

# **Your Heart's Enemy**

**A One-Round Mid-Rank Adventure for  
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido  
Month of Akodo, 1141 (Summer)**

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Rokugan prefers to ignore the world beyond its borders. But the world does not always oblige.

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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 preceds 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 Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank Three.

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 Two): The guards and guard captain have the Momoku Disadvantage, preventing them from spending Void Points for any reason; reduce Fear values by 1 for all sources; the asura does not have the Spirit Quality.

**High End Party** (most/all characters Rank Four): Add a second guard captain to Balyezn's entourage, as well as increasing the number of guards to equal the table; Turi and Bitahatyara are accompanied by a guard captain as well.

## Adventure Summary and Background

For five years now, someone has been trying to kill Yoritomo Aramasu.

At first, this did not truly surprise the Mantis Champion. He is a man with a large number of deadly enemies; as a defector from both the Scorpion Clan and the Kolat, attempted poisonings and knives in the dark were simply what he expected when he took the Yoritomo name. Soon, however, he realized there was far more to the situation than he first believed, for the attacks were the work of gaijin assassins, not Shosuro ninja or Kolat agents. Troubled by this fact – and by how close the assassins kept coming to killing him – Aramasu abandoned his Clan's leadership three years ago, turning command over to Yoritomo Hogosha and Tsuruchi, while he sought out the source of his would-be killers.

At last, he traced them to the Ivory Kingdoms, and journeyed there in disguise to learn what provoked this response. What he found shocked even him: foul cultists who worshipped Kali-Ma, a goddess of destruction and chaos, had infiltrated every level of Ivindi society, turning a once-noble people into servants of evil. Moreover, these cultists, the Cult of Ruhmal, believed for some reason that Aramasu would be their undoing, and thus sought to kill him before he could

take action. Initially, he tried to infiltrate the cult slowly, working to learn what he could before striking at its heart, but outside events soon forced his hand.

Two years ago, the Dark Oracle of Water, Matsu Turi, attempted to kill a ratling shaman named Tek'tik'kir. During the confrontation, a Yoritomo bushi with a gaijin name – Yoritomo Jack, or Yoritomo Jakku as most Rokugani knew him – used the Dark Covenant of Water to banish Turi from Rokugan forever, despite knowing that use of the Dark Covenant allowed Turi to attack him freely. Turi was thus forced to teleport away from the Empire, but not before kidnapping Jack to take with him.

Turi eventually traveled to the Ivory Kingdoms, his prisoner in tow. Making an alliance with the Ruhmaali, Turi encouraged them to strike out at Rokugan, to wreak the vengeance Turi himself no longer could. The lure of such wanton destruction was too much for the cult to resist, and they used their influence to begin preparations for an invasion of Rokugan.

Aramasu has learned of this threat, and cut short his investigation of the cult to return to the Emerald Empire and warn the Empress of the danger. Unfortunately for him, another enemy – the Scorpion Clan, in the person of Bayushi Yojiro himself – is working to finally claim its vengeance on him. The conflict is about to come to a head, with the PCs in the middle – and when it does, the only hope for Rokugan will be to turn and sail for the Ivory Kingdoms.

The experience of being in gaijin lands will be deeply troubling to many Rokugani, especially those with high Honor. Keeping the list of possible Honor losses listed on page 91 of the **Legend of the Five Rings Core Rulebook** handy is highly recommended.

## Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Ivindi (the language of the Ivory Kingdoms) as a known language
- Ally: or Sworn Enemy: Yoritomo Aramasu
- Ally: or Sworn Enemy: Bayushi Yojiro
- Idealistic
- Characters with Honor 8 or higher
- Any PC who played Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei (either part)

## Introduction

*After two long weeks in Toshi no Inazuma, the City of Lightning, the trade conference is finally about to*

*wrap up. The exotic nature of the Mantis Isles certainly served as a distraction for awhile, but once the novelty wore off, the oppressive heat and unending boredom of mercantile minutia combined to make each day feel a week long. At long last, however, the end is in sight – your ship for the mainland sails with the morning tide.*

The PCs have likely been assigned to act as yojimbo or simply members of the escort for the negotiators for their various Clans, although courtiers with three or more Ranks in Commerce and at least Status 4.0 might well have been participating in the talks directly. All of the Great Clans and most of the Minor ones have sent representatives, but the talks have gone fairly smoothly – perhaps too smoothly, if one were to ask the bored bushi standing around in the tropical sun.

During the PCs' stay in Toshi no Inazuma, they will likely have noticed some changes in the feel of the Mantis islands, particularly if they also attended the Winter Court held at Kyuden Gotei two and a half years ago. Since that time, the Mantis have dramatically escalated their military readiness; patrolling squads of armored bushi are a common sight in the streets of Toshi no Inazuma, and the harbor is filled almost to capacity with Mantis military vessels. The Yoritomo family has done nothing to hide this change in their attitudes, and indeed, the higher-Ranked courtiers of the PCs' Clans do not seem overly concerned by it, although all have taken note.

## Rumors

During their time in the city, waiting for the conference to end, the PCs have plenty of time to hear the gossip of the Empire. Anyone interested in listening to rumors may roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness**, TN 10; a successful roll learns one rumor at random, plus one extra rumor for every 5 points by which the roll beats the TN. (Mantis samurai receive a Free Raise on this roll, while samurai with Oath of Fealty: Yoritomo Utaemon receive two Free Raises.) The rumors include:

- The military buildup the PCs have spotted around the city is the direct result of Yoritomo Gusai's influence. Since the retirement of Tsuruchi and Gusai's appointment as "Defender of Golden Sun Bay," Gusai has largely taken over as the military commander of the Mantis Clan. This has seen a corresponding weakening of Yoritomo Hogosha's leadership, as the Mantis tend to respect the veterans of the battlefield more than the court.
- Crab traders at the conference have been murmuring about raiders attacking trade caravans near the southern end of the Shinomen forest. The Crab have not had to worry about such things since the ronin bandits known as the Forest Killers were wiped out by Seppun Murayasu, now the Imperial General, two years ago; the Crab are concerned that a new group might have moved in to fill the gap.
- The Imperial Legions are closing in on the last stragglers of the peasant rebellions that wracked the Empire a year and a half ago. Most of the rebels have been wiped out, and the rest have fled into hiding; only a few of the ringleaders remain at large.
- Ronin across the Empire have spoken of getting invitations to join a new otokodate calling itself the Black Lions. The rumors place the otokodate in locations as far apart as the Unicorn hinterlands and the depths of the Kitsune Mori, but they all claim that the new otokodate has raised a wolf's-head banner – the same banner used by Emperor Toturi during the Clan War.
- Neither Bayushi Yojiro nor Togashi Hoshi has been seen in their Clan lands in several months. Representatives from both the Scorpion and Dragon Clans say their Champions are "in monastic retreat;" those who have noticed the similarity whisper that the two are holding a hidden meeting for some unknown purpose.
- The Dragon have announced plans to rebuild Shiro Chuda, once the home of the Snake Clan, in the south of the Dragon Heart Plain. The Crab Clan, however, opposes this, as a number of reports suggest the land is Tainted. The conflict has already provoked a duel between Yasuki Oguri, daimyo of the Yasuki family, and Kitsuki Mizuochi, the son of the Kitsuki daimyo.
- The Scorpion have begun a program to expand their alliances beyond their rather shaky friendship with the Phoenix. A high profile marriage between a Scorpion and the Lion due to take place this summer is the most obvious example of this new outreach.
- Empress Tsudao is now five years old, and is approaching the age at which she will begin her formal training as a samurai. Kakita Toshiken, the Emerald Champion, has apparently grown frustrated enough by the constant politicking between the sensei of the Kakita and the Akodo Schools that he has asked each Great Clan to offer two Schools for consideration to train the young Empress. The Mantis sensei are thrilled at the unexpected chance to both influence the future

Empress' thinking and prove the worthiness of their young Clan Schools.

The PCs can take any suitable actions they might wish during their last evening in Toshi no Inazuma, but the following morning, they set sail just after dawn for the mainland. The ship they have been chartered to travel on is the *Bitter Flower*, a “merchant vessel” captained by Yoritomo Kitao, a member of the Mantis' elite Storm Legion. The PCs may have met Kitao before, during the Winter Court held at Kyuden Gotei more than two years ago. If so, she remembers them – if they supported Gusai's protégé, Yoritomo Sensin, she welcomes them extremely warmly, while those who supported the other candidates are greeted with indifference. (If any PC asks about Yoritomo Ayano, her first mate the last time they sailed with her, Kitao tells them Ayano was promoted to her own command some time back, and got married along the way somewhere.) Kitao is pretty and athletic, whose tongue carries as much salt as the ocean breeze blowing through her free-flowing hair. She brusquely informs the PCs that they will reach the mainland in a few days' sail, and “requests” they stay out of her way in the meantime.

In addition to the PCs, the *Bitter Flower* carries two additional passengers: a stooped, elderly man who introduces himself as Toku Senisen, and his fretting, overprotective daughter, Toku Moteko. The two were members of the Monkey Clan's delegation to the trade conference, but Senisen seems wearied by the experience, and Moteko hovers over him continually whenever they appear on deck, urging him to go below again and rest, a suggestion he usually resists for a few minutes before giving in and disappearing into their cabin once more. The two seem slightly overawed by the presence of Great Clan samurai all around them, and seem determined to draw as little attention to themselves as possible. (If the PCs check, the faded mon on Moteko's kimono suggests she was trained as a courtier by the Bayushi family, while Senisen's kimono bears no School mon at all; that would be expected for a Monkey samurai of his age, who likely reached adulthood as a simple ronin before swearing to the Clan.)

Late in the morning on the third day, a line of dark, swift-moving clouds appears on the western horizon, and lines of brilliant white flicker between the sea and clouds and along the edges of the storm. As it is clear that the *Bitter Flower* cannot sail around the oncoming blow, Kitao barks sharp orders to her crew and sends the PCs belowdecks to ride out the storm. (Mantis samurai, especially any who have demonstrated Ranks in Craft: Sailing, may instead be press-ganged into

helping the crew during the fight against the tempest.) Should any PC have the ability to manipulate the weather, such as through the basic Technique of the Yoritomo Shugenja School, they find the storm oddly resistant to their manipulations; a **Spellcraft / Intelligence** roll, TN 25, indicates that this is likely the result of a spell interfering with their Technique.

