

Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei

Part Two: Breaking Storm

**A One-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido**

by Clint R. Blome

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A Mantis lord lies dying and the Clan is about to explode. Can the PCs find the culprit before the court is covered in blood?

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This module is written for the Legend of the Five Rings: Fourth Edition, published by Alderac Entertainment.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, gender, glory and status at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters. All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate, as sometimes reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

Players will have Module Tracking Sheets that need to be filled out at the end of the game, which is to keep track of certain circumstances and events for future GM's to create a better roleplaying experience for the player. Important information to be included in the game will be listed at the beginning of the module, and information that needs to be recorded will be listed at the end of the module. Please fill out the GM tracking sheet attached to the end of this module and return it to the Campaign Coordinator. If you need an electronic version of the form, please contact the Campaign Administrator or Campaign Coordinator (e-mail addresses are available on the website).

Rokugan has a complex and rich culture that is different in many ways from modern Western civilization. The Legend of the Five Rings book details these numerous differences, but it is suggested that GMs keep a few specifics in mind.

- Family name precedes personal name for all characters; Akodo Toturi was a member of the Akodo family with the personal name of Toturi.

- Samurai do not commonly concern themselves with money or commerce; exchanges between samurai are treated as gifts, and payments are made to peasants as though humoring the lower orders petty ways.
- An event is not truly considered to have happened without samurai witness; even criminal investigations rely entirely upon eyewitness testimony.

Some events that occur within this module affect the storyline and may need to be reported by the Campaign Administrators. This module has an effective 'active' period which is 3 months after its release, and these events (listed at the end of the module) **MUST** be reported by the GM to the campaign administration before the end of the active period for them to take effect.

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward or punishment. **Please consult the Honor table on page 91 and the Glory table on page 93** of the Legend of the Five Rings Fourth Edition core sourcebook for more specific guidelines for Honor and Glory gains and losses. Specifically, be mindful of the performing PC's current Honor, Glory, and Infamy when meting out rewards and punishments.

Reminder

This module is intended for entertainment purposes; this means that the goal is to provide an enjoyable playing experience for the players. The events of the module should be challenging, so as to ensure the players have a sense of accomplishment, but the mechanics presented here are, ultimately, guidelines. If adjustments are necessary to adapt to the specific group of players, it is suggested that care should be taken to ensure the player characters do have a reasonable chance of achieving their goals (or at least of achieving an entertaining failure). Remember that the GM has the final word at the table, and use that power with both discretion and consideration.

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low/Mid rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 2.

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

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank 1): There is only one Templar with Arjan on the ship.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 3): Increase the number of Mantis Favors required to speak with any NPC by one. Arjan has Reflexes 5, increasing his Initiative Roll to 9k5 and his Armor TN to 30. The Gaijin Sailors have Agility 3, and three of them will assist Arjan even if the rest of the crew is occupied.

Adventure Summary and Background

Winter Court in the lands of the Mantis has always been far from the normal experience for their guests. This year, however, has proven to be more eventful than even the Mantis are accustomed. The returned spirit Gusai has challenged the Champion of the Mantis, Yoritomo Aramasu. Several samurai engaged in a more courtly competition to become the Mantis Ambassador to the Imperial Court. Now, Tsuruchi, the legendary archer and family daimyo, lies dying.

The Mantis have many enemies. The Scorpion have taken offense with their Clan Champion, and there has been bad blood between the Clan of Secrets and Tsuruchi, one of their renegade scions, for a long time. The Phoenix hold bitter resentment due to the Mantis invasion of their lands during the War Against the Shadow. What many in the Empire do not realize is that the Mantis have made enemies outside Rokugan's borders as well. Some in the Ivory kingdoms have begun to make moves to undermine them, leading Yoritomo Aramasu to investigate the matter. Aramasu did not expect the issues that now plague the Clan to become as serious as they are, but he has not been able to return to the Clan yet. In his absence, he left Yoritomo Hogosha and Tsuruchi in charge.

The Ivory Kingdoms have had great success in infiltrating the Mantis Clan, placing an assassin within the castle's peasant population. His masters knew that

many within the Empire look down upon the lower classes and managed to use this knowledge against the Clan. The assassin has been in this position for many years, biding his time to get a chance to kill the Mantis Champion. Nearly two years, he made an attempt that almost succeeded; Aramasu escaped, and the assassin was able to avoid being uncovered, but the incident drove the Mantis Clan Champion into hiding (or so the Empire believes).

Unfortunately, though he is willing to remain in the relative ease of his deep cover role, the assassin's masters have grown impatient and have recalled him to report upon what he has learned from his time in the Empire. Before he goes, however, he has decided to strike at an important member of the Mantis. Tsuruchi was the target the assassin chose, as he believed it would lead to military chaos within the Clan that his masters might find a way to use, as well as having an easy scapegoat in the Scorpion. He managed to poison Tsuruchi's bow before the demonstration, and now the Tsuruchi family daimyo lies dying.

The PCs are called to Yoritomo Hogosha's office and assigned the task of investigating what has happened to Tsuruchi. As they are most likely from different Clans, the Mantis feel they can trust a varied group over that of any one Clan, including themselves. It will fall to the PCs to discover the truth of this crime. They will have a chance to discover what really happened, but ultimately the Mantis are more interested in bringing the matter to a conclusion, so it will be up to the PCs how they choose to resolve the matter: they may lay the blame upon someone within the court, or catch the Ivory Kingdom's assassin before he makes his escape.

Favor Trading

Throughout the first half of the Mantis Winter Court, the PCs had many opportunities to collect Mantis Clan Favors. This is intended to represent the element of favor trading within the courts where one samurai will use these favors for other benefits; the GM is encouraged to allow PCs to trade Favors for creative ways to further their investigation in addition to those listed in the module. (The GM should also pay attention to how many Mantis Favors the PCs have, and adjust costs accordingly if necessary.) The PCs may choose to hoard their Favors instead. Many favors with the Mantis may very well be of use in the future.

Introduction

A castle servant comes rushing into Court with tears in her eyes. "Yoritomo Hogosha-sama! Yoritomo Hogosha-sama! It is Tsuruchi-sama! He's dying!"

The court falls into a strained quiet as all eyes turn to Hogosha. For the first time during the court, you see Hogosha break face, for only an instant, as he pales in fear. He rushes out of the room as the samurai at court look at each other in stunned silence.

Tsuruchi is on death's door. It would be impossible to stop the spread of the rumors throughout the castle, so the Mantis do not even try at this point. The court explodes in a mass of accusations and nearly every member has the finger pointed at them at some point over the next few minutes. As the dust settles, however, two people stand firmly accused by the other members of court: Gusai and Shosuro Ochiba.

If the PCs approach him, Gusai laughs off all accusations that he could be the cause of Tsuruchi's predicament. *"I have no issues with Tsuruchi-san. He has shown himself to be a man of action, much like myself. He is a credit to the Clan, and I have long looked forward to working with him."* A Courtier / Awareness roll against a TN of 25 will show that Gusai is speaking truthfully, but something has spooked the old Clan Champion.

