

Castle of Water

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

Part Two of *Unwritten Future*

by Michael Sander

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A boat carrying children under Isawa Toichi's protection has gone missing , and all eyes turn to the mysterious ship spotted skulking along the Phoenix coast.

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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 source book 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: During combat with the Ratlings, reduce the number of Ratling Howlers and Abominations by 1 each. Rik'Tith does not try to cut out their hearts unless the PC is Out.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 3): Add an additional Mournful Howler to the attack, assisting Yasuki Fumoki and granting him an additional bonus from his rank 2 tech.

Adventure Summary and Background

The Oracles of Light - those that remain, anyway - have all been driven to the brink of madness by the events surrounding the unexpected death of their sister, the Oracle of Void. Earth had been possessed by an unnatural Fear of the Lying Darkness, until a group of intrepid heroes convinced him to gather his Courage and return to the fight. The Oracle of Water has succumbed to an altogether different Sin - Desire, though it has taken a slightly modified form.

The Oracle of Water wants children of her own. Having taken on the mantle of Oracle at a very young age, and so long ago that not even she remembers her true name, Water has become so connected to her Dragon that she has even begun taking on the physical characteristics of an aquatic creature, becoming less and less human as time passes. Her legs have fused into a powerful, dolphin-like tail, the webbing between her fingers has grown, and a set of gills can be seen beneath her billowing cloud of pearlescent hair. Water had almost forgotten what it was like to be fully human when something momentous occurred. The Water Dragon had uncharacteristically rescued a young woman who had attempted suicide by jumping into a river, and held the woman in stasis within itself for several years. It became apparent to the Oracle after a while that her connection to the Water Dragon allowed her to sense what was special about the woman, and in

doing so discovered that the woman was several months pregnant with Toturi's child. Now, Water could feel that child growing in Hatsuko as though it were her own baby, and marveled at the gift that the Dragon had given her, even though she knew that she would never be able to have children herself. Even after the Water Dragon released Hatsuko, Water found herself watching the woman as she moved from place to place within the Scorpion lands, and gave silent witness to the birth of Emperor Toturi's bastard son. The Oracle of Water was content to occasionally check in on the pair, but that all changed with the failed assassination attempt on the Emperor and the subsequent death of Toturi Kaede, pregnant with her second child. Thus began the road to madness, and a fraction of that insanity was passed on to Hatsuko through the bond both women shared with the Water Dragon, allowing the Emperor's former lover to fall prey to murderous outside influence.

The Oracle held on to her sanity at first, even after the earthquake that shook the seabed far to the south of her castle, panicking her ningyo servants. When the minions of the Shadow Dragon tried to steal the Gunsen of Water, she began to contemplate an end to her time as Oracle, and started to search for a successor. It wasn't until poor mad Hatsuko died assassinating Toturi that the Oracle of Water began to Desire a legacy of her own - a child that she could pass her knowledge and wisdom to. But due to her physical transformation, it is no longer possible for the Oracle of Water to have children, so the Oracle grew distraught, and came up with a different solution.

It at about this time that peasant children began to go missing from the little fishing villages up and down the Rokugani coast.

Separate events have lead the Phoenix Master of Water Isawa Tomo to question the safety of allowing the Returned Spirits to remain in the Empire unchecked, including himself. Drawing upon anecdotal evidence from several momentous events over the last few years involving Spirits to support his idea, Tomo has called together a group of witnesses to offer their testimony of these incidents. This discussion is being held at Kyuden Isawa, and several high-ranking members of the Phoenix Elite are present, including the Jade magistrate Isawa Zepekki and Isawa's daughter, Isawa Akiko.

In the midst of these discussions, word comes that a boat carrying a group of young Isawa students has failed to return to port. This event, coupled with reports of an unidentified warship in the same approximate

area, leads Isawa Zepekki to create a multi-clan search party/investigation. He realizes that this is a matter that would normally fall under the auspices of the Emerald Magistrates if one was present, but since the missing children are all shugenja his office does have some interest in finding them.

Introduction

Kyuden Isawa has the distinction of being among both the oldest and newest of Phoenix castles. Recently rebuilt following its destruction during the Second Day of Thunder, it stands on a promontory overlooking Isawa Mori to the west and the endless expanse of ocean to the east. Despite being the seat of the Council of Elemental Masters, the atmosphere outside the castle walls is much more subdued than other similarly sized cities, given that most of the inhabitants are scholars, priests, or pilgrims visiting one of the many shrines and temples located here.

You have been summoned to the castle by Isawa Tomo, the current - if somewhat reluctant - Master of Water, to offer testimony regarding your encounters with those ancestors like Tomo who returned through Oblivion's Gate to help defeat the Lying Darkness. Tomo has been quite vocal with his theory that the Returned Spirits could actually be detrimental to the karmic cycle, disturbing the natural order of the universe and interfering in the Glorious Destiny of the Empire itself. Several prominent Phoenix dignitaries will be participating, and you have been cautioned by your respective daimyos to choose your words carefully.

Since the players are here at the request of the Master of Water, they have been given apartments within the castle proper and access to its many libraries while they wait for arrival of the others who will be testifying. Mantis vessels are currently prohibited from docking at Phoenix ports, so Mantis characters have had to travel north with the Crane delegates. Additionally, Dragon delegates are restricted to the public areas of the Castle, and may not travel into the city itself without a Shiba escort.

It should be made clear to the players that their characters will be expected to deliver some form of testimony as regards the returned spirits, so that the players can think of a short little story about their characters' experiences (likely, but not necessarily limited to something that has happened in a module).

