

The Perfect Weapon

**A One-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of the Moon, 1139 (Late Spring)**

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Module Number SoB24
Release Date: 6/1/2012**

Visitors threaten to disrupt life at Shiro Kaiu.

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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): Reduce the TN to convince Kurodachi to 30. Kosoruji wears Light Armor instead of Riding Armor, reducing his TN to be hit to 30 and his Reduction to 3. Reduce Hiruma Orake's Earth to 2, lowering his number of Wounds and making his attacks Complex Actions.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 3+): Moto Kosoruji has Earth 5, making him Insight Rank 4. This gives him 95 Wounds, increases his Initiative to 8k4, and gives him the Rank 4 "Visage of the Damned" Technique: Once per skirmish, he can cause a Fear 6 effect as a Simple Action. Those who succumb to the effect are limited to one Simple (and no Complex) Actions on their next turn in addition to the normal penalties.

Adventure Summary and Background

In an unremarkable construction yard a few hours away from Shiro Kaiu, the Crab clan has a prototype of a remarkable weapon: a three-armed arm-over-wheel trebuchet. The ingenious design of this new trebuchet comes from Kaiu Kurodachi, a Kaiu engineer who was born a Kakita, but was fostered to and later married into the Kaiu family. Kurodachi also serves as the chief engineer for the building of the weapon. As soon as it is complete and functional, the Kaiu intend to reproduce it in quantity and train it against its enemies in the south.

The Shadowlands have learned of this improvement to Crab siege technology and have been attempting to disrupt its construction. A small splinter force of guerrilla Dark Moto accompanied by a Lost Hiruma bushi has been harassing the construction efforts indirectly, by stealing supplies and intercepting merchant caravans that were headed for the construction yard. They have been doing their best to stay hidden, however, and have avoided direct attack.

The forces of Jigoku, however, are not idly buying time. Their true weapon is Kurodachi's brother Kakita Junsei, a Kakita bushi who has become what will be described in the future as "Consumed by Perfection." In a moment of weakness, a kansen seduced him with the promise of enduring physical beauty and strength, and he gave himself to the darkness. He has come to visit his brother at Shiro Kaiu. He intends to convince his brother to take the same bargain, destroy the new siege weapon, and travel south of the Wall to meet their new lords.

Kaiu family daimyo Kaiu Utsu has tired of the disruptions to his new weapon's construction, and forced provincial daimyo Kaiu Haru to call in aid from other Clans to try to solve the problem. While exposing his problems to outsiders is not ideal, Haru has begun to suspect that the disruptions are coming from inside his castle, and hopes that an outsider's eye may help him root out the problem.

The PCs arrive at Shiro Kaiu the same day as Junsei. The PCs spend two days searching for stolen items that were intended for use in the trebuchet: a set of custom steel fittings for reinforcing the engine's beams and a jar of jade paste for use in the engine's ammunition. In between these two days, the PCs will have dinner with Haru, and at this dinner Junsei will attempt to convince his brother to embrace perfection as an ideal. The PCs will have a chance to intervene.

When they return from the second errand, Kurodachi has disappeared – Junsei and the Dark Moto have gone with him to the construction yard. When the PCs arrive at the yard, they fight the force of Dark Moto. If Kurodachi fell to his brother's temptation, he turns the siege engine on the PCs; if he did not, he kills his brother before using the siege engine on the Moto.

Character Notes

Ask each player to name one thing that their character would like to receive as a gift. Even Ascetic characters must answer – they may focus on things that may be of service to their lord, but everyone needs or wants something. (If it is necessary, note that any item that would normally cost character points must still be paid for with experience.) This should be presented as what the character would like to receive as a gift – the sort of thing that one asks for for one's birthday in Western culture, for example, rather than being an unlimited offer.

Introduction

The PCs' lords have sent them to Shiro Kaiu in response to a vague request for aid from Crab provincial daimyo Kaiu Haru. While none of the PCs' lords currently owe Haru a favor, they would each love for Haru to be indebted to them, and therefore the PC has departed for the south. PCs who have sworn fealty to Kaiu Haru or are trained in the Kaiu Engineer school have instead been called to Shiro Kaiu to assist with an internal security matter. Ronin PCs receive an offer of employment that promises 2 koku up front and another 2 koku in return for successful completion of the job.

The border crossing into Crab lands is uneventful for everyone except Crane PCs, whose papers receive pointed scrutiny.

The last stretch of your journey takes you through a vast expanse of bleak landscapes. Only occasional farms, villages, and quarries interrupt the monotony. After several hours of unchanging scenery, a grey monolith rises in the distance, surrounded by a modest castle town.

Shiro Kaiu looms ominously over a small town. Built entirely of stone and surrounded by three concentric sets of stone walls, it looks from a distance more like a great statue than a proper castle. As you come closer, passing several construction yards, the keep rises overhead until you reach the outermost wall. Guards at the town gates inspect your papers before leading you through town and straight to the fortress itself. There, servants welcome you and help you settle into guest rooms inside the castle.

The PCs arrive in the late afternoon. After getting cleaned up, they receive an invitation to an audience with Kaiu Haru, which will take place at half past the Hour of Shiba (7:00 PM). Until then, they may roam the public areas of the castle as visitors.

Exploring the Castle

PCs who go exploring find that Shiro Kaiu proper is not a particularly exciting place. Rather than busy itself with the courtly activities that mark many Rokugani population centers, Shiro Kaiu occupies itself with matters of construction and warfare. Engineers with ink-stained hands scuttle through the halls carrying scrolls, and bushi train or study tactics. PCs who have been to Kyuden Hida recognize typical no-nonsense Crab behavior, but here it is powered by a quiet sort of nervous energy instead of blustering raw strength.

There are, however, a few sights to see.

- Martial-minded PCs may ask if there is a dojo where they might spend some time practicing. Anyone they ask can point them to one, although they have to share it with a group of Crab students wearing training uniforms and distinctive armbands. Anyone they ask can inform them that these armbands are the insignia of the Daishiki's Anvil dojo, which gives young Crab the opportunity to see some action on the wall before their gempukku.
- Any PCs who ask about gardens are directed to the castle's excellent rock garden. High walls, perfectly raked sand, and pristine silence make this an excellent place to meditate – any Meditation rolls made here get a Free Raise.
- PCs who ask about shrines are directed to a small ancestral shrine along the edge of the compound's wall. This shrine specifically venerates the founder of the Kaiu family, as well as Kaiu Daishiki, the founder of the Daishiki's Anvil dojo that is located here.
- The famed Kaiu Forge is sits in the open air inside the castle's main courtyard, with four heavily armed Hida-trained sentries guarding the entrance and four more roving around inside. The guards rebuff any attempt to enter unless the PC is of the Kaiu Engineer school. Everyone inside is occupied with intense metalwork; they may stop to answer a few questions, but have too much to do to engage in extended conversation.
- The kitchen can provide hungry PCs with tea and light snacks.

Rumors

PCs of a courtly bent who go looking for rumors around Shiro Kaiu find a castle that is mainly concerned with its own welfare. This deep in Crab territory, the rank and file Kaiu focus on their duties, rarely paying attention to the larger happenings of the empire. However, there is still internal gossip to be had. Have PCs who go searching for information roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness**. Samurai who have the Oath of Fealty: Kaiu Haru Advantage get a Free Raise.

- TN 10: Kaiu Utsu, the Kaiu family daimyo, is not present in the castle at this time. With the Crab's efforts against the Shadowlands in the Hiruma provinces meeting with a great deal of success, Utsu has recently undertaken several projects intended to help keep the reclaimed

territory. The famed siege master is essentially working hand-in-hand with the Clan Champion Hida O-Ushi and the Stone Crab Hida Tsuneo to make certain the Crab will not be driven from the Hiruma lands again.

- TN 15: Kakita Junsei arrived for a visit earlier today. Junsei is the brother of Kaiu Kurodachi, who was born Kakita, fostered to the Kaiu as part of a hostage exchange, and has since married into the Kaiu family. Kurodachi makes his home here and serves as one of Kaiu Haru's more skilled engineers. While no one denies that it is appropriate for Junsei to spend time with his brother, various Crab speculate about the dubious wisdom of a Crane coming alone to Crab lands after last summer's fighting.
- TN 20: Disruptions of various sorts have plagued supply lines around Shiro Kaiu for the past month, causing a shortage in several important engineering materials.
- TN 25: Three camps hold different opinions about Kaiu Shinsaku, Kaiu Haru's chief financier. Kaiu engineers love working with him, as unlike previous men in this position Shinsaku speaks their language and can anticipate what they need. Yasuki merchants fret that he thinks too much about disaster-proofing castle operations and not enough about fiscal efficiency. Courtiers speculate that he may not be as good at his job as Kaiu Haru thinks he is.
- TN 30: A top secret engineering project has consumed the castle's best engineers for the past few months. Those same engineers have been acting nervous and frustrated in the past few weeks. There is concern over the cost in both resources and time that may have been better spent in more traditional methods of combatting the Shadowlands.

Any PC who goes hunting for rumors also finds that the average samurai here displays a lesser level of social savvy and polish than the residents of most families' ancestral homes.

The Children

Sometime before dinner, the non-Crab PC with the highest Status attracts the attention of two small but very high-ranking guests to Shiro Kaiu.

Two young children appear from around the corner and march up to you, scowling as they look you straight in the eyes. They appear nearly identical, and

are dressed in the same black kimono and hakama decorated with Hida heraldry, although one's clothing is a bit dirtier than the other's. The cleaner one steals a glance at his companion, who looks defiantly at you. "Have you ever seen an oni?"

These twins are Taro and Jiro, five-year-old twin sons of Hida O-Ushi, the Crab Clan Champion, and her husband Yasamura. Unless strongly dissuaded, they go back and forth peppering the PC with information intended to scare him or her ("They have huge claws." "Some of them are thirty feet tall!" "And have giant mouths that can swallow you whole!" "I heard there's one that spits out even more oni at you.") to see what kind of reaction they can get. This is all second-hand information, however, which they will admit if pressed. Even that, however, will not dissuade them from continuing to harass the PC.

After a bit of time, several adult figures round the same corner where the children came from – a man wearing rich silks in Crab colors but with distinctly Unicorn features, accompanied by three Crab bushi in armor. For those who do not recognize him from previous encounters (such as in SoB22: Tear Away the Darkness), a roll of **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** at TN 20 (TN 15 for Crab or Unicorn) identifies the unarmored man as Hida Yasamura, the husband of the Crab clan champion.

"Taro! Jiro! Come back here, and leave our honored guest alone!" The children start, then scurry back toward the man, who sends them away with the soldiers. "I apologize for my children's poor behavior, <family>-san. They heard that we had visitors, and escaped to investigate. I will make sure they do not bother you again."

The Champion is not present at this event, but Yasamura has taken the opportunity to see his sons while representing the Clan's leadership. If engaged in conversation, Yasamura will be polite, but distant. He then disappears back around the corner from which he came.

