

Everyone Dies

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

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[Investigation, Combat, Shadowlands]

With the Empire threatened by a Shadowlands invasion, the Lion Clan must face a desperate situation within their own borders.

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

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

Adventure Background and Summary

The Empire is under attack by a monstrous army of Shadowlands creatures, led by Lost samurai under the command of the Fallen Emperor, Toturi IX. This new Dark Lord of the Shadowlands is possibly a greater threat to the Empire than it has ever seen, not least because his intention is entirely to conquer Rokugan rather than destroy it.

Because the new Dark Lord is a skilled military commander, the Horde has been highly successful in its military operations. The Unicorn lands are entirely overrun, as are the Minor Clan holdings in the area (Badger, Hare, and Frog). As is noted in more detail in the News of the Empire, the Lion and Scorpion provinces are both being hard-pressed. The Lion Clan, never ones to back away from a challenge, have been throwing the entirety of their considerable military might at the Horde, to extremely limited success.

There are a number of reasons for the Lions' difficulty in this situation. While they are arguably the best-trained, and undeniably the largest, clan army in the Empire, they are almost entirely inexperienced with the nature of warfare against the Shadowlands. And, among other factors, the Lion have had a tradition of entombing criminals in the support structure of bridges; as the Horde has access to maho-tsukai that can raise the dead, this presents a serious difficulty for the defenders of the Lion lands.

Wishing to save face, the Lion have begun efforts to rectify this problem without making it public knowledge. To that end, they have given the task to the military unit responsible for the logistical side of the defense effort. Unfortunately, the man in command of that group is not the upright, honorable samurai most assume he is.

Akodo Tetsui is a cold, calculating warrior with almost boundless ambition. His tactical acumen has served him in good stead, and his ability to make hard decisions is highly valuable in a military context – but without any real consideration for honor or even any kind of human feeling, everything he has done has been solely for the purpose of advancing his career and personal power. He has, entirely without any emotional consideration, decided that the Shadowlands Horde and the Fallen Emperor are more likely to prevail, and begun making arrangements to earn a high position in what he believes will be the new order.

This is not the first time Tetsui has casually destroyed lives in his quest for influence, though it is the largest scale he has ever worked on. Years ago, he began his rise to higher position by claiming lands and property that had belonged to the wife of one of his nephews. By arranging for an accusation of a serious crime, Tetsui ensured that she was removed from her position and was able to manipulate the Akodo daimyo at the time into rewarding him with her territory.

Unfortunately for Tetsui, the nephew he betrayed did not choose to commit seppuku, and instead became a ronin bent on revenge. Jodan has spent years traveling the Empire, gaining allies of his own and learning whatever he could bring to use in his quest to make Tetsui pay. Close observation of the efforts of skilled samurai (like the PCs) has led Jodan to the conclusion, once he could find something that might bring his uncle down, that such a group would be the best instrument of justice.

And so, the PCs will find themselves brought to the Lion lands on false pretenses, where Jodan hopes they will be able to help him weaken Tetsui enough to put the Lion shireikan in a position for the ronin to gain his revenge. Jodan is not aware of Tetsui's disloyalty, but between his and the PCs' efforts, they should be able to uncover Tetsui's plot against the Lion and Empire, and deal with it accordingly.

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. Additionally, the following information should be taken note of, if any PCs has:

- Sworn Enemy or Ally: Akodo Tetsui
- Played a module with the ronin Jodan, a PC in the campaign played by Matthew "Uji" Parker

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. At the start of the module, each PC loses **1 point** of Glory. 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 raw **Earth Roll** is **25**. 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 PCs have only the briefest pause after their previous mission for their lords when a message arrives for them. Unusually, this letter is addressed directly to the PCs rather than their lords, and there are a few other inconsistencies that they may take note of. (The letter is also given in Player Handout #2, so the GM can let the players examine it for themselves.)

[The letter is addressed to each PC],

Your name has become known to me through your exploits across the Empire. In these trying times, Rokugan has need of samurai such as you in defense against the forces committed to our destruction.

If your daimyo permits and will give you the papers, I would ask that you report to Tonfajutsen as soon as you can. The fate of the Empire may depend on your honor and courage.

If you can make it to Tonfajutsen, I have arranged rooms for you at the Shinku Koi Inn.

Akodo Tetsui
Shireikan, Third Battalion, Akodo Army

The fact that this message came to the PCs instead of to their lords is the first unusual issue, though that could come from the fact that they are possibly now at a point in their career where they are personally well-known enough that they are approached directly. Apart from using their names, however, the messages

are all identical; this fact may not stand out until the PCs meet each other on the road, but any PC who has a previous history with Tetsui would reasonably expect it to be mentioned in the letter and it was not.

If a player asks whether or not it may be a forgery, they must have some previous experience with Akodo Tetsui. A PC who has Tetsui as an Ally or Sworn Enemy may roll **Investigation / Perception** at a TN of 40. Only a player with either the Ally or Enemy is likely to be able to recognize the writing and seal used, and even then they will not be able to determine for certain if the message was written by a secretary or scribe. Success on the roll does allow them to realize that the mon used is not quite right – likely from a copy of the stamp used to produce it rather than the original. (Hopefully, this should give them reason to investigate. Either they should wish to warn their Ally or see who else is working against their enemy – this can be encouraged by their lord if necessary.)

Suspicious PCs may also roll **Lore (Law) / Intelligence** at **TN 20** to realize that this is not the normal way they’ve been summoned to adventure previously. It isn’t exactly wrong—it could be outside Tetsui’s remit to issue travel permits for provinces he isn’t in charge of, but samurai with that level of authority and influence have always found a way before. No one would blame him for issuing permits somewhat outside his authority if it was for the preservation of the Empire; but perhaps Tetsui is a stickler.

Additionally, Akodo Tetsui is a shireikan in the Akodo Army. It is possible that PCs who are aware of military leaders in the Empire will realize that there are a few oddities here. If a PC has 5 Ranks in Battle and Courtier, is a Lion with any ranks in both Skills, or can make a Skill Roll using either Skill and Intelligence at a TN of 30, they will realize a few things:

- Tonfajutsen is located in the middle of the Lion lands, and serves as a logistical hub for their military.
- It is the headquarters of the First Matsu Army.
- A “battalion” is a flexible term used to describe multiple legions under the command of a shireikan. Tetsui has recently been promoted to that rank after leaving the Imperial Legions earlier this year.

None of these are actually incorrect, but do indicate that the Shadowlands invasion has caused the highly rigid Lion military structure to make adjustments.

The PCs’ lords are curious about the matter, but if a player wants to write themselves out of the module immediately, they may do so (taking 1 XP and not

playing). On the other hand, the daimyo that the PCs report to are interested in learning what methods the Lion Clan are using to defend their lands, leaving unspoken the possibility that the rest of the Empire may have need of those methods (or knowing if those methods aren’t working) in the near future.

So with the understanding that they are to see what Akodo Tetsui wants help with and learn what they can about the Lion war effort, the PCs are sent on their way. (Travel papers are arranged by the PCs’ lords.)

Part One: The Heart of the Lion

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Tonfajutsen

Traveling in the Lion lands, the PCs meet up at a checkpoint in the central provinces of the clan. (Where, precisely, is not as important as having all of the PCs present for this first scene; it is somewhere they are all passing through.)

Because the bulk of the Shadowlands army is attacking the Lion lands from the north, most of the Empire’s traffic into the Lion lands is routed through the east or south. The Imperial Roads are being prioritized for military traffic, making your journey somewhat more difficult than usual. This means some interesting travel papers and discussions for samurai who have to travel through unusual provinces in order to get into the Lion lands.

You find yourselves at a small Lion checkpoint, waiting in a queue to present your papers to the authorities—as you have been for several hours—when you hear the sound of hooves thundering behind you. A small group of mounted infantry wearing the colors and flying the banners of the Unicorn crest a small hill and come thundering toward you—and the group of non-combatants at the checkpoint.

Any PC who makes an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** check at **TN 20** will notice distinct signs of rot and death among the riders—sure signs of the Taint, and an indication of where the group came from.

PCs have a variety of options on how to be most effective here. Obviously there will need to be a combat response. But there are also openings for the PCs to evacuate civilians, provide support or tactical

overview, or rally the somewhat unprepared Lion forces.

Effectively rallying the Lion forces requires a **Battle / Perception** roll at **TN 25** or a **Performance (Oratory) / Awareness** check at **TN 30**, because the Lion ultimately respect tactics more than speeches. It also requires roleplay.

Moving the civilians also requires roleplay, and an appropriate check. This could be **Battle, Performance (Oratory)**, or another skill appropriate to dealing with civilians—broad latitude should be given to a skill being plausible here, depending on the approach the players wish to take.

Each of the PCs must make a Skill Roll at a TN of 50, or 60 if the Lion troops are not rallied. This is an abstraction of what actions they choose to take during the skirmish, so broad latitude can be given for their choice. Simply avoiding combat is **Defense / Reflexes**, ordering the troops can be **Battle / Perception**, taking part in personal combat is the appropriate **Weapon Skill / Agility**. The GM can allow any reasonable option, as the point of this scene is to establish that the Lion lands are under threat, not to place the PCs in direct jeopardy. If the PCs fail these rolls, they take Wounds equal to the amount they failed by, and these Wounds ignore Reduction. Any PC who succeeds gains G6 (likely not enough to actually give much Glory to High-rank PCs, but it's a minor conflict, however grateful and respectful the Lion are).

Once the opposing forces are dealt with and the civilians saved, things look up for the PCs.

With the raiding party finished, the Lion authorities are able to quickly set the checkpoint back up. The chui in charge of processing approaches with a deep bow. He silently and respectfully holds out stamped travel papers which will see you all the way to the city without further bureaucratic difficulty.

The rest of the journey to the city of Tonfajutsen is uneventful. As you enter the city, your first impression is that it is highly regimented—everything is laid out properly, with a modest castle dominating the skyline giving the impression of stern, stable samurai command. Your second impression is that this regimented and well laid out city is being pressed to its absolute limit, and that it could burst with the slightest provocation.