In truth, the storm is not natural at all; it has instead been created by “Toku Moteko.” She has Importuned the kami to create the storm (the equivalent of a Mastery Level 4 spell) specifically to drive the *Bitter Flower* to a particular destination in the ocean. It is there that, according to her magical divinations, she and “Toku Senisen” will find the man they are searching for: Yoritomo Aramasu. For some years her spells proved fruitless in locating him (because he was beyond the reach of the kami), but recent weeks have seen that change, and brought the two of them here.

The storm is violent, but ultimately deals no damage to the *Bitter Flower*; when it blows itself out a few hours after it first appeared, Kitao tells the PCs the storm cost them perhaps a day's sail – they are far to the south and west of where they started out – but otherwise should have little effect on them. The crew spends a few hours checking the ship to make sure all is well, then Kitao orders the sail raised to make for the mainland once more. Moteko and Senisen seem extremely ill-at-ease; Senisen never quite manages to get sick during the blow, but looks quite green throughout the rest of the day, going to bed even earlier than his usual hour, while Moteko seems almost angry at the Mantis crew, as though they somehow should have stopped the weather from affecting her father.

## Part One: A Slight Change of Plan

The *Bitter Flower* sails through the night without incident, but just after dawn, a lookout cries out, “Sails! Sails!” while pointing south. Kitao produces a gaijin spyglass and raises it to her eye. Even without the aid of the brass contraption, however, the PCs can easily tell that the other vessel – really just a speck on the southern horizon, at least at first – is gaining on the *Flower* rapidly, the speck swelling to a dot, and then to a squarish shape, in just the space of a few minutes. Any character with at least one Rank in Craft: Sailing knows that that kind of speed shouldn't be possible when two vessels are using the same wind; Kitao confirms this as she lowers the glass, muttering, “Magic. That... could be a problem.” As the vessel is coming from the south – not from anywhere in

Rokugan, for certain – she orders the crew to gather arms and prepare to repel boarders.

The PCs may respond to this however they wish, but gathering weapons would be appropriate. They can put on their armor too, if they like; none of the Mantis crew do so, and Kitao's expression is dubious if she sees anyone wearing armor, particularly heavy armor, but she does not argue with a PC's decision to wear it.

The other vessel continues to close with the *Bitter Flower* over the course of the next Rokugani hour. By the time the other ship is half a mile or so away from the *Flower*, it is clear it is not a Rokugani vessel; the hull is narrower and longer than the *Bitter Flower*, and the sails are sharply triangular, in contrast to the square, ribbed sails of the Mantis ship. Kitao identifies it as a "baghlah dhow," a deep-sea vessel from the Ivory Kingdoms. "That... could be good or bad," she adds.

*The ship is only a few hundred paces away when a loud, metallic clang resounds over the water and a blur of movement flashes across the space between the two ships. Huge projectiles, like arrows the size of tree trunks, crash into the Bitter Flower – a metal chain hanging between them wraps around the Flower's main mast, shattering it and sending it toppling into the sea. With a shout, the Mantis sailors begin firing arrows at the crew of the other vessel, barely visible now on the distant deck; even as they do, however, a second clang sounds, and two more of the projectiles crash through the Flower's hull, right near the waterline. With a shudder, the Bitter Flower begins taking on water.*

The *Flower* is sinking, but the enemy ship is also drawing alongside, throwing out boarding hooks with lines attached to draw the two vessels closer together. The attacking sailors – dark-skinned, wide-eyed gaijin with their hair wrapped up in bulbous linen bindings – start trying to force their way aboard the *Bitter Flower*, while the crew of the *Flower* rallies to defend their vessel.

Rather than play out the battle round-by-round, this conflict can be abstracted somewhat for speed of play. Each PC should make an appropriate attack roll against an Armor TN of 20 (characters who can take attacks as Simple Actions may make two rolls; shugenja may make a Spell Casting roll instead using an element of their choice, but use the same mechanics otherwise) and a **Defense / Reflexes** roll against a TN of 30, adding their armor's bonus to Armor TN to the total of the roll. PCs may Raise on the attack roll if they wish; a character who enters Full Defense Stance gains two Free Raises on their Defense roll, but cannot make any

attack rolls. The PCs must earn a number of successful attack rolls equal to three times the number of PCs to drive the boarders back onto their own ship – each successful Raise counts as another successful attack toward this total. The PC takes no damage if they hit the TN 30 on their Defense roll; if they fail, they take 1 point of damage for every point by which they missed the TN – Reduction applies to this damage as normal. Continue rolling attack rolls and Defense rolls until the PCs have accumulated enough successes to meet the necessary threshold.

While the PCs make their rolls, the battle between the two crews rages around them; Kitao leads her men valiantly, and the tide soon turns against the gaijin. When the PCs hit the necessary number of attacks, they have managed to force the gaijin back onto their own ship, and Kitao – mindful of the sinking *Bitter Flower* – leads the Mantis and the PCs onto the dhow. On their own ship, though, the Ivindi sailors' resistance stiffens, and the fight briefly becomes a stalemate.

*The stalemate is broken after just a few moments, however, when a newcomer appears on the deck of the dhow, sneaking up from somewhere below. Surprisingly, he is Rokugani; hard-faced and muscular, thick, ridged scars mar the man's cheeks and throat. Although unarmed, he does not hesitate; moving with striking speed and brutality, the man slips quietly up behind one of the Ivindi sailors, breaks the man's neck and takes his sword in a single swift motion. Two more sailors die an instant later as he turns his new weapon to lethal use, and under assault from both behind and in front, the Ivindi crew is slaughtered quickly.*

*The dhow's captain is the last to fall. As he does, a strange creature, with the head and wings of a bat and the body of a cobra, tears itself free from the corpse and stares at the new arrival. "There you are..." it hisses in barely-comprehensible Rokugani. "I should have known you would try to warn them..." The revolting thing turns and flies away with shocking speed. As it does, the newcomer swears and hurls his weapon at it, but falls short.*

Other attacks from the PCs might hit it (due to small size and speed, it has an Armor TN of 50), but they can do little to actually stop its flight even if they hit it. In moments it is out of sight.

*Behind you, Toku Moteko and Toku Senisen, having stayed far away from the battle, clamber awkwardly onto the dhow's deck as well. This goes unnoticed by the Mantis; Kitao and her surviving crew all stare at the newcomer in surprise before dropping to their*

*knees and pressing their foreheads to the deck. (Mantis PCs will also recognize the man at this point, and should do the same.)*

*“Aramasu-dono!” they cry, but Aramasu is looking at Senisen. Approaching the old man slowly, Aramasu bows as to an equal, then says, “I am honored that you came all this way just for me, Bayushi Yojiro-san, but I must ask that you refrain from trying to kill me until after we have saved our Empire.”*

*Senisen frowns, looking around at the Mantis sailors now rising to their feet and reaching for their weapons. “If you think I came ‘all this way’ just to try to kill you,” he replies at last, “then you still underestimate the Scorpion, traitor. But there is just enough strangeness here for me to hear you out.”*

*Aramasu nods equably. “First, however, might I suggest your companions reclaim anything of value they might need from your vessel before it is lost forever?”*

The *Flower* is still sinking, but it takes a few more minutes before the waters flood the upper decks. Each PC can grab one item they were not already carrying from their gear per Rank of their Reflexes Trait. Anything else sinks to the bottom of the Umi Yakamo, never to be found again.

## What Are You Doing Here?

While the PCs gather their equipment, the Mantis sailors surround Yojiro and his companion, albeit at a healthy distance; the two seem unconcerned by this, keeping their attention focused on Aramasu, who returns their regard with similar scrutiny. Once everyone has returned to the deck of the dhow, Yojiro snaps, “Now, speak quickly.”

*Aramasu’s expression darkens at Yojiro’s tone, and several of the Mantis move closer, grips tightening on their kama. The Mantis Champion raises a hand, though, and the Yoritomo warriors step back. “Of course, Bayushi-san,” Aramasu replies, his deliberate use of the honorific acting as a rebuke to Yojiro’s rudeness. “Right to business.*

*“Five years ago, a series of assassination attempts began targeting me at Kyuden Gotei. Despite what many believed, I am well aware that you were not behind these attempts, Bayushi-san, because they all had a common thread: the assassins were gaijin, specifically from the Ivory Kingdoms. Three years ago, I decided to leave the Mantis islands and find out*

*why. The trail took me several places, but eventually I found myself in the Ivory Kingdoms, and it was there I began to find the answers.*

*“The Kingdoms are a strange place, and many of their ways are barbaric indeed – but there are men and women there who understand something of honor. Unfortunately, what I learned was that those people, the kshatriya, were no longer in control of the Kingdoms. Instead, their daimyo, what they call raja, had fallen under the sway of a foul cult of murderers and thieves called the Ruhmaali. The Cult of Ruhmal worships a foul goddess of death and darkness known as Kali-Ma, Kali the Destroyer. Kali-Ma knows nothing of Jigoku, but I assure you she is as evil and corrupt as anything touched by the Ninth Kami.*

*“Among the cultists are seers, known as mantriks, who somehow foresaw that I would one day prove to be the cult’s downfall, and it was for that reason that they sent their assassins against me. This was a mistake, for without those assassination attempts I would likely have never known to turn my attention toward them. Even so, the truth must be said: while it is not in Rokugan’s interest that the Kingdoms be ruled by these blasphemous killers, such a state would not truly threaten the existence of the Empire. However, there is more.*

*“Roughly a year ago, the Kingdoms began preparing for an invasion against Rokugan. The shift in their aims caused me to change my investigations from merely trying to learn why the cult wanted to kill me toward learning why they had begun their aggressive course. Ten weeks ago, I found the answer: Matsu Turi, the Dark Oracle of Water, is in the Kingdoms, and has allied himself with the Cult of Ruhmal. My knowledge of the events is thin, due to distance, but I can tell you this: apparently, some time before that, one of my Clan used an artifact, the Dark Covenant of Water, to banish Turi from Rokugan forever. His alliance is an attempt to wreak revenge on the Empire for his banishment.*