The PCs may make **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness TN 10** to learn one of the following bits of information. For every increment of **5** above the base TN, they are able to pick up another piece of gossip during their time in Kyuden Isawa:

- Isawa Norikazu, the prophet turned Oracle of Fire has not been seen within Phoenix Lands since the death of Toturi Kaede. Many had expected him to return after a mysterious illness brought about the death of Norikazu's brother, Isawa Mitori, but that never occurred. There are rumors that he was spotted in Ryoki Owari when that city caught fire a year or so back, but this is unsubstantiated.
- Over the last year, peasant uprisings have become more and more common in the Empire. The matter has come to the attention of the Imperial Court, and there are rumors that pressure is being put on Emerald Champion Kakita Toshiken to investigate the matter and resolve it.
- The Dragon Clan are once again building troops along their border with the Phoenix. However, reports indicate that the majority of these forces are being deployed in the Dragon Heart Plain, the largely-unpopulated flatlands between the Dragon mountains and the Phoenix mountains. At the same time, there are indications that the Dragon may be seeking a political resolution to the conflict between the Clans, with the Phoenix loudly claiming that they have demonstrated to the Dragon what the price of war will be.
- Tensions remain among the leadership of the Phoenix Clan. While Clan Champion Shiba Tsukune's command over the military forces is unquestioned, the entire Empire knows that Isawa Tomo is seeking a replacement. Some wonder why a returned spirit in the prime of his second life would wish to abandon his duties, and some voices question why he does not simply appoint Isawa Akiko, another returned spirit and the daughter of the Thunder Isawa, as the Master of Water.
- Imperial Regent Miya Mashigai reports that the Empress has graciously accepted a gift from the Unicorn Champion of a young riding pony. As her first steed, the Blessed Empress has given it the name of "Kanni" in honor of Moto Gaheris' generosity.
- **Trouble in the Void (TN 30+ only)**- There are whispers that some of the most talented of the Phoenix Ishiken have reported trouble completing some of their more difficult spells

and rituals. It is almost as though the more powerful Void kami have stopped listening to their prayers.

If a player rolls a 40 or better, they are able to pick up on an undercurrent of discontent among the peasant population, but since the locals are normally treated pretty well by their Phoenix protectors, an interested player who questions a peasant must roll **Sincerity / Awareness TN 20** to convince them to speak ill of their samurai defenders. Alternately, a less scrupulous character can make a **Lore (Underworld) / Awareness TN 20** to get the same information from a disgruntled merchant.

- Several children have gone missing following boating accidents in recent months. Adult bodies have turned up showing signs of being attacked by some sort of animal and rumors say that some are missing their hearts, but no children have been recovered. The local magistrates have written these disappearances off as unfortunate accidents.

Shortly after breakfast, a messenger approaches each of the players, letting them know that Isawa Tomo-sama and his guests are ready to hear their testimony.

Part One: A Fine Line

You are lead into a large parlor within the wing of Kyuden Isawa set aside for the Master of Water and his aides. The room is modestly decorated, with several small fountains and water features scattered amongst the pillows and cushions placed around the room. Several other samurai are already present, and engaged in small talk while awaiting your arrival. They all stand as you enter, and Tomo's hatamoto leads you on a tour of the room while introducing you to the other guests before leading you to a portion of the seating that has been decorated with your clans' colors. (Scorpion, Crane and Unicorn at the front of the room, then Lion, Crab, Mantis, Dragon and Minor Clans fill the spaces leading towards the rear of the room, where any ronin PCs are seated.)

The PCs are introduced to the Phoenix dignitaries first, starting with Isawa Tomo, whom they may have met before.

Isawa Tomo - The Master of Water radiates immense power, despite his slight frame. The years following the death of his sister, Toturi Kaede, have placed additional pressure on him as he struggles to find a worthy replacement for himself in addition to carrying the weight of atoning for the destruction caused by the

Elemental Council during the Clan War. He is extremely concerned that much of his work will be undone if his fears about returned spirits like himself turn out to be true.

Isawa Akiko - The woman introduced as Isawa's daughter is quite simply radiant. In addition to being strikingly beautiful, Akiko is surrounded by the faint glow that marks her as a returned spirit, an effect that is amplified by the golden trim on her orange and red robes. Despite her apparent youth, she has spent more than a lifetime learning the ins and outs of the courts, quickly regaining her reputation for finding elegant solutions to delicate issues.

Isawa Toichi - Toichi is the governor of the province that surrounds Kyuden Isawa. He is soft spoken and pleasant, and his Asako training has given him an enduring patience with the slower pace of that comes from governing a low-key populace. He will gladly discuss any topic, but gets quite animated when talking about ikebana.

Isawa Zepekki - Many of the PCs have probably met Zepekki during the events of Prison of Earth, and the large earth shugenja will greet them in a fashion appropriate to the outcome of that module. The Jade Magistrate is just as forthright as before, and any tales involving maho-tsukai or tainted creatures will cause him to visibly redden with righteous fury. He wears the jade green sash that marks his station at all times, claiming that just as he must be ever-vigilant in his duties, those who would commit acts of blasphemy should feel the weight of his gaze upon them where ever he goes.

Mirumoto Takejiro and Mirumoto Kyuujo- Lore (Heraldry) / Intelligence TN 15 recalls that Takejiro was the Commander of the Dragon armies during the assault on the Phoenix territories. He's been invited to take part in this event as a token of good will from the Isawa. Most of the PCs will have met Takejiro at least once, and he will introduce them to his son, Kyuujo. PCs who played **Bonds of Fate** should make an **Perception TN 10** roll to recognize the young man as the boy they rescued from a misguided attempt on his life by one of his father's loyal servants. Kyuujo is here to offer his testimony of the events surrounding that night.

Kitsu Shisou - If the fire-red hair and golden eyes didn't mark Shisou as one of the Lion Clan's elite sodan-senzos, his impressive knowledge of the Spirit Realms would serve just as well. Since the PCs encountered him at the Topaz Championship, Shisou has spent his time interviewing as many of those who

returned through Oblivion's Gate as he can, building up an impressive collection of stories and details about the various realms the Spirits came from, and just as many reasons as to why they decided to follow Toturi back to Ningen-do. He will anxiously ask any Spirit PCs for their stories, inviting any who agree to meet with him privately after they have completed their other duties.

The overall impression is far less formal than one might expect, and Isawa Tomo confirms this as he addresses you.

"Thank you, friends, for agreeing to take part in this discussion. While you have been asked to provide testimony regarding your experiences with those of us who made the choice to return to Ningen-do through Oblivion's Gate, this is not a formal hearing on the matter. It is my belief that the longer those of us who remain, the more we place undo strain on the karmic balance of the universe, sending ripples of disruption throughout the Empire and damaging the destinies of those people we have returned to protect. Isawa Akiko-sama disagrees, and will be making her case as to why we, the Returned, should continue to work towards reintegrating ourselves into society."