Tonfajutsen is the central most city of the Lion provinces. Originally little more than a supply depot

that happened to be located where five major Imperial Roads meet, it has been expanded into a major city and the main logistical hub of the Lion military machine. Crossroads Castle (sometimes called Central Castle) is the headquarters of the First Matsu Army; there are basically no natural defenses apart from the city's distance from the clan's borders, so all of the fortifications are man-made. The city relies on its heimin to assist the vital role of ensuring the armies are fed and equipped, and the local peasants are treated generally better than elsewhere in the Lion lands. A group of peasant deputies, called "the Handles" after the tonfa they use and that gave the city its name, assist the Lion in keeping the peace.

Lion PCs probably know most of these details already without having to roll; a PC with Ranks in the Skill can make a **Lore (Lion) / Intelligence** roll at **TN 15** to know the above information (or, at the GM's discretion, another appropriate skill roll such as **Lore: Geography** can be used at **TN 25**).

As long as any PC gets this information, any PC can also make a **Commerce** or **Battle / Intelligence** roll at **TN 25** to gain more information about the city's current situation. Simply put, while the city can handle 5,000 troops easily, there are currently more than twice that present. The city is running out of room and any supply not directly related to the war effort, and it was simply not made to handle this many people at once. The famed Handles and samurai of the city are doing their best to handle it, but the situation is far more dire than any contingency planning ever accounted for.

If the PCs want to pick up local rumors in Tonfajutsen, they may do so here or at any point in the remainder of the module.

Rumors

The following information is available with a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll. Lion PCs gain a Free Raise on this roll, as do PCs on a Military Status track (these benefits are cumulative).

- 10: With the First Matsu Army heading to the front, Akodo Tetsui has been appointed shireikan in charge of Tonfajutsen and the defense of the Heartland. The First Matsu is the personal army of the Lion Clan Champion, and while Akodo Shuhan is untested, most Lion are glad that he is taking the field.
- 15: The Lion Clan are trying to keep it quiet, but there have been two almost-riots related to food in the city. All of the food is going to the frontlines, and peasants are feeling the squeeze acutely .

- 20: Tetsui is known to be a skilled tactician, having spent years in the Imperial Legions, and has significant political connections. He has appointed Kitsu Shiko as his Chief of Staff. It's an unusual appointment, because Shiko is a shugenja (although not a sodan-senzo), but she has also been acquitting herself well and few have complaints.
- 25: The Lion have been bringing in large numbers of ronin to reinforce their troops, bringing additional chaos to the normally regimented city. There are even rumors that the Lion have considered declaring some variation of the Crab's Twenty Goblin Winter for those ronin who prove particularly helpful in fighting the Shadowlands army. The Lion have been so desperate to reinforce their troops that garrisons with other duties, like the residual garrison at the ruins of Shiro Shimizu, have been reassigned to the front.
- 30: Rumors say that part of the reason Tetsui began his rise to prominence involved the surprise execution of his niece and her family for treason. He was rewarded for testimony with stewardship of the lands her family had held for generations, and was able to parlay that into an appointment in the highly-competitive ranks of the Imperial Legions.
- 35: It has been kept somewhat under wraps, but the city is expecting that even more troops will be arriving soon: the Ikoma Army, which has been bearing the brunt of the fighting in the northwest, will be rotating some of their wounded and officers through the city while the First Matsu Army takes position at the front.

Tonfajutsen has a variety of exciting things for the PCs to look at normally, but right now the city's been largely overrun with the war effort. PCs are welcome to visit any of the shrines or temples, but the two main options that they have are to check in with the shireikan who allegedly invited them, or head to the Shinku Koi Inn for rest. Or, as it turns out, to do one and then the other.

Visiting the Shireikan - Part 1

Akodo Tetsui has set up his command staff in Crossroads Castle. The banners of his command are well pressed and snap in the wind impressively.

As you approach the gate, a Lion guard steps forward and gives you a polite bow. "Samurai, please forgive me, but Tetsui-sama is not seeing any visitors today."

This begins the increasingly awkward scenes that will culminate in a very awkward meeting with Tetsui. But the PCs don't know that, so they will likely press their case with the guard to see Tetsui. If they want to, one PC—possibly the one with highest Status or the one with the highest skill—can roll **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness** at **TN 60** to try to speed things along. They get a Free Raise if they mention Tetsui's letter, plus one Free Raise for every Rank of Status they have. Effects such as "Ryunnosuke's Favor" treat this as an automatic success, but do not change the timeframe. (The GM should take note of success here, as it has effects later in the module.)

If they succeed:

The Lion guard pauses for a moment, considering your request and information. He clearly looks confused about something, but after a moment he bows again. "Samas, I will inform Lord Tetsui about your arrival in the city. We will pass word on to you when he is available to meet with you. If you are able to find accommodations in the city, please let us know where they are."

The PCs cannot gain anything further by pushing, and anyone with at least Etiquette of 2 will realize that. If they continue to press, they will undo the result of their success. They may leave their chops to indicate they have arrived, but there is little else that can be done at this point.

If they do not succeed, the guards will dismiss them with less patience while still clinging to the demands of Courtesy. Again, they can leave their chops, but there is nothing further to do yet.

The Shinku Koi Inn

Whether they go to Tetsui or the Inn first, they will almost certainly end up there at some point.

The Shinku Koi Inn was once no doubt painted a brilliant crimson, but that has faded with years in the sun. It is still an attractive inn, catering to the overlap of "clean but not overly expensive". A happy-looking red koi flutters on a banner, inviting passersby to come in for some sake.

Inside, you are greeted by a competent woman who offers a strained smile and polite bow. "Please, samurai, you're welcome to join us for sake and food, but our rooms are all booked."

When assured by the PCs that they do have rooms, she will check her ledgers and find that their rooms were paid for—it came in by an un-sealed letter from Tetsui's office.

The main room of the Inn is simple, and reminiscent of a dozen inns you've been in across the Empire. It is mostly full, as a result of the city's overcrowding, but a table strangely becomes available for a group of famous samurai.

Most of the other tables are filled with ronin, but these must be more socially acceptable wave-men as they are not causing any kind of ruckus. As you watch, a few of them get up and head out while muttering about a pain in the ass gunso and needless patrols – the complaints of soldiers everywhere.

There are a number of rooms reserved appropriate for the number of samurai present, albeit sleeping two to a room if there are more than 6 PCs. The ease they have of gaining accommodations in the crowded city is another sign that there is something more going on here.

The Waiting Game

The PCs are now in the etiquette waiting game of having turned in their chop to the local authority, and waiting to be summoned. This is both normal, in that it is the expected etiquette, and abnormal, as they might justifiably feel that the exigencies of war would do away with it.

No one comes during the entire first day, and attempts to push are firmly but politely rebuffed. There is not a roll that they can make to expedite, because Tetsui is both very busy and trying to figure out what's going on.

The PCs will not be summoned for two full days—one if they succeeded at the Etiquette check earlier—giving them plenty of time to explore the city. This section is designed to drag a little bit and make the PCs feel the weight of the waiting game.

While they're waiting they can explore the city and gather information about the situation. They can make the Gossip and Commerce or Battle rolls listed earlier, as well as gain specific information based on what other rolls they want to make.

Markets

Commerce / Intelligence at TN 25: The sudden influx of thousands of extra soldiers is straining the

city to the bursting, and there may be food riots in the near future as prices have skyrocketed. The inflation is a result of Tetsui taking every bit of food from the surrounding area to funnel to the army (and, if the PC rolls more than 35, they hear whispers that supplies may be routing to other places – no one wants to directly slander Tetsui, but he has profited from the war on a personal level as well as political one).

Soldiers/War Camp

Battle / Awareness at TN 20: While Tetsui has been primarily focusing on his stated duties, he has also been working on an additional project. He is sending specialists to check the bridges in the provinces which expect attack, presumably to determine if they should be preserved or demolished depending on the tactical situation.

If the PC rolls 25+, the soldiers will mention that Ikoma Yura, the rikugunshokan of the Ikoma Army, is expected to be arriving soon, which has motivated the local bushi to get everything in as good a shape as they can.

Magistrates

Lore: Law / Awareness at TN 25: The magistrates are having a difficult time keeping the civilian population of the city under control. Even among Lion peasants things will get more tense when you more than double the number of bushi in an area, even before accounting for all the ronin coming in. There has been a huge increase in the number of criminal incidents that they don't see stopping any time soon.

Temples

Lore: Theology (Shintao), / Awareness or Perception at TN 25: Whether through talking to monks and shugenja or doing their own investigations, the PCs discover that there is something...off about the local spirits. It is hard to figure out what, exactly, as it doesn't appear to be Shadowlands related. But the local spirits of the earth and water are unrestful; most of the local spiritual leaders attribute it to the influx of new people.

If a PC makes a Gossip roll during this time, the following should be added to the list of information:

- 40: A few Lion samurai have been asking around town about some of the more famous new-comers to town. The PCs will recognize their own names and descriptions, but it appears as though someone is trying to find out what they can about the PCs' business in town.

An Awkward Meeting

Finally, after days of waiting, you are summoned to a meeting with Akodo Tetsui. When you arrive at the castle, you are immediately brought inside and shown to what was once a well decorated receiving room. Some of the old decorations remain, but they have been largely replaced by military miscellanea—both necessary and decorative.

Akodo Tetsui himself is a handsome older man dressed in immaculate armor, with the bearing of one who is accustomed to both combat and command. Iron gray at his temples highlights the iron in the cool, measuring gaze he turns toward you. On your entrance, he rises with a polite bow, gesturing toward the places laid out with tea and sake.

“The Lion Clan thanks the samurai of the Empire who are willing to join us in this fight. Please, sit, that we can discuss the best way to use your talents.”

Any PC who wishes to do so can make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception or Courtier / Awareness** roll at **TN 35**. If they succeed, they notice that there is a hesitancy in Tetsui’s words and an uncertainty in his posture. He is good at covering it, so it is not possible to determine why, but it is notable.