*“When I learned of this, I immediately set out to inform the Empire of the threat. I stowed away aboard this vessel, and have hidden here for the last six weeks. Now, though, the situation has changed. When I left, the invasion was perhaps nine months away – the plan was to sail as soon as the spring monsoons ended. But that demon – it is a servant of Kali-Ma, an evil entity known as an asura – now knows that I am on my way home, and will return to its master, the mantrik that summoned it. The invasion will begin in weeks, and the ships will land before fall.”*

*“I realize that this all likely sounds rather far-fetched, but I assume your shugenja has been verifying the truth of my words, and will confirm what I have said.” Moteko looks surprised, but then with a sour expression nods reluctantly at Yojiro.*

*Yojiro frowns. “We cannot organize the Clans to defend the Empire in that time frame. Even were the political situation not as... complicated... as it is, the logistics would be challenge. As things are, they will be impossible.”*

*“I was afraid of that,” Aramasu says. “I can see only one response. We must sail back to the Kingdoms and kill the asura’s master before the word can spread. We cannot catch up to the asura, but they will not expect us to turn back now – as a result, the response will be slow, filled with calculation. With the assistance of the wind kami, we can likely return to the Kingdoms more swiftly than they could foresee; hopefully, that will give us the chance to eliminate that threat. If the Fortunes truly favor us, our mission will be successful enough to delay the invasion further, by removing an important asset.”*

*“Your plan is risky,” Yojiro replies, “but your reasoning seems sound. A risky plan is better than none at all.” He studies Kitao and her crew, then turns to the rest of you. “I am certain these Mantis will follow your commands... Yoritomo-san... but I think we will require the aid of all those present.” Reaching into his sleeve, Yojiro produces an emerald green sash. “Despite my position as Scorpion Champion, I remain an Emerald Magistrate as well. In that capacity, I acknowledge that I have been informed of a threat to the Empire, a threat that falls within the mandate of the Emerald Magistrate charter. As such, I hereby designate all of you my yoriki until this matter is resolved.”*

The PCs can refuse if they want, but it’s essentially academic – Yojiro is within his legal rights, and disobedience would be treason, punishable by death. The sentence would be carried out by Yojiro, Aramasu, and as many of the Yoritomo bushi as it would take to finish the traitorous PC off.

With the matter settled, Yojiro and Aramasu swear a formal oath to set aside their vendettas “until the threat to Rokugan from the Ivory Kingdoms has been resolved.” Toku Moteko reintroduces herself as Soshi Mutsumi, the young wife of Soshi Taoshi, daimyo of the Soshi family. With the matter of Aramasu’s life or death off the table for the moment, the two Scorpions go below, reappearing a short while later in kimono

colored in the traditional scarlet and black. Yojiro wears his preferred full-face mempo, while Mutsumi’s mask is made of black silk, arching high onto her forehead and trailing two black points down her cheeks. The traditional icons of the five rings are embroidered in bright colors around the mask, with Void at the top, Fire and Water over the eyes, and Air and Earth on the cheeks.

By the time the Scorpions have dressed themselves more accurately, the Mantis have worked out the differences in the way the baghlah dhow is rigged as compared to the Rokugani arrangement they are used to, and the ship – already renamed the *Bitter Root’s Blossom* by Kitao – is ready to sail. Mutsumi (with the aid of any PC shugenja who wishes to help, particularly any with an Air Affinity) summons the kami to fill the sails and speeds the ship on its way southward once more.

## Part Two: When You’re a Stranger

Even with magical aid, the journey takes more than five weeks. Beyond the basic requirements of sailing, most of the time is taken up by language lessons from Aramasu, who works with the PCs to teach them Ivindi, the language of the Ivory Kingdoms. He is aided in this by Yojiro, who turns out to know the language as well. By the time the PCs approach their destination, they have the basics down – any PC who has the available XP and wishes to do so may purchase Ivindi via the Languages Advantage for 1 XP. If the PC does not or cannot spend the XP, they learn enough to understand and convey basic concepts, but won’t be able to handle complicated conversations and will reveal themselves as foreigners the instant they open their mouths.

About two weeks after the ship begins sailing south, Kitao orders a turn to the west; according to the captured ship’s charts, the *Bitter Root’s Blossom* has swung wide enough around the Sea of Shadows to risk heading back for the mainland and the Ivory Kingdoms. Roughly around the same time, Soshi Mutsumi (and any PC shugenja) discover the kami have become much harder to contact – from now until the PCs return to Rokugan, all shugenja (although not the local mantriks) suffer a +10 TN penalty to their Spell Casting rolls. Also, during this time, the PCs’ long absence from the Empire costs them half a Rank of Glory.

*Finally, more than five weeks after leaving the Mantis Isles for your “short trip home,” you find yourselves staring across a wide-mouthed bay at a thing of*

**wonder and strangeness: Balishnimpur, the capital city of the Rafiq Mahajanapada. Nearly everything about it is a contrast to what you are familiar with: the buildings are the wrong shapes and colors, the sharp and pungent smells assault your nose, and the warm, moist air seems to wrap you in a smothering blanket. As the Bitter Root's Blossom approaches an open pier, the sound of hundreds of voices calling to one another in Ivindi hammers your ears, an unyielding cacophony after more than a month alone with the silence of the sea.**

Officially, the Rafiqs – one of the great families of the Ivory Kingdoms, roughly equivalent to Rokugan's Great Clans – consider the Emerald Empire an ally; samurai from Rokugan are welcome to freely visit the port city whenever they like, a fact that a small group of Mantis smugglers have used to their advantage for several decades. During the Clan War, an Ivory Kingdoms warrior named Fedyn Rafiq even helped a group of samurai uncover the existence of a Ruhmaali cult within Rokugan's own borders. During his time here, though, Aramasu came to realize that the Rafiqs are members of the Cult of Ruhmal almost to a man, and he is sure to explain this to the PCs: **"We are in enemy territory. Never forget that."**

Shortly after the ship docks, Aramasu produces a number of small amulets – wrought-iron boxes smaller than the length of his thumb from the first knuckle to the tip, covered in tiny sculptures of many-armed humans or animal-headed warriors and hanging from silver chains. He hands them out to the PCs, Yojiro, Mutsumi, Kitao and a few (two or three) of Kitao's sailors, keeping one for himself. (There are a dozen in all – the number of sailors who get an amulet is dependent on the number of players at the table.) When worn, the amulets change the appearance of the wearer, darkening their skin tone and changing their facial features to resemble an Ivindi. There remains a strong resemblance between the character's new appearance and their actual one – a stranger would likely remark on the similarity, and anyone who knew of the amulet's magic would recognize them easily. In addition, it only changes the wearer's own appearance; clothing and carried items like weapons are unaffected.

Aramasu already has an outfit suitable for the local style; after donning it, he heads down the gangplank and into the city, returning perhaps two hours later with enough local clothing for each person who wears an amulet. Ivinda is very different from that of Rokugan – the clothes for the men consist primarily of long tunics edged with heavy embroidery and a distinctive squared-off cutout at the collar (which helps to keep the wearer cool in the tropical heat), while the women wear a basic

skirt and halter top, covered by a single, long strip of cloth wrapped around the shoulders and waist in an improbably-complicated fashion. As Aramasu hands out the costumes, he points out that noblewomen usually wear an astonishing amount of jewelry, especially ear adornments, rings and even piercings through the nose. (He cannot keep from shuddering slightly when describing the last.) In both cases, the colors are extremely vivid, rivaling the most daring of Rokugani courtier fashion. Should any female PCs, especially samurai-ko, object to the particulars of the local costume for their gender, Aramasu acknowledges there is a tradition for female kshatriya who take up the sword similar to that of the samurai-ko; such women wear masculine outfits while wearing their armor and carrying their weapons, much as female bushi often do.

Aramasu and Yojiro both argue strongly that it would be best of the PCs maintained their disguises as locals throughout their time in Balishnimpur, to avoid alerting the cultists in the city to their arrival. However, doing so costs characters of Honor Rank 9 one point of Honor, and characters of Honor Rank 10 three points. If Yojiro cannot persuade a PC to accept the disguise, he finally shakes his head and says, "Just stay out of sight then."

## Settling In

Once the disguises are in place, Aramasu leads the group – everyone with an amulet, leaving the rest of Kitao's sailors on the dhow to watch over it – into the city. If the view from across the bay was impressive, having it surround the PCs makes it almost overwhelming.

***As you walk through the narrow, twisting streets of the Ivindi city, the barrage of new sensations is dizzying. The crowds of gaijin engulf you, swallowing up the space you would naturally be accorded as samurai of standing in the Empire; the smell of unwashed humanity is strong, and you simply cannot avoid being touched by dozens, perhaps hundreds, of strangers as you walk. All around, the buildings look strange to your eyes – rather than the soothing, stable squared-off lines of the doors and windows you are used to, most of the doors and frames around you have a peculiar arch to them, one that narrows to a small point at the top like a raindrop.***

When the PCs reach the manor Aramasu's contacts have arranged, they find it large, secluded and well-staffed with servants that speak Rokugani and have had at least some training in proper social behavior, although all are locals. The interior décor is primarily

in the local style, but a few Rokugani touches – painted privacy screens, a pair of watercolor hangings on bamboo, a set of Mantis Isles porcelain for washing hands and a woven mat for the floors – have been added, seemingly with some haste.

The PCs and their allies are met at the house by a smiling Ivindi man who Aramasu introduces as “Bishan.” According to the Mantis Champion, Bishan has been a long-time ally of the Mantis Clan, and he knows the Ivindi to be trustworthy. Bishan is short for an Ivindi, only a few inches taller than a typical Rokugani, with a squat, athletic build. His smile never seems to fill his whole face, but it never completely disappears either, as though he were continually thinking of some private joke. He greets the PCs and Yojiro in flawless Rokugani, bowing deeply and with perfect etiquette. *“I am pleased to have the heroes of Rokugan visit my homeland at last,” he says, still grinning. “I look forward to ridding Balishnimpur of the corrupt fiend that infests it.”*

In addition to Bishan, Aramasu also has another set of allies in the Ivory Kingdoms, a merchant group that call themselves the Houses of Dahab. (A **Lore: Burning Sands / Intelligence** roll, TN 25, or a possessing at least 2 Ranks of Lore: Burning Sands allows the PC to know that the Houses of Dahab are a merchant group based out of the city of Medinaat al-Salaam that has trade ties to the Ivory Kingdoms; a **Lore: Kolat / Intelligence** roll, TN 30, or having at least 3 Ranks in Lore: Kolat – this roll cannot be made without actual ranks in the Lore: Kolat skill – informs the PC that the Houses of Dahab are the public face of the Qolat conspiracy in the Burning Sands and elsewhere outside of Rokugan.) These contacts are the ones that arranged for the manor house, and Aramasu informs the PCs that he can also call upon them to supply the group with weapons and armor suitable for maintaining a low profile in Balishnimpur.