"Forgive me, cousin," Akiko interrupts, "but I don't know if 'making a case for reintegration' is the best way to describe my proposal. It sounds as if we were criminals who, claiming rehabilitation, wish to be allowed to guard the tax collector's vault. Instead, I would see that those of us who have a lifetime of experience be given the chance to help our descendants deal with the many issues that continue to plague the Empire, much in the same way a wise grandmother guides her daughter in raising the next generation. From the reports I've read and the situation surrounding Ningen-sama's students, I feel that many of the 'ripples of disruption' you describe are more closely tied to the death of Kaede. I mean no disrespect to your sister, Tomo-san, but I think this issue is larger than any effect we ancestors are having on the Empire. As for the matter at hand, it is not reintegration I seek, but for us return to the responsibilities we claimed in our previous lives, instead of competing with our descendants for the respect we have already earned."

Tomo nods blandly, and returns his attention to his other guests. "And, that, I think, signals the beginning of our discussion. I would ask each of you to offer an experience you have had involving one of the returned spirits. While I do not aim to have a solution to the issue after today's events, I do hope that all sides have a more complete understanding of the issues."

If there are any PC returned spirits present, Tomo will add the following: *"And those of you who followed Toturi back through the Gate, I would like to know how you have been treated since your return, and please share your opinion of our role in this new Empire."*

"Perhaps our esteemed Dragon guests would like to begin?" Tomo concludes, indicating the father and son before taking a seat on one of the cushions. The two men stand and tell the story of Kyuujo's kidnapping and attempted murder by one of Takejiro's most trusted advisers just over two years ago. After thanking any PCs present who took part in his rescue, young Kyuujo adds his thoughts to what happened that night, though neither man will mention Koichi by name, nor do they reveal the man's motive for the attack. "My father's servant hired a Returned ronin assassin to kill me, believing that those who came back through Oblivion's Gate were somehow outside Destiny. That he claimed to have come to his mad plan after speaking with Tomo-sama is unfortunate, but I would humbly ask that any conclusions drawn from this discussion be carefully considered before being shared outside this room." Kyuujo's tying of Isawa Tomo to the events surrounding his kidnapping draws some uncomfortable glances from the Phoenix present, and Takejiro is quick to bow deeply before motioning for his son to take his seat as well.

Remind the players that they have been sworn to secrecy in this matter, and cannot themselves reveal Koichi's motive for killing the boy. If the prophecy is mentioned by a PC, Takejiro will become visibly angry, and both of the Mirumoto will storm from the room. That PC(s) gains Mirumoto Takejiro as a Sworn Enemy, and Phoenix players who serve Isawa Toichi will not gain Status at the end of the mod due to the political backlash.

Encourage the players to share their experiences. Since this module is intended for characters of at least Rank 2, spoilers are not a huge issue, as most players should have already played the modules that are likely to be discussed, but care should be taken to avoid them if possible. Characters who make particularly biased accusations or negative observations should be cautioned by a glare from Akiko, and asked to make a **Sincerity / Awareness TN 15** to avoid offending her. Failure earns the following rebuke: *"You would do well to remember your place, [family]-san. You are here at our invitation to offer your testimony and whatever small insight you may have, not to promote your own misguided attempt at cleansing your ancestors from the Empire."* The player will also lose

2 points of Glory, as the word spreads outside of the court. Phoenix players who fail the Sincerity Roll gain additional chastisement, *"Perhaps you should return to your daimyo and ask for proper training before you find yourself lying at the feet of someone with a much sharper tongue than your own,"* along with a 1 point loss of Personal Status.

Isawa Zepekki will offer his own testimony, or join in with any player making a similar comment, speaking in favor of allowing the spirits to fully participate in the affairs of the Empire. *"I believe we should look to the Crab as an example. They have welcomed the return of several great warriors, including General Hida Tsuneo. He has led the Crab armies south of the Wall to victory after victory over the fell beasts that plague the Hiruma lands, recovering more territory in five years than any other general has managed in centuries. I can only see great events unfolding, if more such talented ancestors were to step forward and claim positions of leadership during these troubled times."*

Give any players who have not yet spoken up a chance to offer their testimony, or give them a chance to offer their opinion on the matter, if they have no testimony that hasn't already been discussed. Once everyone has had a chance to share or decline, Kitsu Shisou will offer his testimony, taking a more balanced stance.

Kitsu Shisou takes a moment to gather his thoughts before offering his own insight into the matter at hand. He walks the room as he speaks, flowing like a stream around the small islands of seated samurai. "For several years now, I have spent the majority of my time interviewing the ancestors who walk among us, learning about the Realms the left and their reasons for returning. In almost every case, they - you," he says, indicating Tomo and Akiko, "state that the primary reason for returning was to aid your beloved Empire fight off a massive threat not only to the lives of your descendants, but to all of creation. Now that the threat posed by the Lying Darkness has been reduced, those spirits who remain find themselves struggling to find a way to fit in. Some have chosen to keep themselves separate, retiring to monasteries or living as hermits in the hidden places of the Empire. One young woman (if you can call a being whose soul has potentially existed for centuries 'young') returned with no recollection of who she was in her previous life, and has been searching for years for some indication of who she is, and who she was. Most of the spirits that remain are like yourselves, and chose to continue assisting their Clans and families adjust to the rapidly changing nature of an Empire that has seen more turmoil in a single decade than in

the entire previous century. It is also of note that there are now children, including our Empress, who have returned spirit parents, and it may be some time before we can judge what impact these individuals might have on Destiny. I have been corresponding with a young ishiken, Isawa Ume, who has been studying the Realm created by Kaede's demise; while there is still a great deal to learn, Akiko-sama may be correct in her assessment that there are more pressing threats. I believe that it is ultimately up to us, the ones born to this era, to decide whether or not we will follow the guidance of those who offer their wisdom, or to turn aside yet another potential threat to our existence."

As Shisou finishes speaking, Isawa Tomo's hatamoto approaches his lord and speaks to him softly, causing a troubled expression to cross Tomo's face. Standing quickly, Tomo addresses his guests, "I apologize for the necessity, but I must speak to Toichi-san in private. Please feel free to continue our discussion amongst yourselves." The Master of Water then exits the parlor with the provincial governor following quickly behind him. Moments later, a servant enters the room and hands notes to both Isawa Akiko and Isawa Zepekki, who promptly stand and leave through the same door as the other men.

The remaining guests are free to speak amongst themselves, though there is clearly a tension in the air. Just when it appears that no one will be returning any time soon, Isawa Zepekki returns to the parlor with a look of grave concern darkening his brow.