The players are highly likely to open up with “Why did you ask us to come here?”, especially after the days of delay, but Tetsui should deflect that initially. Moving the subject to them is a good option: “In due time, samurai. Tell me of yourselves. What are your particular skills? How do you think you could be of help here?”

The way this scene goes depends entirely on the approach the PCs take. They have a good reason to want to work with Tetsui—they are representing their Lords and Clans, and this is an important task—and if they have some suspicions about what is happening here, it would be much easier to investigate if they had his official imprimatur.

For his part, Tetsui is a cold, stern samurai with little interest in anything outside his own power – but he is fairly skilled at presenting a more reasonable face to the Empire. He should be proper and polite (never speaking directly about the Shadowlands, for example), and make his disapproval of open speech plain, while avoiding questions to his personal motivations. He is a busy man with a fairly high Status, but recognizes that the PCs are important samurai and likely to be a problem if he gives them cause. With the imminent arrival of the Ikoma Army, Tetsui is prone to be very careful, and cannot give

orders that are too obviously self-serving or would cause questions about his loyalty and probity.

Tetsui is willing to answer questions the PCs have. Some possible answers are below.

- **Tetsui’s Job Here:** Tetsui smiles shortly. “To defend the Heartland of the Lion and ensure that all the supplies needed for the war front are sent that way. While I had hoped for a front line command, I am honored to be given such an important mission.”
- **Food Scarcity in the City:** Tetsui sighs and nods. “The situation is growing dire, I admit, but I don’t have an obvious solution. We have armies in the field who need to eat in order to protect the clan. If the peasants of a single province must go hungry to preserve the Empire, that is a sacrifice I will bear.”
- **Observing the Lion Defenses:** “In all honesty, I am not exactly eager to let samurai from outside the Lion get a good look at Lion military preparations and doctrine, but I recognize the importance of a united front against the enemy. You may have access to the troops and fortifications, but specific details of where supplies are going will remain classified.” While he does not alter his tone, it is clear that the security of the Lion is a serious matter. “I am certain you understand.”
- **Bridges:** Here Tetsui actually lets out a little bit of a chuckle. “I’ve always been a bit of a student of history. The project started off as a strategic one, reviewing which bridges would be necessary to keep for our troop movements and which could be destroyed to hinder the enemy. But I was reminded of some interesting information which may be helpful.” This is a patent evasion, and any PC who succeeds at an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll at a **TN of 30** will recognize it as such. Nothing is untrue, but leaves wiggle room to save the clan’s face (and hide his own plans). He will not elaborate further, especially if the PCs try to go into more detail.
- **Kitsu Shiko:** “Ah yes,” Tetsui nods. “Some of my taisa were quite surprised when I named Shiko as my Chief of Staff. But she has a brilliant tactical mind and can use her magic to help command a battlefield. Unusual for a Lion military command, but these are unusual times.” Again, this is true but incomplete, and can be recognized as such, though the TN is 50.

The answer to the question “**Why did you ask us to come here?**” depends on how they have approached

the conversation up to the point they ask it. In order to get an honest answer to that question they cannot have been outright hostile to Tetsui, and must make a **Courtier (Manipulation)** or **Sincerity / Awareness** roll. The TN for this roll **40** if they've been neutral, or **35** if they've been friendly or polite to him. Any PC who has been hostile or impolite may not make this roll, and their presence increases the TN to **50**.

If they succeed at the roll to get an honest answer, Tetsui says:

“Samurai, one of the reasons for the delay in seeing you was that *I* needed to determine what happened,” Tetsui spreads his hands in front of him, in a gesture of almost studied helplessness. “Because the truth is that I did *not* send for you. I did not write the letters you received. I don't know who did. If it weren't a crime and grave insult to steal a samurai's name in such a fashion, I might thank them for bringing you here. I would never turn down the assistance of well-known and talented samurai such as yourselves. But it neither occurred to me, nor do I know if I could have spared the political resources to bring you here.” He shakes his head ruefully, letting his hold on his features slip enough to show genuine confusion. “I assure you, I will be continuing my investigation into whoever did summon you in my name.”

If the PCs fail at the roll, Tetsui reacts as follows:

Tetsui shakes his head. “You are all well known in your clans, and have been in...difficult situations before. I will admit that I did not have a specific task for you. I merely hoped that in the Empire's time of need, samurai such as you would be willing to serve as best you can.”

The PCs may make an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30 to recognize this answer as a complete fabrication from a fairly skilled liar. Whatever task the PCs seem suitable for, he will recommend (training troops for bushi, improving morale for courtiers, spiritual guidance for shugenja, etc). But as he doesn't have a particular idea for them apart from keeping them away from his business, anything they think they can do that will be a reasonable help would be acceptable to him to get them out of his hair.

Regardless of if they succeed or not, once they have asked their fill of questions the audience will be finished and they'll be free to go about their business. They can do whatever they want with the remainder of

the day; the next major plot point happens when they return to the Inn.

When they leave the meeting, the PCs may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at a TN of 35 to notice that they are being followed by a pair of Akodo bushi. Familiar with the city, the bushi do well at being discrete, and are under orders not to interact with the PCs but to keep them under observation. If confronted, they will retreat and return later.

The Plot Thickens

When the PCs go back to their rooms at the inn, they discover that a note has been left for one of them on their futon. This is Player Handout #3, and reads:

You are being watched by Tetsui's soldiers. He is dangerous, and cannot be trusted.

Tomorrow morning there is going to be a commotion, and your watchers will be distracted. Go to the alley between the sake brewery and the inn.

- the friend who invited you

The note is on plain paper, with no identifying marks. PCs who want to can roll Investigation on it, but there is little information to find from examining it. The calligraphy is simple and almost blocky, indicating the person who penned it was either trying to hide their penmanship or is not particularly skilled at the art (or, as is the case, both). Should a PC wish to consult the spirits, it will show a man dressed in plain brown and wearing a komuso—a basket hat worn by some orders of monks. (Locally-obtained paper and ink, with precautions taken to prevent a water shugenja from being able to trace it; Jodan is aware of Shiko, after all, and has a basic understanding of what the spirits can do.)

If the staff of the inn are questioned, they don't have any information about the note. Because of the troop build up and the ronin in town, there has been a lot of traffic through the inn and they haven't been able to keep track of everyone. There was a large group of ronin who left their rooms during the day, and so one of them might have left the note, but the staff can give no further details.

If the PCs want to investigate further, it will take an **Investigation (Search)** roll at **TN 55** or **Lore: Underworld / Perception** at **TN 45** to find the group of ronin based on the innkeeper's description. Success leads them to a small group of ronin gearing

up for a patrol outside the city. Since they're trying to get in good with the Lion and possibly join the clan, they're not going to lie to clan samurai. They had a sixth member who joined them about a month ago and went by the name Muhaki, but he disappeared when they left the inn. They do not know anything about a commotion, but do comment that the city is primed for something to happen.

If the PCs do not choose to attend the meeting with Jodan, they will not get the information required to advance in the module. Tetsui will assign them to a genuine support role outside of the city, and they will not stop the bridges from collapsing. They will gain 2 XP for this module. (The GM should encourage the players to avoid making this kind of choice, though they are free to do so if they wish.)

Attending the Meeting

The next morning there is a tension in Tonfajutsen that even the least aware could not fail to notice. Something is going to happen, and everyone seems to know it. The warm morning is starting to drag on unbearably when finally it breaks and the sound of screaming fills the air.

A crowd of peasants surge toward a rice storage warehouse nearby, screaming for food. The Lion bushi, supposedly on guard, are apparently caught off guard by the sudden violence of it, and quickly retreat into the warehouse to regroup. Two bushi wearing the mon of the Akodo quickly rush out of the inn, awkwardly sparing you a glance as they go.

The PCs have a choice here too. They can use the distraction of the rice riot to lose their minds (the two Akodo bushi who left), or they can try to help with the riot and then go to the meeting—but then they will have to slip their tails later or risk blowing their contact's secrecy.

If they choose to stay and help with the riot, they can roll **Battle (Skirmish) / Awareness** at **TN 30** to rally the Lion defense, or an **appropriate Social skill / Awareness** at **TN 30** to try to settle the crowds. They can also attempt to do both. If the PCs rally the defense they gain **H7**, and if they settle the crowds they gain **G8**. If they do both, they gain both.

However if they don't want to lead the Akodo to their meeting, they will need to succeed at a group **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility** roll at **TN 25** to lose them. In order to succeed at least one more than half of the table must make the roll (so if the table is 6, then 4 people

need to make it). If they do not, the Enemy Preparation increases by 3.

It is possible the table will split up to manage multiple tasks; this is fine, though obviously means that PCs in different places cannot contribute to Cooperative Rolls.

When the PCs arrive at the alley in question, they see nothing but a blind beggar holding an offering bowl. He greets the samurai politely in a creaky voice when he hears them enter the area, "Ohaiyo, generous friends? Spare a coin for a wounded ashigaru?" If the PCs approach, they can see that the glazing inside the bowl has been scratched, bearing a simple message:

Dark Moon Warehouse. I'll be waiting.

The blind beggar knows nothing of the man who gave him the bowl this morning and told him to greet any samurai who approached during the day. The markings are faint enough that a passing Lion samurai would not see them (as they pay little heed to the lower orders), and would likely fade over the course of the day. This indicates a certain amount of paranoia and preparation on the part of whoever is sending these messages.

Assuming that the PCs go there directly:

The Dark Moon Warehouse is in one of the more run down areas of town. Run down by Lion military standards means that it is still in good repair but clearly has not been painted in a while. It's almost odd that it hasn't been used for the military build up, but the state of dust on visible surfaces show that it hasn't been. The front doors are closed but not barred, at least from the outside; the windows on the top levels have been shuttered.

The PCs can attempt to enter any way they would like, including conducting reconnaissance around the building. There is nothing more for them to find—the streets are reasonably empty, but not in a condition to show tracks. There aren't patrols or secret passages. It is, in fact, just a warehouse.