Shosuro Ochiba will immediately retire to her quarters and will not speak to anyone save for Scorpion PCs. To them, she will merely mention that they need to keep their heads low and ears open. *"I will wish to speak to you soon; when the time is right, I will send for you."*

Asako Misashi will be quite vocal in his support of the Scorpion courtier, denying that Ochiba could be involved in such a sordid affair and decrying any effort to implicate her as "Mantis misdirection" intended to eliminate one of the absent Champion's staunchest supporters in exchange for political leverage against the Scorpion.

A few hours later, servants approach the PCs to invite them to a private meeting with Yoritomo Hogosha. It is made clear that attendance is not optional.

Part One: Dark Horizon

As the PCs approach the private rooms of Yoritomo Hogosha, it is immediately apparent that the mood has changed in Kyuden Gotei. Guards who were once lax have become very dutiful. Guards are now stationed throughout the halls, keeping an eye on all the guests. The guests themselves are seen far less often, keeping to their assigned rooms much more than venturing out into the castle's public rooms.

The guards at Hogosha's doors eye the PCs carefully before letting them in. Hogosha bows to the PCs and motions them to sit before a low table while a servant prepares tea for them. He studies the PCs carefully as they settle in before speaking bluntly and concisely.

"We have a problem. Due to the inept actions of a servant, the entire court now knows of this problem. Tsuruchi is deathly ill. I have need of a group of samurai to investigate the matter. I want you to give an unbiased evaluation of the situation. I have chosen you for your varied backgrounds and your relatively low rank. You are to investigate this matter as thoroughly as possible and attempt to find out how Tsuruchi was stricken. Hopefully, if you discover the responsible parties, you will recover some information that will help our healers find a cure. You are also to discover whom, here at court, wanted Tsuruchi dead. The Mantis cannot let this stand; someone will face justice. You will help me decide who."

"Any questions?"

- Was Tsuruchi poisoned?/What happened to Tsuruchi?
From what our healers have been able to determine, Tsuruchi-san was most likely poisoned. However, if it is poison, it is a type unknown to us.
- Do you have any suspects?
I do not wish to 'influence' your investigation. There are more than enough samurai at court that would like to see the Mantis leadership in disorder. I will say that no one is above suspicion at this point, regardless of his or her status.
- Can we see Tsuruchi?
I have already notified the guards that you are to be permitted access to his rooms as necessary. He will not be much help to you as he is barely coherent.
- Will we have access to the other guests?
You will have to negotiate that on your own. I will not force one of my guests to speak to you unless you have evidence of their guilt.
- Will we have access to the castle?
You will have access to all of the public areas of Kyuden Gotei. If you need access to another location, the Mantis Clan will determine whether it is in our interests for that to happen.

Hogosha will answer any other questions to the best of his ability, though he obviously is anxious for the PCs to find answers and will dismiss them (roughly if they

seem to have been dithering or stalling) as soon as he has given them what information he has.

Part Two: The Broken Arrow

The PCs now have access to Tsuruchi and his belongings (as well as any public areas of the castle). If they want to speak with any of the guests, they will have to trade Favors in order to gain access to them. They will also need Favors and a good reason to access any of the private areas of the castle. The Mantis will be patient with the PCs but will brook no insult from those who try to force their way past them (although they will respect PCs who attempt to bully their way into these areas).

Mantis samurai heavily guard Tsuruchi's quarters, like those of Hogosha. These samurai are informed of the PCs coming, so, other than a few suspicious looks from the guards, there is no impediment to the PCs entering his quarters.

As they enter, they will pass several servants who are leaving after tending to Tsuruchi and the healers in the room. Tsuruchi is laying unconscious in his bed, surrounded by three shugenja who have been tending to him. Two Yoritomo shugenja are doing what they can for the stricken daimyo, and Moshi Uidori is lending her assistance.

Tsuruchi

If the PCs examine Tsuruchi, they may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** against a TN of 20 in order to notice a small cut across Tsuruchi's forearm. Anyone who has at least two ranks in Kyujutsu will recognize that this comes from a string snapping on his bow; a rare injury but not one that normally causes any issues. Studying the wound and a **Medicine / Intelligence** roll against a TN of 20 will tell the PC that the wound does show signs of poison, though they are very faint. Rolling more than a 30 tells them that the dosage was precisely applied; there is very little left on the wound because Tsuruchi's body has absorbed most of it – this indicates the poisoner was very familiar with their target.

The shugenja in the room will answer any questions the PCs ask of them:

- What is Tsuruchi's status?

He still lives, though his health is failing. A cure must be found soon or Tsuruchi-sama may not make it for long.

- Have you asked the kami for their assistance?
Hai, samurai. It is only through their intervention that Tsuruchi-sama is still alive. This is like no other poison we have seen in that the kami have trouble locating it. He shows all the signs of being poisoned, but our normal prayers for healing this sort of affliction have failed.
- Who else has been here?
Yoritomo Hogosha-sama has spent much time here. Tsuruchi Ichiro-sama has visited his daimyo, and seemed very troubled. Lord Gusai-sama also stopped in to pay his respects.
- What about the servants that were just here?
Hai, several servants have been in to assist us in our duties.

The Room

Tsuruchi's chambers are sumptuously appointed guest rooms, but the legendary archer has almost no personal belongings present. He habitually travels light, from his formative years as a renegade and bounty hunter, and his gear is essentially ready for him to leave at a moment's notice. The only real sign of his own interests and personality in the room is the large case containing archery equipment: the bows and targets used during the demonstration and lesson, along with a large number of arrows and the tools and materials necessary to care for these weapons.

If the PCs search the rooms, they may roll **Investigation (Search) / Perception** against a TN of 25 to notice two things of note: there is an unopened letter to Tsuruchi on his writing desk, and Tsuruchi's personal bow is out of place. Those with at least two ranks of Kyujutsu will notice that the bow is not stored like a master of the art would. Also, the damage done to the bow during its failure at the demonstration has not been repaired. It is as if he simply threw it to the side when he returned.

Examining the bow specifically will allow the PCs to roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** against a TN of 25 to catch a slight floral scent coming from the bowstring; if they make a TN of 35, the PC will remember that he has actually smelled this same floral scent in a corner of the gardens. (Characters who have spent a great deal of time in the garden may receive a Free Raise on this roll at the GM's discretion.) A roll of **Lore: Poison / Intelligence** against a TN of 25 will tell the PCs that the scent is not one that they are

familiar with, but that it has similar qualities to poisons they do know.

The letter is addressed to Tsuruchi from Tsuruchi Ichiro. If the PCs read it, the letter details Ichiro's unhappiness with the Tsuruchi family's place within the Mantis and how the events at this Winter Court show that the Yoritomo are not worthy of the family's loyalty. However, reading the unopened letter will cost the PC one point of Honor if they have more than two Ranks of Honor (two if the character has more than six Ranks).