Part Two: Lost at Sea

"On behalf of Isawa Tomo, I must call this discussion to a close. He appreciates the testimony each of you has given, and promises to keep you informed of any additional insights he may gain while contemplating your words. Mirumoto-sama, Kitsu-san, Tomo-sama understands that your time is valuable, and will not keep you from your duties. Safe journey to each of you." Once the two Dragon samurai and the Kitsu have excused themselves, Zepekki approaches those of you who remain. Taking a deep breath, the large man speaks quietly, "I find that I must ask of you a favor. A boat carrying several of our young students and a few of the children under Isawa Toichi's care is hours late in returning from a training session at sea. Isawa Tomo has tasked me with following up on the early reports of the incident and locating the missing children and their sensei. Based on the location and mysterious circumstances surrounding the disappearance, I believe this falls under my

jurisdiction as Jade Magistrate, and I would like each of you to act as my yoriki in this matter. "

Assuming the players agree, Zepekki will fill them in on what information the Phoenix have at this point and attempt to answer any questions the players may have. If any players choose not to participate, award them 2 XP, and continue the mod with those remaining, if possible.

What Zepekki knows:

- Passengers included Isawa Okosu, a sensei of the Isawa Shugenja School, two young shugenja twins, Isawa Mitako and Sayuri, and three orphans under Isawa Toichi's care (Iwa, Toki, and Hanayama).
- The boat was on a sight-seeing excursion to an area just outside of Phoenix territorial waters. There are reports of a large area of unusually calm water in the area, and curiosity may have convinced the young shugenja to investigate it.
- One of the twins (Mitako) is a talented water shugenja, while the other (Sayuri) shared her Ishiken training with Shiba Ningen, who is now the Master of Void.
- Zepekki must remain behind to help Tomo commune with the great sea kami for guidance, since any of the smaller water kami who may have been in the area at the time of the accident have since moved on.
- There have been reports of shipwrecks in the area, though no more than normal for the season, and several peasant children have been reported missing.

Zepekki will "suggest" that the best place for the players to begin their investigation is by interviewing the peasant sailors and merchants down at the docks.

Once the PCs begin asking questions at the docks, it becomes apparent that the peasants are angry that it has taken the disappearance of samurai children to get the attention of the magistrates, despite several reported peasant children having gone missing under similar circumstances in recent months. A mob forms around the PCs as they question the sailors, and a **Sincerity / Awareness TN 40** roll is required to convince the peasants that they will do whatever is necessary to find the cause of the disappearances and prevent them from happening again. Failing the roll, threatening the peasants or using Intimidation will result in the mob surrounding the players to swell to near riotous proportions. Succeeding at a second attempt to reach the TN will quiet the crowd just long enough for someone to notice (with an **Investigation (Notice) /**

Perception roll at TN 15) a young girl struggling to pull herself out of the surf. If the PCs attack the peasants, the crowd will erupt in violence, forcing the local magistrates to call in a squad of Hurricane Guard to put the riot down, killing several peasants in the process, but not before the PCs take 2k2 damage from various improvised or thrown weapons.

If the PCs do not calm the peasants in some fashion, the young samurai girl will be brought to the castle and a messenger will come to inform them that they should return to speak with a possible witness. This will have little effect on the rest of the module, save that the PCs will earn one less Glory at the end (this will not cause them to lose Glory for inactivity) and PCs with more than 6.9 Honor will lose one point of Honor for being stymied by peasants.

The girl appears to be 13 or 14, and wears a battered and torn kimono of orange and red silk with a mon that marks her as a student of the Isawa Ishiken school. She is on the verge of hypothermia and clearly in shock. Repeating "They took her.." or "They have her..." over and over again until someone makes a successful **Medicine / Intelligence TN 15** roll. Once she has calmed down, she tells her tale, punctuating portions of her story with exaggerated arm movements.

"My name is Isawa Sayuri. My sister, Mitako, and I were asked to provide a demonstration of basic water magic for Toichi-sama's children while they went on a short trip out to sea. Everything was fine until... I don't know what happened, really. Mitako has always been good friends with the water kami, and they were delighted to do whatever she asked. But.. something went wrong with a very easy Commune spell, and the ocean... exploded... around us, tipping over our boat. I grabbed a floating, something, I don't know. Then.. then they came. I heard Okosu-sensei scream something from the boat, but... I don't know what he said. These... things... were all around us, grabbing the children in nets, dragging them off... Sensei tried to call on Osano-wo, but.. the lightning bounced off, and then one of the things threw a... a... spear-thing," Sayuri describes, while making a stabbing motion with three fingers, "and Okosu-sensei fell into the water."

She pauses a moment, obviously trying to fight back her sobs before continuing, "Then... I heard Mitako call me... I looked around and saw her... caught in a net, being dragged away. She screamed for me to get away. To get help. And I saw a boat, a huge glowing boat, and the things were taking my sister to it. She was screaming 'Go!' Then I felt the water pushing me away. And I heard the air tell me to swim, to get help."

And then... My sister! Please, samurai-samas! You have to help me!"

Sayuri will attempt to answer the PCs questions as best she can, though some details are a bit fuzzy.

- If asked to describe the things that attacked the ship, Sayuri will be somewhat more specific: *"They looked almost human, but had lots of sharp teeth and their fingers were all webbed together. The ones that swam away looked like they had tails like giant fish."* A PC may roll **Lore: History**, **Lore: Mantis**, **Lore: Naga** / **Intelligence** at TN 20 (or if they have two Ranks in **Lore: Naga** or **Lore: Mantis**) to know that his description matches stories of an ancient race of fish-men called Ningyo. Normally, they stay clear of humans except for rare reports of attacks that almost always occur in defense of their underwater homes.
- If asked about the boat: *"It was large, like a fighting ship, and had 5 or 6 masts, but most of the sails were ripped."*

Sayuri can feel her sister's presence through their Karmic Tie, and is certain that Mitori is still alive. She believes that she can guide the PCs to where her sister was taken, if they can procure a boat.

If the PCs were able to calm the peasants in a peaceful manner, one of the Phoenix merchant-captains will offer his boat to assist in the search. If violence broke out or any peasants were killed, the party will need to succeed at another **Sincerity / Awareness TN 20** roll to convince a captain that they are going to do everything they can to stop the disappearances.