The Mission

At the hour of Shiba, the PCs meet with Kaiu Haru, the daimyo of the Yoake province, and his accountant and financial advisor Kaiu Shinasku.

At half past the hour of Shiba, a servant leads you from your rooms to a sparse antechamber, decorated only with an ornate kettle drum underneath a suspended bell in one corner. The servant kneels in front of the door next to the bell. "Samurai-samas, please wait here until the lord is ready to see you."

After ten minutes of waiting, a bell rings somewhere on the other side of the door. The servant stands and rings the bell in answer before turning to you. “Kaiu Haru, lord of Yoake province, will see you now.”

The room on the other side of the door is again sparsely decorated. On the far end of the room, **Kaiu Haru** sits on a dais raised about a foot higher than the rest of the floor. Haru is a thick man with jet black hair in a tea whisk topknot and a fu manchu mustache. He wears voluminous clothing appropriate to his station, but his broad shoulders show through the layers of silk.

Behind the dais, a suit of armor rests on its box next to a daisho stand that holds two swords. Two drums sitting on wooden stands flank the display of swords and armor.

In front of the dais sits **Kaiu Shinsaku**, a thin man in his mid-twenties. The opposite of the unkempt Crab stereotype, Shinsaku grooms and dresses as precisely as any proper courtier. He wears his dark brown hair in a crisp topknot with his forehead shaved, and sports a precise goatee. His crisply-starched kataginu bears the heraldry of both the Yasuki school and the Kaiu family. PCs who have at least one Rank of the Commerce Skill recognize that he is wearing rather expensive clothes. As the PCs enter and sit, Shinsaku’s eyes dart back and forth between his lord and the PCs, and his hands fidget.

Shinsaku should occur to the PCs as something of an oddity. He is Kaiu born, but Yasuki trained – the Rokugani equivalent of an investment banker. While he is technically both a courtier and a merchant patron, he prefers handling matters of investment and logistics in his offices to dealing than with live humans out in the world. He lives much of his life within the walls of the castle, and has little to speak of in the way of useful wilderness skills. Shinsaku will travel with the PCs through much of the module, but his inexperience in practical matters will leave them mostly to their own ends.

Once the PCs are seated, Haru addresses them.

“Welcome to Shiro Kaiu. My name is Kaiu Haru. I offer my thanks to you and your lords for responding to my request for assistance. This is Kaiu Shinsaku, one of my chief advisors. He has – but, of course, we should eat before we speak of business.” He claps his hands sharply.

Servants stream into the room, carrying one low table covered with food for each diner. The simple but hearty

spread includes rice, grilled duck, pickled daikon, fresh steamed broccoli, and agedashi-dofu--fried tofu served in fish stock with a green onion garnish. The Crab have nearly perfected this last dish, and food-conscious PCs recognize that it is among the best they have ever eaten.

When the servants have nearly finished clearing the tables once the meal is over, Haru clears his throat again. “Shinsaku-san is responsible for the matter that has brought you here, and I will allow him to introduce your task.” The daimyo looks pointedly at Shinsaku, who turns to face you, doing his best to look stoic.

“Indeed. My family has earned its reputation for excellence in both engineering and siege warfare. We do not rest, however, and are on the verge of yet another breakthrough in siege technology for use against our enemies to the south. Sadly, misfortune has plagued our construction for the past month. Two caravans of construction supplies went missing, and a team of workers was waylaid and slain on the road. The project has both taken longer and cost more than anticipated. As only those shipments meant for this project have been attacked, we have come to believe that someone may be working against us from the inside.”

He takes a deep breath. “The project is now in danger of being cancelled. While I understand the financial pressure, the siege engine we have developed appears to be a most devastating weapon. Losing it could cost us untold numbers of lives in our defense of the Wall. The project’s cancellation would also irreparably damage my own reputation, as I am responsible for construction logistics in this province. I would appreciate your assistance in tracking down the source of the disruptions.”

This is an opportunity for PCs to back out of the adventure. They gain Sworn Enemy: Kaiu Haru and one Experience Point. Crab PCs who do so gain a rank of Infamy (characters with “Oath of Fealty: Kaiu Haru” who make this decision are made ronin). Assuming the PCs assent to helping, Shinsaku continues.

“You chose an excellent time to arrive. Yesterday, a supply caravan departed from this castle for the construction yard where the new engine is being built, carrying a set of steel fittings that were custom-made for it. That caravan never reached its destination. Tomorrow, I hope that with your help I will find out why, and with luck we will be able to recover them.”

The PCs are now free to ask questions. These are some answers to likely questions:

- Who do you think is responsible for this? *“As of yet, we have no hard evidence of anything more sinister than well-organized banditry. However, the pattern of the attacks suggests that someone is specifically targeting this one project.”*
- Has anyone been caught? *“Unfortunately not. Whatever forces are responsible for this have done an excellent job of staying hidden.”*
- Why is this steel special/What kind of siege engine is this/Why is this project so important? *“While I appreciate your curiosity, I am not qualified to speak about the prototype's technical details. The project's chief engineer Kaiu Kurodachi would be happy to answer questions, and I am sure you will have the chance to meet him while you are here.”*
- How long has this been going on? *“Attacks have come once a month for the past three months, although directly attacking one of our holdings displays a new level of boldness.”*
- What investigations have the local authorities made? *“There is no indication that these are more than isolated incidents, other than the fact that the targets are all associated with my project. The local magistrates have other matters they are attending to.”* Shinsaku will be very uncomfortable with this line of questioning, as the local magistrate is a political enemy.

Once the PCs have had the chance to ask questions, Shinsaku uses the Yasuki Rank One Technique against the PCs. Each of the PCs rolls **Etiquette / Awareness** against Shinsaku's **Commerce / Perception** (9k4, with a Free Raise). If Shinsaku defeats a PC's roll, he knows what gift the PC would like to receive as reported at the beginning of the module. Keep track of which PCs' desires he learns for later.

Shinsaku may treat the PCs differently based on their requests, as follows:

- Shinsaku is not an engineer, but shares his family's love of craftsmanship. Shinsaku gains respect for PCs who ask for a single high-quality item, such as a fine kimono, a bottle of a specific brand of sake, or a specific annotation of a classic work of literature.
- Shinsaku is a Yasuki courtier, but resents his colleagues who use their training to serve themselves rather than their clan. Shinsaku loses respect for anyone who asks for a large

undistinguished quantity of something, like a random plot of land or a whole wardrobe.

- Shinsaku has grown weary of stereotypical Crab behavior. He loses a great deal of respect for anyone who asks for anything he considers debauchorous, such as an all-expenses-paid evening at a brothel or low-class sake house.
- Feel free to have him respond as you deem appropriate to any other offbeat request.

Players who have played Poisoned Gift likely know what has just happened to them. Unlike many Yasuki courtiers, Shinsaku would never dream of using this information against the PCs directly. However, he knows the value of information and will collect it through any means available to him. The characters will have no way of knowing this, and the GM should do nothing to dissuade them of any concerns if they choose to suspect his motives.

Once this is done, Shinsaku concludes.

“I thank you for your assistance. Please be at the stables ready to depart tomorrow morning at dawn. We may encounter armed opposition, so feel free to make any preparations you feel are appropriate.”

Characters who do not understand the implication here may roll **Etiquette / Intelligence** at TN 15 to remember that under normal circumstances traveling imperial roads while wearing armor signals violent intent. Shinsaku has given them leave to do so tomorrow anyway.

Part One: Tracking the Caravan

At the stables in the morning, Shinsaku bustles about preparing a caravan of supplies for departure. Aside from the PCs and the caravan workers, there are four bored-looking bushi in heavy armor who will also be escorting the wagons.

Once everyone is ready to leave, Shinsaku gathers the PC for a quick briefing.

“Our task today is to look for signs of what happened to yesterday's wagons. I ask that you be vigilant, and tell me as soon as you see something that may help us.”

The first road to the construction yard travels through mostly barren ground, with occasional trees that don't

provide much shade. Have the PCs roll **Hunting / Perception** for the first leg of the journey. With a TN of 20, they find intermittent wagon tracks that look exactly like those produced by the wagon that they are currently escorting, showing that the previous wagon went this way.

The trees begins to thicken along the road, and it begins to pass through a lightly forested area. Have the PCs roll **Hunting / Perception** again. With a TN of 20, they find more intermittent wagon tracks. With a TN of 30, they also find a set of human footprints in the woods fifteen feet off of the road. These footprints were made yesterday by a small figure who was wearing dark green and brown clothing as he crept along. There are no fire or air spirits who can help with explaining this, but water and earth spirits respond appropriately to questions asked during a Commune spell; a Raise for clarity also discovers that there were "bad spirits" following him.

The trees further thicken, and the road begins to pass through a heavily wooded area. Have the PCs make a third **Hunting / Perception** roll. A TN of 15 finds them a spot where the wagon tracks abruptly stop, and that spot is surrounded by a great deal of footprints. A TN of 30 also finds one set of footprints in the woods that exit the forest near the spot where the wagon prints stopped. Should the PCs all miss this, a roll of **Battle / Perception** at TN 25 will allow someone to realize that this would be a fantastic place to perform an ambush.

Though the remaining signs cannot make it clear, a small force of Lost Moto ambushed the supply wagon here. They jumped out of the woods, killed the horse, driver and the three peasants who were with the wagon, and dragged the wagon into the woods. Any cursory examination of the surrounding area finds the wagon about a hundred feet into the woods, turned on its side, and covered with leaves, branches, and other vegetation. None of its contents remain. Should the PCs ask what was inside it, Shinsaku can tell them that it was only food and the fittings. If the PCs manage a 30 on a **Hunting / Perception** roll at this location, they also find four dead bodies in a shallow stream not too far away.

Shinsaku asks the PCs to try to figure out what happened and rejoin him back at the castle later. If they recover the box, he would like them to bring it back to the castle with them. He offers to leave a map and some traveling rations with them, then heads off with the caravan and his guards.

From the crashed wagon, the **Hunting / Perception** TN to find the trail is only 15. The tracks indicate that

whoever made the footprints was carrying something big, heavy, and unwieldy, as many plants are disturbed or broken along the way. This new set of tracks leads through the woods and eventually to a twenty foot wide river, and the trail leads the PCs along the river's left edge for about an hour.

This trail eventually leads the PCs to a rocky cliff face that stands about twenty feet high. The river rushes over it, forming a waterfall that lands in a wide basin which eventually narrows into the river that the PCs were following. Set into the river on the left side is a natural cavern about fifteen feet square. To the left along the cliff face, there is a natural ramp that leads up to the top. The tracks go in and out of the cavern, as well as up the ramp.

Should the PCs look inside the cave, a **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll of TN 15 finds the scattered remains of a fire. A 25 finds an empty canvas sack hidden under a pile of rocks in the corner. The sack's markings indicating that it once held rice, and it contains three empty clay bottles that smell of alcohol.