If the PCs choose to summon the kami to get an idea as to what happened in the room, they will encounter certain difficulties. The spirits can tell the PCs that several people have been in and out of the room, particularly since Tsuruchi's indisposition, and will identify most of them as servants if at least one Raise is called for clarity. Two Raises for clarity will induce the spirits to reveal that someone other than Tsuruchi was in the cases that hold Tsuruchi's weapons about an hour before the demonstration. Unfortunately, they are not able to describe this person – even kami of Water will only reveal them as a brownish blur.

Part Three: Questions and Answers

Getting in to question samurai at the court is not a simple matter – all of the samurai at court have quickly become aware that the PCs are investigating what has happened to Tsuruchi, and none of them wants to be implicated due to whim. Each samurai has a cost associated with the PCs gaining access to speak to them. This will usually be a set of Favors but a PC can always attempt a roll of **Courtier / Awareness** against a TN of 40 in order to bypass the Favor trading process. However, if the roll is made, they will only speak to the PCs who succeed on the roll.

Gusai

Speaking to Gusai will require that the PCs spend a total of 3 Mantis Favors in order to get in to see him. Otherwise, they will need to make the Courtier roll mentioned above. Mantis PCs gain a Free Raise on this roll.

Gusai's apartments, while grand, are nothing special for Kyuden Gotei. In fact, they are barely above those of the PCs themselves, a small slight to the former Clan Champion. The blocky samurai greets the PCs with a sardonic smile.

“Welcome samurai. I would offer you tea, but it seems that the servants in the castle have been instructed to be somewhere other than in my presence. It seems some in the Clan blame me for Tsuruchi's condition. This could not be more wrong. If the Clan wishes to blame anyone for the current state of things, they need look no further than Aramasu. If he were here to handle things, this never would have happened.”

Gusai will welcome any questions by the PCs, and is not likely to take insult from any but the absolute most offensive suggestion.

- Did you poison Tsuruchi?
I did not. I hold much respect for Tsuruchi-san. I see much of myself in him; he stood against those who sought to keep him from his birthright and prevailed with nothing more than his conviction and skill. Poison is a poor weapon for a Mantis. I will not say that there are not members of the Clan who might resort to such a thing, but they are not men I would associate with.
- Where were you when the bow was poisoned?
As I did not know it was the bow, and have no idea when it happened, I can only imagine that I was in my rooms. I had heard that the archery demonstration was coming and was preparing myself. It is rare to get the chance to see a master perform their craft.
- Who might have done this?
There are many who would like to see the Mantis in conflict. The Scorpion Clan has a vendetta against Tsuruchi – Kyuden Ashinagabachi was a Scorpion holding once. They hate him almost as much as the traitor Aramasu. The Phoenix still remember what happened to them at Mantis hands during Yoritomo's reign. And they may blame me because a divided Clan is a weak Clan. There are also those within my Clan who are unhappy. I would hate to think that any Mantis would attempt to kill one of his brothers, but Aramasu has led us to this. His failure is costing us, and it may have cost the life of Tsuruchi.
- Do you maintain your demand that Aramasu show himself?
I do. This only emphasizes my point. The Clan is in turmoil and Aramasu is nowhere. He is an unfit leader.
- Tsuruchi Ichiro seems to think you may have poisoned Tsuruchi to get him out of your way.
That is unfortunate. It is also untrue. Ichiro-san has lost his sensei and his Lord. He, of course, wants vengeance. I wish he

would focus such passion to the benefit of the Mantis Clan.

- Why were you in Tsuruchi's room?
I went to pay my respects; I did not stay long.
- Did you notice the poison in the garden?
There was poison in the garden? I can tell you that we did not have such plants growing in Mantis soil when I was Clan Champion!

Tsuruchi Ichiro

Getting in to see Tsuruchi Ichiro will cost the PCs a total of 5 Mantis favors. He makes a show of being far too busy to speak with anyone and will only speak to the PCs if they force the issue by spending those favors. Attempting to force through with a Courtier Roll is possible, but only members of the Tsuruchi family gain a Free Raise.

Ichiro is very evasive with the PCs questions. He is annoyed at having to waste time with the PCs while his daimyo is dying. He now has a family to manage while Tsuruchi is unable to.

- Did you poison Tsuruchi?
I should shoot you like a dog for even asking that question. Tsuruchi is my family daimyo and there is no other man I respect more. He is my Lord and I will see his poisoner dead.
- Where were you when the bow was poisoned?
Preparing for the demonstration, probably. We wished to put on a good show.
- Who might have done this?
It is no secret that Gusai saw Tsuruchi as yet another man in his way to the Champion's position. That man has proven that he is willing to do anything in order to prove a point. One needs look no further than how he originally died to see that.
- What about the Scorpion?
The Scorpion have proven that they are not nearly as adept as their reputation suggests. They have failed to kill the Mantis Champion through assassination since their return. They probably maintain their public hatred of Aramasu in order to hide what they are truly up to. The wars this summer proved they still covet Tsuruchi land. No, they are just a convenient scapegoat.
- What about the Phoenix?
Poison is not the way of the Phoenix. They are much more likely to use the courts against us than to attack us directly.
- We found this letter in Tsuruchi's room.
That is a private message between a samurai and his Lord. Have you no honor? Yes, I

disagreed with Tsuruchi-sama about our Clan joining the Mantis. I believe we had more influence in the Empire before we swore service to Yoritomo. This was a mere policy disagreement and not a reason to wish him ill.

- Why were you in Tsuruchi's room?
I believe my Lord may still be in danger. I often go to make sure that the security on his rooms is sufficient. This is actually not entirely true; any PC who wishes to roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** at a TN of 15 will realize this; rolling a 25 or higher will reveal that Ichiro looks on Tsuruchi as a father, and is personally very concerned for his daimyo's health. He will deny lying, and will abruptly dismiss the PCs if they attempt to force the issue.

Shosuro Ochiba

In order to get in to see Shosuro Ochiba, the PCs will need to expend a total of 3 Favors, one of which must be a Scorpion Favor. The PCs may also trade in a Scorpion Ally in order to get in to see Ochiba. Scorpion PCs who attempt the Courtier roll to force their way in gain two Free Raises, but will not be trusted with the further information. Scorpion PCs may also attempt to covertly speak with her – this requires a **Stealth / Agility** roll at a TN of 25, but Ochiba will appreciate their discretion and speak with them frankly.

Shosuro Ochiba looks more stressed than she has been throughout the court. She will be very diplomatic about how she says things as she does not plan to be on the losing end of a Mantis sword.

- Did you poison Tsuruchi?
No, and no one did so under my orders. The Scorpion Clan does not wish to interfere with the Mantis Clan's internal issues.
- Where were you when the bow was poisoned?
I was with Asako Misashi. He will vouch for my whereabouts. (This is a lie – she is simply using the sympathy the Phoenix is showing her to her advantage; the PCs must roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** at a TN of 40 to discover this, however, and even if they do, she will stick to her story.)
- Who might have done this?
I do not know. I am only a simple diplomat and any speculation I may make would be nothing more than slander. I have no desire to wrong any samurai in this fashion.
- Do you think Gusai might have done this?