The primary melee weapons used in the Ivory Kingdoms are the talwar, mechanically identical to the scimitar (the scimitar Emphasis applies equally to the talwar and vice versa), and the khanda, a straight-bladed sword with two serrated edges and an almost completely blunt tip – the khanda is a 2k2 Medium weapon and requires its own Emphasis. Both weapons can be wielded without penalty via the Kenjutsu skill. An oversized version of the talwar, usually just called a grand talwar, exists as well; it is a Large 3k3 weapon and also requires its own Emphasis. Spears, functionally identical to yari (including applying the Emphasis), and daggers, functionally identical to aiguchi (again, including using the same Emphasis) are also available. For ranged weapons, bows that are

mechanically equivalent to yumi are available, although daikyu and han-kyu equivalents are not, and the only arrowheads that are regularly available are basically the same as willow leaf arrows.

In terms of armor and other protection, suits of armor that are equivalent to ashigaru or light armor are the preferred types in the Ivory Kingdoms – the excessive heat means that Ivindi warriors do not wear anything equivalent to the heavy or riding armors of Rokugani bushi. Instead, they pair shields with their swords or spears. Ivindi shields give their bearers a +5 bonus to Armor TN and 2 points of Reduction, but penalize the user’s attacks in the same fashion as wielding two weapons (see the sidebar on page 141 of the L5R 4E Core Rulebook); the defensive bonuses of carrying a shield given here supersede the Armor TN bonus for carrying an off-hand weapon that is listed in the sidebar, however.

Aramasu will arrange for any of these weapons or armor the PCs wish to request. He strongly suggests that Rokugani weapons and armor be left in the manor house so as to avoid drawing attention, much as he recommended wearing only Ivindi clothing on the streets of the city. Once he knows what the PCs need, he leaves the manor again, returning near dusk with the requested items. At that point, he gathers the PCs together with himself and Bishan and begins explaining Ivindi culture before the PCs head out into the city.

*“The gaijin here are both very similar to and very different from Rokugani,” the Mantis Champion explains. “Much as in the Empire, their society is broken down into the nobles, who are warriors much like samurai, called kshatriya. Below them, the merchants are called vaishyas, and are similar to the heimin from our home. Common laborers are called shudras, and are equivalent in many ways to the hinin. There are also the dalits, who are like our eta, and the brahmin, who are something like the Brotherhood monks, but they are not retired and are instead born into their role; as such, they are considered spiritually pure and extremely important in terms of status. However, there are important differences. Many of the rajas, who you might think of as daimyo, have risen to their positions from the ranks of the vaishyas and the shudras as well as from the kshatriya and brahmin castes. They do not have the same view of dharma as we do; they believe a person’s path can guide them to a higher level even if they were born quite low.*

*“Moreover, they will be strange in their behaviors. They have no hesitation in touching one another, and to do so is neither rude nor a gesture of intimacy. A*

*common greeting is to grasp the other's hand, like so." He takes one of Bishan's hands in both of his, and Bishan likewise wraps his other hand around Aramasu's.*

As Aramasu and Bishan shake hands, a TN 40 **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll allows a PC to find something odd about Bishan's hands, although they cannot identify precisely what is weird. If a PC makes the roll, that PC also notices Bishan glancing at them sideways and winking.

*"Finally, you must understand their gods. They are many – so many that even the Thousand Fortunes seem a small gathering as compared to all the gods that seem to watch over this place. Also, they apparently sometimes voluntarily incarnate, becoming mortal for a lifetime to perform some heroic task before dying and returning to whatever realm shelters them the rest of the time. However, for our purposes, the two most important are Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer. Together, they define the universe as structure and dissolution. Vishnu guards the cosmic order, and is the patron of the kshatriya in their pursuit of just rule. Shiva is viewed as the god of death, but also of rebirth, as one must die to return to the karmic wheel before one can be reincarnated. As Shiva, then, he is a god of mixed blessings, but much like the Fortunes, Shiva has a wrathful aspect, a female form called Kali-Ma. As Kali-Ma, the Destroyer annihilates without the possibility of rebirth, corrupts without the possibility of redemption. And it is this aspect that the Cult of Ruhmal worships."*

## Whispers and Wanderings

Aramasu's plan for locating the mantrik that summoned the asura is fairly straightforward. The kshatriya as a group have a strong distrust of magic, an attitude that Aramasu attributes to not having sacred kami or the assurance of the Celestial Order to link righteousness and magic together for the Ivindi peoples. "I would likely distrust magic as well," he shrugs, "if maho were all I knew of it." The gurus, certain specially enlightened brahmins, do have abilities not unlike the kiho of Rokugani monks, but that is about as close to real magic as traditional Ivindi ever get. Ruhmaali cultists are far less scrupulous, however, and make use of mantriks as often as they can. Even so, though, they are rare in the Kingdoms, so Aramasu believes rumors of mysterious, mystical or supernatural activities within Balishnimpur will eventually lead to the mantrik, and hopefully in such a way as to avoid making the Cult aware of the return of Aramasu and his allies. "We

must search the city and listen for whispers; we must do so subtly, however, teasing out the hints we need without making those who are talking to us wonder who we are – or why we're asking."

As the PCs track down rumors, they will gain Notoriety Points. The base Notoriety starts at the number of PCs.

Hunting rumors in Balishnimpur requires the usual **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, at a TN of 30. Each roll takes half a day, however (thus, a given PC can only roll twice a day). Characters who do not speak Ivindi are treated as unskilled (no Raises, 10s do not explode) unless they spend a Void Point. Characters without Courtier who also don't speak Ivindi must have some way to have two Enhancements on the same roll (i.e., be able to spend 2 Void Points) in order to overcome their penalties and be treated as skilled. Each roll after the second in a given day, whether successful or not, earns the PCs another Notoriety Point. However, the PC may Raise once to avoid having the roll add to their Notoriety. Schools with bonuses that apply to concealing the source of a rumor, such as the Bayushi Courtier, can apply those techniques to avoid gaining Notoriety as well. Aramasu and Yojiro will encourage this sort of action by stressing that the PCs should be subtle in their questioning.

Any rumor-chasing roll made by an unskilled character (including those considered unskilled because they do not speak Ivindi) automatically adds a point of Notoriety on top of any other Notoriety gained. Likewise, any time a PC who is not disguised as an Ivindi is present for a rumor-chasing roll, the PCs gain a point of Notoriety in addition to any other gains.

PCs must split up to make multiple rolls at the same time – characters together can roll Cooperatively (the lead character gains a bonus equal to the Courtier skills of all those present, although all the characters are considered to be rolling for the purposes of gaining Notoriety due to lack of skill), but must go to different parts of the city to find actual different rumors. They can begin searching the city first thing in the morning.

## A Stroll Around Balishnimpur

The PCs have a wide variety of areas they can search within the sprawling Ivindi city. As the GM, you are encouraged to tailor the sorts of rumors the PCs uncover to the areas they are searching, but a few examples of the kinds of tales they might hear are provided with each description, below.

## Docks

The docks are one of the rougher districts in the city, filled with hardfaced working-class men and women, many of whom show signs of hard weathering at the hands of sun and sea. There are a number of inns, taverns and brothels – the Ivindi have no conception of something as refined as a geisha, unfortunately – to be found here, and most Rokugani ronin would feel right at home in the narrow, shadowed streets. The city guard patrols regularly and in force, but the locals complain that crimes can happen right in front of them and the guards will typically look right past the offense and move on.

### Possible Rumors:

- “I heard a man the other day complaining about damage done to his ship – looked me straight in the eye, sober as you please, and said he’d seen a monkey with wings chewing through the ropes on his sails.”
- “My men have been bringing lumber down the river as fast as we can fell it, but the shipyards are buying it up even faster. I’d wonder where the Raja’s getting the gold – last I knew he was in debt to several bankers in Anghkala – but it spends too well for me to get curious.”

## Markets

The markets of Balishnimpur are much more impermanent things than are similar districts in Rokugan. Rokugani markets tend to be mixtures of street vendors selling from carts and merchants selling from storefronts; here, however, almost every store, from the richest to the meanest, is some form of tent. Only a few – the diamond seller, for example – have solid structures in which to do business; even the merchant with the furnishings of a rich, dark wood unfamiliar to Rokugani eyes uses a massive silk pavilion rather than an ordinary building to shield his goods from the elements. The crowds in the markets are thicker than anywhere else in the city; even the nobles with their palanquins and phalanxes of guards often find themselves forced to simply stop in the center of the street until a space opens up.

### Possible Rumors:

- “It’s true! Ivory prices have skyrocketed in the last few weeks, and you know it wasn’t exactly cheap before. Two sellers I know of have had to close up shop for lack of stock since the start of the month, and both have financed missions into the jungle to find graveyards for more. I’ve even heard some merchants are paying to have elephants killed! I

don’t even want to think about such blasphemy, but some people will do anything for gold, I suppose.”

- “Ah, you like the statuette? Ten rupees, and a bargain at the price, I assure you. This statue is blessed by Vishnu and Lakshmi to guarantee you good fortune in marriage – both in the daylight and at night, if you catch my meaning? And trust me, my word is good. You may have heard about other mystic trinkets for power or influence being sold in alleyways and the like; frauds, all of them, or worse. Here, however, I can promise you only the finest and most potent benedictions from the heavens.”

## Noble Quarter

The manor Aramasu has arranged for the group to stay in is in this quarter, near the border with the Markets to the north. The houses in the Noble Quarter are spaced far apart, especially by Ivindi standards, and the streets, while still crowded, offer more room to walk than anywhere else in the city. Small, expensive shops and upscale inns frame several small squares, and the area has a number of beautiful sculptures and fountains among the houses. The stone warriors grip weapons and crush asuras underfoot, but a closer look shows staining and pitting on the soft soaprock surface, leaving marks on their faces almost like tears.