The windows on the top level are shuttered, but the PCs can climb to them with a reasonable Athletics roll, or make any other precautions they feel necessary before entering. The front doors are not locked.

The inside of the warehouse is quiet, and dim with all the shutters closed against the morning sun. But in the large main area a few lanterns are hanging to brighten

the room, and in the middle of that room is a plain camp table with a few bottles of sake and cups waiting. Behind it is a man dressed in plain brown kosode and hakama, obviously well-worn but clean and cared-for. He is clean shaven, with a precise samurai topknot, and holding his hands in the air. A small pile of weapons laid out ten feet away from him seems meant to serve as an indication of peaceful intent; they are scattered almost at random, except for a fine katana resting in an ornate stand.

“Samurai, thank you so much for coming. I am called Jodan, and I’m the one who sent you those letters, because I am hoping you can help me bring justice to the Empire. And,” he says, a sharp smile growing on his features, “Kill Akodo Tetsui. May I tell you why?”

(If any of the PCs have traveled with him before, he will greet them politely by name—he isn’t trying to snub them, it’s just impossible to know who will have met him before)

This is the ronin Jodan, a PC in the campaign played by one of the authors of this module. He is the actual quest giver here (as long as PCs don’t skip him), and gives the PCs vital information. His demeanor is focused but at peace, like a runner near the end of the race when the finish line is in sight. He believes his long journey is coming to an end, and is ready to explain his whole back story.

Assuming the PCs don’t attack him outright, and hopefully express some interest, he will continue.

Jodan gestures to the seats, and the sake. He pours a cup for himself, normally a breach of etiquette, and sips it. “I am trying to make it very clear that I mean you no harm or violence. Please, join me.”

Jodan will politely pour for everyone before he continues. “Jodan is the name I chose for myself, because it was the name of Emperor Hantei the 38th before he ascended. I don’t compare myself to an Emperor because I think so highly of myself, but because I too was betrayed by a friend.”

Hantei the 38th, born Hantei Jodan, was close friends with Bayushi Shoju—the Scorpion Clan Daimyo who eventually killed him in the Scorpion Clan Coup in an attempt to delay the Prophecy of Uikku. A PC can roll **Lore (History)**, **Lore (Imperial Families)**, or **Lore (Scorpion) / Intelligence** at TN 15 to remember this.

“I was born Akodo Takeshi, a member of a well respected Akodo family. My father was one of three siblings, and I was raised close to my cousin Akodo Takeda and his sister. After my gempukku I was betrothed to a distant cousin named Akodo Minako. Her family were in charge of a village and the farmland around it, which they’d been given as a reward for her father’s service. The marriage started as a political match, but before we had even been married a year I found myself completely in love with her.”

He pauses as if considering the memory, and takes a long draw from his cup of sake. “She was a perfect samurai, loyal to the clan and the Empire. When her father retired from the field he gave her his Akodo blade Iwanomi, and everyone was sure that she was going to end up at least a shireikan in either the Lion or Imperial Legions. Two years after our wedding, she gave birth to Hanako.”

Here he drains the rest of the sake in his cup, and pours himself another. There is a definite shake to his hand as he does so, but he keeps speaking as if afraid that if he stopped even for a moment longer he would be unable to continue.

“Hanako was five, and we were both serving in her father’s lands, when out of nowhere she was accused of treason. Three perfectly respectable samurai said that she’d tried to recruit them into a Bloodspeaker cult, promising them power. She was executed, and so was Hanako as the daughter of a traitor.” He looks down at the cup of sake as if considering it, and shudders. “My kindly uncle Tetsui intervened and spared me from execution, and gave me the chance to commit seppuku instead.”

Jodan laughs bitterly. “But he didn’t know that I knew the three men who testified against Minako. I saw them when I was training with my cousin. Every single one of them was sworn to Tetsui. And one of the servants in the house let slip that after Minako’s father committed seppuku in shame, his lands were given to a distant family member whose own lands happened to border his. Surely it was just a coincidence that happened to be the very same man whose retainers Minako had tried to recruit, my dear uncle.”

Jodan’s hand spasms in anger, and the cup in his grip drops out of it. It shatters on the floor with a loud crash, which Jodan hardly notices. “I declined to commit seppuku for a fabricated dishonor. Minako’s katana was claimed by another, and I left that night. A peasant showed me more justice and mercy in that moment than any samurai had shown my family in the preceding weeks, and I knew I’d never have justice

under the corruption of the Clans or the tenets of Bushido. So I swore I would come back and not just kill Tetsui, but destroy him. Ruin him so that in three generations he is still being used as a lesson about ambition.”

“And now,” Jodan says with a wolfish smile, “He has given me a chance.”

“Recently Tetsui requested Kitsu Shiko as his chief of staff. Shiko is a very effective battlefield shugenja, but she isn’t just a water shugenja. I know she is Tainted, and I believe she is a maho-tsukai. She was an acolyte of the fallen sodan-senzo Kitsu Isei, but was cleared of suspicion—largely on account of influence from Tetsui. I don’t know if Tetsui assigned her to his staff knowing she is Tainted, but either way—if we prove what she is, it will destroy him. The commander of the Ikoma Army is on her way to this city, and you can present whatever we learn to her. Will you help me?”

At this point, Jodan will answer any questions that he can.

- **How do you know Shiko is tainted?** Jodan pulls out a small scroll. “This is the account from an eyewitness to the comings and goings of members of Isei’s cell. It describes Shiko perfectly. But the informant was a peasant, so their testimony doesn’t count.” His tone leaves little doubt as to his opinion of samurai jurisprudence. “The testimony was suppressed, which is what caught my attention – I don’t know if Tetsui knows what it contains, but he definitely used his influence on her behalf.”
- **You’re a criminal/You forged the note so why should we trust you/You’re under arrest:** Jodan nods at the accusation. “I am a criminal. I forged the letter from Tetsui. And I did it pretty much to have my shot at killing Tetsui. But if you help me to reveal Shiko and destroy my uncle, you’ll also remove a Tainted traitor from the center of the Lion mobilization. Is that worth helping me temporarily?”
- **Why don’t you just challenge him to a duel?** Jodan shakes his head. “Tetsui is a better duelist than I am. I should throw away my life, and let everyone think that the Kami have shown him to be truthful, because he’s better at pulling his sword out in a hurry? No. My justice is more important than following a form made up by a random Crane 1200 years ago.” If any PC takes offense at this dismissal of tradition, he will offer an entirely insincere apology just to get the conversation back on track.

- **What if Tetsui was right about Minako?** A dark cloud passes over Jodan’s face, and it is clear he is barely restraining himself as he answers. “You don’t think I would have known? And you think, samurai, that somehow it is a simple coincidence that all three of her accusers worked for Tetsui, and he gained her father’s land?” He doesn’t answer any further.
- **What about after?/If you survive, what then?:** Jodan shrugs, indifferently. “I don’t care. I put myself in your hands, samas. If you want to execute me, fine. As long as Tetsui is destroyed, that’s all that I care about.”
- **How did you get the Akodo Blade back?** “Our uncle gave the sword to my cousin. Some time before he died, Takeda returned it to me with his blessing. He knew what I intend, so make of that what you will.”
- **Did you start the riot?** “Not personally. I just distracted some samurai and let the peasants know the opening was there.”

Additionally, any Lion PC can roll **Kenjutsu** or **Investigation / Perception** at **TN 35** or **Lore (Lion) / Intelligence** at **TN 30** to realize that the katana on a stand is an Akodo blade, almost certainly the one belonging to his wife.

When the PCs are done asking questions, or if they get to the point of asking what the next step is, the ronin presents some research.

Jodan pulls out a text of what appears to be Lion myths and fairy tales. “I think it has something to do with the bridges. There was an old Lion tradition called hitobashira, which involved putting a corpse in the foundation of a bridge. Sometimes it was a condemned prisoner, sometimes the engineer that designed it. The practice largely stopped some time before the Clan War. But we didn’t go back and demolish the old bridges, and when they needed to be repaired or rebuilt the foundations were the same. Tetsui has sent Shiko out to identify which bridges have them and remove the bodies from the foundations in advance of enemy’s advance, but I think she’s actually mapping which ones have bodies to pass that information on.”

Any PCs with ranks in the Engineering Skill understand very well how a body placed in the foundation could cause a bridge to collapse if it was resurrected. Any PCs with ranks in an (in)appropriate Skill like Lore: Shadowlands or Lore: Maho may roll it with Intelligence at **TN 30** to realize that it would take a very powerful tsukai, or a massive blood

sacrifice, to turn a body buried in a foundation into a zombie.

“I don’t know what bridges she is being sent to map, however, and she isn’t the only one he has doing it” Jodan finishes. “I haven’t been able to find that information, and Tetsui isn’t about to tell me if I stroll up and ask. So the first thing we need to do is figure out where Shiko is.”

If the PCs refuse to work with Jodan, decide they have to arrest him right there, or otherwise make a decision that would end the module, he shakes his head slowly. “Morons. Why did I expect more from clan samurai? Fine, kill me and doom the Lion to whatever Shiko has planned.” He will not surrender, forcing the PCs to kill him or overpower him and then kill him. Disarmed as he is, it isn’t really a fight, but he won’t make it easy or convenient.

If the PCs have some qualms about working with an admitted criminal, he will offer them his word of honor to turn himself over to whatever authority they decide upon after Tetsui is dealt with. “I swear upon my wife’s grave, samurai. There is nothing for me but this revenge, and if you help me with it, I will do whatever you require of me after.” An Idealistic PC may find the matter difficult, as it could cause a loss of Honor after all this is said and done if they accept his pledge and then goes back on it, but Jodan is utterly sincere.

Given the state of the Empire’s military situation and that they are expected to assist and observe the Lion’s defensive efforts, the PCs should find this issue significant to their interests. If the players insist on following the law to the letter and turn Jodan over to Tetsui, then the Lion shireikan will thank them profusely. They gain H8 Honor and end the module with 2 experience and 1 Favor as Tetsui’s gratitude for giving him a chance to eliminate this enemy. Jodan is tortured to death, and a short time after the PCs return home, they will learn that the Lion heartlands fell to the Shadowlands when an army of undead appeared well behind the battle lines – this will cause them a loss of D0 Honor, subsequent to the previous gain, and to gain a Rank of Infamy.