It is possible. Gusai has made his play and the time for Aramasu to show himself is coming to an end. It could be an attempt to remove Tsuruchi from his way to the head of the Mantis.

- Do you think Tsuruchi Ichiro might have done this?
Interesting. It is not something I would have suspected of him. Anything is possible.

After meeting with her, she will request Scorpion PCs to stay so she can speak with them privately:

“You are in a unique position. The Scorpion does not truly care who did this, though it is a matter of some minor curiosity. What we want to know is how it was accomplished. Others have struck at the Mantis where our own agents have failed, more than once. We must find out how they are getting around the Mantis defenses. Also, if you have the opportunity to place the blame for the assassination attempt (or success if it should come to that) on someone of use to us, I suggest you do so.”

The Scorpion do not really care who gets the blame for the murder though they will be less interested in the real culprit than they would be in Gusai, Ichiro or another of the guests being accused of the attempt. Mantis leadership falling in this fashion would give the Scorpion an edge in their military conflict, and driving a wedge between the Mantis and another Clan would be politically beneficial as well.

Asako Misashi

Speaking to Asako Misashi will only cost the PCs 2 Mantis Favors. He is not averse to speaking with the PCs as he feels he has nothing to hide, but he is attempting to stay out of the way of everyone and keep to himself. Misashi has taken offense to the rumors about Shosuro Ochiba being behind the attempted murder. He will do everything in his power to make sure that the PCs catch the right suspect and stop allowing the Mantis to show their bias against the frame job, insisting that they are wasting their time on the matter. He is even willing to lie for Shosuro Ochiba should she need an alibi for when the bowstring was poisoned.

Asako Misashi will have his own servants serve the PCs tea and will be as polite as he can be to everyone save Mantis PCs whom he will give the cold shoulder to.

- Did you poison Tsuruchi?
Of course not.

- Who might have done this?
The Mantis have a bloody history. They have made many enemies both within and without their Clan. There are many who would like to see them in turmoil. The Scorpion and the Lion have a tumultuous history with the Tsuruchi family. Anyone could have done this, and done so with reason.
- What were you doing in the gardens near the poisonous flower?
Hmm? I knew there was something strange about that flower. It did not appear to be one native to the Empire. I was merely fascinated by it. I was not the only one. Shosuro Ochiba and Gusai spent a good amount of time in the same area; they too studied the plant for a good amount of time.
- Where were you when the bow was poisoned?
Note: His answer largely depends on whether the PCs have spoken with Shosuro Ochiba. If they spoke to her first and asked for her alibi, she has already sent word to Misashi and he will support her even though he is lying. Should the PCs try to call him on the lie he will simply affirm that it is what he will attest to in court. If they did not speak to Shosuro Ochiba, he will say that he was alone in his rooms. Should they later come to question him about her alibi, he will say that he was mistaken before about the timeframe and was having tea with Ochiba.
- What do you know of poisons?
Not much. I have studied most subjects available to me, and I have touched upon the matter on occasion, as distasteful as it may be. Most poisons are derived from animal or plant substances. If you were looking for a poison, I would start with where such may be found.

The Servants

At some point, the PCs may want to speak to the servants about what they may have seen. This does not require the expenditure of any Favors but it will need a roll of **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** against a TN of 25 in order to find the right servant who may have seen something. They will need to do this for a servant for each of the locations that they want to ask about or to find a particular servant by name.

Tsuruchi's Rooms: A servant can tell the PCs that Gusai, Tsuruchi Ichiro, Yoritomo Hogosha, and several of the castle servants have been in the room. They did not see anything that seemed suspicious. The servants seen in the room were Hosaru, Raigu, Iseki, and Arjan.

The Gardens: One of the servants can tell the PCs that there were several people seen near where the poison was planted in the gardens. These were Shosuro Ochiba, Asako Misashi, and Gusai. The servants who have tended that area are Iseki, Nagiko, Arjan, and Sumata.

Iseki: Iseki is a small peasant woman who will speak quietly but truthfully to the samurai. She is quite popular among the other servants of the castle. She was one of the servants who was assigned to Tsuruchi when he came to the castle so she has had access to him since he arrived. In fact, she was the servant that handed Tsuruchi his bow during the archery demonstration.

- Did you poison Tsuruchi?
No, samas!
- Where did you get the bow you gave Tsuruchi?
Tsuruchi gave it to me to hold until he was ready. He usually keeps it in a case in his room.
- Did you ever see anyone touch the case the bow was in?
No samas!
- Why were you in Tsuruchi's room?
I have had the honor of being one of his personal attendants since he arrived.
- Why were you in the gardens by the poison?
I used to work in the gardens samurai-samas.
- Did you see anyone else in Tsuruchi's room?
No samurai, samas. No one of importance. (This is a lie; Iseki has no desire to get anyone in trouble with the samurai, and does not want to give testimony that could result in another servant's death. She is not particularly skilled at this sort of dissembling, however: any suspicious PC need only beat a TN of 10 on an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** roll. If pressed, she will tearfully apologize and reveal the following.)
- Who are you protecting?
I did once see Arjan there. I thought it was odd as he does not usually tend the rooms of samurai and instead tends to the gardens.

Arjan: Arjan is the assassin. He is a sly servant of the Cult of the Destroyer, from the Ivory Kingdoms. He is not popular among the other servants of the castle and keeps to himself. He is not afraid of speaking to the PCs and will do anything to lay the blame on the samurai at the court, as he just needs to make it until he gets word that the ship that is picking him up is ready. He does speak with a gaijin accent but this is not

unusual in the Mantis castle; in fact, he plays up the accent so as to confuse the issue more. As a skilled long-term infiltrator, Arjan is adept at lying to samurai; in order to catch him in a lie, a PC must make a 40 on an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** roll – and even at that, it will only determine that the most recent statement was a prevarication. Arjan was responsible for treating Tsuruchi's bow with an exotic poison and for placing the source of that poison in Shosuro Ochiba's rooms in an attempt to shift the blame to a more obvious target (and to involve the Mantis more directly in the affairs of the Empire, distracting them from the Cult of the Destroyer).

It is important that the PCs do not see through Arjan's disguise. Should they manage to do so anyway he will attack, though he will be without his Templar escorts or any weapon other than a knife. He will fight to the death, focusing on shugenja PCs unless a bushi is causing a significant issue.

- Why were you in Tsuruchi's room?
My duties take me throughout the castle. I have probably been in every part of it at one point or another samurai-sama.
- Where were you when the bow was poisoned?
I was performing my duties in the gardens.
- Why were you in the gardens by the poison?
Most of my work revolves around the gardens. I have been tending the smaller plants and shrubs for most of the year.
- Did you see any other samurai in Tsuruchi's room?
Of course, sama. Tsuruchi-sama is an important lord. Arjan will answer this however the PCs seem to be leaning. If they ask if a specific samurai was there he will admit to seeing them there.