### Possible Rumors:

- “Three Houses have been banned from the Rajah’s court in the last two months. What worries me, though, is that I don’t know why. I’m all for a delicious scandal, but truly, they were boring, bland little Houses, and I can’t imagine who it is they angered so thoroughly.”
- “At least the Exchequer is leaving me alone at last. The way I’ve heard it, he and his pretty young wife have finally, ah, ‘worked things out’ between them. The Thousand Gods alone know how, though – he’s almost seventy! I’d pay some fine coin myself to figure out how to keep a woman like that satisfied at his age...”

## Residential Neighborhoods

The residential area of Balishnimpur that holds most of the city’s commoners and low-caste merchants is found on the north side of the city, across the river from the docks. Only a single bridge spans the wide flow, at the mouth of the bay, but a brisk trade in hired ferries – tiny boats, only large enough for one or two people plus the pilot – crosses back and forth continually. The district itself is an uneven mix of houses, some tiny hovels and others almost as grand as ones you can find in the

Noble Quarter, all cheek-by-jowl with what seems like little order or reason. Smaller marketplaces specializing in more mundane goods like food or textiles are scattered throughout; they look more like Rokugani markets than do the great market squares on the south side of the river, particularly with regard to the presence of storefronts over tents. The people are a mix of poor and middle-class, with the occasional wealthy merchant playing at nobility with a palanquin or decorated horse to push through the crowd.

#### **Possible Rumors:**

- “My sister’s daughter’s brother-in-law knows a girl who was dying of the chill-sweat shakes until a man visited the family and cured her of it. I’ve heard that he took all their gold and three drops of blood from everyone in the building as payment!”
- “I’ve just sent my eldest to work at one of the inns near the docks and it’s just eating me up. I hate the idea of her being down there with all those sailors, but since that horrible business with her previous patrons... No one wants to hire the maid who survived the murders of every noble in the house! What else can we do?”

## **Shipyards**

The shipyards are under the control of the local military garrison, in the form of a naval fortification that guards the isthmus of the city and overlooks much of the shipyards themselves. Guards patrol the streets near the shipyards and small boats navigate the surrounding waters, stopping and turning back any traffic that sails too close to the massive shipworks. In the streets near the shipyards, the buildings tend to be large warehouses; the only businesses open to the public are dank, tiny beerhouses (this is a good way to learn just how different the local drinks are as compared to sake). The local inhabitants are dirty and sullen, many on their way to or from work in the yards. Nobles are a rare sight here, and the only folk who appear to call this district home are vagrant beggars, of which there seems to be an even greater quantity here than elsewhere in the city. Many of these bear weapon scars or the remnants of old military uniforms, suggesting they are veterans of some past conflict with the enemies of the Rafiqs. The shipyards resound night and day with the tumult of massive labor, as the Rafiqs work to build the ships that will be aimed for Rokugan’s heart in the coming months.

#### **Possible Rumors:**

- “Fourth day in a row working from an hour before sunrise to an hour after sunset. Vishnu preserve me, I hate the new overseer. He’s tight with gold,

but spends that whip of his freely, and I swear I see him praying in ecstasy every time he takes a swing.”

- “All I’m asking is a little something. Just something for some food. I’ve been asking the soldiers who walk by, men I fought and bled beside, but they look at me and it’s like they don’t know who I am – like they don’t even know what I am. It’s not human, that thing in their eyes. But if I can’t ask my own sword-brothers for help, where else can I go? So please, if you can do help a little...”

## **Slums**

As does every city in the world, Balishnimpur has slums, and those in the heart of the Ivory Kingdoms are not so different than those found in the cities of the Emerald Empire. The slums occupy the extreme northwestern part of the isthmus on which the main part of Balishnimpur rests, beyond the wall that guards the isthmus’ neck – it is a shanty town, a cluster of ramshackle buildings huddled against the wall and each other like children clinging to their mother’s hem. The stench of desperation permeates the air; most of the inhabitants are dalits, the most impure caste, and they struggle every day to find some way to earn what scraps of food or money they can to see the next day’s dawning and start the struggle anew. The PCs almost cannot help standing out here; unless they take special precautions to appear as dirty and poor as those around them, they receive a point of Notoriety just for entering the slums.

#### **Possible Rumors:**

- “I’m telling you, five children have disappeared this month from the shacks around here. Nobody cares about dalit kids; we tell the guards and they just pull back like we’re gonna give them leprosy. But something’s happening, and it’s gotta stop, it’s just gotta stop!”
- “There were two of ‘em in the middens when I went to carry it off last week. Little bones, I first thought they were chicken legs maybe. But no, I’ve pulled more than my share of hens, and they were something else. I think... I think maybe they were fingers.”

## **Steeltown**

“Steeltown” is the local name for the district in the northwestern part of the city, near the city wall. As much of Balishnimpur is surrounded by water, the city’s wall only stretches from one side of the isthmus to the other, and it is there that the Rafiq’s army holds

its city garrison. The presence of the army garrison combined with the many weaponsmiths and armor crafters in the district are what give the quarter its name. As one would expect, guards and patrolling soldiers are common in Steeltown, but it is also one of the few places where the different castes freely intermingle. Kshatriya officers command soldiers from the vaishya and shudra castes, while the city's dalits pass through Steeltown on their way to and from their homes in the slums beyond the wall. The air is filled with the sounds of metal ringing on metal, whether day or night – as with the shipyards at the other end of the city, Steeltown has had all its energies turned toward preparing the Rafiq armies for the invasion of Rokugan.

#### **Possible Rumors:**

- “My husband was badly hurt during training earlier this week – if he doesn't recover, I have no idea how we'll keep our children fed. He almost lost his left hand; he was holding his sword two-handed instead of carrying his shield. Why would his commander make him do that, and in a training exercise of all things? Who fights without a shield anyway?”
- “I've been having trouble sleeping the last few nights, I have to admit. It's... well, this is going to sound ridiculous. It's this new chant I was given to say while I work; supposed to be some kind of mantra for blessing the blades as I hammer them or something. Only I keep having nightmares now, and there's something in my dreams hunting me while it says that damn chant...”

#### **Temple District**

While every quarter of the city has a few shrines to the Ivindi's many gods, the largest gathering of them is known as the Temple District, and it lies in the shadow of the Inner City, on the western face of the city's central hill. Here is a place where one can find all the various types of people in Balishnimpur brought together, from simple laborers to exalted nobles and the most downtrodden indigents. Saffron-robed sadhus – wandering monks, familiar in many ways to Rokugani eyes that know the Brotherhood – carry offering bowls among the crowds, calling for alms or offering prayers over passersby. The buildings themselves are far more ornate than those in the rest of the city, and even the richly-carved temples of Rokugan seem pale and bland compared to the decorations that cover every scrap of visible surface on the temple walls. Chanting pilgrims or holy men give the background noise – loud and continuous here as it is everywhere – an oddly musical quality, but one that sounds eerie and strange to Rokugani ears.

#### **Possible Rumors:**

- “Do you know the temple to Indra near the gates to the Inner City? I was there a few months ago, and spent some time admiring one particular statue of Airavata with tusks of pure gold, each the size of my largest finger. When I was there the day before yesterday, though, the statue was gone – and none of the monks will admit it was ever there to begin with!”
- “I heard one of the priests in the temple to Agni complaining about someone selling false scriptures in the marketplace. I don't understand – the Vedas are free for all to hear at any temple. Where's the profit in selling them?”

In addition to these areas, the city also has an exclusive, walled-off central zone, not unlike the Forbidden City of Otosan Uchi. The two most important buildings contained within the “Inner City,” as it is called, are the Palace of the Raja and the High Temple. Aramasu doubts that the mantrik would allow himself or herself to be found in such a visible location, but if any PC asks how the group will handle things if it turns out that the mantrik is inside the Inner City's walls, he simply says, “We'll deal with it.”

#### **Inevitable Complications**

While the PCs are searching for rumors, they do have a few encounters that disturb their subtle search for information, and potentially raise their profile high enough to tip off their enemies.

On the first day, a group of sadhus, wandering gurus wearing bright orange robes much like those of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, approaches the PCs as they move through the city. They focus their attentions on the highest Honor character; in recognition of that PC's innate purity, they surround him/her, laying their hands on the PC while praying on the PCs' behalf to Vishnu. Touching is shameful to Rokugani; accepting the touch will cost the character Honor as though they had committed a minor breach of etiquette. Forcing the sadhus away (merely telling them to stay away will not work) causes such a disruption that the PCs gain a point of Notoriety. However, quietly accepting the touch does allow the PC to gain Vishnu's favor. This favor grants the PC a single Void Point over and above their usual rating that can be used at any point during the rest of their time in the Ivory Kingdoms (even if they've spent Void already in the turn), and can be combined with other uses of Void on the same roll.

On the second day, a young urchin attempts to steal the magical disguise amulet of one of the PCs (determined

at random), recognizing it only as an object of value. The PCs who are present can roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception**, TN 35, to spot the pickpocketing attempt – the targeted PC gains a Free Raise. If they succeed, they can intervene before the theft occurs. Intervening subtly – trying to catch the boy’s arm, bumping him aside, and so on – allows them to interrupt the theft without gaining Notoriety. If they interfere in a very public manner, especially by threatening violence or even moreso if they use violence, they gain a point of Notoriety but prevent the theft.

If they fail, however, the boy snatches the amulet and runs off, immediately breaking the illusion on the targeted character. Chasing the boy requires beating him in a contested **Athletics (Running) / Water** roll. The tightly crowded streets are Difficult Terrain, reducing effective Water Rings by 2. If the PCs can reduce the penalties to Moderate, such as through the Mastery Abilities of the Athletics Skill, their Water Ring is reduced by 1 instead, and if they can ignore terrain penalties entirely, they suffer no reduction. The boy rolls 7k2 on his roll, has the Running Emphasis and ignores all penalties from terrain. The PCs have to beat him on the roll to catch him – if they fail three times in a row, they lose him, and each roll gives the PCs a point of Notoriety. If caught, he surrenders and gives up the amulet. Any punishment the PCs inflict will not give them additional Notoriety unless they kill him. Obviously, if he gets away, the one of the PCs will no longer be disguised, with all the attendant complications – spending any time out of the manor without the disguise will give the PCs 1 point of Notoriety per half-day or fraction thereof.