The trail goes up the ramp, then turns back toward the river. There is a great deal of footprint activity at the riverside about twenty feet from the edge of the waterfall. A dark shape that is about a two foot cube can be seen at the bottom of the center of the river. Another **Hunting / Perception** roll at a TN of 20 also finds that the tracks continue along the river, eventually taking the PCs to the outskirts of a peasant village.

There are two locations of interest here: the spot above the waterfall where the box containing the steel is, and the peasant village. The Lost patrol took the food and the steel from the caravan it ambushed, dropped the food off in the cave, tossed the box into the river, and camped in the cave for the night. However, one of them also went along the river to a peasant village, where he stole much of the village's supply of alcohol. He brought this back to the cave, where the Lost patrol consumed it.

The two adventure locations are described in the following two sections.

The Waterfall

The box containing the steel fittings lies at the bottom of the river about fifteen feet from where it goes over the cliff. The river is twenty feet wide and fifteen feet deep. The river is not fast, but it is also not slow.

Pulling the box out of the river without magical or mundane help is quite challenging. The box is heavy enough that it takes three PCs to move it. A PC must

make an **Athletics (Swimming) / Agility** roll at TN 30 to make it to the box. Failing this roll by more than 15 sends the PC over the waterfall and into the basin below, which deals 4k2 damage on impact with the water and the rocks below (certain precautions, such as tying off the swimmer with rope, may prevent this). If two PCs make it to the box, they may make a combined **Athletics (Swimming) / Strength** roll. Succeeding at a TN of 30 gets the box out of the water; hitting a TN of 25 gets it halfway to the shore, and another successful attempt at a TN of 25 gets it the rest of the way. A shugenja who makes two raises while Communing with the water kami in the river can make the **Athletics / Agility** roll easier by convincing the water kami to slow down, flow around the area where the box is instead of through it, or some other creative solution.

PCs may come up with some other creative way to get the box out of the river. In general, an effort of sufficient creativity should succeed given a few successful rolls. If the PCs seem stuck, the GM can point them at the continuing tracks.

Shugenja may investigate the surrounding areas for kami who have information. Earth spirits in the cave and on the riverside describe a group of men either throwing a crate into the water or bedding down for the evening. As before, a raise for clarity also learns that there were bad spirits following them. There are no water spirits in the river who can help, but casting Commune at the base of the waterfall with three Raises for clarity finds a water spirit who was around yesterday. It shows an image of several armored men wearing dark clothing entering the cave, although the edges on the figures appear a bit blurry.

The Peasant Village

The peasant village is fairly small, consisting of seventeen smallish buildings surrounded by rice paddies. The buildings include the headman's residence, a tool barn, and a food storage building, and the remainder are other residences.

Samurai approaching the village see peasants hard at work in the fields. There is a bit of a hubbub when the peasants notice that foreign samurai have come to visit, but characters who have the Hero of the People Advantage or make an **Investigation / Awareness** roll at TN 30 immediately know that these peasants are even more on edge than they would normally be upon seeing samurai.

The villagers point the samurai to their headman, who is named Taroji. A thickly-built bald man in his late thirties, he looks weather-worn and weary despite his strong frame. He does his best to deal pleasantly with

the PCs, but is distracted. Last night, several bottles of alcohol disappeared from the food storage building. Everyone has assumed that one of the villagers is secretly holding out on the rest of them, and tensions are high.

A **Hunting / Perception** or **Investigation / Perception** roll at TN 25 finds tracks that lead out of the woods and to the food storage building. If the PCs suspect that the trail leading to the village has something to do with the missing alcohol, they have a free raise on this roll.

The peasants here are all in a very sour mood, as all of them suspect that they have a holdout in their midst. Their mood does not improve much upon discovering that the culprit does not come from among them, as they still don't have their alcohol back. Their mood may improve, however, if the PCs spend some time with them. The villagers will eagerly receive spiritual teaching from shugenja, monks, or otherwise qualified instructors, and will also be thrilled to hear a performance from someone with a Perform skill. Many of the peasants also have individual problems that they might be bold enough ask for help with, and the GM should feel free to improvise things that relate to the individual PCs. For example, a character with a parent who died when he was very young might be approached by a single parent who struggles to enforce discipline on their children.

The purpose of the scene is to see what happens when the PCs encounter their social inferiors while out of view of the rest of Rokugan. If the PCs put serious effort into placating and helping the peasants and the GM feels the PCs have earned the peasants' respect, they ask if there is anything they can do. When presented with the problem of the box at the bottom of the river, one of the villagers has an idea. He creates a sort of harness out of a few long lengths of rope, which one person who swims down to the box can slip around it. This allows everyone on the shore to pull together, which easily gets the box out of the water.

Once the box has been retrieved, the PCs should return to the castle. As the PCs arrive, Shinsaku is waiting for them. If they were successful, he gets a report from them, and then has the box taken away by subordinates.

If the PCs find the box but are not able to get it out of the water, a squad of Hida bushi with an engineer follow the PCs' directions the next day to find it, and bring it back to the castle. In this case, however, it does not make it to the siege engine by the conclusion of the adventure.

Either way, Shinsaku has another mission for them.

"I apologize for further imposing on you, samurais, but I must ask you for another favor. We received notice this morning that yet another box of supplies has gone missing. This one contained a jar of custom-formulated jade paste that we intended to use to create ammunition. It was stolen during the night from a jade mine one hour's ride north of here. I intend to go there tomorrow morning to try to track it down. I have no more budget to spend on this. Would you come with me tomorrow?"

Hopefully, the PCs will assent.

"In happier news, we are all invited to dinner with Lord Haru in his audience chamber half an hour from now. We should all clean ourselves up before then."

Shinsaku leaves the PCs to their bathing.

Part Two: Dinner and Discussion

The PCs arrive at the audience chamber at the same time as Shinsaku, and servants usher everyone inside. Haru's seat is empty, but two other men are already seated at a row of low tables. Shinsaku introduces them:

"This is Kaiu Kurodachi, the chief engineer of the project you have been assisting me with, and this is his brother Kakita Junsei, who has honored us with a visit. Lord Haru will be joining us momentarily."

Kaiu Kurodachi is a tall and lean man, with facial features that almost exactly match Junsei's in shape and attractiveness. Kurodachi, however, keeps his dark hair in a traditional topknot, and his shoulders and arms are significantly thicker than his brother's. He wears white and grey clothing that displays Kaiu family and Kaiu engineer school heraldry. Like Junsei, he has a deep and pleasant voice, although he tends to speak more deliberately than his brother.

As a child, Kurodachi served as a hostage to the Crab. He trained in the Kaiu Engineer school as a nod to the fame his father earned as a Kakita Artisan. Kurodachi took to this training so well that both clans agreed he should marry into the Kaiu family. His has since ascended through the ranks of the Kaiu engineers, and serves Kaiu Haru as the chief engineer of new projects. Kurodachi contentedly explains his past to a PC who asks.

Kakita Junsei is a tall and thin man with a handsome, pointed face that looks like it could have been chiseled out of stone. His white hair hangs long and ungathered around his pale face, and he wears clothing in Crane blue and white that displays Kakita family and Kakita bushi school heraldry. His voice is deep and resonant, almost surprisingly so given his slight frame.

PCs who trained in the Kakita Bushi School or who succeed on an **Courtier / Intelligence** roll at TN 35 know that Junsei has a reputation as a easily-provoked duelist. He has demanded and won two duels over matters of honor in the past six months. Crane courtiers are split over whether the first matter was worth a challenge or not, but they all agree that the second duel was fought over a triviality.

Both brothers have Benten's Blessing. PCs who notice this may express interest in pursuing a romantic engagement with Kurodachi or Junsei. Female PCs who approach Kurodachi learn that he is happily married and has no interest in a short-lived affair, but is flattered that they would be interested. Junsei does not entertain such advances from a female PC either, airily suggesting that she should not distract herself with matters of the flesh while she is here on business.

The real reason for this, however, is that he prefers men to women, has high standards, and is Consumed enough by Perfection that he will pass on any romantic opportunity that does not meet them. Only a male PC who has an enticing Physical Advantage such as Benten's Blessing, Dangerous Beauty, Voice, or Large might find Junsei a willing partner. In more private circumstances, some roleplaying combined with a roll of **Temptation / Awareness** or **Sincerity / Awareness** (emphasis depends on approach) at TN 25 gets him to consent. A tryst with Junsei has consequences that appear at the end of the module.

Both brothers stand and bow to you. Junsei speaks, his voice surprisingly resonant given his small frame. "And who are these fine samurai that I have the pleasure of meeting?"

Junsei converses enthusiastically with the PCs, asking about their homes, their journeys to Crab lands, and their hobbies, and he happily follows any other subject that the PCs bring up. Junsei wants to learn at least one thing each PC enjoys or has skill in for later use. Kurodachi allows his brother to take the lead in conversation, but asks polite and curious questions of PCs who speak of expertise in any artisan or craft skill.

The PCs may ask Kurodachi about his siege engine, which he is happy to speak at length about if the PCs are willing to promise not to share with others:

"I convinced my superiors that it would be most rude of us to ask you to help with this project if we are not willing to entrust you with the details. These weapons will be used against the Shadowlands, after all, the common enemy of the entire Empire."

Junsei will agree with the sentiment thoughtfully, and any politically-aware PC should readily grasp that these engines can be turned against any enemy of the Crab. Though Kurodachi is entirely unaware of the larger political ramifications, unveiling these weapons to other Clans is a deliberate effort on the part of the Crab to intimidate the rest of the Empire in a fairly (at least for the Crab) subtle fashion. Kurodachi will describe his invention in general terms at first, but will become more specific as the PCs express interest. (After all, what craftsman does not like to show off their work?)

Kurodachi has discovered how to build the arm-over-wheel trebuchet, a design that is new to Rokugan. He has gone one step further, however, and built one with three arms instead of just one. The engine itself is about fifteen feet square, and rests on wooden wheels about three feet in circumference. It has three arms, each about ten feet long. The engine offers several advantages over traditional Rokugani siege engines.

- Kurodachi's siege engine rests on four wheels, as opposed to being mounted on a sled that must be pulled. This makes it much easier to move.
- Mounting the siege engine on wheels also allows Kurodachi to get more range. A sled-mounted engine with too much tension can lead to the siege engine flipping onto its back when fired, as energy is driven into the ground below the front of the engine. An engine on wheels can simply roll backward to dissipate this energy instead.
- The arms on Kurodachi's siege engine can pivot through a rotation of about five degrees in either direction, which allows the engine's aim to be adjusted on the fly. This has never been done before in Rokugan.

Whenever you feel that the conversation is dying down, a servant rings a bell, one of the side doors opens, and Haru enters the room. *"Thank you all for your patience. Shall we eat?"*

Dinner is an informal affair, with only Haru, Shinsaku, the two brothers, and the PCs present. Servants bustle

around, presenting a dinner that is quite similar to the previous evening's. As the servants clear the tables, Haru addresses the PCs again.