Part Four: Locations

The Garden

Once the PCs have determined that the poison came from the garden they will most likely want to search the area for clues. With an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll against a TN of 20, they can locate the section of the garden where they smelled the scent of the poison from the bowstring. What they find when they get there is that a small portion of the garden has been dug up and there is no sign of the poisonous plant from which the poison was made.

Asking around the gardens, no one will know what happened to the lovely purple flowers that once were in that spot, though if the PCs dig into the servants see the

Servants section of Part Three above for what they can figure out about who has been seen in that area.

With a **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** against a TN of 15, they will be able to find obvious tracks that appear to have been made by a samurai tabi, leading from the garden and towards the samurai guest quarters in the castle. If they make a 40 on the roll, they see that someone made the tracks with a peasant's sandal, though cleverly disguised. Following these tracks will take the PCs into the back hallways that comprise the servants section of the castle. A few smears of mud and dirt will lead the PCs to a winding staircase that opens onto the third floor of the castle and near the rooms of Shosuro Ochiba. If the PCs ask the servants about who may have come through this area, none of them remembers seeing a samurai pass through.

Shosuro Ochiba's Rooms

If the PCs decide to search Ochiba's room, she will not allow it unless they are fellow Scorpion. This would be a major breach of etiquette, but a surmountable one with the expenditure of 7 Mantis Favors.

Her rooms are completely austere, denoting the opinion the Mantis have for their Scorpion guests. In the sleeping chamber, a bright purple flower can be found in a vase by the bed. If the PCs have smelled the scent of the poison, they will be able to identify as the source with a roll of **Investigation / Intelligence** against a TN of 20.

Ochiba does not know where the flower came from, only that it appeared in her room after a recent walk she took around the palace grounds. This is damning evidence if the PCs are not Scorpion and may be enough for the PCs to throw her to the mercy of the court.

If the PCs accept her protestation of innocence, there are very few clues as to who may have been responsible for framing her. There is nothing in the room that can be discovered by mundane means – the assassin is very good at what he does, after all. Moreover, a shugenja who Communes with the spirits in the room will discover the same issues with identifying the culprit as they may have experienced in Tsuruchi's rooms. However, if these issues are mentioned to Ochiba, she will inform the PCs that she has heard of similar issues in the past. *“When our Clan was banished to the Burning Sands, our shugenja had a hard time dealing with the spirits outside the Empire. Many of the gaijin seemed to be outside the understanding of the kami, and the shugenja regularly reported difficulties in working their prayers upon them.”*

If only Scorpion PCs are in the room, Ochiba's story does not change, but she has more to tell. *“If this is the plant that killed Tsuruchi, then it may be of vital importance. Take it, and use it in order to set the court's sights on someone else. It is obvious that it was set here to cast blame on the Scorpion Clan. Whoever did this will pay. Find the true culprit and teach them the error of their ways, but if you can use the plant to wreck havoc within the Mantis, do so. If you require testimony, I can arrange for it. Do not hesitate to do what is needed.”*

This may cause some issues with those among the Scorpion that have chosen to side with Yojiro's view of a Scorpion Clan that casually uses heinous methods in order to accomplish their goals. It should be noted that they are not being forced to make an opposite choice; it is just being offered to them.

In order to place the poisonous flower in another samurai's room, they will need to make a **Stealth / Agility** roll against a TN of 25. Leaving it in the room of another samurai will cost the PC that does so Honor as per the being an accomplice to a heinous crime; they will lose 1 pip of honor if honor 0, 4 pips if honor 1 or 2, 8 pips if honor 3 or 4, 12 pips if honor 5 or 6, 16 pips if honor 7 or 8, or a total of 2 ranks if honor 9 or 10. (Any other PCs who allow this to take place knowingly also suffer the same Honor loss.)

Ochiba can also arrange for the testimony of one of the samurai guests against any samurai the PC wishes. She will do this by blackmailing Doji Juichi into testifying against the samurai of choice. This will earn the PCs the same amount of Honor loss as above. Sometimes, doing the dirty work of the Scorpion can have major consequences.

Other rooms

There is nothing of note to find in the rooms of other samurai unless one of the PCs has placed the poisonous plant in the room of said samurai.

If the PCs cannot locate the plant or identify it as the cause of Tsuruchi's affliction, the investigation is unlikely to continue further. If they cannot do it on their own, several of the NPCs may be able to guide them in that direction: Asako Misashi, while not an expert, is an Asako Loremaster and knowledgeable about a wide variety of subjects; Mirumoto Kaukatsu trained as a Kitsuki Investigator, and may know something of antidotes as a result; Kasuga Senriko can serve to aim the PCs at the servants if they seem unable to draw that connection. Speaking with these NPCs should cost two Mantis Favors, but if the players are at

a loss and making a genuine effort to learn more, those Favors should not be totally wasted.

Part Five: An Accusation

While the PCs have been investigating the assassination attempt of Tsuruchi, other players have not been quiet. Tsuruchi Ichiro's anger has built until he is ready to explode, and it does not take long before he confronts Gusai with accusations that he is behind the crime. Whenever there is a lull in the investigation (or before the PCs have a chance to accuse anyone outright), this scene will occur. (Minor courtiers or servants may bring word of the impending confrontation to the PCs if necessary.)

The court has convened again with the obvious absence where Tsuruchi once stood over Hogosha's shoulder when a large commotion comes from outside the hall. Tsuruchi Ichiro, flanked by several Tsuruchi Archers clad in armor and bearing their renowned bows, comes bursting through the door. He points a long accusatory finger at Gusai.

"You! You try to murder the Lord of the Tsuruchi family, the founder of the Wasp Clan, and think you can get away with it? You die here Gusai! We will not let you get away with murder!"

Hogosha stands abruptly, "Ichiro-san! Stand down! This is the court of the Mantis and I will not have you accusing our guests without proof. Give my chosen investigators time and they will discover the truth of the matter."

"The truth is that this filth is a traitor to everything the Mantis have stood for since his death," Ichiro spits. "Your time is gone, Gusai. It is over. This is the Age of Man and if I have to kill you again to prove it I will."

Gusai blinks at Ichiro as several Mantis bushi move to surround him. "What do you hope to accomplish here Ichiro-san, besides making a fool of yourself? I made no move against your lord. I have done you no wrong"

The PCs will need to act quickly in order to stop a battle from occurring with the court chambers. The Mantis samurai acting as guards here are too close to this inter-Clan dispute and will not act in time to stop the fight. The PCs, however, can. How they do so is completely up to them. Simply standing between the combatants is enough to buy the time needed for the guards to intervene but they could also try to talk down

Tsuruchi Ichiro. This is a completely role-played encounter though the judge can call for rolls she feels are appropriate.

If the PCs intervene, read the following:

Ichiro stares down Gusai as his hand moves towards his bow. Gusai frowns at Ichiro. "Ichiro-san, let it not come to this. Mantis should not fight Mantis; we have enough enemies outside the Clan that we do not need to create more. In order to preserve the peace, let me set your mind more at ease as to what kind of samurai I am. When Hogosha-san's investigators find me innocent, as I am sure they will. I will swear loyalty to the Yoritomo family and take their name."