On the third day, the PCs are walking along with a crowd when they see an elephant in front of them. To Rokugani eyes, it is a monster, perhaps even an oni – massive, rock-skinned, with vicious tusks and powerful muscles. The surrounding Ivindi, however, move smoothly and calmly out of the animal’s path, many with a murmured prayer as they do so. As weird as the animal itself seems to the PCs’ eyes, the real difficulty happens a moment later, when the elephant defecates directly in their path.

An **Etiquette / Reflexes** roll, TN 20, is needed to step out of the way without making a scene. Failing the roll results in a disruption as the PC jerks away into the crowd, gaining a point of Notoriety – most of the people behind them either calmly walk through the pile of feces or actually bend down to briefly touch their fingertips and palms to it. Not making the roll at all means the PC walks through it, losing Honor as though committing a severe breach of etiquette – but the

blessing of the Ivindi god Ganesha grants the PC an additional Void Point to be used once during their remaining time in the Ivory Kingdoms, just as with the blessing of Vishnu above.

Finally, if at any point during their time out in the city the PCs try to offer a bribe to an informant (or in an attempt to “help out” the urchin-thief who tries to steal their amulet), they provoke the attentions of a swarm of beggars, both male and female. If done with a gossip-hunting roll, the PC does at least gain a Free Raise on the roll; regardless, though, the beggars show up, clamoring for money, crowding in their face and violating their personal space, shouting and crying out a tumult of demands for more gold. The PC earns a point of Notoriety and an additional point of Notoriety for every koku they spend on the bribe and/or on the beggars. Any other gossip rolls made by the PC that day, with or without a bribe, attract more beggars, earning another point of Notoriety (plus more if koku are again spent). This can be avoided if and only if the PC specifically tries to hand over the money in a completely secluded area.

## Part Three: The Job You Came Here For

Eventually, the PCs, together with information gained by Aramasu and Yojiro, who are also out looking, are able to piece together the location of the mantrik and learn his name: Balyezn Rafiq.

It takes a number of successful gossip rolls equal to twice the number of PCs for them to locate Balyezn. If the PCs do not manage it before then, Aramasu and Yojiro find him on the Xth day (X = number of PCs). The rumors pinpoint Rafiq’s stronghold: an isolated plantation a short distance outside town. They also place Matsu Turi as present there as well. Beyond that, though, the PCs must investigate themselves.

### The Cultists’ Plantation

The plantation consists of several acres of rice paddies, strikingly similar in most ways to Rokugani agriculture, and a main complex of buildings in the middle. The complex is walled, but the paddies run right up against the jungle.

There are two main buildings on the plantation. One is clearly an estate, a large mansion with three floors and two wings, several parts of which are open to the daily breezes to keep off the heat. The other is a long, low building that Bishan identifies as sleeping quarters for

the workers in the fields, and likely also a barracks for the guards; it is outside the walls, but clearly visible to anyone on the walls who happen to be watching – as in fact there are. Several guards are visible, standing watch over the paddies and in guard towers near the main house as well.

The paddies provide almost no cover, meaning any assault will be visible from the walls unless undertaken during the night. Obviously, that is the preference of both Aramasu and Yojiro. High-Honor characters will likely object; sneaking causes an Honor loss as appropriate for use of a Low Skill, regardless of whether the Stealth Skill (or any other Low Skill, for that matter) is used. On the other hand, as the PCs are acting as Yojiro's yoriki, refusing to do as he commands causes an Honor loss equal to twice their current Honor Rank. Seppuku is the only alternative to this Honor loss.

Mindful of the possibility that their quarry might hear of their coming, Yojiro and Aramasu want to attack at once. Sustained counterargument from the PCs can change their minds, however. This is only possible if the PCs argue for an attempt at recon one night before launching the assault the next – nothing else strikes the two samurai as potentially worth the risk.

Any PCs who want to attempt to sneak close enough to the buildings to look inside them can make up to three TN 30 **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility** rolls – again, these cause Honor losses for Low Skill use. For each successful roll, the PC learns one of the following three items of information:

- The first roll grants the exact location of Balyezn Rafiq's private chambers within the house.
- The second roll grants the exact location of Matsu Turi's meditation chamber within the house, and the presence of Yoritomo Jack within it.
- The third roll reveals the presence of Betihatyara the Twice-Born in Turi's chambers as well.

Succeeding on any roll also tells the PC that the total number of cultist-guards is roughly four times the number of PCs, in addition to Betihatyara, Belyzen and Turi; the guards sleep in the barracks on the edge of the rice paddies, as Bishan suspected. For each roll the PC fails by less than 10, they gain 1 point of Notoriety. If a PC fails the roll by 10 or more, the PC must flee at once or die; regardless, the household is automatically made aware of the PCs' presence in the city.

When the time comes for the assault to begin, the GM should make a roll to determine whether the PCs have drawn enough attention to themselves since they arrived for Balyezn and his allies to be aware that

Aramasu has returned and brought reinforcements. The roll is (**Current Notoriety**) **k (days spent searching)**; the day the PCs arrived does not count, but all the days afterward do, since Aramasu and Yojiro were looking even if the PCs might not have been. If the PCs' Notoriety is over 10, extra unrolled dice convert to extra kept dice as normal. The TN is 25 – if the roll fails, the PCs have not alerted their quarry; if it succeeds, the enemy will be prepared when they arrive.

With two buildings to assault, Yojiro and Aramasu agree that attacking both simultaneously is the only way to avoid being overwhelmed – keeping each occupied will prevent them from being able to send aid to one another. Aramasu, Kitao and Bishan will lead Kitao's disguised crew members against the barracks, leaving Yojiro, Mutsumi and the PCs to assault the main house. Both groups will be outnumbered, but hopefully surprise will allow the Rokugani forces a chance for victory.

As the planning begins, Mutsumi points out that Turi is likely weakened by his distance from the kami of Rokugan. *“Even without his greatest powers, Turi is probably a foe too potent to confront with less than our entire strength,”* she says, *“but it may be that now is the only chance any of us might ever have to kill a Dark Oracle. We might even survive to tell about it.”* If any of the PCs carries a nemuranai of any sort, Mutsumi recommends that that character strike the killing blow if possible, since awakened weapons likely have the best chance to be able to perform the deed if it is possible at all. *“In addition,”* she warns, *“the dark blessings of Jigoku that grant an Oracle its powers will try to move to another valid receptacle when the Oracle dies. Steel your souls to resist the temptations of power you will face, lest we find ourselves needing to kill you next.”*

When the PCs attack the plantation, Aramasu leads Kitao, Bishan and the rest of the Mantis against the barracks in the fields, leaving the PCs, Yojiro and Mutsumi to face the walls of the main house. The guards on the walls are the first obstacle.

Stealth or ranged attacks are necessary to avoid having them alert the house. The PCs and their two allies must kill two guards before they can act to avoid alerting the household. If the PCs use Stealth to get close (resisted by **Investigation / Perception**) and succeed, the defender takes a -20 penalty to his initiative check once combat begins, and his Armor TN is 5 + armor until he acts. Ranged attacks automatically get this bonus, but suffer penalties due to darkness (-1k1 to all attack rolls, in addition to range penalties). The walls are about 400

feet from the nearest forest cover – anything closer requires Stealth rolls to avoid being seen.

When the PCs have dealt with the guards, climbing over the walls or getting through the gate is simple enough. Once inside, the PCs will encounter Balyezn or Turi and Bitahatyara randomly unless they scouted the house ahead of time as mentioned earlier.

## Facing Turi and Bitahatyara

When the PCs encounter Matsu Turi (deliberately or otherwise), they find him in his meditation chambers, having converted them to a torture room, with a blue-skinned woman who has four arms by his side. Turi is attempting to force Yoritomo Jack, a captive Rokugani and the man directly responsible for Turi's banishment from Rokugan, to accept the power of the Dark Oracle of Water and turn to the Shadowlands. Jack, tortured for nearly a year by all the horrors Turi can devise, is near to breaking – Turi hopes to complete the conversion in time to send the Ivindi invasion fleet to Rokugan with Jack at its head.

*The rooms are dark, but obvious effort has gone into making them look and feel Rokugani. Painted silk screens line the walls, low lacquered-wood tables with cushions surrounding them have replaced the high tables and “chairs” used by the Ivindi, and a portion of the floor has been edged off with three-inch-high wooden planks to hold a small raked-sand meditation garden, complete with river stone centerpiece and an incense holder. As placid as all these elements seem however, the room holds no comfort for you, far from home as you are, for the center of the room is a scene from a nightmare.*

*A broken Rokugani man, in a faded, soiled, tattered and bloodstained Mantis kimono, lies on a table, his wrists and ankles bound with shackles and wounds visible on every part of his body. A broad-shouldered Rokugani figure wrapped in a flickering, sickly green aura stands over him; from the sensation of power that radiates from him and the Lion mon still visible on the fabric, it can be no one else besides Matsu Turi, the Dark Oracle of Water. Turi down, murmuring to the tortured captive, “Just accept this, and your pain will end, replaced by glories and power such as you have never known...” At the man's head, a four-armed, blue-skinned woman, nude but for a variety of complicated-looking jewelry at wrists, neck, forehead and a few other noteworthy places, strokes the victim's cheek as gently as a lover.*

*As you take the scene in, Turi looks up, locks eyes with you, and grimaces. “Always, just as I am about to complete my tasks,” he sighs, then waves a hand. A wall of water slams through the room and envelopes you all.*

The wave catches the PCs and teleports them, Bitahatyara and Turi back outside, to the flooded paddies nearest the house. Turi looks haggard and weakened by this, and he pulls the nearby water toward him, surging until it is up to his knees (and all but dry in the nearest parts of the paddy). His form then divides, starting at his waist, and the two upper halves take on grotesque, oni-like versions of Turi's visage.

Wrapped in the water from the paddies as he is, Turi cannot move, but he can lengthen his arms and body at will, allowing him to reach anyone in the combat. A **Battle (Skirmish) / Perception** roll, TN 20, picks up in his immobility if the PCs don't realize it themselves. Should they wish it, the PCs can leave the fight and attempt to return to the house to rescue Yoritomo Jack – trapped by his need to stay near water, Turi cannot follow. If they do so, they are unimpeded in their attempts to free Jack. Once Jack is freed, Turi roars in fury and teleports away again - he does not return in this mod.