"My clan may not have the same reputation for hospitality as the Crane," he says, glancing at Junsei, "but our clan's enthusiasm for good drink has given us some of the Empire's best alcohol. I offer you a tasting of the finest of sake that can be found in my lands."

The servants bring out a tray for each guest that holds three small sake cups along, a card describing the brands each cup contains, and a large cup of water to clear the palate in between.

- The first is Friendly Traveler. It is clean, smooth, and quite dry.
- The second is a gift from the Crab allies among the Mantis: Honey Badger brand sake, a potent and robust drink with little refinement but a great deal of kick.
- The third hails from the Midakai province of the Kuni family and bears the unlikely name "Tears of the Sun". It has a light, spicy flavor that stands in contrast to the desolate nature of the land of its birth.

The cups each contain enough sake to give an impression of each brand, but nowhere near enough across the three cups for a PC to become drunk. Haru politely rebuffs any PCs who ask for more. (*"You have work to do tomorrow morning, <family>-san."*).

Once the sake is served, Kurodachi addresses Junsei.

"Brother, you were always a skilled musician, and it has been years since I enjoyed one of your performances. Lord Haru enjoys music as well, and," gesturing to the drums behind the dais, "...owns some very fine taiko. Perhaps you would be so kind as to share your talents with us?"

Surprise and amusement cross Haru's face. "Junsei-san, I had no idea that you were a musician. You must demonstrate your skill!" He motions to a servant, who brings one of the drums, as well as a pair of thick drumsticks.

Junsei speaks with grand gesture of his arms and a small bow. "Brother, you flatter me with your praise. Haru-sama, I would be happy to perform if that is your will." Haru nods, gesturing for him to play.

He begins at a medium volume, with simple rhythms that grow in complexity. He ends the performance after

about a minute by fading the volume down to nearly nothing before he stops.

PCs who have either Sensation or at least a Rank of any musical Perform Skill can tell that Junsei's instrument of choice is likely something else: he has no formal training in drums, is coasting on raw talent, and made the piece up on the spot.

Haru beams. *"Thank you, Junsei-san. I do not often have the privilege of hearing music in my own audience chamber. Perhaps we can make an evening of this. Do any of the rest of you wish to perform for us?"*

Any PC who wishes may offer a performance, drum or otherwise. A roll of 20 or better earns a PC Haru's praise and a point of Glory. A lower roll earns the PC a gracious apology for asking for a such a performance immediately after serving alcohol. Rolls of Perform: Drum, however, get a Free Raise due to the high quality of Haru's instruments and the daimyo's preference.

Once all the PCs who wish to perform have done so, Haru stands, draining one of his cups. *"I suppose after asking you to play this game, it is only fair for me to do the same."* He approaches the instrument, takes a deep breath, and begins to play. The piece is loud, fast, and obviously practiced, although you hear the occasional irregular rhythm. After a few minutes, a crescendo begins to rise, filling the entire audience chamber with sound, and the piece ends with a loud flourish.

Again, PCs who have either Sensation or a Rank of any musical Perform Skill can tell that Haru is a moderately skilled drummer, though the piece he chose was just slightly outside his range.

Kakita Junsei claps his hands. *"What a sensational performance! You have clearly sought perfection in your art, Haru-sama, and I think you just showed us a glimpse of that perfection."*

Haru wrinkles his nose. *"Perfection is a strong word, Junsei-san. I do my best, but my duties keep me from spending as much time as I might like on my music. I assure you I heard every mistake I made."*

"Kakita wrote that one should win with a single perfect strike. One need not seek perfection in combat, as there is the potential for perfection in any endeavor." Junsei turns to his brother. "Consider our grandfather."

Kurodachi blinks in surprise and responds uncertainly. *"Nakezo-sama was a renowned swordsmith."*

Junsei's smile is as sharp as the objects of discussion. *"He made only five blades in his lifetime, each the very picture of the sword's perfection."*

Kurodachi nods reluctantly. *"They are fine blades."*

"He poured the last years of his life into one last sword. He never finished, but came ever closer to that sword's perfection with every day. It is a tragedy that his work was interrupted by such mundane concerns as politics or war."

Kurodachi shakes his head and frowns. *"Junsei-san, the tragedy is that he could have finished five more excellent swords in that time. That sword was good enough two years before he died, but he refused to finish it."*

Junsei leans forward. *"You disrespect his memory, brother. I brought that sword with me, and I was instructed to leave it with you. Perhaps you have lost your drive for perfection since you left us..."*

The Crab brother flinches slightly and glances away. *"I would not seek to interpret the words of the great Kakita, but what you speak of sounds more like obsession. A goal that you are trying to achieve instead of a path toward continued improvement."*

Junsei's eyes flash in anger for a moment, but he regains command of himself. *"Are the siege engines you create deadly works of art, or are they merely sufficient to throw a rock into a crowd of goblins?" He turns to you. "Surely these other samurai understand the value of the search for perfection."*

Junsei now turns to the PCs, asserting that they have sought perfection in their own endeavors, and asks them to provide examples of having done so. Possible statements might look like the following:

- To a courtier: *"Surely you must know the joy of finding the perfect words to turn public opinion against a rival. Would you tell us a story about having done so?"*
- To a bushi: *"You may not often engage in iaijutsu, but surely you must savor it when you find the perfect attack to slip past an opponent's defense. What has been your greatest triumph in battle?"*

These ideas can obviously extend to many other disciplines: any artisan skill, any performance skill, and

any other hobby or endeavor that Junsei has learned that a PC enjoys.

While Junsei engages the PCs in this debate, his true objective is to convince his brother to embrace perfection as a virtue. The PCs cannot sway Junsei's opinion, but they have a chance of convincing Kurodachi to reject Junsei's views if they do not succumb to his flattery. Some methods of doing this may include:

- Strongly advocating an opposing view.
- Making Kurodachi's views seem irrelevant.
- Pointing out that Kurodachi is being obsessive.

A PC who threatens to do any of these things earns Junsei's ire, and Junsei attacks that person in conversation more and more fervently until he clearly reaches an impasse.

Any PC who succeeds at a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30 will realize that there is more to this discussion than a lively debate; Junsei is patently trying to influence his brother for some specific reason.

Kurodachi remains silent during the discussion unless he is directly prompted, as his brother's prodding about his siege engines hit a bit of a nerve. He spends the time evaluating everyone's arguments.

When the debate reaches a standstill, the PC who made the strongest case rolls **Sincerity / Awareness** (with the Honesty or Deceit Emphasis as appropriate) if they chose to advance an alternative view, **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** if they tried to make Junsei's arguments seem irrelevant, or **Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness** if they pointed out that Junsei is being obsessive. The TN for the main roll is 35. Each PC who supported that case may make the same roll at TN 15 to give the main PC a Free Raise.

If no PC presented serious opposition, do not call for the roll. Instead, the evening ends amicably with Junsei giving Kurodachi their grandfather's sword. *"This was the culmination of his efforts, and nearly the perfect example of his art. Perhaps you can finally bring it to the perfection it deserves."* The PCs may roll **Investigation / Awareness** at a TN of 30 to determine that Junsei is not being honest about the origin of the sword he is giving his brother. If any PC attempts to say anything, it will provoke Junsei as below; otherwise, the festivities come to a close and everyone goes peacefully to their quarters.

Junsei's Taint combined with his Brash Disadvantage have made him quite sensitive about lost face, and therefore the PC who made the main roll receives a challenge whether or not Junsei was defeated in conversation.

Junsei rises from the ground in an instant, eyes locked with yours. "This disagreement cannot stand. Apologize, or back your words with steel."

Kurodachi's face goes white. "Brother, you would duel over this? Now?"

Junsei does not break eye contact with you. "I am not requesting a duel to the death. We do not require permission. Stand and defend your words."

The PC has two options: concede the argument and offer an apology, or fight the duel. Groveling requires a properly role-played response plus an **Etiquette / Awareness** roll at TN 25. Success gets Junsei to back down. On a failure, Junsei is not placated: "That is insufficient. I demand you defend your words with your blade."

If the PC does not carry his or her own katana, he or she must ask another PC to serve as a champion. If no PC will do so, they must stand on their own; Haru will reluctantly provide a katana for their use. After servants retrieve the duelists' swords, the duel continues according to the dueling rules.

- Iaijutsu Duels take three rounds, during which the participants are in the Center Stance (and therefore receive the bonus of +1k1+Void Ring to one roll made in the second and third rounds).
- **Assessment:** In the first round, the participants roll **Iaijutsu (Assessment) / Awareness** against a TN equal to their opponent's Insight Rank times 5, plus 10. (15 for Rank 1, 20 for Rank 2, and so on. Junsei's School Rank is 3, making the TN 25.). Success lets them know one of the following pieces of information about their opponent, plus one for each Raise: Void, Reflexes, Iaijutsu Skill, Iaijutsu Emphases, current number of Void Points, and current Wound Level. If one character exceeds their opponent's total by 10 or more, they gain a bonus of +1k1 on their Focus roll. Junsei spends a Void Point and rolls 10k5 with the Emphasis. After the Assessment phase, either duelist may concede the duel.
- **Focus:** In the second round, the participants roll Contested **Iaijutsu (Focus) / Void**; if one of the duelists beats the other's roll by 5 or

more, they get the first strike. If neither beats the other's by at least 5, then the result is a "karmic strike". Junsei spends a Void Point and rolls 10k8+7 with a Free Raise and the Emphasis if he wins the Assessment by 10+, and 10k7+7 if not. He also wins if he beats the opponent by 3 or more.

- **Strike:** In the third round, the character with the chance to make the first strike (or both, simultaneously, if there is a karmic strike), rolls **Iaijutsu (Strike)** / **Reflexes** against their opponent's Armor TN. They receive a Free Raise to this roll for every additional 5 their Focus Roll exceeded their opponent's. Junsei spends a Void Point and rolls 10k6+3 to attack, with a Free Raise for damage for every 3 points he exceeds the opponent's Focus roll.

Should Junsei win the duel with a successful strike, he spends a Void Point and uses the Center Stance bonus on damage, rolling 9k4+4, plus +1k0 for each Free Raise. He also keeps high damage dice unless doing so would outright kill the target, in which case he deals as close to lethal damage as he can without actually killing.

This scene has four possible outcomes.

- The PC defeats Junsei's argument, convincing Kurodachi that his brother has gone mad and must be treated carefully. In this case, the outcome of the duel is irrelevant to Kurodachi.
- The PC does not defeat Junsei's argument, but fights the duel to completion. In this case, whether or not the PC wins, Kurodachi sees the PC's demonstrated conviction and decides that his brother has gone mad.
- The PC does not defeat Junsei's argument, then either attempts to grovel an apology or concedes the duel after the Assessment phase. In this case, Kurodachi decides that the PC must not feel very strongly about his argument and sees his brother's side of things. By the next morning, he gains the "Consumed by Perfection" Disadvantage and a Rank of Shadowlands Taint.
- No PC attempts to defeat Junsei's argument. Everyone goes to sleep happy and content. Kurodachi gains Consumed by Perfection and a Rank of Shadowlands Taint from his brother's corrupted gift.