Ichiro sneers at Gusai, "And should they find you guilty?"

"Let us hope it does not come to that," Gusai responds as he leaves the court with a perfunctory bow to Hogosha.

Should the PCs fail to intervene in the dispute, the court descends into chaos. The representatives of other Clans rapidly attempt to leave the room before they get hurt as the two sides of Mantis clash. As long as the PCs attempt to stay out of the fight, they can do as they will, helping their Clan dignitaries escape and the like. If the PC is a Mantis and has chosen a side in this affair in the previous part of *Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei*, however, they will be pulled into the fight. Any PCs that get involved take 5k3 Wounds before the more rational Mantis guards pull apart the battle.

Hogosha will find the PCs afterward and tell them to speed up the investigation and find the culprit before the entire Clan falls into civil war.

After this altercation, those Mantis that have sided with Aramasu and not Gusai start wearing armbands in Wasp black and yellow in a sign of solidarity with Tsuruchi Ichiro. Tensions between the Mantis who wear these bands and those who do not skyrockets. Any Mantis PCs that have sided with Aramasu at this point will also be offers one of the armbands.

Part Six: Wrapping It Up

Accusing a Samurai

In order for the PCs to lay an accusation on one of the samurai, they will need to have a certain amount of proof in order to make their testimony valid before the court. They need less than they would in many of the other courts in the Empire as the Mantis are rather eager

to lay the blame on someone. While the PCs can accuse anyone, they will most likely accuse one of the major NPCs. Use the entries below as a guide should the PCs choose someone else to blame for the crime. When they are ready to make the accusation, Hogosha calls for the court to meet to hear the PCs words.

In order to place the poisonous flower in another samurai's room they will need to make a **Stealth / Agility** roll against a TN of 25. Leaving it in the room of another samurai will cost the PC that does so honor as per the being an accomplice to a heinous crime; they will lose 1 pip of honor if honor 0, 4 pips if honor 1 or 2, 8 pips if honor 3 or 4, 12 pips if honor 5 or 6, 16 pips if honor 7 or 8, or a total of 2 ranks if honor 9 or 10. (Any other PCs who allow this to take place knowingly also suffer the same Honor loss.)

Gusai: In order to blame Gusai the PCs will need all three of the following:

- The poisonous plant placed in Gusai's room.
- A witness that saw Gusai near the plant's garden location. (Asako Misashi or Doji Juichi if Shosuro Ochiba has blackmailed him)
- Someone that can place Gusai in Tsuruchi's quarters before he fell ill.

When the PCs present the evidence that Gusai is behind the attempted murder of Tsuruchi, his entourage surrounds him.

“What do you have to say for yourself, Gusai?” asks a furious Yoritomo Hogosha.

Gusai spits on the ground with a sneer. “These are nothing but lies Hogosha-san.”

Hogosha visibly takes control of himself. “You shall be given a chance to confess, Gusai-san, but I believe there is more than enough testimony to force you to pay for this deed.”

Gusai's massive hands clench into fists. “I think not, Hogosha-san. I will not allow this to happen.”

Tsuruchi Ichiro stands, “Coward! Face the truth like a man!”

“I will not be played.” Gusai's guards surround him as he starts to march out of court.

“Guards!” Hogosha screams.

The guards attempt to stop Gusai from leaving but several of them turn on their fellows and cut them

down. They march a bloody swath out of the castle and to the docks where Gusai manages to escape with only minor wounds.

Again, the Mantis PCs that have chosen a side in the Gusai-Aramasu conflict can take part in Gusai's bloody retreat out of the castle. Both sides will take a total of 5k4 wounds as they make their way out. Those Mantis PCs that sided with Gusai are made ronin – they lose all Status, and the player should contact the Campaign Admin staff as soon as possible for further information.

Tsuruchi Ichiro: In order to place the blame on Tsuruchi Ichiro, the PCs will need all three of the following:

- The letter to Tsuruchi
- The poisonous plant placed in Tsuruchi Ichiro's room
- Someone that can place him in Tsuruchi's quarters before the bow was poisoned. (This can be either Arjan or Doji Juichi if Shosuro Ochiba has blackmailed him)

Tsuruchi Ichiro looks at you in shock. “You honestly think that I did this? Attempt to murder the man who has been like a father to me?”

Hogosha shakes his head sadly. “The matter seems clear, Ichiro-san. I am sorry that you never felt welcome in the Mantis, but that is no excuse for slaying your own lord.”

Ichiro stammers, nearly incoherent in his denials. “But... it's simply not true, I loved this man!”

Hogosha's sincere regret becomes stern. “Quiet now, Ichiro-san. You will be given your chance to confess your crimes.”

“I will not confess to this,” Ichiro replies while the guards take him into custody. “I will never confess to this.”

Yoritomo Hogosha sighs, “Thank you for your work samurai-sans. This is a dark day for us all.”

A few days later, before the PCs leave the Court, they will hear the Tsuruchi Ichiro refused to confess under torture and hung for his crimes.

Shosuro Ochiba: In order for Shosuro Ochiba to take the fall, the PCs only need the following:

- The poisonous plant

- A witness that saw Ochiba near the plant's garden location. (Asako Misashi)

Yoritomo Hogosha stares long and hard at Shosuro Ochiba. "We had trusted that even you would respect the tradition of court, despite the conflict between our Clans. Let us consider the lesson learned: you cannot, or will not, change your treacherous nature."

Shosuro Ochiba bows low to Yoritomo Hogosha, her face calm and dignified. "I am innocent in this matter, Yoritomo-sama. I did not do this, nor did I have any involvement in it."

Hogosha spits out, his face darkening in rage. "You lying Scorpion whore! Not only will you pay for this trespass, but so will the entire Scorpion Clan! This will mean war between us!"

Ochiba shakes her head slowly. "A war started under false pretenses, and a war you will lose, Hogosha-sama. I cannot stand against your torturers in this matter... but I will not admit to this farce. Know that by starting this false war, you doom only yourselves." With that, Ochiba pulls out her wakizashi and stabs herself in the throat, robbing the Mantis of their confession.

Saving Tsuruchi

In order to save Tsuruchi the PCs need to locate the plant used to create the poison before they chase after Arjan and do battle with him. However, saving the life of Tsuruchi will not be an easy task. A PC trained in Medicine can stay and the healers will welcome the aid of shugenja in their prayers over Tsuruchi. However, staying to aid in the processing of the anti-toxin will take time. Those that stay will not be able to join in the chase of Arjan. Essentially, the two events take place simultaneously. The PCs will have to choose whether to save a life or catch a killer.