Part Two: Two Graves are Not Enough

Finding Shiko

The next section is relatively free-form. The most straight-forward method the PCs might have to find

Shiko is to get assigned to the bridge project, but doing so without raising Tetsui’s suspicions will likely be difficult. Finding her without Tetsui’s assistance is possible, but will definitely take longer and may prove somewhat more difficult.

Several things can happen as a result of these investigations; Tetsui and Shiko will have a certain amount of preparation that they can make, based on how long the PCs take to learn what they need to learn and how obvious they are in doing so. This is being represented by “Enemy Preparation”, which will provide bonuses to the enemies when the PCs confront them. If the PCs succeeded at the Etiquette roll when arranging a meeting with Tetsui when they first arrived in town, the starting Enemy Preparation is 2. If they failed at that roll, the starting Enemy Preparation is 4.

With Tetsui

Approaching Tetsui will require gaining another audience with the shireikan. This requires an **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness** at **TN 35**. Success grants them a much quicker audience than the days-long wait they had previously, getting in to see him within a few hours. Additionally, if the PCs were followed to their meeting with Jodan, this roll automatically in an automatic success—Tetsui believes they intend to work against him, and wants to send them to their doom.

Assuming that the PCs were not followed but do gain admission, they can meet with Tetsui the next day. He knows they weren’t watched the whole time (although as soon as they went back to the inn the watching resumed), but he blames the riot rather than thinking they are working against him. As such he is a bit hesitant to actually send them out after Shiko.

PCs can attempt to convince him using a variety of skills to do so. **Courtier**, any skill related to **Engineering, Battle**, or anything else which is supported by roleplay can be rolled as a Social Skill with **Awareness**. If the PCs had a positive interaction with Tetsui the **TN** is **35**. If they had a neutral interaction the **TN** is **45**. And if they had a negative interaction with Tetsui the **TN** is **55**. They must also roll **Courtier (Manipulation)** or **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** at a **TN** of **35** to avoid arousing his suspicion.

Once the PCs have convinced him, however, he will give them information—but it again depends on what kind of interaction they had. With a positive or neutral

result, Tetsui will give them directions to “Namida no Hashi”, one of the other bridge projects that Shiko isn’t at—he just wants them out of the way, and a site that nothing is happening at is more likely to bore them enough to hide any of the many things he wants hidden. This does allow them to make an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30 to realize he is lying and sending them somewhere useless – this means that they are not immediately given the right information, but it does provide them with information on where Shiko won’t be, so they gain two Free Raises on the rolls to learn it on their own.

If they had a negative interaction, he sends them directly to Shiko at the Bridge of Regret (see below) because they annoyed him and he wants them dead.

Approaching Tetsui on this matter at all increases the Enemy Preparation by 1; arousing his suspicion raises this to 3. If he sends them after Shiko deliberately, it is increased by 5.

Without Tetsui

It is possible to get the information without Tetsui, but it will take more time. This ends up giving Shiko and Tetsui both more preparation time for their confrontations.

Figuring out which bridges are being targeted requires either what amounts to in-depth research, or a fairly un-intuitive leap of tactical knowledge. Researching in the library requires rolling **Lore: History / Perception** at a TN of 40 to find the correct records, and an **Investigation** or **Battle / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 50 to determine which of the bridges listed as having been constructed with hitobashira would be of strategic importance and are within close range of the city. These rolls may be made cooperatively, and more than one PC may make these attempt. This option gives Shiko and Tetsui a chance to notice what’s going on; increase the Enemy Preparation by 2.

Trying to determine which bridge she might have gone simply based on reason and knowledge of the enemy requires **Battle / Intelligence** roll at TN 50, an **Engineering / Intelligence** roll at TN 55, and a **Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence** roll at TN 60. More than one PC may make these rolls, but they may not be rolled cooperatively. This does not increase the Enemy Preparation.

These rolls may be repeated, and each time they are failed, all of the TNs are reduced by 5. The rolls do

not have to be successful all on the same set of rolling. However, each roll requires about a half day of effort, giving Shiko more time to prepare for their confrontation. Every failed roll increases the Enemy Preparation by 2.

On the Road Again

One way or another, when the PCs have the information (or think they do), they can get on the road.

If Tetsui gave the PCs the incorrect information and they just follow it, they have a chance to notice that it seems to be taking them to the south, well away from the most likely invasion routes. This requires either an **Investigation** or **Hunting (Trailblazing) / Perception** roll at TN 50, or a **Battle / Perception** roll at TN 40. Lion PCs gain a Free Raise on these rolls, and a PC with the “Way of the Land” Advantage for any Lion province automatically succeeds. If they notice this, they also figure out which bridge they think is the correct one. The delay still increases the Enemy Preparation by 2.

If not, when they get to the bridge they will find a small squad of peasant engineers making measurements of the bridge itself, but no sign of Shiko. The peasants, having no information about why they’re doing what they’re doing (literally just getting physical dimensions of the bridge), only know that Kitsushiko has been and gone. “She headed to the Bridge of Regret, Kokai no Hashi, in the Shimizu Province, samas...” This detour increases the Enemy Preparation by 4.

Bridge of Regret

Located to the northeast of the city of Tonfajutsen, the Shimizu Province has an unsavory reputation in the Lion Clan after the vassal family that held the land six centuries ago fell to Shadowlands corruption. Few people come here, and fewer wish to remain. The ancient lands, however, have at least one ancient bridge: Kokai no Hashi, the Bridge of Regret.

On the road northwest toward the lumber town of Renga Mura and the forest beyond it, Kokai no Hashi appears to be a wide bridge suitable for the large wagons bearing wood for the Lion storehouses at Tonfajutsen. There is little to indicate any reason behind the dramatic name, save perhaps for a faint sense of abandonment in the Shimizu Province to the east.

The bridge project is supposed to involve Kitsu Shiko and a small crew of surveyors, along with a few peasants for the actual construction or deconstruction. None of whom seem to be present when you arrive at the Bridge of Regret, as your quarry stands alone at the peak of the gentle arc of wood and stone. Kitsu Shiko is a tall woman with her thick black hair bound back in a practical braid. Her head is down in an attitude of prayer, though she raises her gaze to you as you approach. Her face is determined, and her golden eyes blaze with fanatic intensity.

Shiko will address the PCs as they approach; sneaking up on a water shugenja standing on a river is not possible in this situation. This gives them a slight chance to speak with her before combat, though if they step onto the bridge, she will initiate the conflict. Likewise, as soon as the PCs refuse to stand down, she sees little point to continuing the conversation.

If they pause to hear her out, her greeting should give some indication of how much Enemy Preparation there is. Ranging from “It is a surprise to see you here” or “You are not entirely unexpected” or “You took your time about tracking me down” can indicate how much she was aware of before the PCs found her.

Shiko speaks in a dispassionate voice that strains to conceal a raw anger. “Greetings, samurai. [You are not entirely unexpected]. I give you one chance, in honor of my sensei: surrender to the will of the Son of Heaven, and take your place at his side.” She raises her left hand above her head, and you catch a glimpse of blood pooled in the palm. “Or choose to die.”

This is not intended to be a long interaction scene. Shiko wants revenge for the death of Isei, and the PCs most likely refused this offer once already. If they speak with her at least somewhat politely, they may gain some more information: Akodo Tetsui has been promised the position of Lion Clan Champion by the Fallen Emperor. This can come out by Shiko simply telling a Lion PC that they have the opportunity to swear to a “true Lion Champion” or by telling a PC from another clan that they may be able to “supplant your false champion, as the Lion shall”. It should not be immediately made clear that Tetsui is the replacement in question, though should the PCs continue to speak carefully, they can be rewarded with that information.

Shiko will not wait long, however, and even if they are polite, when they refuse her offer or move to attack:

The Kitsu snarls, her face twisting in hatred. “So. Be. It.” Clenching her fist, she flings blood onto the stones of the bridge and splashing it over the side. There is a churning in the water almost immediately, as if it is being brought to a boil. Dozens, even scores, of hands disgorge from the water as a horde of zombies erupts from it. They tear themselves out of the ground, pulling themselves from the foundation of the bridge, clawing meat from their own bones as they free themselves to begin the slaughter.

The PCs must roll to resist **Fear 3**, with an increased TN to 30 (if the roll is failed, they are at -3k0 as normal, but the surprise of the situation increases the difficulty to resist). A literal horde of zombies rises to surround the PCs, and the tsukai commanding them is standing on a crumbling bridge behind sixty feet of undead monsters.

This is intended to be a difficult fight, made harder if the PCs gave her more time to prepare. Shiko is a water shugenja and maho-tsukai. She will cast spells both of the kami and the kansen, as appropriate. The zombies block the way for the PCs, so the PCs must make a number of successful attack rolls equal to the Enemy Preparation plus the number of PCs at the table to clear a way to Shiko. The TN for these attack rolls is 35, and the PC may substitute Strength for their Agility if they wish as they are basically brute-forcing their way through the throng. PCs may take Raises to give Raises on the roll to defend against the zombie horde (either to themselves or to one of their allies) on a one-for-one basis, or call four Raises to clear two zombies with one attack roll. Magic targeting Shiko is redirected to the zombies, clearing away one zombie per Mastery Level of the spell used.

The zombie horde is an environmental hazard rather than a set of discrete statblocks. During the Reactions Stage of every Round, each PC must choose to either avoid the horde or to fight back against them. If they take a defensive option, they may not be in the Full Attack Stance and must roll Defense at a TN of 40. If they go on the offense, they may roll any melee Weapon Skill (or Jujutsu) at a TN of 50. The player may choose any Ring to roll and keep with this roll, ideally based on the combat style and training of the character. If they fail, the PC takes damage equal to the amount they failed the roll by – this damage ignores Reduction, though a GM may allow some magical effects to reduce it partially (but nothing should prevent all of it, including spending Void Points). If they succeed, they take no damage, but if their result is higher than 60, they become Fatigued; the players should be aware of that complication before they decide which dice to keep. (It is important

to pace yourself when surrounded...) PCs who disengage are ignored by the zombies.