If the duel took place and a character is grievously wounded, Haru immediately sends for a shugenja as servants rush to stem the bleeding. A Kuni wearing

kabuki face paint arrives and casts Regrow the Wound, returning the character to full health.

Once the argument has been resolved one way or the other, Haru ends the evening.

Haru rises with a scowl. "Clearly we have had too much to drink tonight. Regardless, thank you for joining me. I suggest that you keep the rest of your visit more civil." He leaves the chamber through a side door.

Part Three: The Jade Mine

The next morning, the PCs will again set out to help Shinsaku with his problems. Upon arrival at the stables, PCs who brought horses find their mounts saddled and ready to go. PCs who do not have their own horses find a loaner horse ready for them. Shinsaku has also arranged for a day's worth of food and water.

Not much happens during the journey north, although the dry air and grey sky cast a grim pall over the landscape. At each crossroads, Shinsaku consults a map to ensure that he is going the right way. Observant PCs notice that he is somewhat out of his element on the road, brushing dust off of his hakama and adjusting his straw hat a bit more often than is actually helpful.

Most of the journey takes the PCs on main roads through desolate terrain, although the last portion takes them down a smaller road and winds through forested areas. They arrive at the jade mine after one Rokugani hour of travel.

The Jade Mine

Twenty or so man-made craters in the rocky ground make up the main quarry. Several peasants with picks are working inside one of the craters. Two wagons stand at the edge of the crater, one piled high with large stones and the other holding smaller rocks. Five wooden buildings stand a stone's throw away from the quarry itself. Three are house-sized and two are only shacks. A grumpy-looking bushi in heavy armor stands watch over the miners. Two more appear to be guarding one of the shacks: a broad man in his mid-thirties wearing heavy armor and a younger, thinner man wearing light armor.

The older man steps forward as you approach and bows. "Kaiu Shinsaku-sama," he says with a hint of a growl. "I am Hida Tadoka, gunso of the squad that protects this mine. I hope you did not find the journey here too uncomfortable."

Shinsaku frowns. "What happened here, Tadoka-san?"

Tadoka looks each of you over, suspiciously.

Shinsaku sighs. "They are here to help. You can trust them."

He snorts. "Two days ago, one of Lord Haru's shugenja came here to prepare the batch of jade paste you requested. We put the jar in here for safekeeping. That night, two of my men were guarding this shack, which is where we keep the materials that go to the construction yard. One of them heard a noise and went off to investigate. Someone slipped a poisoned needle into the man who stayed behind, opened the shack, took the jar of paste, and disappeared into the night."

Tadoka reports these events completely and accurately as he knows them. The PCs, however, may wish to know more.

- What else is in the shack? *"Fingers of jade, and other jade fragments we couldn't finish here. Pretty strange that the valuable stuff was left behind."*
- Where are the two sentries? *"The one who was poisoned is still recovering at the castle. Both of them have been reassigned to even less prestigious posts than this one."*
- Have you tried to track them? *"We do not have enough men here. Sending one soldier after someone that skilled would be a suicide mission."*
- What did the jar look like? *"It was black, round, about a foot wide, and about a foot tall. Unmarked, too, just like the order said."*

If the PCs do not take the lead here, Shinsaku has little idea of what to do. Tadoka does not go out of his way to help, as he quite resents being upbraided by a man of higher status ten years his younger.

After a few questions, have everyone in the party roll **Investigation / Perception**. Success at TN 25 notices that the younger man fidgets with his hands, shifts his weight repeatedly, and has an irritated look on his face. This is Hiruma Kinichi, a scout assigned to Tadoka's unit. Although he found tracks leading into the forest yesterday, Tadoka commanded him to stay with the unit, remain silent about the tracks, and let Tadoka handle this conversation. Any PC who directly engages with Kinichi (a question, a word, or even direct eye

contact will do) gets Kinichi to jump into the conversation against his gunso's wishes.

The younger man turns to you. "Samas, please." Tadoka gives him a dirty look, but he continues. "I found foot tracks leading east into the forest on the other side of the mine. I can show them to you. I think whoever took the jar went that way. It's been a while, but it was pretty wet that night and it hasn't rained since then. I think you could still follow."

Kinichi happily shows the PCs the tracks. They can also be found with a **Hunting / Perception** roll at TN 25 or an **Investigation / Perception** roll at TN 30.

Searching the mine doesn't turn up much. The guarded shack contains only jade; the other one is a store of food, blankets, and mining tools; and the three buildings are rough living quarters. Similarly, no one else here has much information, as everyone else was asleep during the theft. However, an **Investigation / Perception** roll at a TN of 25 finds a torn scrap of black cloth in a shrub near the supply shacks. A roll of 30 or higher realizes that this piece of silk was once purple, but is now completely black with dirt and filth.

Shugenja may wish to perform some magical investigations. No water, air, or fire spirits with helpful information remain, but an earth spirit in the ground underneath the shacks still remembers the events of two nights ago, which it narrates slowly and dispassionately. "Two men, one heavy and one light, stood. The light one walked away. An even lighter man put pointed earth and bad water into the heavy man. The heavy man fell. The lightest man walked away with some water and earth mixed together." With one Raise for clarity, the earth spirit adds that the man who walked away was "impure". With two Raises, it adds that "bad spirits were following him."

If the PCs ask Tadoka if he has any men he can spare who know the area, he unhappily sends Kinichi with them. Tadoka does the same if they ask for Kinichi specifically. In both cases, he gives Kinichi one Rokugani hour to return.

Should the PCs fail to find the tracks completely and get stuck, Kinichi storms up to them, leads them to the tracks, says "Your thief went that way," and then walks back to Tadoka, scowling. If this happens, the PCs hear Tadoka reprimanding Kinichi for insubordination as they leave the jade mine for the wilderness.

Following the Tracks

The tracks lead east into the forest, which slopes gradually downward as the PCs get further and further.

If Kinichi came along, no roll is needed to follow. Without Kinichi, the PCs will need to make **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** at TN 20 or **Investigation / Perception** at TN 25 to stay on track. Success on this leg of the journey brings the PCs to the bottom of a river valley, where the tracks lead directly into the river and then disappear.

If the PCs seem confused about this, Kinichi will point out that wading into a river is an excellent way to make tracks harder to follow. Finding the tracks on the other side of the river requires **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** at TN 20 or **Investigation / Perception** at TN 25. If Kinichi is with the PCs, his involvement gives them a Free Raise to their rolls.

Kinichi cannot go further than the river and still make it back to the mine in time, so the PCs are on their own for the last leg of the journey. This requires **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** at TN 20 or **Investigation / Perception** at TN 25. Success leads them to the edge of the forest on a ridge. Below the ridge, a temporary tent city sprawls out in a great circle around a tiny cluster of buildings.

A fallen log forms a natural bench near the edge of the woods. Next to it, a circular imprint about a foot wide rests in the dirt, and tracks go from the log, leading out of the forest and down the ridge.

A PC who looks around for anything else nearby can roll **Hunting / Perception** at TN 20 to find a pool of thick black nearly-dried liquid that looks a little bit powdery. With a **Medicine / Intelligence** or **Lore: Anatomy / Intelligence** roll at TN 20, a PC knows that this is vomit mixed with blood.

Shugenja who wish to Commune with spirits in the forest once again find only earth spirits to be helpful. The spirit reports that "A man carrying mixed water and earth went that way," giving the PCs a free raise on their next Hunting roll to track the thief. As before, one raise adds that it was an "impure man", and two adds that "bad spirits were following him." A PC who specifically asks about the vomit learns that "He opened the container of mixed water and earth, then expelled bad water", and one raise clarifies that there were "bad spirits in the water."

The only helpful water spirit here is what remains of the water in the nearly-dried vomit. Unfortunately, that spirit is actually a minor kansen. It responds to any question from a shugenja by conjuring an image of the standing shugenja, visible waves of power pulsating out from him or her, with the lacerated bodies of Shinsaku and the other PCs scattered in the surrounding area. It

continues to show different images designed to entice the shugenja to embrace the darkness until he or she either does so or ends the spell allowing communication with the kansen. Note that this is a water spirit, so all other observing characters see the images as well.

Clever PCs may wonder what lies in the direction of these tracks. Asking Shinsaku this causes him to produce his map, study it for a moment, and realize that the thief is making a beeline for Grey Crossroads Village. This gives the PCs a free raise on each Hunting roll made after the realization.

By the end of the trip through the woods, Shinsaku's nice clothes are rather dirty. He makes a hasty effort to clean himself up before entering the village, but still ends up looking a bit silly in dirty clothes that are ill-suited for wilderness travel.

Grey Crossroads Village

Most of the time, Grey Crossroads Village is an unremarkable town in the outskirts of the Kaiu lands. Ten or so permanent single-story buildings stand in two rows along one main road, and some peasant dwellings and rice paddies sprawl to one side of the main road. Currently, however, a great multicolored sprawl of tents has occupied the other side. Closer investigation reveals that these tents are built on top of wagons; the tents can be collapsed into the wagons for travel. The tracks lead down from the woods and disappear into the tent city.

Shinsaku can explain what is going on, if asked. While Grey Crossroads Village is normally a sleepy farming village, four times a year it plays host to a great gathering of merchants, who exchange goods with each other in order to balance out their inventories. Vast quantities of rice, beans, silk, raw steel, and koku change hands here so that the needs of the southern Great Clans can all be met.

Once the tracks enter the tent city, they disappear into the thousands of footprints that the mass of merchants here has made over the past two days. The PCs need to find other ways to track the jade paste.

- No roll is required to discover that this season's event officially started this morning. Most merchants arrived yesterday evening, with the rest trickling in this morning.
- PCs who go for a stroll through the tent city may roll **Investigation / Perception** at TN 25 or **Commerce / Perception** at TN 20 to notice that the great majority of merchants here are dealing only in trade goods, like beans, rice, lumber, silk, and raw steel. The few exceptions to this hail from the Yoritomo family.