PCs trained in medicine can assist in the process by making a **Medicine (Antidotes) / Intelligence** roll against a TN of 30. Shugenja can assist by speaking prayers to the kami – a successful casting of the spell **Jurojin's Balm** will give the PC making the Medicine roll a Free Raise. Alternately, they may Communing with the earth or water kami to aid in this process: a successful casting of **Commune** for either of those elements with two Raises will be necessary to convince the spirits to assist the processing of the antidote. Both mundane medicine and shugenja intervention is necessary to save the life of Tsuruchi. If there are no shugenja PCs at the table to say these prayers, Moshi Uidori will (and can be considered to automatically succeed on any such roll). Tsuruchi will be crippled for

the rest of his life, but survive. Uidori will only make the roll if the PCs cannot. If the PCs fail the roll, Tsuruchi passes away. There is nothing that Uidori can do.

Tracing Arjan

If the PCs have not fallen to the courtly intrigue, they may have discovered that the real assassin is the servant known as Arjan. When the PCs are ready to chase him down, they will need to start with finding him. With little effort, they can gain access to his room in the servant's area. He has just a mat to sleep on as well as a small chest. By the time the PCs try to track him down, Arjan has already packed up everything that he needs and headed for a hidden kobune he has stashed away. However, in his small chest, the PCs can find a used mortar and pestle that has the same scent as the poisonous flower wrapped in a dirty servant's kimono.

When the PCs search the room, a successful **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll at a TN of 25 will find a loose board underneath the sleeping mat. Under the board is a note in a strange language. This language is Ivindi, the language of the Ivory Kingdoms. In order to understand the note, the PCs must either know the language or find someone that does. Two Mantis Favors will allow them to speak with Kasuga Senriko, the Tortoise Ambassador who is known to be highly interested in gaijin and is fluent in Ivindi. The note is a message telling Arjan that he is to meet with a ship, the *Matsya*, in a few hours, and has the location of the meeting.

The PCs will have to get a hold of a kobune in order to catch Arjan before it is too late. Yoritomo Kitao is more than willing to take out the *Bitter Flower*. If Kitao takes her ship out to find the man that may have killed Tsuruchi the PCs will not need to make any rolls to catch Arjan in time. If the PCs take any other ship, they will need to succeed on a series of three **Sailing / Agility** rolls against a TN of 20. Failure means that they will not arrive at the meeting place in time.

Part Seven: The *Matsya*

After chasing down Arjan, the PCs finally reach him as a storm breaks overhead, drenching the ship in rain. Through flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, the PCs are able to see a strangely built foreign ship, ungainly even in comparison to most Rokugani vessels. Next to the ship, a small kobune has pulled up and a form is crawling up the side of the ship.

The ship's crew will move to defend the ship as the PCs boat approaches. If the PCs brought more than just

themselves, this will not be an issue; otherwise, they will have to fight their way to Arjan. If they have a crew with them, their crew will take on the crew of the *Matsya* leaving the way open for the PCs to face off against Arjan.

If the PCs have to fight against the crew they will need to defeat a group of Ivory Kingdoms Sailors equal to the number of PCs before they face off against Arjan. Two Ebonite Templars accompany Arjan in the final fight.

Conclusion

There are several different endings depending on how the PCs progressed through the module. The ending the PCs get depends on whether or not Tsuruchi lives and whether or not Gusai swears fealty to the Yoritomo family.

Tsuruchi Lives, Gusai Swears Fealty

The PCs managed to find the poison in time to save Tsuruchi. The PCs have also either discovered Arjan was the poisoner or that at least Gusai was not, and Gusai was not driven off when Ichiro accused him of the poisoning.

The court comes to a hush as Gusai enters the room. He marches forward to where Yoritomo Hogosha sits in judgment on the court. As he moves forward, Tsuruchi enters the room leaning heavily on a cane, a scowl crossing his face. Slowly, with proud dignity, Gusai bows, then kneels before the dais.

“Hogosha-sama,” Gusai says steadily, “I wish to apologize for how I entered this court. I did so only with the best interests of the Mantis in my heart.”

“There is no need to apologize, Gusai-sama,” Hogosha says benevolently, with a small, relieved smile on his face.

“But there is, Hogosha-san, for throughout this court I have seen how the Mantis of this new era work with one another, and have gained a new respect for them. In doing so, I have been honored to spend time with my brethren, and I wish to associate myself more closely with my beloved Clan. To prove my loyalty, I, Gusai, have come to swear my loyalty to the Yoritomo family. I will accept Yoritomo Aramasu-dono as my lord, and vow to serve the Mantis as I serve the Empire!” Gusai bows low before Yoritomo Hogosha.

Tsuruchi speaks, his voice rough from his ordeal, “Gusai, you have accused our Lord of incompetence.

You have caused an uproar among the Clan. I cannot support you in this.”

Hogosha turns his gaze to Tsuruchi, but shakes his head slowly. “Thank you for your words Tsuruchi-sama, but I have heard from Aramasu-dono and he has made his wishes clear. Gusai-sama, it is the will of Yoritomo Aramasu, Champion of the Mantis Clan, that you be welcomed into the family of Yoritomo. He would be honored if you served him as an advisor. It is with honor, that I am allowed to introduce you to this court as Yoritomo Gusai!”

The members of the court bow low to Gusai and Hogosha, “Thank you Hogosha-sama. I am proud to rejoin the Clan of my birth.”

With that, the tumultuous court of the Mantis comes to a close.

Tsuruchi Lives, Gusai Leaves Mantis

The PCs managed to find the poison in time to save Tsuruchi. However, the PCs have allowed the blame for the poisoning of Tsuruchi to fall squarely on the shoulders of Gusai.

Yoritomo Hogosha has called the court to order, and a weakened Tsuruchi follows him into the room. He stands in front of the court, fierce determination in his eyes.

“Samurai of Rokugan! As you can see, Tsuruchi has survived the villain Gusai’s cowardly attempt to murder him perpetuated. From this time on, let it be known that Gusai is no samurai of the Mantis Clan. It is the duty of all Mantis to report on his movements to the Clan so that proper measures can be taken against him. Let all the Empire know that Gusai is the sworn enemy of the Mantis Clan. Giving him succor or assistance makes you an enemy of the Mantis Clan.”

Tsuruchi Ichiro steps forward and speaks fiercely, “Let it be known that Gusai cannot escape the bows of the Tsuruchi. We will find him wherever the coward tries to hide.”

Hogosha nods, “I wish to thank you all for attending this court and to apologize that we may not have been able to give you the Winter Court that you deserve.”

With that, the tumultuous court of the Mantis is brought to a close.

Tsuruchi Dies, Gusai Swears Fealty

The PCs were unable to find the poisonous plant in time to save the life of Tsuruchi. However, they also discovered either Arjan was the poisoner or that at least Gusai was not, and Gusai was not driven off when Ichiro accused him of the poisoning.

The court is quiet when it is reconvened. A staunch Yoritomo Hogosha sits at the head stoically and clearly in mourning. The doors open and Gusai marches in, wearing the colors of mourning over his normal Mantis green.

“Yoritomo Hogosha-san. This is a dark time for the Mantis; one of our greatest has died. I wish to formally withdraw the request that I made, perhaps in poor judgment, when I arrived.”