Part Three: A Ship in the Distance

True to her word, Sayuri guides them out to sea, and the PCs are eventually able to see the strange ship out in the distance. It is nearing dusk before they are able to get a better look, though it is clearly of Crab design, and very old. Any PC may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 20** as their boat approaches the larger ship. The green glow seen from a distance is due to the large jade studs imbedded in the ship's hull, and figures can be seen moving among the sails and rigging.

The ship has become stuck in the becalmed area described earlier, but with help from Sayuri, the party's

ship is able to come along side the still vessel. The kanji on the bow spells out the name 'Deathless'. Succeeding at a **Lore: Crab / Intelligence** roll (TN 15) or **Lore: History / Intelligence** roll (TN 20) recalls stories of a Crab pirate named Yasuki Fumoki who gained infamy for looting primarily Crane trading junks. The brigand disappeared after capturing a ship laden with gold, jewels, and other treasure, and it is assumed his ship, the Deathless, was caught in a storm and sank under the weight of it's precious cargo.

If any PC attempting to cast a Water spell rolls 30 or more on the Spellcasting Roll from this point forward, immediately skip ahead to Part 4.

The main deck of the warship looms several feet above the passengers in the smaller junk, and a boarding ladder is cautiously placed so that the party may climb aboard. A haunting, keening howl erupts from above them, like several small animals mourning the death of their master, and PCs must make succeed at a **Fear 2** test (TN 15) before they may begin climbing. If they fail the test, they must wait until the wailing ends before climbing aboard the Deathless.

As they climb, the PCs are able to catch the occasional glimpse of a bestial face watching them from the shadowed deck above. When the first PC reaches the top of the ladder, clawed hands will reach out and attempt to drag him or her onto the deck. An aggressive response will send the assailants scurrying around the deck and clearing space for the others to climb aboard.

Surrounded by several Nezumi, the PCs find themselves in the midst of a bizarre landscape, as there appear to be trees covered in fur-like bark growing from the deck and several large boulders carved to look like crude statues of ratlings glare at the party in stoney silence. The source of the howling becomes apparent from a trio of the ratlings cowering in one corner of the deck while a fourth cries from the rigging above them. As they continue their visual scan of the boat, their eyes will be drawn to another rat crouching at the foot of a set of stairs leading to the pilot's wheel. This one is covered in large, scabbed bald spots and has a hungry look in his eyes. **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 20** reveals similar bald spots on the other rats, and even some of the strange trees show signs of having clumps of bark ripped from their trunks.

The patchy rat barks sharply, quieting the howlers, and getting the party's attention. Since the howling has stopped, anyone affected by the Fear effect regains their composure and may climb aboard the ship.

"All must bow! All must-must show respect for the mighty-mighty Captain Yasuki Fumoki-sama!" At these words, a man appears on the deck above you, striking a dashing pose with his hands on his hips and one leg resting on a small box. He is bare-chested and muscular, wearing only a pair of ragged and stained hakama and a blood red sash around his waist. "Welcome samurai, to the Deathless," Fumoki offers, smiling broadly and spreading his arms wide before somersaulting to the deck. "How may-m. How may this humble samurai help y-you?" As he speaks, Fumoki bows deeply, and you can't help but notice that one half of his mustache is significantly shorter than the other.

This is intended to be a role-play encounter to determine what role the rats played in the disappearances, but could devolve rather quickly into combat. Fumoki will attempt to answer any questions the PCs have, though he will occasionally stutter. PC's who made the earlier check to recall the history of the Deathless may be interested to know that Fumoki does not glow like a returned spirit, nor will he trigger any Techniques or abilities that detect ancestors, ghosts or possessions.

During the questioning, the patchy ratling (Tuk-T'k) will attempt to rip a fistful of hair from one of the samurai and eat it, starting with any white-haired Crane or red-haired Lion, as he has not tasted these colors before. Have the PC's roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 25** to keep tabs on him as he stealthily moves around the deck, edging closer to his target. Once he gets within reach of his target, he will grab a claw full of hair, and yank it out, unless the PC makes a contested **Defense / Reflexes** roll against Tuk-T'k's **Jiujutsu / Agility** (6k3). Tuk-T'k will have a Free Raise if the target PC did not notice him. If the ratling succeeds on this roll, he will try to rip a chunk of the PC's hair and eat it; the player must roll **Jiujutsu / Strength** or **Agility** against his **Raw Strength** (2k2) to avoid this; success by 10 or more will allow them to break free. Any PC may attempt to make the ratling release his grip by rolling **Intimidation (Bullying) / Awareness** at TN 15. Alternately, any PC may choose to attack the creature instead, which causes the entire crew of ratlings to attack (one of the howlers will open the lock to the hold, releasing the horrors contained there.) If a PC has a section of hair torn out, they will lose a point of Glory and suffer a +5 penalty to the TN of all Social Rolls for the rest of the module (as the samurai is afflicted with a certain amount of self-consciousness).

PCs with the Brash Disadvantage who wish to avoid a fight must make the required Willpower roll to avoid

simply cutting off the creature's arm and initiating combat. **During the first round of combat, one of the Mournful Nezumi will unlock the hatch leading below decks and releasing Rik'tith and the Abominations.**

Captain Yasuki Fumoki

Dashing Pi-rat

Air 3	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 3	Name 4
		Agility 4	Str 5	
		Niche 3.5		

Init: 7k3(3 reroll/day) **Att:** 10k5 (Full Attack, unarmed, Simple)

Armor TN: 20 (22)

Damage: 7k2

Reduction: 0

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

School/Rank: Nezumi Warrior 3, Berzerker 1

Rank 1: Reroll initiative 3x day, +2 ArmorTN when not in Full Attack

Rank 2: Pack Tactics - +1k0 to Atk for every ally attacking the same target since last turn

Rank 3: Attack as a Simple Action

Berzerker 1: +1k1 to damage while in Full Attack.

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 5, Hunting (Survival) 3, Investigation (Notice) 3, Jiujitsu 5, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Craft: Sailing 4, Stealth 3, Peasant Weapons 5

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 unarmed damage, Free Raise to initiate a Grapple

Advantages/Disadvantages: Fearless, Nezumi Madness, Dark Secret (Not a Human)

Tuk'tk

Cursed to eat Hair

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 4	Name 3
		Niche 2.5		

Initiative: 4k2 **Attack:** 6k3 (unarmed, Complex)

Armor TN: 22 (ashigaru armor)

Damage: NA

Reduction: 1

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

School/Rank: Nezumi Scrounger 2

Skills: Athletics 3, Craft: Sailing 3, Defense 3, Hunting (Survival) 4, Jiujitsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 2, Stealth (Sneaking) 4, Sleight of Hand 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Nezumi Madness

In combat, Tuk'tk will weave in and out of the shadows, trying to grab a fist full of hair from his target. If he hits an opponent, he will use his Rank 2 Technique to distract the target, rolling Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility

(9k3) versus their Investigation (Notice) / Perception. If he wins, they lose track of him, and he rips out a clump of their hair.