If, on the other hand, they kill Turi before freeing Jack, Turi roars, **“NO! YOU WILL YIELD TO ME!”** as he falls, turning briefly into a two-headed water dragon before imploding – and another, similar explosion occurs in the house where Jack was being held.

*Yoritomo Jack, fully healed but with an unsettling darkness behind his eyes, steps out of the gaping hole in the wall and stands on the air, twenty feet above your heads. He bows and says, “Thank you for pushing him that hard; I would probably never have accepted this gift if he hadn't been so... desperate. I suspect we will meet again... if you make it back home.” Jack's smile is filled with hatred. Wrapping himself in a spray of water like a tiny whirlpool, the new Dark Oracle disappears.*

## Confronting Balyezn Rafiq

Balyezn Rafiq occupies the largest suite of rooms in the plantation house, positioned at the top of the house with a view over the rice paddy fields and a set of balconies overlooking the house's central courtyard. This late in the evening, though, shutters have closed off the balcony doors and windows, meaning only the house's inner doors offer access to the rooms.

*When you open the door, the rooms within assault your vision with an extravagance of colors and textures, as though you had just entered some combination of a Doji weaver's shop and a Unicorn's exotic art collection. The suite is spacious and open, with a massive sitting room directly before you and personal office or library on one side and private bedroom on the other. Rattan chairs surround a broad table in the middle of the sitting room, and scrolls, papers and Ivindi "books" cover the ebony surface. At a glance, the papers appear to be maps or charts of Rokugan, but you have little time to consider the question – for the room is filled with people, all of whom are staring at you with violent intent.*

The room contains Balyezn Rafiq himself, his guard captain, a squad of guards (number equal to half the table size, rounded up), plus a bound asura that looks like a gorilla with a boar's head and a pair of cobra-like snakes growing out of its back. Balyezn is immediately recognizable as the owner of the plantation – his short, strongly muscled frame is wrapped in robes, tunic and pants of the finest silks, his strong fingers are covered in rings set with precious gems, and even his turban is bound with a large, gaudy pin that likely cost more than many in Balishnimpur make in a year. Balyezn is not interested in words; combat begins at once.

## Conclusion

Once both battles are over, the PCs are free to leave the building once again. Yojiro heads toward the barracks to aid the Mantis, but finds only dead cultist-guards and Bishan standing amidst the bodies.

*“My friend Aramasu-san and his followers give you their regrets, Yojiro-sama, but having ascertained all was well, they have chosen to seek an alternate means of returning to your homeland – to avoid any... misunderstandings... between you and my friend. He also asked that I give you this.” Bishan hands over a folded paper to Yojiro, who opens and reads it, hiding the contents from even Mutsumi's eyes. Bishan continues, “I am to be your captain as you sail back to the Emerald Empire. As we will undoubtedly return to Rokugan before Aramasu-san, he trusts you with the importance of informing your Empress and the rest of your people about the upcoming invasion before it is too late.”*

*Yojiro slips the paper into his sleeve and studies the other man for a moment before replying, “A Mantis crew under the command of an Ivindi captain seems likely to draw scrutiny when we arrive. Perhaps it would be best if I took command instead.”*

*“Oh, do not worry, Yojiro-sama,” Bishan answers. His features shift, twist, melt like running wax; his entire form shrinks inward somewhat, and then stills again, and Yoritomo Kitao stands before you, smirking. “I don't think I'll draw any attention at all.”*

*Yojiro gasps, reaching for his weapons. “You are one of Adisabah's kin!” he cries.*

*“Kitao” steps back, her arms raised. “I am, and you know quite well that means your weapons are useless against me. But I have been a friend to the Rokugani people for longer than even you imagine, Master of Secrets. We are not all the same as Adisabah the Cruel; some of us admire your Empire and appreciate the ways of its people. You would do well to keep me as your friend, as Aramasu has done. And you should realize that you can trust me. Had I wished not wished you to know, you would never have been aware that Kitao was not the one commanding her vessel in the first place.” She smiles, then bows formally. “Shall we set sail, Bayushi-sama, so that we can warn the Empress about the threat to our lands?”*

Lacking other options, Yojiro agrees, and the *Bitter Root's Blossom* sets sail for Rokugan on the morning's first tide.

As before, the trip takes more than 5 weeks, and the PCs lose another half-Rank of Glory. Yojiro and the PCs spend their time assembling the intelligence they have collected about Balishnimpur and the Rafiqs for presentation to the Empire; a PC who makes a **Craft: Cartography / Intelligence** roll, TN 40, is able to produce a battle-quality map to present to the Empress should she desire it. When the PCs return to Rokugan, Yojiro commands Bishan to sail up the River of Gold to Shiro no Soshi, where the Scorpion Champion sends a number of letters but does not stop to visit his own castles, marching straight on through Beiden Pass to Kyuden Tonbo. The *Bitter Root's Blossom* sails south again, carrying news of the invasion to the Mantis Isles – there is a brief moment where Yojiro clearly considers impounding the vessel and its inhuman captain, but “Kitao” merely smiles, and Yojiro, scowling beneath his mask, allows the ship to depart.

As a result of this haste, the PCs are the only retinue Yojiro has when he enters the Empress' Court. Kakita Toshiken is present, as is the Empress herself, along with a number of other advisors and councilors. Toshiken and Tsudao each hold wooden bokken, and it is clear that the Emerald Champion has been holding a

public lesson with the five-year-old Empress on the basics of Kakita-style iaijutsu.

*“My Empress,” Yojiro begins as soon as he is recognized – although he is looking at Toshiken while he speaks – “I am here to inform you of a grave threat to the entirety of Rokugan. These samurai and I have just returned from a lengthy journey to the Ivory Kingdoms. There we battled the banished Dark Oracle of Water, as well as a group of foul tsukai of that kingdom; although we defeated a small cell of these cultists and delayed their plans, I am here to tell you that, driven by these corrupted priests, the whole of the Ivory Kingdoms plans to invade in the spring.”*

*A shocked murmur sweeps through the hall, and fans flutter like butterflies caught in a sudden windstorm. Toshiken opens his mouth to speak, but young Tsudao, an odd spark in her eye, beats him to it. Drawing the practice blade she holds in perfect imitation of a Kakita master, she says, “Well, we will strike first then.”*

*Toshiken stops, mouth open, but there is no denying what has been said, in the hearing of the whole court. Exchanging a look with Yojiro, Toshiken turns and bows deeply to the girl-Empress. “Hai, Tsudao-heika.” He looks to a nearby courtier. “Send word to Seppun Murayasu-san at once. The Empire sails to war.”*

## 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
Killing Balyezn Rafiq:	+1XP
Killing Matsu Turi <i>or</i> Rescuing/Killing Yoritomo Jack:	+1XP

**Total Possible Experience: 4XP**

### Honor

PCs can lose Honor as mentioned in the adventure; only extraordinary acts of Honor should gain any outside Rokugan

### Glory

PCs lose a total of one Rank of Glory during the course of the adventure – they cannot gain Glory for actions taken outside the Empire

### Other Awards/Penalties

Scorpion characters who performed well while in Yojiro’s company may earn him as a Ally at the GM’s discretion (Influence 4, Devotion 1); all others gain a Favor from the Scorpion Clan

All characters gain a Favor from the Mantis Clan

If a PC can provide an accurate map of Balishnimpur, they receive an Imperial Favor as well

### Module Tracking Sheets

Make note if the PC received the Blessing of Vishnu via the sadhu monks or the Blessing of Ganesha via the elephant droppings

### GM Reporting

Was Yoritomo Jack rescued, killed or allowed to become the new Dark Oracle?

Did any PCs receive the blessing of the Ivindi gods? If so, which PCs and which gods?

**GM must report this information BEFORE (11/25/13) for it to have storyline effect**

# Appendix #1: NPC Allies

## **Bayushi Yojiro**

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 5 Water 3 Void 4  
Awareness 5 Perception 4  
Honor 2.8 Status 8.0 Glory 5.0

**Initiative:** 10k5 **Attack:** 9k5-5 (no-dachi, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 35 (Heavy Armor) **Damage:** 7k3 (no-dachi)

**Reduction:** 10

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

**School/Rank:** Bayushi Courtier 4/Bayushi Bushi 2

*Weakness is My Strength:* When making a Contested Social Roll against someone else, gains a Free Raise for every 3 points of Mental or Social Disadvantages (rounded off) they possesses. Disadvantages which did not award Experience Points still count for their normal point value for the purposes of this Technique. This Technique cannot award more than 5 Free Raises. Gain a Free Raise when using the Courtier skill to spread gossip, and need not Raise in order to conceal that you are the source of that gossip.

*Shallow Waters:* By conversing with someone for a few minutes, can make a Contested Roll of Investigation /Awareness against their Etiquette / Awareness to learn the identity and rank of their lowest Mental Trait and their lowest Social Skill that has at least one Rank (the GM chooses in the case of ties). May spend a Void point to also learn their next lowest Mental Trait and next lowest Social Skill.

*Secrets Are Birthmarks:* By speaking with someone for a few minutes, may make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness against their Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness to force them into revealing one Mental or Social Disadvantage they possess. If they have no such Disadvantages, this will instead reveal one Mental or Social Advantage. (Note this will only reveal the rulebook title of the Advantage / Disadvantage, not the specific nature of it.) If the roll succeeded in revealing a Disadvantage, with the GM's permission you may take a 2-point Blackmail Advantage against this individual, for no cost in Experience Points.

*Scrutiny's Sweet Sting:* Any time you make a Contested Social Skill Roll against someone on whom you have Blackmail, his dice cannot explode. In addition, any time you make a Contested Social Skill Roll against someone, regardless of whether you have Blackmail on them

or not, you may spend a Void point to force them to use a mental Trait of your choice (instead of the normal Trait used for the roll).

*The Way of the Scorpion:* +1k1 to Initiative Rolls. +5 to Armor TN against any opponent with lower Initiative.

*Pincers and Tail:* May make the Feint Maneuver for one Raise instead of two.