Yoritomo Hogosha nods fractionally, and Gusai continues, “Now, more than ever, the Mantis need to show the world that we are one Clan united. The late Toturi raised us to the equal of all the major Clans of the Empire, and it is time we show it. With all due respect, Hogosha-san, I wish to swear my fealty to the Yoritomo line. In doing so we unite the present with past to find a brighter future for all the families in the Mantis.”

Hogosha sighs, “Yes, Gusai-san, I agree. I just wish it did not take the dark times to make the bright ones meaningful. I have heard from Aramasu-dono, and he has made it plain to me that should you wish it, he would be proud to call you a Yoritomo and his brother. He needs men like us to serve as his advisors and to lead the Mantis towards a brighter future. Let all men know that from this day forth, Gusai shall be known as Yoritomo Gusai, a true son of the Mantis.”

“Thank you Hogosha-san,” Gusai turns towards the gathered courtiers. “And know from here on out, that the ones who brought about the death of Tsuruchi shall pay for their crimes. We will not stand idly by and let these fiends destroy what we have built. We are the Mantis; we are the children of Thunder! And there is a storm coming!”

Tsuruchi Dies, Gusai Leaves Mantis

The PCs were unable to find the poisonous plant in time to save the life of Tsuruchi. However, the PCs have allowed the blame for the poisoning of Tsuruchi to fall squarely on the shoulders of Gusai.

Hogosha quietly enter the court wearing the colors of morning. The vibrant nature that he has always shown the court is clearly gone.

“Friends, this is a dark day for the Mantis. Our beloved Tsuruchi, founder of the Wasp Clan has died. He died not the honorable death of a samurai, but in his bed, in pain, due to the actions of a traitor in our ranks.”

Hogosha sets a fierce glare around the court, “Gusai has murdered Tsuruchi-dono in the most heinous of ways. For this, I call him an enemy of the Mantis. We shall hunt him down and make him pay for what he has done. Let all who give him succor or assistance makes you an enemy of the Mantis. This is a time for the Mantis to come together in unity and show our enemies that we will NOT be abused. We are the Mantis, we are the children of the storm, and that storm is coming!”

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Raw Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll fails, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

If a PC has a Crafting cert, they may make a Crafting roll at this time.

Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Finding the poisonous plant:	+1XP
Bringing the investigation to a satisfying conclusion for the Mantis:	+1XP
Total Possible Experience:	4XP

Honor

Any samurai who willingly goes along with accusing a samurai they know to be innocent will cost the PC that does so honor as per the being an accomplice to a heinous crime: they will lose 1 pip of honor if their honor is 0, 4 pips if honor 1 or 2, 8 pips if honor 3 or 4, 12 pips if honor 5 or 6, 16 pips if honor 7 or 8, or a total of 2 ranks if honor 9 or 10. They can lose this on

multiple occasions if they are aware of more than one of these breaches.

(More than one PC at a table sharing a daimyo each get their own, independent, vote.)

Glory

All PCs gain two points of Glory if they bring the investigation to a satisfactory conclusion. That is to say, as long as Hogosha has someone to blame.

If they did not, they lose five points of Glory as Hogosha makes his displeasure known to the Empire as a whole.

GM must report this information BEFORE (4/20/12) for it to have storyline effect

Other Awards/Penalties

If Tsuruchi survives, all PCs that participated in the investigation gain him as an Ally with 1 point of Devotion and 4 points of Influence. PCs that were directly involved in processing the antidote gain an additional point of Devotion.

If the investigation comes to a satisfying conclusion as far as Hogosha is concerned, each PC gains a Mantis Clan Favor.

Module Tracking Sheets

Mantis PCs: Which side did the PC support?

GM Reporting

Did the court break into open fighting?

Who was blamed for the poisoning of Tsuruchi?

Did Tsuruchi survive?

Did Gusai swear fealty to the Yoritomo?

Did Arjan escape?

Did the PCs get help from Yoritomo Kitao in chasing down Arjan?

Meta-Question for Year Two of the Campaign:

Do you want your PC's daimyo to support the Toturi Dynasty or the Hantei Dynasty?

This is not entirely an in-character question; the players are being given a chance to determine which daimyo support which side of the coming conflict. List the name of the daimyo and the side that each individual player chose for their answer in the reporting sheet.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Arjan, Ivory Kingdoms Assassin

Despite his dark, exotic features, Arjan is highly skilled at avoiding attention. He is lean and habitually walks with a stoop so as not to loom over the much shorter Rokugani he serves – a habit he drops when he faces them in combat.

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3
Intelligence 4
Integrity 1.5 Status N/A Glory 0
Initiative: 8k4 **Attack:** 10k4 Sayf-Saghir (Simple, Rank 3)
Armor TN: 25 **Damage:** 5k2 or Daze
Reduction: 0
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Assassin Keeper 4
Skills: Athletics 5, Defense 7, Etiquette 5, Investigation (Notice) 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Swordsmanship (Sayf-Saghir) 7, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 4, Stealth 5
Advantages/Disadvantages: Bland, Magic Resistance III, Silent / Gaijin
School Abilities:
Rank 1: +1k0 to all Rolls involving the Perception Trait. When inflicting Wounds to an opponent, may ignore half of their Reduction rating (round up).
Rank 2: When attacking an opponent, may choose to disable them rather than wound– dealing no damage, but inflicting the Dazed Conditional Effect instead.
Rank 3: Making an Attack which does not inflict damage (such as the Rank 2 Techniques of this Class or initiating a grapple) is a Simple Action. If you make an attack as a Complex action and miss, may immediately attack using the Rank 2 technique as a Free Action.
Rank 4: The difficulty of resisting Conditional Effects (including gaining control in a Grapple) you inflict is raised by 8. When attacking a Dazed opponent, may make 1 Raise on Attack Roll. If successful, that opponent is Fatigued until the end of the Skirmish (multiple applications of this technique are not cumulative).

Ivory Kingdoms Templar

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 2
Reflexes 4
Integrity 3.5 Status Glory
Initiative: 6k3 **Attack:** Ebonite Longsword 9k4 (Simple)
Armor TN: 30 (Light Armor) **Damage:** 7k2
Reduction: 3
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)
School/Rank: Ebonite Templar 3
Skills: Defense 5, Intimidate 4, Jiujutsu 3, Lore: Law, 2 Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 2, Swordsmanship 5, Theology 3
School Abilities:
Rank 1: When facing an opponent with lower Integrity you roll an additional +1k0 on all Attack, Damage and Social Skill Rolls.
Rank 2: During the Reactions Stage at the end of the round you may spend a Void Point to increase your Initiative score as if it was the beginning of the round. This increase lasts until the end of the skirmish.
Rank 3: You may make attacks as a Simple Action when using weapons with the Warrior or Ebonite Keywords.

Gaijin Sailors

Air 1 Earth 2 Fire 1 Water 2 Void 1
Reflexes 2
Integrity 0.5 Agility 2 Status N/A Glory 0.0
Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 5k2 (parangu)
Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 5k2 (parangu)
Reduction: 0
Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 28 (+15), 32 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)
School/Rank: none (Insight Rank 1)
Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 3, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Parangu) 3, Sailing 4