley slope, at midnight tonight. Be prepared to travel.

Handout #2 -
A Message from Ganko

My sister has joined the ancestors, pursued there by the hounding of nightly terrors and my own pride. Let her death be the last price I pay for such arrogance. Go where you need to, Moshi Saori, in the name of Mirumoto Atashuke.

Mirumoto Ganko
Lord of Kousou Province