Rik'Tith

Cursed to eat Human Hearts

Air 3 Earth 2 Fire 3 Water 4 Name 2

Niche 2.5

Initiative: 4k2

Attack: 8k3 (knife, Complex)

Armor TN: 24 (no armor) **Damage:** 5k1 (knife)

Reduction: 0

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

School/Rank: Nezumi Scrounger 2

Rank 1: +2k0 to all Stealth Skill rolls, add Stealth to Armor TN at all times.

Skills: Athletics 4, Craft: Sailing 3, Defense 3, Hunting (Survival) 3, Jiu-jitsu 2, Knives 5, Lore: Shadowlands 2, Stealth (Sneaking) 4, Sleight of Hand 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Great Potential (Knives), Nezumi Madness

During combat, Rik'Tith will Full Attack the weakest member of the party, hoping for an easy kill and a quick snack. If a PC is reduced to Down, she will attempt to cut out their heart and eat it, calling 4 raises to an Attack roll against a prone PC. If she does enough damage to kill the PC, Rik'Tith has successfully carved out the character's heart and will spend the next round eating it.

Mournful Howlers

I ate a fish-man. I am so sad.

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Name 2
Agility 4

Initiative: 3k2 (1 reroll) **Attack:** 7k4 (masakari, Complex)

Armor TN: 21 (light armor) **Damage:** 4k3 (masakari)

Reduction: 3

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

School/Rank: Nezumi Warrior 1

Rank 1: Reroll initiative 1x day, +1 ArmorTN when not in Full Attack

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 2, Hunting (Survival) 2, Investigation (Notice) 2, Heavy Weapons (Masakari) 3, Jiu-jitsu 2, Lore: Shadowlands 1, Craft: Sailing 2, Stealth 2

Mastery Abilities: Heavy Weapons 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Nezumi Madness

One of the Howlers will team up with Fumoki, giving him the bonus from the Warrior's rank 2 technique. They are cautious, however, and will not enter Full Attack.

Ratling Abominations

^&#\$\$%#!

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 1 Water 3 Name 0
Agility 3

Initiative: 3k2

Attack: 7k4 (full Attack)

Armor TN: 5

Damage: 4k2

Reduction:

Fear 3

These poor souls not only got hit by the ugly stick, but then they ate it. One of them looks like a fur carpet studded with several toothy maws. Another has been reduced to a mass of writing rat tails, while the third has had all of the flesh removed from its head and forelimbs, leaving only polished bone. They always full attack, and they never, ever give up.

If fighting doesn't break out immediately, the PCs will have to find a way to restrain Tuk-T'k, or he will select a new target to 'harvest'. Maintaining a respectful conversation with the Captain and making a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness TN 20** results in the crew opening up to the PCs and sharing their story. Failure means they only answer questions relating to the first three topics below.

- If asked why they are taking children, Tuk-T'k (the patchy one) snaps dismissively from where ever he is, *"We don't take your pups! Why nezumi need?"*
- If asked why they are in the area, Fumoki will answer: *"We hunt the fish-men. The fish-men take the children somewhere else."* At the mention of the fish-men, the quartet of howlers will begin their wailing once more, causing a new **Fear 2 check**. Any player who can understand the Nezumi language can interpret the howls. *"I ate fish-man, and now my name is broken. I am so sad."* Fumoki will loudly clap his hands together, silencing the ratlings, but any one who failed this roll will be under the effects of Fear 2 until the end of the scene.
- If asked where the "fish-men" take the children, Fumoki will respond with *"Down, under the water. Don't know where after that."*

- If asked why they hunt the “fish-men”, Tuk-T’k snarls ***“HUNGRY!”*** Fumoki ignores him and says, ***“They broke my na.. my crew’s names. Twisted them. Now th-they think Tomorrow will n-not come for them. We hunt the fish-men so that we can fix their names.”*** A PC may roll **Lore: Nezumi / Intelligence** at TN 15 to remember that the Nezumi believe that names carry immense power, and having one’s name broken can be worse than death. Success on a **Lore: Mantis, Lore: Naga / Intelligence TN 20**, or **Lore: Theology TN 25** reminds the PCs that anyone who eats the flesh of a Ningyo gains immortality, but falls under the effects of a very powerful curse. It can take many forms, each aligned to one of the five elements. The ratlings have fallen under the curse of the Ningyo, though they don’t really understand what happened. Some of the rats, presumably those with stronger Name, have managed to avoid the more severe aspects of the curse, but no one escapes entirely.
- If asked if they ate one of the “fish-men”, Tuk-T’k will come out from where ever he is hiding. ***“Big-big wave came, and brought the chittering teeth into the Shining Warren. Chittering teeth take many Nezumi to see Tomorrow. Warren, gone. Chipped Tooth Tribe, gone. Big-Big wave carry Deathless away from chittering teeth. Only Tuk-T’k. Only Rik’tith. Only three paws pups on Deathless. Only Captain Yasuki Fumoki-sama.”*** Tuk-T’k goes on to explain that after several days without food, they came upon a capsized fishing vessel, and searched it for food. All they found was a large, strange-looking fish with a human face and arms like a nezumi. Rik’tith brought the ugly fish back to the Deathless, and fed some of it to the pups before taking some for herself, Fumoki, and Tuk-T’k. After their meal, they all fell asleep, only to wake up to the howling of several of the pups. The rest had disappeared, replaced by either the strange trees and stones scattered around the deck or by hideous monsters. Tuk-T’k bows his head and says, ***“Tuk-T’k always hungry. Always need fur. Captain Yasuki Fumoki-sama become Captain Yasuki Fumoki-sama. Rik’tith always hungry, but will not eat fur, or rocks, or sticks.”*** He goes on to explain that several days later, they come across another fishing boat, this one intact. Rik’tith attacked the humans, killing one of them and ripping his heart out with her claws before eating it. During the attack, Tuk-T’k

spotted another fish-man in the water, and Fumoki ordered the small crew of Nezumi to chase it in the Deathless. ***“We catch three more fish-men, but they die before removing curse.”***