Shiko's first few Rounds, while she is intended to be largely untouchable, should be devoted to her personal defense. She summons the Battle-Spirit on the first Turn. The most threatening PC (the first to close within melee range, or the one closing with the least damage) will be targeted with the Pain maho spell. Unless the table is highly threatening, she should not cast it on more than one PC, and she should not increase its duration with Raises at all. A PC who is targeted with it is knocked Prone, cannot act on their next Turn, and must act defensively against the zombie horde, keeping their lowest dice as they are largely helpless in agony. When Shiko is dropped to Down, Out, or Dead, she is unable to command the zombies and they will cease their assault.

Kitsu Shiko

A shugenja talented with speaking with the water kami, but generally denied greater glory in the Lion Clan because of their traditions, Shiko became bitter that she was unable to earn what she felt she deserved. This bitterness twisted her spirit and prevented her from becoming as great as she might have been able to be, and made her easy prey for Shadowlands infiltrators when Toturi IX began sending agents into the Empire...

Air 4	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 5	Void 3
		Intelligence 4		
Honor 2.1 (4.1)	Status 5.0		Glory 6.1	
Initiative: 9k4+5			Attack: by spell or 8k3e (Obsidian Wakizashi, Complex)	
			Damage: 8k2 (Obsidian Wakizashi)	
Armor TN: 37				

Reduction: 30 in the first three Rounds, 10 after
Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out), 77 (Dead)

Taint Rank: 3

School/Rank: Kitsu Shugenja 5

Technique: *Eyes of the Ancestors:* May make a Spell Casting Roll (as though casting a Water spell) against a target's Willpower x 5. If successful, she learns all Spiritual Advantages or Disadvantages that individual possesses and can spend a Void Point to negate any one Spiritual Advantage they possess for 5 minutes. Free Raise on any spell with the Battle keyword.

Affinity/Deficiency: Water/Fire

Spells: Air: 10k4, Earth: 10k4, Fire: 8k3, Water: 10k6; spell selection largely around gathering information, summoning spirits, and personal defense. Strike of the Tsunami is a good default, and can knock PCs into the river; healing should be a low priority. She also has a

handful of maho spells, but these are of lower utility (apart from Pain). Note that her relatively low Void prevents her from casting higher-level spells in one Round.

Skills: Battle (Mass Combat) 5, Calligraphy (Cipher) 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, Lore: History 6, Lore: Theology 5

Athletics 3, Engineering 2, Intimidation 2, Investigation 2, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Wakizashi) 5, Lore: Maho 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Heart of Vengeance: Lion, Perceived Honor, Strategist / Brash, Dark Secret

Obsidian Wakizashi: When the PCs close with her, Shiko can stab them with her Tainted sword – a black blade that shows the state of her soul. This weapon ignores all Reduction, does additional damage equal to the target's Honor Rank, and if any damage dice explode, the PC must roll raw Earth at a TN equal to the Wounds dealt to avoid gaining 3 points of the Shadowlands Taint.

Battle-Spirit

A Tainted spirit from Toshigoku, summoned to Ningen-do for no reason than combat.

Air 1	Earth 4	Fire 2	Water 3
Reflexes 4		Agility 5	Strength 5
Initiative: 8k4		Attack: 10k5e (Spirit Weapon, Simple)	
Armor TN: 30		Damage: 9k3x (Spirit Weapon)	

Reduction: 5

Wounds: 40 (+10), 80 (Dead)

Taint Rank: 5

Skills: all Weapon Skills at 5, Jujutsu 5

Special Abilities:

- Spirit (half-damage from non-crystal, jade, or obsidian)
- Spirit Weapon: the Battle-Spirit wields a blade forged from the essence of Toshigoku blended with the Shadowlands Taint; this blade takes the form of any weapon the spirit wishes, and can benefit from the mechanics of those weapons but always has the DR (base 4k3) listed above. When the spirit is slain, the blade remains; if a PC wishes to take it, it will bond to them – granting a Rank of the Taint in the process and giving them the Curse of the Realm: Toshigoku Disadvantage.
- Rage: damage rolls made by the Battle-Spirit explode on 8s, 9s, and 10s

Once the battle is done, the PCs have an opportunity to investigate the area; the bodies of the surveying crew and peasant laborers can be found easily, sacrificed to power the massive maho working that brought the zombies to unlife. Additionally, Shiko's

spell satchel is easy to examine took on the road, in which there is a folded letter sealed with a mon that some of them might recognize: a black Imperial chrysanthemum with a nine-legged spider.

Well done, my priestess. I will accept Tetsui-san's pledge as the Dark Champion of the Lion. His cunning and strength are already well-known, and his devotion to the Empire will benefit Us going forward. Send a message where to meet him to accept his fealty.

Toturi IX
Master of the Chrysanthemum
Lord of the Seven Hills
Champion of the Pit
Bridge between the Heavens of Light and Dark

There is also a message sealed, but not yet opened, with Akodo Tetsui's personal mon and marked with the day's date. (If the PCs hesitate to open it for some reason, Jodan will break his enemy's seal gladly.)

Ruins of Shiro Shimizu. Tonight.

-T

The date should impose on the PCs a sense of urgency—Tetsui has, apparently, been given a chance to take a place by the side of the fallen Emperor, and will be meeting away from Tonfajutsen and most of his troops that night. The fact that Tetsui's message is sealed means that Shiko has not yet sent word to the Fallen Emperor on where the meeting will take place, so it will be relatively safe for the PCs to confront him. Additionally, the ruins in question are actually closer to the bridge the PCs are at than returning to the city, so taking Tetsui by surprise there will be much easier.

Jodan looks thunderstruck as he considers the notes. "I...all these years, and I had no idea he'd do something like this. I never thought he'd go this far. Take a shot at the Akodo family daimyo, maybe even the clan champion, but this..." The ronin laughs, bitterly. "Well, now I definitely get to kill him."

More conscientious PCs may wish to be more certain that Tetsui is guilty and not being framed, or want to give him an opportunity to surrender. Jodan is impatient with such vacillation, but will agree to let the PCs determine Tetsui's guilt without question before he strikes if it means he gets the chance to make the strike...

If there is argument here, Jodan can mention Ikoma Yura coming to town, though sarcastically. "What,

you think Ikoma Yura will deal with him? The general of the Ikoma Army might out-rank him, but what are the odds she'll see reason?" If the PCs have forgotten about the impending Ikoma arrival, this can be an opportunity to mention it to them and give them the thought that there may be a reasonable authority figure to turn to.

Part Three: A Bridge Too Far

The amount to which Tetsui is prepared is a result of how long they took and how much they gave away the game when dealing with him. If the Enemy Preparation is higher than 8, Tetsui brought two squads with him and the second is kept back and can be added to the fight once combat begins if the first is talked down or otherwise incapacitated.

The Ruins of Shiro Shimizu

Finding the ruins is relatively easy, and as noted in the Rumors, the garrison normally stationed there have been reassigned to the front lines. The PCs can arrive before dark, about two hours before Tetsui and his guards – not enough time to make a whole lot of preparations, but enough to get an idea of what the terrain is like. If they look around, and succeed at an **Investigation (Search)** or **Battle (Skirmish) / Perception** roll with a TN of 35, they can tell that someone else has already been here in the last few days – Tetsui examining the ground before committing to a meeting there.

The tactically-prudent option is to wait inside the castle walls, so as to catch Tetsui in his betrayal and limit the traitor's escape routes.

Once a proud castle, now known as "Otori's Shame", the ruins of Shiro Shimizu are abandoned save for a garrison meant to keep away those that might be tempted by the same darkness that caused the fall of the long-lost and mostly-forgotten family. The garrison is not present, reassigned to more pressing duties, leaving the shattered stone of the castle walls to the mercy of time.

Jodan pauses for a moment in the courtyard to reach down and begin untying the peace knot on his katana. "I swore I would never draw a sword again until it was to avenge my family. This is Minako's Akodo blade, Iwanomi - the Strength of the Earth. Today my vow is complete."

Eventually, the PCs hear voices from outside the castle (or spot the cautious approach of the Lion squad, whatever), and the shireikan will enter with a squad of Akodo Guards (equal to the number of PCs at the table).

Tetsui falters for only a moment when he sees you, and he starts to put on a polite smile... but then his face twists when he sees Jodan stepping forward from your midst. "You..." Tetsui begins angrily, clearly recognizing his nephew.

"Akodo Tetsui, you're a traitor to the Empire and these samurai are my witnesses," Jodan growls, drawing his wife's blade in a swift blur, falling into an Akodo bushi stance with the sword leveled at the shireikan. "What was it you said, Uncle? Everyone dies? Well, now it's your turn, you son of a bitch."

If the PCs want to back his play, the confrontation can proceed directly to combat. The Akodo Guards, confused, move to defend their commanding officer.

Restraining Jodan from jumping at Tetsui now that he has a chance for vengeance will require a roll—Jodan has the Driven disadvantage, but he also isn't an idiot. He is open to **Courtier**, **Sincerity**, **Battle**, or any other checks so long as the PCs are emphasizing that they are not going to let Tetsui go or negotiate with him. These rolls are at **TN 40**, with a Free Raise if the PCs have journeyed with Jodan before; but the roll automatically fails if the PCs talk about "bringing him to justice" or letting him leave alive.

The Akodo Guards do not know that Tetsui has sold his soul to the new Dark Lord, so they can similarly be talked down—if the PCs indicate they know he is working with the Shadowlands and are willing to testify, and succeed at a Contested Roll against Tetsui's Deceit (9k4, with the Emphasis), the Guards will stand down to see how this all plays out.