- All the merchants here like to protect their business associates, and will under no circumstances directly turn in one of their own. The majority of the merchants here are Yasuki, however, and helpfully point out that no Yasuki merchant would traffic in goods that were likely stolen from the Crab.
- PCs who ask specifically about non-Crab merchants learn that there are several Yoritomo and Daidoji merchants here. PCs who ask about when they have each arrived learn that of them, only Yoritomo Makoto has been present since yesterday morning. Everyone else arrived yesterday evening or this morning.
- Asking the Mantis merchants directly about who has been here since yesterday morning can lead the PCs to Yoritomo Makoto, although this will not work if the PCs make it obvious that Makoto may be in trouble. PCs who slip and indicate that something may be wrong must roll **Sincerity** / **Awareness** at TN 20 if they try to save themselves. PCs who make it obvious that the person they are seeking may be in trouble receive no help.
- PCs who speak to the peasantry and make an **Investigation** / **Awareness** roll at TN 25 find an inquisitive twelve year old peasant telling his friends about *"a weird big black jug in one of the Mantis tents! The merchant hid it when I asked what was inside, though."*
- Asking for information outside the merchant district, combined with an **Investigation** / **Awareness** roll at TN 25, finds a peasant eating at a noodle stand who saw a ronin wearing dark clothing and a deep straw hat enter town yesterday around noon. He carried a brown sack over his shoulder, entered a tent, exited the tent without the sack, and immediately left town along the main road.
- A PC who asks around about where he or she could sell any object other than a standard trade good finds that they should speak with Yoritomo Makoto, who trades in exotic goods as something of a hobby. While this would normally cost a PC glory, the merchants here will not besmirch anyone's reputation for being discreetly interested in commerce. Another PC who is present for such a conversation may choose to dock the potential seller a point of glory at the cost of losing a point of his or her own honor.

Eventually, the PCs should find Yoritomo Makoto's tent. Finding Makoto is not intended to be the main

challenge here, so the GM should reward any plausible approach with success.

Shinsaku has less-than-great relations with the Yoritomo merchants, so he does not find Makoto on his own. If the PCs seem stuck, he will hint that the PCs might look into the Yoritomo merchants who are present, as he cannot do that freely himself.

If the PCs share that Yoritomo Makoto likely has the jade paste with Shinsaku, he blanches somewhat. *"Yoritomo Makoto-san? Of course she would have it... I think it best if you attempt to bargain with her yourself. My presence would only hinder your efforts."* While he would prefer not to explain further, a roll of **Investigation** / **Awareness**/ or **Courtier** / **Awareness** at TN 30 convinces him to anyway. *"We once had a dispute about a petty matter of pricing that became... regrettably public. She does not think well of me now."*

Makoto's wagon-tent looks much like every other from the outside: canvas cloth drapes over two poles, forming solid side walls and a front wall with a narrow slit that one can enter through. A banner bearing the Yoritomo mon hangs next to the slit, indicating that the tent is open for business. Inside, however, it is a little different. While she has barrels of rice and beans and a wooden rack displaying samples of silk, linen, and cotton, that wooden rack also displays several more exotic goods. She has a gaijin spyglass, a pair of spectacles, a sample of wool fabric, a masquerade-style mask carved out of "ai-vo-ri" (*"A very rare gaijin stone!"*), and three bottles of Suitengu's Laughter – a Mantis brand of alcohol that some PCs may recognize. Makoto herself is a shorter-than-average woman. She is thick without being heavy, with a sharp but pretty face made severe by the tight black bun that she keeps her hair in.

If the PCs enter alone, she turns her attention to them, bowing respectfully. *"Welcome, samurai. I am Yoritomo Makoto. How might I help you?"*

If Shinsaku enters with them, however, he reacts as soon as he hears her voice. *"Please forgive me. I believe I have entered the wrong tent."* He bows hastily before disappearing again through the tent flap.

Once he is gone, Makoto gives them a confused look. *"Who was that?"* If the PCs ask, an **Investigation** / **Awareness** roll at TN 30 reveals that she knows exactly who it was. If the PCs identify Shinsaku by name, she asks how they know him. Admitting that the PCs are his associates raises the starting price of the jade paste by 10 koku. Roleplaying combined with an **Sincerity** /

Awareness (honesty or deceit as appropriate) roll at TN 20 convinces her that they do not know him.

While Makoto mainly deals in trade goods and foodstuffs necessary for Rokugani life, she buys and sells rare and unusual goods as a hobby. She makes a habit of being open and undeceptive, as she believes that reasonable adults can find mutually beneficial solutions to problems.

Makoto has the jade paste inside a hidden compartment in her wagon. While she will readily admit to having it, she will not reveal its location to the PCs until they reach a mutually acceptable arrangement.

PCs who point out that the item in question belonged to the Crab military before it was stolen will not sway her. Makoto's duty to her lord is to make a profit, the PCs have no legal authority, and besides, if she had not bought the jade paste, it wouldn't even be here for the Crab to get back. Should she not be compensated for her courtesy?

The cleanest way to get it back is to buy it from her. She paid 25 koku for it and wants to double her money, although she will under no circumstances expose that goal to the PCs. She will accept 50 koku without question. Many parties, however, will not have 50 koku lying around. In that case, they will have to do some work.

- A PC can haggle with her to reduce the price. This requires an **Commerce / Awareness** roll at TN 20. Should a PC take this direction, suggest that they make raises. Any number of PCs can give the main effort a free raise by making the same roll at a TN of 15, although they must participate in the roleplaying to do so. Success reduces the price by 5 koku, and each called raise reduces the price by 5 koku more. Makoto does not, however, go below 25 koku. Negotiation may only be attempted once. If the PCs begin to take this tack Makoto complains of stuffiness inside the tent, opens the front and sides, and speaks loud enough that passersby can hear that she is negotiating prices with samurai. This forces all participating PCs to lose a pip of Glory.
- Yasuki PCs may use their school Technique to lower the price. However, they discover that Makoto has learned how to defend against some of their tricks; one PC's use of the technique only reduces the price by 5 koku.
- The PCs can threaten her into reducing the price if they are very careful not to imply personal harm to Makoto. This requires a

Intimidation / Willpower roll at TN 20. Should a PC take this direction, suggest that they make Raises. Any number of PCs can give the main effort a Free Raise by making the same roll at a TN of 15. Success reduces the price by 5 koku, and each raise reduces the price by 5 koku more. Makoto will not, however, go below 25 koku. Intimidation is a Low Skill. Any PC who makes an Intimidation roll here loses a pip of Honor. Any PC whose honor rank is 6 or higher loses two pips instead.

- Intimidation may only be attempted once. If a PC tries again, or if they threaten her physical person, see below.
- Makoto enjoys acquiring rare goods in general and gaijin goods in particular. If a PC is carrying something with enough perceived value and rarity, Makoto may be willing to take the item instead of part of the monetary price. This requires both an item that is valuable and unique by Makoto's standards, and enough roleplaying combined with an **Perform: Storytelling / Awareness** or **Commerce / Awareness** roll at TN 20 to "sell" the item. Something like a fine quality Unicorn-made saddle would work; a bottle of Friendly Traveler sake would not. As before, success reduces the price by 5 koku, and each raise on the Storytelling roll reduces it by another 5 koku, but Makoto does not go below 25 koku. If a trade becomes part of a negotiated deal, Makoto happily waits for the PC to fetch the item or items and bring them back to the village for her. She will allow any number of items be part of a deal that includes a trade.
- Makoto will also reduce the price by 5 koku if every PC present accepts an Obligation to the Yoritomo.
- Enterprising PCs may offer Favors they have accumulated to Makoto. Three Favors from Great Clans or Great Clan families may be cashed in here for a 5 koku reduction in price. Allies may not be used in this way, however. The Trade Contact: Silk Merchant cert from Cold Hands, Stone Heart may also be cashed in for a 15 koku discount.
- An attempt at Intimidation that unambiguously threatens Makoto with physical harm can get her to give up the jade paste for free. She will not do this unless the PCs make an explicit threat, such as breaking an arm, cutting off a thumb, or something equally gruesome. If the PCs try to be vague, she will encourage them to threaten specific violence

("Ah, but I am only a simple merchant. I am not sure I understand. What exactly do you plan to do?"). As soon as they do, she politely produces the jade paste, demanding nothing of the the PCs in return. Later, she delivers a report about the thuggish treatment she received from the PCs to her lords Yoritomo Seiryō and Yoritomo Maya. Each of the PCs gain the pair of them as a Sworn Enemies and a full rank of Infamy, as the Yoritomo merchant patrons spread word of the PCs' actions.

If the PCs fail to acquire the jade, or if the deal for the jade paste includes items that they need to fetch from the castle, Shinsaku suggests that they return to the castle to acquire military force.

If the PCs leave Makoto unsupervised for any significant length of time without having given her a reason to stick around, she packs up her tent into her wagon, fetches her horse, and skips town. Her wagon tracks blend like water into the many tracks leaving the city, making it impossible to follow her. Should all the PCs leave town with Shinsaku before coming back with the squad of Hida, Makoto has long since left when they return. If one or more PCs remain behind and conspicuously observe her, she stays and will be present when Shinsaku returns. She also stays behind if she is expecting the PCs to return with items for her.

A trip to Shiro Kaiu and back takes two Rokugani hours. If they return with goods to exchange with Makoto, the deal goes off without a hitch. On the other hand, if the PCs choose to bring backup, they return with five Hida bushi, each wearing heavy armor and carrying tetsubo. If Makoto has not skipped town, they march through the tent district to Makoto's wagon and demand the jade, citing military necessity and threatening to revoke her merchant privileges after pounding her into a bloody pulp. Makoto gives the jade to them, but reports this incident to her patrons, Yoritomo Seiryō and Yoritomo Maya. Each of the PCs who spoke with Makoto gain the pair of them as a Sworn Enemy.

PCs who acquire the jade paste peacefully and still have some money left over may wish to purchase some of her gaijin goods. On these, she will not budge on the price, but she is willing to perform a trade for some other good if the PC can pitch it successfully (see above for those mechanics). Here is her price list:

- Gaijin spyglass: 10 koku
- Spectacles: 5 koku

- Unicorn-manufactured wool fabric for one kimono: 2 koku
- Bottle of Suitengu's Laughter: 1 koku
- Ivory mask: 3 koku

Should a PC express interest in one of these objects, she makes some remark about privacy being nice and closes her tent shade again so that the PC does not lose glory for the transaction.

The PCs may press Makoto for information about the man who sold her the jade paste. She knows little, but shares what she knows. He dressed like a ronin, with threadbare dark clothing and a deep straw hat. He negotiated competently and aggressively, which made her wonder why he was so poorly dressed.

PCs looking to acquire any other goods in the market may attempt to do so. Once Shinsaku has the jade in hand, however, he wants to get home as soon as possible. He gives the PCs time to purchase one or two things, then asks them to return to Shiro Kaiu with him.

The return journey takes one more Rokugani hour. If the PCs acquired the jade, Shinsaku acts visibly relieved during the trip. If they did not, he acts despondent, often muttering to himself.

The road home passes alongside a thick, forested area. Halfway home, the road turns and begins to pass through the forest. In the falling twilight, the PCs can barely see thanks to the overhanging trees and their shadows. Any PC who rolls **Investigation / Perception** at a TN of 30 notices a crouched figure about forty feet into the forest to their left. This man is a former Hiruma scout who fell to the Shadowlands and now works with the Dark Moto who have been harassing the construction efforts.