- If asked what happened to Rik’tith, Tuk-T’k hisses unhappily and answers, ***“We find another broken boat, but no humans live. Rik’tith take hearts and eat. More yesterdays, no more hearts for Rik’tith. She attack Captain Yasuki Fumoki-sama, but he is mighty-mighty, and lock Rik’tith inside Deathless with... others.”***
- If pressed on the “others”, Tuk-T’k will answer reluctantly, ***“Some pups have Name completely broken. Become strange monsters like destroyed old warren. Like chittering teeth. Want only fight, only kill. We trick them, put them down below.”***

Once the ratlings and their strange captain have been dealt with, through combat or negotiation, Sayuri will say that she can feel her sister is nearby. If the PCs are having difficulty with further ideas, have them roll **Spellcraft / Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Raw Intelligence**, TN 15) to recall that the trouble started for Sayuri and her sister when Mitako attempted to cast **Commune with Water**.

If no shugenja are in the party, Sayuri will offer to cast **Path to Inner Peace** on any PCs that need healing, or offer to cast **Commune with Water** in an attempt to see if the water kami know where Mitako was taken. In either case, her spell will catch the attention of the Oracle, and trigger the next encounter before the spell can resolve.

Part Four: What an Oracle Wants

As the spell is being cast, the water around the ship begins to boil angrily, and an enormous grasping fist of water erupts from the ocean surrounding the Deathless. It closes around the vessel, and begins to draw it, and you, under the waves. Once the ship is completely submerged, you find yourselves still standing on the deck, and breathing normally, despite being surrounded by water. It becomes clear as you descend that you are not alone, as several of the so-called ‘Fish-men’, or Ningyo, swim alongside the Deathless, carrying large pearls that emit a strange blue glow.

The number of Ningyo escorts continues to grow until their combined light reveals an undersea tableau that

is both completely alien and strangely familiar. Just ahead, a large castle rises from the sea floor, almost indistinguishable from anything you might see in the Empire above, only covered in a rainbow of riotous color provided by the living coral that makes up the fortress' walls. The Deathless settles in a courtyard next to the castle proper, and a school of perhaps 20 Ningyo surrounds you, using their spears to indicate that you should leave the vessel and head towards the castle gates.

If the players have killed the Nezumi on board the Deathless, skip ahead to **"Meeting the Oracle."** Otherwise, read the following:

"No! Wai...!" Fumoki's sudden shout is cut short by a blow from one of the Ningyo. Turning to look, you see several of the guards working to wedge open the hatch that leads below decks. Suddenly, the hatch bursts open, and a flash of brown and white fur lunges towards Isawa Sayuri. Before anyone else can react, the young girl calls upon the Void to defend herself, releasing a small sphere of nothingness towards the mad creature that was once Rik'tith. Time stops, then begins creeping forward. The sphere slowly expands to encompass the Deathless, then instantly contracts. You feel something snap deep within, and you find yourselves staring at one of a half dozen reflections of the scene taking place on board. At the center of these mirrored images stands Sayuri, surrounded by six spectral dragons. Each one is seemingly composed of a piece of the night's sky, and each is attempting to fend off the attack of a brown and white nezumi. The world snaps back together, but the six mad ratlings remain, eying you hungrily and preparing to strike.

As Isawa Akiko mentioned earlier, something very strange is happening to the Void, causing even simple void spells to behave in unusual ways. Each player should roll **Raw Void TN 10** with a success allowing them to keep one Void point, and an additional point for each increment of 10 to a maximum equal to their Void Ring +1. Any extra Void Points earned in this manner will fade away at the end of combat. This effect only happens at this moment, in this place, and only under these circumstances - no other Void magic will be affected during this adventure. The other Ratlings and several of the Ningyo have been knocked unconscious, and the remaining guards leave the party to deal with these feral Void-Spawned Nezumi while they deal with the ratling abominations. (Use stats and tactics for Heart-Eater Nezumi, one for each PC.)

Once combat has been resolved, the doppelgangers vanish, leaving the body of only a single Rik'tith

behind. The other nezumi regain consciousness, but are quickly surrounded by a horde of ningyo, and pinned back against the jade-studded hull of the Deathless.

"We will-will wait for you here," Fumoki calls.

Meeting the Oracle

Sayuri, clearly shaken by the unexpected result of the attempts to call upon the spirits, points towards the large castle doors. "She's in there." The Ningyo gather close around you, and urge you forward with their tridents. The huge doors swing open revealing an indoor garden of brightly colored seaweed and fish of all kinds swimming in schools numbering well into the hundreds. The column of Ningyo herds you towards another, smaller opening covered with seaweed which parts at your approach, and a cacophony of voices reaches your ears.

The room is full of children. Dozens of young peasants run and play, some pausing briefly to grab a piece of sugared fruit from a long table set filled with food and treats. Based on the style and color of the clothes they wear, you can spot children taken from Phoenix and Crane territories, and even a couple Mantis peasants. Most of them turn as you enter, and several of the youngest cry out and run to the far end of the chamber, seeking protection behind a large coral outcropping. "Mitako!" Sayuri shouts joyfully as a young woman in orange robes rushes forward. The two sisters embrace tearfully, and Mitako looks over her shoulder towards the far end of the chamber and proclaims, "I told you my sister would rescue me!"

Resting atop the coral pillar and watching you with a malevolent gaze is what appears at first to be a beautiful woman with skin the color of moonlight and silver hair that ebbs and flows like sea grass on the tides. Her apparent humanity ends there, however, as her lower body resembles that of a dolphin, and several small gill slits are visible at the side of her neck and along her ribcage.

PCs who played through the Water section of SoB09, Fire and Water, immediately recognize the Oracle of Water. If none of the PCs have encountered her previously, have them roll **Lore: Oracles / Intelligence** or **Lore: Theology / Intelligence TN 15** to recall similar descriptions of the Oracle of Water.

"Rescue? You are here as my guest, Mitako-chan. Why would you need to be rescued?" Turning her attention back to your group, she motions you

forward. "Welcome to my home, samurai. Thank you for capturing the beasts responsible for murdering my servants, but I sense that this is not the purpose for your visit. Speak your minds, children of Ningen-do."