Seeing his troops wavering, Tetsui snaps his war fan out and clears his own katana of its saya. "These traitors would deprive the Empire of one of its greatest weapons! Slay them before they bring the Lion to our knees!"

Tetsui himself cannot be talked down, but he can be demoralized. If the PCs tell him that they destroyed his zombies and know about his betrayal, they may roll **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** or **Intimidation / Willpower** at TN 35 to shake his

confidence. If they succeed, he will be unable to spend Void Points.

During the fight, Tetsui has a number of Free Raises equal to the Enemy Preparation the PCs accumulated through their investigation, representing his preparing the field for a potential combat (he did not trust the Dark Lord of the Shadowlands, though he was willing to pledge himself to the Fallen Emperor). Once they are used, they are gone. He may also spend them after an attack or spell deals damage to him to negate the damage; this costs one Free Raise for the first time, and the cost doubles after every time he uses this ability (meaning that he likely can only do it two or three times). At the GM's discretion, this may cause an attack or spell that does no damage to simply fail if its effect would end the combat within the first two Rounds.

Additionally, if the Enemy Preparation is 7 or higher, there is a second squad of Guards that join the fight at the end of the second Round.

Note: if the PCs are particularly powerful (all of them are School Rank 5+), the Akodo Guards have Kenjutsu 7 and Reflexes 4, increasing their Armor TN and Initiative accordingly, and giving them exploding 9s on damage rolls.

Jodan focuses his attention entirely on Tetsui; if the PCs do not assist, he is likely to be cut down by the Guards.

Note that, despite his treason, Tetsui is not Tainted.

Akodo Tetsui

Tall, dignified, and handsome, Tetsui give the appearance of a perfect samurai – save for the cold steel of his gaze. He is entirely devoted to nothing but his own advancement and quest for power.

Air 4 Earth 4 Fire 4 Water 5 Void 4
Willpower 5 Intelligence 5
Honor 3.6 (6.6) Status 6.0 Glory 7.6

Initiative: 10k5+8 **Attack:** 10k4e (Akodo Blade, Simple)

Armor TN: 35/48 with off hand War Fan **Damage:** 10k2m (Akodo Blade)

Reduction: 5 (heavy armor)

Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out), 77 (Dead)

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 5/ Tactical Master 4

Techniques: *The Way of the Lion:* May either ignore the portion of an opponent's Armor TN derived from Armor, or gain a Free Raise when attacking. (Do not ignore Reduction from the Armor while choosing the

first option.) +1k0 to attack rolls on first melee attack against an opponent in a skirmish, or against any opponent who has declared a Raise on an attack against since last turn. Add only a total of 1k0 for an enemy who Raised against you, no matter how many times they actually Raised.

Strength of Purity: During a skirmish may add Honor Rank to the total of any single roll during Turn. May not increase damage rolls in this fashion, nor can this be done in the Center Stance.

Strength of My Ancestors: May make attacks as a Simple Action instead of a Complex Action while using weapons with the Samurai keyword.

Triumph Before Battle: Once per skirmish, may designate an opponent during the Reactions Stage. Ignore any Armor TN bonuses target receives from his Stance during the next Round.

Akodo's Final Lesson: When make Raises on any Bugei Skill Roll, if meet or exceed the original TN (before Raises) but fail to meet the Raised TN, still succeed without the benefits of Raises.

The Eyes of the General: May reroll any one die during an attack roll in which you called at least one Raise.

Malleable as the Sea: see Enemy Preparation

The Soul of the Army: When spending Void Points to get +1k1, gets +5k1 on Battle or +2k2 on other Bugei Skills instead.

Skills: Battle (Mass Combat) 8, Defense 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: History 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, War Fans 7

Athletics 3, Calligraphy 4, Commerce 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Engineering 3, Etiquette (Bureaucracy) 5, Games: Shogi 4, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Intimidation 5, Investigation 4, Jiujutsu 3, Lore: Law 3, Polearms 4, Spears 4, Temptation (Bribery) 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies, Clear Thinker, Heartless, Perceived Honor, Tactician, Wealthy / Dark Secret, Driven, Failure of Honor, Insensitive

Akodo Guard

Air 3 Earth 4 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3

Honor 6.5

Status 3.0

Glory 3.5

Initiative: 7k3+5

Attack: 9k4e (Katana, Simple)

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 8k2 (Katana)

Reduction: 3 (light armor)

Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out), 77 (Dead)

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 4

Techniques: *The Way of the Lion:* May either ignore the portion of an opponent's Armor TN derived from

Armor, or gain a Free Raise when attacking. (Do not ignore Reduction from the Armor while choosing the first option.) +1k0 to attack rolls on first melee attack against an opponent in a skirmish, or against any opponent who has declared a Raise on an attack against since last turn. Add only a total of 1k0 for an enemy who Raised against you, no matter how many times they actually Raised.

Strength of Purity: During a skirmish may add Honor Rank to the total of any single roll during Turn. May not increase damage rolls in this fashion, nor can this be done in the Center Stance.

Strength of My Ancestors: May make attacks as a Simple Action instead of a Complex Action while using weapons with the Samurai keyword.

Skills: Battle (Mass Combat) 5, Defense 4, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: History 3, Sincerity 3

Athletics 3, Calligraphy 1, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 1, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 2, Jiujutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 1, Spears 3, War Fan 1

Whether or not they are also fighting guards, when Tetsui is put at **Down or Out**, he will begin pleading for his life.

If Jodan is still alive:

"Is this justice?" Tetsui demands, taking a couple steps back from the furious ronin that pursues him. "She was judged guilty under the law, and now you're murdering a Lion commander?"

Jodan laughs harshly. "It was samurai justice, Uncle, and I've had my fill of that. Three liars and a swift execution is what you gave her. That's more than so many of our victims get!" His voice rises as he advances, until he is nearly shouting. "And it's more than you deserve!"

Tetsui sways in the face of the other man's rage, sword wavering in his grasp. "I- I challenge you to a duel! We'll let the Heavens de-," he stammers, breaking off when Jodan lashes out with Iwanomi to knock his blade aside.

"I refuse," the ronin answers simply. "I'm an honorless dog, and you're something even worse."

Tetsui collapses to a knee, anger in his eyes. "I'm a brilliant tactician! The Empire needs me! Are a wife and child worth losing the battle for our clan, Takeshi? Fine, you can kill mine and we'll be even!"

Jodan stops at that, almost stumbling in shock at the casual monstrosity of proposition. “The Shadowlands are too good for you, you son of a bitch,” Jodan finishes in horror.

Tetsui lunges in this final moment of distraction, in one last desperate attempt to kill his vengeful nemesis. But Jodan will not be denied – he steps to the side and brings his blade down in perfect Akodo form. Tetsui’s head hits the ground a heartbeat before his body does.

Jodan falls to his knees, holding his wife’s sword, as if all the energy and drive has left him—consumed in the final act of vengeance.

If Jodan is Out or Dead:

“Samurai,” Tetsui gasps, stumbling back with blood streaming from his wounds. “I only sought to serve a true Emperor. Surely we can come to some arrangement.” His hands open, and the sword and tessen clatter to the ground.

If the PCs refuse, he will try again:

Tetsui collapses to the floor, anger in his eyes. “I’m a brilliant tactician! The Empire needs me! I sought higher authority, and I’ll renounce it. Leave me as a ronin or a monk—wouldn’t that appeal to Jodan’s sense of justice?”

If the PCs approach to contain him, he will make the same play he would have against Jodan. He draws a knife and makes a surprise attack to try to disable one of the PCs in advance of running. The PC may make a Defense /Reflexes roll at a TN of 30 to avoid being struck by the poisoned blade: they take 10 Wounds and are treated as being in the **Down** Wound Rank until they succeed at an **Earth** check at **TN 20** (they may roll once per Round, but since combat is over, they’ll get over it eventually).

If he misses or does not do enough damage, the PC he attacks can counter attack—any damage will be sufficient:

Tetsui lunges in this final moment of distraction, a knife flashing from his obi in one last desperate attempt to kill you. But he will not escape justice today, as you strike him down. Tetsui’s head hits the ground a heartbeat before his body does.

If the PC he attacks is paralyzed, he will attempt to flee in the confusion, but the other PCs will be able to bring him down with little effort, but he will fall on his own wakizashi rather than accept capture.

Conclusion

With Tetsui dead, the PCs need to return to the city and determine who they need to report the news of the near-betrayal to. Fortunately for them, the Ikoma Army has arrived, and the rikugunshokan Ikoma Yura can clean up the mess. Given that they were known to have met with the shireikan, the PCs should be encouraged (whether in character by surviving Akodo Guards or even Jodan) to report in to the Lion military.

When you return to Tonfajutsen, the Ikoma Army has arrived – the banner of the army flies over Crossroads Castle, mitigating some of the confusion from Tetsui’s abandonment of his post. You are taken to see the commander of the new military force as soon as you arrive.

Ikoma Yura is a stern-faced, experienced bushi in her late thirties. She bears a few scars from her service to the clan, but greets you with a grave nod and receives your reports. “This is most disturbing, of course. That a samurai with a record and bloodlines of such distinction could turn against the true Son of Heaven should be unthinkable. But perhaps we need to think of such things, if only to ensure we can combat them.” She sighs, weariness showing through her on for a moment. “I will take care of the local garrison and the logistical units, and ensure that the hitobashira problem is managed more efficiently. We may lose some face over the issue, but that is preferable to the damage that could be done with that kind of weakness in our defenses. I thank you for bringing this matter to my attention, and for your discretion going forward.”

If Jodan is still alive, she has little time for the man whose manipulations brought this problem to a head despite the threats that doing so might have prevented.

She shakes her head. “As far as the ronin Jodan is concerned... I leave that matter entirely in your hands, samurai. Deal with him as you feel appropriate.”

Jodan will have been almost insensible since Tetsui’s death. He has given no thought to life past that moment, and is still trying to figure out what it means. When they go to speak with him, he is polite but distant, almost shell-shocked.