PCs who attempt to chase him through the forest will have no luck. His Taint and long experience have given him several advantages (like the Uncanny Speed Shadowlands Power to complement his ranks in Athletics and Stealth, as well as Way of the Land: Crab). Furthermore, he has the Demonic Eyes Shadowlands Power, which allows him to see perfectly in the dark. A PC who makes an **Athletics / Agility** roll of 20 or better, however, will get close enough to notice his glowing red eyes before they lose him. Crab PCs who get that close recognize the style of armor he wears as being popular with the Hiruma if they brought a light source with them. It may be possible to use ranged attacks or magic against him, if the attacking PC succeeded at the initial Investigation roll (or are being guided by another PC who did and succeeds at a TN 25 roll) and if they succeed at the Athletics roll. If the PC

does 20 Wounds to him, he will stumble and fall, allowing them to confront him. This will inevitably lead to his death – if he cannot fight his way clear, he will kill himself rather than face capture. Non-damaging magic should be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis, but in general, should require a Mastery Level Two spell to slow him enough to be caught up to.

Part Four: Confrontation

The PCs should return with their horses to the stables. In the barn, they find one of the stable boys on his back, unconscious but breathing. He is bleeding from a gash on his forehead. Any attempt to wake him up succeeds. As soon as he wakes, he prostrates himself to the PCs and begins apologizing profusely. After he has calmed down a little bit, he speaks more coherently.

"The Kakita and lord Kurodachi... They said that they were going to the construction yard, and demanded my two fastest horses. I said they should take a lamps, because it was dark. A very big man wearing black walked up next to him, and said that wouldn't be a problem. The last thing I saw before he knocked me out was his glowing red eyes."

Shinsaku turns to the PCs.

"I can gather soldiers, but that will take time. Would you go now? Follow the road we were taking yesterday, and don't take any turns. It dead-ends into the construction yard where Kurodachi's engine is. I will follow behind you as soon as I muster a few squads."

If the players successfully acquired the jade paste, he has one more thing to say:

"He turns to go, then remembers something. "Take the jade paste with you. If our enemies have glowing red eyes, you may find it useful."

Coating a blade with jade paste is a Complex Action and causes an additional +2k1 damage on the next successful attack against a target with one or more Ranks of Taint.

The PCs' ride to the construction yard is dark; the forest road that was pleasant in the daytime is now dark and creepy at night. There is a full moon, but that is the only natural light. After half a Rokugani hour of riding, the road dead ends into a large complex surrounded by ten foot tall wooden walls. Two lanterns burn on either side of the front gate, which illuminates the corpses of two

men in heavy armor, dead on the ground with weapons strewn about.

The entrance to the yard is a corridor about ten feet wide and fifteen feet long. A group of men riding what look like rotting black horses and dressed in black stands in a wide semicircle around the mouth of the corridor. Fifty feet behind them stands a great three-armed siege engine, all three arms loaded and ready to fire. Junsei and Kurodachi stand next to the siege engine – Kurodachi is busily fiddling with the engine, and Junsei is standing watch. The yard is also strewn with other in-progress projects, many of which take on a disjointed, eerie appearance in the darkness. The only light other than the moon comes from a few torches near the siege engine and two lanterns on the inside wall of the construction yard.

"And here they are!" announces Junsei, stepping forward from the trebuchet. "Now is the time to show that you wish to serve a master who truly values perfection."

Have the PCs roll Initiative. There is one dark Moto for every PC. There are also two Lost officers – Moto Kosoruni, the commander of the Dark Moto, and Hiruma Orake, the scout the PCs may have seen in the woods. Orake will begin the combat hiding to one side of the PCs. (If the PCs somehow caught and killed him, then he is not here.) The Moto are all riding onikage, which gives them a Water Ring of 4 for movement purposes. Note that both the Lost Moto and the Lost Hiruma add their Taint Rank to all Rolls they make using physical Traits. This is already taken into account, but it may apply to other things players force them to roll.

While the antagonists would not mind slaughtering the PCs, it is not their main goal in this fight. Their goal is to hurt the PCs enough that the PCs cannot continue to follow them, to burn the siege engine down, and to flee for the Shadowlands. If the PCs appear hurt enough that effective pursuit is impossible, the NPCs will take their leave. If half of the Dark Moto go down, Hiruma Orake will flee. If the situation looks tactically untenable to Kosoruni, then he will gather the survivors and depart, leaving Junsei and Kurodachi to find their own way south.

During the fight, the Lost Moto simply close and attack. The Lost Hiruma dashes into melee and attacks the party members who look most difficult to hit, hoping to apply his second Rank Technique to make them easier to hit for the rest of their team.

Junsei and Kurodachi's role in the combat depends on whether or not Kurodachi has turned to the Shadowlands. If Kurodachi was not swayed by his brother, he spends his first turn in combat stabbing an unaware Junsei in the back of the neck with a tanto, dropping him. He spends his second turn adjusting the siege engine to hit the Moto, and his third, fourth, and fifth turns launching projectiles at the Lost. If Kurodachi has turned, he spends his first, second, and third turns launching projectiles at the PCs, and his fourth and subsequent turns fleeing the scene with Junsei. Junsei does nothing until his fourth round, when he lights the siege engine on fire with a nearby torch. Either way, Kurodachi's siege engine does not roll to hit human-sized opponents; each projectile it does 4k4 damage in a 10-foot radius. Any PC in that area must make an **Athletics / Reflexes** roll at a TN of 25 or take the damage. If they give up their next Turn (either in this round or in the following), then the TN drops to 15.

The siege engine's minimum range is 30 feet. Loading a boulder onto one of the arms, preparing the arm to fire, and firing an arm are each a Complex Action. The trebuchet has 60 Wounds, and it has Reduction 10 against all weapons that are not Heavy Weapons. At the beginning of the combat, all three arms of the siege engine are loaded and ready to fire. If the engine catches fire, it collapses into a burning heap two rounds later unless the fire is put out.

Should Kurodachi begin to launch boulders at the Lost Moto, two of them will peel off from the main melee and try to kill Kurodachi. If they succeed, one of them spends a Complex Action lighting the siege engine on fire with a nearby torch before returning to the combat.

Crab PCs who observe the Lost Hiruma recognize many aspects of the Hiruma Scout School, but notice some unfamiliar techniques as well. This NPC are trained in the original Hiruma Bushi School that was lost when Shiro Hiruma first fell—a School that now only lives on in the Shadowlands.

If Kurodachi turned to the Shadowlands, enterprising PCs may attempt to convince him to come back to their aid. To do so, a PC must be within 20 feet of the siege engine, roleplay a compelling plea, and roll **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at TN 50 (at the GM's discretion, Free Raises may be awarded for reminding Kurodachi about his life among the Crab – his duty to his lord, or his wife, for example). If the PC succeeds, Kurodachi spends his next round stabbing his brother in the back with the sword that Junsei gave him, then begins to launch boulders at the Moto.

If the PCs did not manage to recover the steel fittings for the trebuchet and the trebuchet was fired at least once, it collapses from the stress into a pile of splintered wood and steel at the end of the fight.

Hiruma Oake

This Lost Hiruma scout wears light armor and camouflaged clothing just like most Hiruma, but the embrace of Jigoku has given him glowing red eyes that allow him to see in the dark. He trained in the Hiruma school that was lost to the Crab in the fall of Hiruma castle. Crab PCs who watch him in action recognize a haunting similarity to current Hiruma techniques, but with a more aggressive bent.

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 4	Void 2
		Agility 3		
	Honor 0	Status 0		Glory 0

Initiative: 6k3 **Attack:** 9k3+5 (katana, Simple)

Armor TN: 25 (light armor) **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)

Reduction: 3

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 5

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

School/Rank: Lost Hiruma 3

Techniques: *Torch's Flame Flickers:* +1k0 to attack rolls while in the Attack Stance; may make all food, water, and jade rations last twice as long for up to 5 people

Wolf's Harsh Lesson: While in the Attack Stance, may lower target's Armor TN by 5 for rest of skirmish when hit with melee weapon; stacks up to 3 times.

Shark Tastes Blood: May make attacks with Samurai weapons as a Simple Action.

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 5, Hunting 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Jujutsu 3, Kyujutsu 5, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Stealth 5

Mastery Abilities: Moderate terrain does not impede movement, +5 to Armor TN in defense stance, +1k0 damage with swords, can draw a sword as a free action, Stringing a bow is a simple action, +1k0 unarmed damage

Advantages/Disadvantages: Way of the Land: Crab

Powers/Weaknesses: *Lost:* Cannot spend Void Points or call Raises, adds 5 to the total of all rolls using a physical Trait

Demonic Eyes: Eyes glow red, and can see in the dark.

Uncanny Speed: +2 Water for movement (Water 6)

The commander of the Dark Moto is a bulky, menacing form in coal-black riding armor. He issues orders in hate-filled, icy tones.

Air 4	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 4	Void 2
Honor 0		Status 0	Strength 5	
Initiative: 7k4		Attack: 10k5+5 (katana, Simple)		

Armor TN: 37 (riding armor) **Damage:** 10k4 (katana)

Reduction: 4**Shadowlands Taint Rank: 6**

Wounds: 76 (Dead)

School/Rank: Dark Moto Cavalry 3

Techniques: *Power in the Darkness*: Max Raises limited by Taint Rank, +5k0 to attack rolls

Ride Beyond Death: May summon onikage as a Simple Action.

Dark Lord's Fury: May make attacks as a Simple Action.

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 3, Defense 3, Horsemanship 6, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu (katana) 5, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Shadowlands 5, Polearms 3, Spears 5, Stealth 4

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 damage with swords, can ready sword as a Free Action, can use Full Attack stance while mounted, can mount steed as a Simple Action and dismount as a Free Action

Powers/Weaknesses: *Lost:* Cannot spend Void Points, adds 5 to the total of all rolls using a physical Trait
Demonic Eyes: Eyes glow red, and can see in the dark.

Monstrous Strength: -1k0 Social Rolls; +6k0 Strength Rolls, Strength-based Skill Rolls, and Damage Rolls.
Undead Strength: Suffers no Wound Penalties.

Dark Moto

These Dark Moto ride onikage, carry yari and yumi, and wear light armor. Their armor and clothing are dirty black, and their eyes glow red in the darkness.

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 3
			Strength 3	
Honor 0		Status 0		Glory 0
Initiative: 5k3			Attack: 10k4+5 (yari, Complex)	

Armor TN: 25 (light armor)

Reduction: 3

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 5

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

School/Rank: Dark Moto Cavalry 2

Technique: *Power in the Darkness*: Max Raises limited by Taint Rank, +5k0 to attack rolls

Ride Beyond Death: May summon onikage as a Simple Action.

Skills: Defense 3, Horsemanship 5, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 5, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Polearms 2, Spears 4, Stealth 3

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 damage with swords, can use Full Attack stance while mounted, can mount steed as a Simple Action and dismount as a Free Action

Powers/Weaknesses: *Lost:* Cannot spend Void Points, adds 5 to the total of all rolls using a physical Trait

Demonic Eyes: Eyes glow red, and can see in the dark.