The Oracle's reaction to the PCs' quest (to return at least the samurai children, presumably) depends on the manner in which it is discussed. An aggressive or disrespectful approach will earn the PC the Oracle's wrath:

The Oracle's already stern expression tightens further, and the wisps of silvery hair floating about her head begin to blacken and form inky tendrils that writhe like serpents. "You DARE presume to make demands of an Oracle?!" she bellows, and you feel the pressure of the water that surrounds you begin to bear down on you with crushing weight. The sudden pained screams of the children snap her out of her anger, however, and she dives from her throne to catch up one of the youngest, cradling the boy and murmuring softly to calm him.

A respectful and sympathetic plea to return the boys and girls to their parents is met with calm logic:

"They are much safer here, with me. I can offer them so much more than the shacks and bowls of rice that wait for them above. Here, they don't have to worry about bandits or war or any of a thousand other dangers that lurk on land."

If asked why she has taken the children, the Oracle will answer fairly straightforwardly, though glossing somewhat over any wrongdoing on her part:

"Once, the Water Dragon took pity on a poor woman and the child she unknowingly carried within her womb. By taking her inside itself, the Dragon gave me a chance to feel what it was like to be mother, to feel a life growing inside me. My joy was short-lived, but I could do nothing but watch from a distance as the young mother struggled to raise her son, while hiding from those who would harm a boy with such an incredible Destiny. Then my sister was killed, and I could no longer see the currents of fate that flowed around the boy, or his mother. It wasn't until one of my ningyo servants brought me a young boy he had rescued from a sinking fishing boat that I once again knew happiness, and ever since, my servants have been bringing me children that would otherwise have drowned."

If the PCs mention that Oracles are supposed to remain apart from mortal affairs, she will shrug and avoid the issue. *"What the ningyo do with the children they have rescued is not at my request, though I do appreciate their desire for my happiness."*

The task here is to convince the Oracle that her actions are wrong, indecent, and hurtful without angering her. Successfully arguing that by taking part in changing the destinies of these children, the Oracle of Water may not only be endangering their lives, but the safety of the entire Empire requires a roll of **Sincerity / Awareness TN 60**. (This is the Sincerity argument.)

The players may instead try to convince her that the children belong with their true parents. This method focuses on the tenet of Compassion. Sayuri could provide a tip here, saying that she and her sister already have parents and would like to return to them. **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness TN 60** convinces the Oracle that returning the children to their families truly is the kindest thing she can do for them. (This is the Compassion argument.)

Any player with the Gunsen of Water cert adds +5 to the roll, as does any player who takes an active part in furthering his or her group's argument.

Conclusion

Conclusion 1 - Triumph of Bushido

If the players are able to convince the Oracle of Water to release the children using one of these two methods, read the following:

"Perhaps you are right, samurai. After so long living detached from humanity, I may have become too attached to it. Since the shattering of the Void Dragon, I have thought that I should seek a replacement. To my shame, it seems I have waited too long. I will return these children to their homes, and begin seeking a protege."

Isawa Mitako takes a step towards the Oracle, and kneels before quietly speaking, "I have dreamt of you, ever since I first heard the laughter of the ocean waves. My sister tells stories of waking up to find me gone from my bed, only to locate me on the beach below our house, sleep-walking into the surf. It has long been my fear, my desire, and my regret that I may be chosen to become the Oracle of Water, but I will put those sins behind me, if that is to be my destiny. On one condition - my sister must be allowed to stay, if she chooses."

"You must understand, my child, that taking on the mantle of Oracle means that you must sever all ties, even those that bind two souls as tightly as the two of you are bound. I will gladly permit her to stay for as long as she chooses, though the time may well come

when you can no longer bear the burden of her sadness." The twins share a silent moment before nodding to each other, and then to the Oracle.

"One last bit of business remains - What shall I do about the fiends who killed my servants? I understand that they did not understand what they were doing, but I do not believe that ignorance is an excuse for murder."

Can you cure them?

"The politics of the Celestial Heavens do not differ all that greatly from your own courts. I will testify before the King of the Orochi, Ryujin, on their behalf, but they have committed a great crime against those who are under his protection. I cannot guarantee he will be merciful."

They have earned whatever mercy you decide for them.

"Very well." The Oracle waves her hand, but you are unable to discern any effect.

Can we have the Deathless?

"Your ship will stay with me until a decision has been made regarding its crew. If the Empire has need of its services in the future, The Deathless will find its way out of the mists once more."

Conclusion 2 - The Roads Less Traveled.

If they fail to find the right argument, or succeed at manipulating the Oracle into giving up the children in some other fashion, she will only do so if one of the children stays behind to act as her child, and will randomly choose Mitako. Sayuri will volunteer to stay, but in this instance the Oracle will refuse, severing the twins' Kharmic Tie, and causing them both to pass out. The Oracle will also 'heal' the nezumi by removing them from the castle and committing them to Oblivion with a wave of her hand.

Once the arguments have been made and everything is settled, the Oracle will take a moment to avoid answering PC Questions before shunting them back to Kyuden Isawa, and the children to their homes with another wave of her hands

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 Captain Yasuki Fumoki-sama's Crew Or Rik'tith reflections:	+1XP
Convince the Oracle to release the children:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

If successful:
Players with Honor 5 or less gain +.2 Honor
Players with Honor 6 or more gain +.1 Honor.

Glory

If successful:
Players with less than Glory 3.0 gain .3 Glory
Players with 3.0-5.9 Glory gain .2 Glory
Players with 6.0 or more Glory gain .1 Glory

Other Awards/Penalties

Successfully rescuing the children earns characters who have sworn fealty to Isawa Toichi (and have not angered Isawa Akiko) +.2 Status

Shugenja who have already earned Isawa Zepekki's Recommendation may now take him as an Ally (1 Influence, 3 Devotion). Shugenja who do not have his recommendation now have it.

If the Karmic Tie between the twins remains unbroken, the players gain a favor from the Phoenix Clan.

Any PC who attempts to eat a piece of Ningyo meat is to be given several warnings, but will not ultimately be stopped. Let the player know *before* determining the results of the curse that the character is now an NPC, and at the Mercy of the campaign admin.

GM Reporting

Which argument was used to persuade the Oracle? Compassion or Sincerity?

Will the Oracle testify on behalf of the nezumi, and seek the removal of the curse?

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

Does the Kharmic Tie between the twins still exist?