“Samurai...thank you. I...I know that my soul is not likely bound for any of the nice places. I’ve long since made my peace with that. But you’ve helped me put the souls of my wife and daughter to rest, and I will always be in your debt for that.” Jodan bows all the way to the floor, his forehead touching the tatami.

“Whatever you decide to do with me, I will accept it.”

The PCs have a very broad latitude to decide Jodan’s fate here. The Ikoma general will back their decision, whatever it might be. He has had previous offers from the Scorpion and Mantis clans that he could spend favors to join, although he is not thrilled with the whole clan samurai system. The Lion would also, given the circumstances, be willing to take him back—they’re going to declare a fifteen zombie bounty, and they’re willing to say he has met that—but in order for that to happen both one PC and Jodan will have to take a Minor Obligation to the Ikoma. He will not rejoin the Akodo, and they will not take him. He is willing to shave his head and join a monastic order, remain a ronin, or accept seppuku or execution.

If the PCs choose to execute him or demand his seppuku, he will request either the highest honor PC or a PC he has traveled with previously to be the executioner or serve as his second. In the event of seppuku he will request that his kaishakunin use his wife’s blade and then see it given to the Hall of Ancestors. If he is to be executed he won’t ask them to use the blade, but will ask them to put it in the Hall.

Seppuku:

Jodan kneels, having been given all white to wear for the ceremony. Out of his normal generic brown kimono, he ironically looks much more like a proper samurai in this final ceremony.

He takes a brush in hand, and quickly draws out three lines of poetry on a piece of rice paper.

“Trees shorn of branches,
Yearning for that loving warmth,
Find the rising sun.”

With that complete, he takes the blade wrapped in paper, and holds it to his belly. “I don’t think it would be just for me to be allowed to see them again. But I hope.”

He plunges the knife into his stomach, and in a few agonizing moments he is brought to an end by his lost love’s blade.

If they choose to execute him:

Jodan nods in understanding at his fate. He bows, his head once more touching the floor. “Make it swift, samurai, that’s all I ask. I deserve it. I may not be going home, but I do not wish to tarry any longer without them.”

If they choose to have him join a clan:

Jodan looks, frankly, stunned. And then he barks a laugh. “I don’t know if I have it in me to be a good clan samurai any more, samas, but I put myself in your hands and I will abide by it.”

He bows. “Pleased to meet you, samas. It appears that I am...”

The names are: **Yoritomo Takeshi, Bayushi Takeshi, or Ikoma Takeshi.**

If they choose to have him become a monk:

Jodan looks, frankly, stunned. But then he nods. “Takeshi died years ago. Jodan should die today. Maybe in your travels you will meet Shokan at a Shrine of Ebisu.”

If they choose to have him remain a ronin:

Jodan nods. In that moment he looks weary, but understanding. “I think that’s fair. Becoming a ronin was my way of finding a path to vengeance. Now I guess I’ll have to use it to find another purpose.” He bows deeply.

Regardless of the ronin’s fate, the PCs will be able to return to their lords, having helped prevent a disaster for the Lion in their defense against the Shadowlands Horde.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 EXP
Good Roleplaying:	+1 EXP
Killed Kitsu Shiko:	+1 EXP
Confronted Tetsui:	+1 EXP
Total Possible Experience:	4 EXP

Favors

As long as the PCs report back to the Ikoma Army about the problem with the bridges, they gain a Favor.

Honor

Defeating a maho tsukai and a Lion traitor gains the PCs H8 Honor. This is increased to H9 for Lion PCs.

Standing as Jodan's second for his seppuku, or giving him patronage to join the Ikoma, grants a PC H10 Honor.

Glory

Defeating the maho-tsukai is worth G10 Glory.

To maintain morale among the Lion troops, the Ikoma would prefer the PCs remain quiet about Tetsui's attempt to join the Dark Lord. If any PC does spread it, they all receive another G10 Glory gain, but those that are actively spreading it also gain 3 pips of

Infamy, as the Ikoma family speaks against them in court. This is increased to 5 pips for any Lion PC.

Allies and Enemies

If Jodan survives the events of the module, the PCs gain him as an Ally. He has 1 Influence if taken into a samurai family, or 0 if he remains a ronin or becomes a monk, and 3 Devotion in all cases.

Other

If a PC supports Jodan joining the Lion, they gain "Minor Obligation: Ikoma Family".

GM Reporting

There should be a few reporting questions for each module,

- 1) Did the PCs let Jodan kill Tetsui?
- 2) Did the PCs incur more than nine points of Enemy Preparation?
- 3) Did Jodan join the Lion?
- 4) Did Jodan join another Great Clan?
- 5) Did Jodan become a monk?
- 6) Did Jodan survive?

GM must report this information BEFORE (6/11/2022) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Jodan, once Akodo Takeshi

A ronin who takes care of his appearance and makes some effort to act like a proper samurai, as long as the conversation doesn't touch on matters of justice or samurai privilege, Jodan is nearing the end of his quest for vengeance.

Air 3 Earth 4 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 3
Honor 7.1 Agility 5
Status 0 Glory 5.2

Initiative: 8k3+5

Attack: 10k6e
(Masakari or Akodo
Blade, Simple)

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 5k3m
(Masakari) or 8k2m
(Akodo Blade)

Reduction: 3 (light armor)

Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out), 77 (Dead)

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 1/Ronin Bushi 4

Techniques: *The Way of the Lion:* May either ignore the portion of an opponent's Armor TN derived from Armor, or gain a Free Raise when attacking. (Do not ignore Reduction from the Armor while choosing the first option.) +1k0 to attack rolls on first melee attack against an opponent in a skirmish, or against any opponent who has declared a Raise on an attack against since last turn. Add only a total of 1k0 for an enemy who Raised against you, no matter how many times they actually Raised.

Strength of My Father: May make an Earth Roll (ignoring Wound TN penalties) during the Reactions Stage of each Round, with a TN equal to 5 + 5x the number of Wound Ranks you are currently suffering.

If the roll is successful, you may ignore the effects of your Wound penalties until the next Reactions Stage. This Technique does not work once you reach the Down or Out Wound Ranks.

Never Yield: When you are outnumbered in a skirmish, you gain a bonus to your Armor TN equal to the amount by which the number of enemies exceeds the number of your allies. This bonus caps at +8.

Bite of the Wolf: Simple Action attacks with a katana or a knife.

Twice-Cutting Spirit: Simple Action attacks with masakari. Once per skirmish, you may spend a Void Point on a damage roll, regardless of what weapon you are using.

Skills: Battle (Mass Combat) 5, Defense 3, Heavy Weapons (Masakari) 8, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: History 1, Sincerity 2

Athletics 3, Calligraphy 1, Commerce 1, Engineering 1, Etiquette 3, Forgery 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 3, Jujutsu 3, Knives 3, Hunting 3, Lore: Shadowlands 1, Lore: Theology 1, Lore: Underworld 4, Stealth 3

Mastery Abilities:

Advantages/Disadvantages: Leadership, Strength of the Earth, Tactician / Lost Love, Social Disadvantage: Ronin, Driven: Destroy Akodo Tetsui, Sworn Enemy: Akodo Tetsui, Sworn Enemy: Skarblazam the Tallest Goblin

Player Handout #1: News of the Empire

Honored Samurai,

Never has the news I share been so disastrous and bleak.

The forces that shall not sully our courts with their descriptions have moved with unholy speed across the plains, and though the Clan of Shinjo fights alongside the Imperial Legions for every inch of territory, the Unicorn lands have fallen. The Minor Clans of the north are likewise over-run. The Badger, Frog, and Hare Clans have either left their provinces behind or been slain by the invaders. Refugees from the territories beset by war are seeking protection from their neighbors and allies.

The battle-lines have moved as far south as the Lion and Scorpion lands. This division in the enemy's forces is perhaps the only good news, for if they were concentrated, who knows how long even the stalwart samurai of either clan could stand? Reports indicate that Shiro Soshi and Ryoko Owari are under siege, while the main force of the enemy closes on Shiro no Shosuro. Likewise, the Lion have been forced to give ground to a line between Shiro sano Ken Hayai and Kyuden Ikoma. These two strongholds serve as anchors for the Lion defense, but the Clan of Akodo has so far been unable to mount an effective counterattack – though thousands have gone to their ancestors in honor.

There are signs that the foe does not seek indiscriminate destruction. While all military forces arrayed against them have met with an utter lack of mercy, cities of political or economic value have only been raided and abandoned. Little effort is being spent to hold these places, unless they hold a position of strategic importance. What this portends is surely unspeakable.

Even the East, the direction of the Sun's Blessings, presents difficulties to overcome. There have been reports of raiders striking at smaller Mantis holdings. The source of this is unclear so far, but it is difficult to imagine it is entirely unrelated to the other issues the Empire faces.

The matter of the Phoenix rebellion is much on peoples' minds, even in the press of these other concerns. The actual fate of the clan will likely be determined by the Imperial Winter Court, to be held in the Phoenix city of Mikui Toshi. While both the Clan Champion and the Master of Water were killed, most of their military was able to retreat and are now under the command of the new Champion.

Darkness threatens our glorious land once again. Now is truly the time for heroes to step forward, to keep the light of honor shining bright for all of Rokugan to see!

With Hope in Honor, my Friends and Comrades in Arms.

Otomo Yusuke

Player Handout #2: Letter from Akodo Tetsui

[The letter is addressed to each PC],

Your name has become known to me through your exploits across the Empire. In these trying times, Rokugan has need of samurai such as you in defense against the forces committed to our destruction.

If your daimyo permits and will give you the papers, I would ask that you report to Tonfajutsen as soon as you can. The fate of the Empire may depend on your honor and courage.

If you can make it to Tonfajutsen, I have arranged rooms for you at the Shinku Koi Inn.

Akodo Tetsui
Shireikan, Third Battalion, Akodo Army

Player Handout #3: Message from “a friend”

You are being watched by Tetsui’s soldiers. He is dangerous, and cannot be trusted.

Tomorrow morning there is going to be a commotion, and your watchers will be distracted. Go to the alley between the sake brewery and the inn.

- the friend who invited you