Onikage

These onikage appear as rotting black horses. Each onikage is magically bound to its rider, but has no loyalty to the group as a whole. If an onikage's rider dies, it skitters out of sight, then burrows into the ground and returns to the Shadowlands. An onikage only attacks the PCs if its rider has been reduced to the Down or Out wound ranks and the PC is attempting to keep it from fleeing with its rider. In that case, it tries to fight its way out of the construction yard in order to save its rider's life.

Air 1	Earth 4	Fire 1	Water 4
Reflexes 3		Agility 3	Strength 6
Initiative: 3k3			Attack: 4k3
Armor TN: 20			Damage: 6k3
Reduction: 10			
Wounds: 40 (Dead)			
Taint Rank: 2			

Three squads of Hida arrive about fifteen minutes after the conclusion of the fighting. If the PCs were victorious, the Hida remove heads from the dead bodies and secure the area while a messenger summons shugenja and eta to do the cleanup. If the PCs lost, the Hida will verbally take out their frustration out on the surviving PCs to a degree that is just short of dishonorable.

Conclusion

The PCs return to the castle, and are offered healing before returning to their rooms for some much-needed sleep.

Ending 1: Kurodachi survived, trebuchet stands

In the morning the PCs find notes inviting them to an audience with Kaiu Haru after breakfast. Haru,

Shinsaku, and Kurodachi are all waiting for them in the audience chamber. Kurodachi is the first to speak.

"You have done a great service to the Crab clan. Without your assistance, my brother would likely have killed me and destroyed the prototype. You have our thanks."

Haru clears his throat. "Kurodachi-dono is correct. You have rendered us a great service. Unfortunately, the full story of that service includes details that would embarrass both my own family and certain elements of the Crane clan. I plan to credit you with helping to repulse a surprise Shadowlands attack, but I would prefer it not to become common knowledge that said attack breached the Wall or that a high-ranking Crane duelist was involved. I appreciate the discretion that I'm sure you will show while discussing these events."

When the PCs arrive back home, they find gifts waiting for them. If Shinsaku identified a gift that a PC wanted using the Yasuki Technique earlier, and it costs less than 5 koku, they find that gift waiting for them. Otherwise, he sends a gift that he deems appropriate for that PC's interests and profession.

Each PC may individually choose whether or not to tell the full story of what happened at Shiro Kaiu. PCs who keep quiet gain one point of Glory and Kaiu Haru as an Ally with Influence 2 and Devotion 1. PCs who do not keep quiet gain two points of Glory and lose one Crane Favor and one Crab Favor that they had previously earned. (Allies may be substituted, reducing their Devotion by 1 to a minimum of 0.) PCs without enough Favors or Allies instead gain Sworn Enemy: Kaiu Haru.

Crab PCs gain one point of Status. PCs with "Oath of Fealty: Kaiu Haru" gain an additional point (for a total of two points of Status) as long as they heed their lord's command for silence. (If they chose instead to speak of these events, they will instead be given the choice of seppuku or becoming a ronin; the player should contact the Admin staff to discuss the fate of the PC.)

Ending 2: Kurodachi survived, trebuchet destroyed

In the morning the PCs find notes inviting them to an audience with Kaiu Haru after breakfast. Haru, Shinsaku, and Kurodachi are all waiting for them in the audience chamber. Kurodachi is the first to speak.

"You have done a great service to the Crab clan. Without your assistance, my brother would likely have killed me. It is unfortunate that the prototype was destroyed, but I know enough to rebuild it. You have our thanks."

Haru clears his throat. "Kurodachi-dono is correct. You have rendered us a great service. Unfortunately, the full story of that service includes details that would embarrass both my own family and certain elements of the Crane clan. I plan to credit you with helping to repulse a surprise Shadowlands attack, but I would prefer it not to become common knowledge that said attack breached the Wall or that a high-ranking Crane duelist was involved. I appreciate the discretion that I am sure you will show while discussing these events."

Each PC may individually choose whether or not to tell the full story of what happened at Shiro Kaiu. PCs who keep quiet gain one point of Glory and Kaiu Haru as an Ally with Influence 2 and Devotion 1. PCs who do not keep quiet gain two points of Glory and lose one Crane Favor and one Crab Favor that they had previously earned (as above).

Ending 3: Kurodachi became Tainted or died, trebuchet stands

In the morning the PCs find notes inviting them to an audience with Kaiu Haru after breakfast. Haru and Shinsaku are waiting for them in the audience chamber. Shinsaku is the first to speak.

"Although the plans for the siege engine were destroyed, our other engineers will be able to recreate them. Thank you for your assistance."

Haru clears his throat. "Shinsaku-dono is correct. You have rendered us a great service. Unfortunately, the full story of that service includes details that would embarrass both my own family and certain elements of the Crane clan. I plan to credit you with helping to repulse a surprise Shadowlands attack, but I would prefer it not to become common knowledge that said attack breached the Wall or that a high-ranking Crane was involved. I appreciate the discretion that I am sure you will show while discussing these events."

Each PC may individually choose whether or not to tell the full story of what happened at Shiro Kaiu to their lords. PCs who keep quiet gain one point of Glory and Kaiu Haru as an Ally with Influence 2 and Devotion 1. PCs who do not keep quiet gain two points of Glory

and lose one Crane Favor and one Crab Favor that they had previously earned (as above).

Ending 4: Kurodachi became Tainted or died, trebuchet destroyed

When the PCs wake up, they find notes waiting in their rooms. The notes read as follows:

"Thank you for offering your help to us in our time of need. Your assistance is longer required. Lord Haru is too busy to see you this morning, and hopes that you had a pleasant stay. -Kaiu Shinsaku"

Kaiu Haru is not as socially connected as some provincial daimyo, but his words still carry weight due to his station. Each PC loses a Rank of Glory as his derision for the PCs filters across the Empire.

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
Defeating the Lost force:	+1XP
Kaiu Kurodachi survives untainted OR The trebuchet remains standing:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

As stated in each ending.

Glory

As stated in each ending.

Other Awards/Penalties

A PC who managed to have a tryst with Junsei must roll raw Earth at TN 20 or gain one die of Shadowlands Taint.

Ronin receive 2 koku for a successful completion of the mission.

Module Tracking Sheets

Did the party save either Kurodachi or the siege engine?

Did the PC keep quiet? If not, what favors or allies were lost?

GM Reporting

What happened to Kaiu Kurodachi?

What happened to the siege engine?

Did either of the Lost officers survive the encounter?

GM must report this information BEFORE (9/1/2012) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Kaiu Kurodachi

Kurodachi is a tall and lean man, with facial features that almost exactly match his brother Junsei's in shape and attractiveness. Kurodachi, however, keeps his dark hair in a traditional topknot, and his shoulders and arms are significantly thicker than his brother's. He wears white and grey clothing that displays Kaiu family and Kaiu engineer school heraldry. Like Junsei, he has a deep and pleasant voice, although he tends to speak more deliberately than his brother.

As a child, Kurodachi served as a hostage to the Crab. He trained in the Kaiu Engineer school as a nod to the fame his father earned as a Kakita Artisan. Kurodachi took to this training so well that both clans agreed he should marry into the Kaiu family. His has since ascended through the ranks of the Kaiu engineers, and serves Kaiu Haru as the chief engineer of new projects. Kurodachi contentedly explains his past to a PC who asks.

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3
Intelligence 4
Honor 7.3 Status 3.0 Glory 3.2
Initiative: 5k3+5 **Attack:** 7k4 (katana), 9k4 (trebuchet)
Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 7k2 (katana), 4k4 (trebuchet)
Reduction: 0
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Kaiu Engineer 3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Courtier 1, Craft: Armorsmithing 3, Craft: Weaponsmithing 3, Defense 2, Engineering (Siege) 5, Etiquette 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Architecture 2, Sincerity 2, War Fan 3

Mastery Abilities: moderate terrain does not impede movement and movement over difficult terrain only reduces Water by 1, +1k0 to damage with swords

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Voice, Soul of Artistry: Craft/Fascination: Engineering, Soft-Hearted, Obligation: Crab

Kaiu Shinsaku

Shinsaku is a thin man in his mid-twenties. The opposite of the unkempt Crab stereotype, Shinsaku grooms and dresses as precisely as any proper courtier. He wears his dark brown hair in a crisp topknot with his forehead shaved, and sports a precise goatee. His crisply-starched kataginu bears the heraldry of both the Yasuki school and the Kaiu family.

Shinsaku should occur to the PCs as something of an oddity. He is Kaiu born, but Yasuki trained--the Rokugani equivalent of an investment banker. While he is technically both a courtier and a merchant patron, he prefers handling matters of investment and logistics in his offices to dealing than with live humans out in the world. He lives much of his life within the walls of the castle, and has little to speak of in the way of useful wilderness skills. Shinsaku will travel with the PCs through much of the module, but his inexperience in practical matters will leave them mostly to their own ends.

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2
Intelligence 4 Perception 4
Honor 5.4 Status 2.0 Glory 1.5
Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 4k3 (wakizashi)
Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 3k2
Reduction: 0
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Yasuki Courtier 2

Skills: Commerce (Appraisal, Mathematics) 5, Courtier 3, Defense 1, Engineering 3, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 1, Intimidation 1, Kenjutsu 1, Sincerity (Deceit) 3

Mastery Abilities: May increase or decrease an item's price by 20%

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Precise Memory, Daikoku's Blessing, Wealthy (3 ranks)/Bishamon's Curse

Kakita Junsei

Junsei is a tall and thin man with a handsome, pointed face that looks like it could have been chiseled out of stone. His white hair hangs long and ungathered around his pale face, and he wears clothing in Crane blue and white that displays Kakita family and Kakita bushi school heraldry. His voice is deep and resonant, almost surprisingly so given his slight frame.

Junsei became Consumed by Perfection and gave his soul to Jigoku in exchange for enduring physical perfection. He is here at Shiro Kaiu to try to claim his brother for the Shadowlands before fleeing Rokugan for the south.

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 4
Agility 4
Honor 0 Status 2.5 Glory 3.4
Initiative: 7k4+10 **Attack:** 8k3 (katana,

Complex)
Armor TN: 25
Reduction: 0
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15),
45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)
School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 3
Skills: Athletics 1, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu
(Assessment, Focus) 5, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 2,
Sincerity 3 (Honesty, Deceit), Tea Ceremony 2,
Temptation 3
Mastery Abilities: +5 to contested rolls made using
Sincerity, free raise on Focus roll during a duel,

drawing a katana is a free action, +1k0 to damage with
swords

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Voice,
Sensation/Consumed by Perfection, Brash

Shadowlands Taint: 3.4

Shadowlands Powers: Unholy Beauty—no physical
signs of the taint. Father of Lies—Add Taint Rank in
kept dice to rolls made with Temptation, Intimidation,
or Sincerity (Deceit).