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Battle 4, Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation) 7, Craft: Poisons 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 6, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 6, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (no-dachi) 4, Lore: Law 4, Lore: Underworld 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 6, Stealth 4, Temptation 5

**Mastery Abilities:** Courtier 7 (+7 Insight, +1k0 to Contested Rolls using Courtier), Defense 5 (may retain a Full Defense Roll in successive Rounds, +3 Armor TN while in Defense or Full Defense Stance), Etiquette 6 (+3 Insight, +1k0 to Contested Rolls using Etiquette), Iaijutsu 3 (readying a katana is a Free Action), Intimidation 5 (+5 to Contested Intimidation Rolls), Investigation 6 (may make a second Search roll without increasing the TN, +5 to the TN of Contested Rolls using Investigation), Jiujutsu 3 (+1k0 to unarmed damage), Kenjutsu 4 (+1k0 damage with swords), Sincerity 6 (+5 bonus to Contested Rolls using Sincerity), Stealth 6 (Simple Move Actions to move 15' while hiding)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Benten's Blessing, Read Lips, Voice / Junshin, Soft-Hearted, Unluck I

Yojiro works to support the PCs in combat, often attempting maneuvers (such as Knockdown or Disarm) to weaken foes and set them up for the PCs to deal with rather than facing them directly. His armor is a *nemuranai* of the Scorpion Clan, which grants him increased Reduction (already included in his stats) and does not apply any TN penalties to Stealth rolls made while wearing it.

## Soshi Mutsumi

Air 4    Earth 2    Fire 3    Water 3    Void 4  
Willpower 4

Honor 2.2    Status 5.5    Glory 2.1

**Initiative:** 7k4

**Attack:** 6k3 (tanto, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 37 (in Defense stance)

**Damage:** 3k1

**Spellcasting:** 9k4 (Air), 5k2 (Earth), 7k3 (Fire, Water)

**Reduction:** 0

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

**School/Rank:** Soshi Shugenja 3

*The Kami's Whisper:* Can spend two spell slots instead of one when casting non-damaging spell to conceal all signs of the spell going off except its effect.

**Spells Known:** *Air:* Call Upon the Wind (ML 2), Gift of Wind (ML 4), Know the Mind (ML 4), Mask of Wind (ML 3), To Seek the Truth (ML 1), Whispering Wind (ML 2); *Fire:* Fires of Purity (ML 1), Never Alone (ML 2); *Water:* Path to Inner

Peace (ML 1), Reversal of Fortunes (ML 1), Stand Against the Waves (ML 2)

**Skills:** Acting 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 2, Defense 5, Etiquette (Conversation) 2, Investigation 1, Knives 3, Lore: Theology 4, Lore: Scorpion 2, Lore: Underworld 2, Sincerity (Deceit) 4, Spellcraft (Importune) 5, Stealth 5

**Mastery Abilities:** need not reroll a Full Defense roll if she maintains the stance for multiple rounds; gains an additional +3 to Armor TN in Defense or Full Defense; may move up to Water x5 feet per Move action while using Stealth; gains +1k0 to all Spell Casting rolls; off-hand penalties do not apply while wielding knives

**Advantages:** Social Position (Daimyo's Wife), Stealthy

In combat, Mutsumi focuses her spells primarily on supporting Yojiro, but also heals any PC who needs it.

## Appendix #2: Enemy Combatants

### Cultist Guards

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 2  
Reflexes 3 Perception 3

Integrity 0.5 Status N/A Glory N/A

**Armor TN:** 30 (Light Attack: 7k3-5 (khanda, Armor and shield) Complex)

**Reduction:** 5 **Damage:** 5k2 (khanda)

**Initiative:** 4k3

**School/Rank:** Kshatriya Warrior 1

*Strength of Indra:* adds +1k0 to School Weapon Skills; Willpower is one higher when resisting Fear

**Skills:** Archery 2, Athletics 1, Craft: Poison 1, Defense 1, Hand-to-Hand 2, Horsemanship 1, Investigation (Notice) 2, Knives 1, Lore: Theology (Destroyer) 2, Spears 1, Stealth 3, Swordsmanship (Khanda) 3

**Mastery Abilities:** Adds +1k0 to damage with swords; may move up to (Water x3) feet per Move action while using Stealth

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty / Cruel, Dark Secret (cultist)

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

**Special:** If the cult has been alerted to the PCs' presence in Balishnipur, Matsu Turi has infused all the guards with the power of Water – this increases their Water Ring and the associated Traits by 1, and they heal (Water Ring) Wounds during each Reactions Stage. This effect ends if Turi is either dead or has fled.

### Guard Captain

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 3  
Reflexes 4 Strength 4

Integrity 0.5 Status N/A Glory N/A

**Armor TN:** 35 (Light Attack: 10k4-5 (khanda, Simple) Armor and shield)

**Reduction:** 5 **Damage:** 7k2 (khanda)

**Initiative:** 7k4

**School/Rank:** Kshatriya Warrior 3

*Strength of Indra:* adds +1k0 to School Weapon Skills; Willpower is one higher when resisting Fear

*The Ward of Vishnu:* when carrying a shield, can use Simple Action to make Contested Defense / Agility against one opponent's [Weapon Skill] / Agility; if successful, opponent must make three Raises to strike him

*The Speed of the Mongoose:* can make attacks with sword, spear or unarmed strike as Simple Actions

**Skills:** Archery 4, Athletics 3, Craft: Poison 3, Defense 5, Hand-to-Hand 4, Horsemanship 3, Investigation (Notice) 4, Knives 3, Lore: Theology (Destroyer) 4, Spears 3, Stealth 5, Swordsmanship (Khanda) 5

**Mastery Abilities:** Ignores Moderate Terrain and treats Difficult Terrain as Moderate for movement; need not reroll a Full Defense roll if he maintains the stance for multiple rounds; gains an additional +3 to Armor TN in Defense or Full Defense; adds +1k0 to unarmed damage; can assume Full Attack while mounted; adds +1k0 to damage with swords; may move up to Water x5 feet per Move action while using Stealth

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty / Cruel, Dark Secret (cultist)

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

**Special:** If the cult has been alerted to the PCs' presence in Balishnipur, Matsu Turi has infused all the guards with the power of Water – this increases their Water Ring and the associated Traits by 1, and they heal (Water Ring) Wounds during each Reactions Stage. This effect ends if Turi is either dead or has fled.

## **Balyezn Rafiq**

Air 4 Earth 5 Fire 4 Water 2 Void 4  
Perception 4  
Integrity 0.5 Status N/A Glory N/A  
**Armor TN:** 37 **Attack:** 7k4 (khanda of fire, Complex)  
**Reduction:** 0 **Damage:** 4k2 (khanda of fire)  
**Initiative:** 9k4 **Spellcasting:** 9k4 (Air), 10k6 (Earth), 10k4 (Fire), 8k2 (Water)

**School/Rank:** Ruhmaali Mantrik 5

*Death Silences All:* gains a Free Raise on spells with Battle Keyword (marked with an asterisk\*); whenever kills a target with a spell, regains a Void Point – Earth Affinity, Air Deficiency

**Spells Known:** *Earth:* Armor of Earth\* (ML 1), Courage of the Seven Thunders\* (ML 1 – only works on members of the Great Houses of the Ivory Kingdoms), Earth Becomes Sky (ML 2), Earth Kami's Blessing\* (ML 3), Essence of Earth\* (ML 4); *Force of Will\** (ML 2), Major Binding (ML 5 – applies to asura rather than Shadowlands creatures), Sharing the Strength of Many (ML 4), The Kami's Strength\* (ML 5), The Wolf's Mercy (ML 3); *Fire:* Fist of Osano-Wo (ML 3), Envious Flames (ML 1), Khanda of Fire\* (ML 1), The Raging Forge (ML 1); *Water:* Path to Inner Peace (ML 1), Stand Against the Waves\* (ML 2)

**Skills:** Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 2, Defense 5, Etiquette (Conversation) 2, Investigation 1, Knives 3, Lore: Theology (Destroyer) 6, Lore: Underworld 2, Sincerity (Deceit) 4, Spellcraft 5, Stealth 5, Swordsmanship 3

**Mastery Abilities:** need not reroll a Full Defense roll if he maintains the stance for multiple rounds; gains an additional +3 to Armor TN in Defense or Full Defense; may move up to Water x5 feet per Move action while using Stealth; gains +1k0 to all Spell Casting rolls; off-hand penalties do not apply while wielding knives; adds +1k0 to damage with swords,

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty / Cruel, Dark Secret (cultist)

**Wounds:** 25 (+0), 35 (+3), 45 (+5), 55 (+10), 65 (+15), 75 (+20), 85 (Down, +40), 95 (Dead)

**Special:** If the cult has been alerted to the PCs' presence in Balishnipur, Balyezn already has Armor of Earth and Earth Kami's Blessing cast upon himself when they arrive. This changes his **Reduction** to 10 and his **Wounds** to **Wounds:** 27 (+0), 39 (+3), 51 (+5), 63 (+10), 75 (+15), 87 (+20), 99 (Down, +40), 103 (Dead)

## **Asura**

Air 1 Earth 5 Fire 2 Water 2  
Reflexes 3 Agility 4 Strength 5  
Integrity 0.5 Status N/A Glory N/A  
**Armor TN:** 20 **Attack:** 6k4 (claws, Simple) or 6k4 (tusks, Complex)  
**Reduction:** 5 (crystal or ivory) **Damage:** 5k2 (claws) or 4k4 (tusks)  
**Initiative:** 6k3  
**Wounds:** 30 (+10), 75 (Dead)

**Special:** *Spirit*

*Fear 4*

*Savage Gore:* The asura deals tusk damage while it controls a Grapple.

*Biting Snakes:* While it is Grappled, regardless of who controls the Grapple, the sneak heads on the asura's back lash out at its opponent. Anyone in a Grapple with the asura on the asura's turn is bitten by the snakes for 1k1 Wounds and must roll Earth, TN 20, or suffer a -1 penalty to their Reflexes for an hour. The penalty is cumulative for multiple bites, and if it reduces the victim's Reflexes to 0, they are paralyzed for an hour until the toxin wears off.

## Bitahatyara the Twice-Born

Air 4      Earth 5      Fire 3      Water 4  
Reflexes 5      Agility 5      Strength 5  
Integrity 0.0      Status N/A      Glory N/A  
**Armor TN:** 40      **Attack:** 9k5 (4 khandas,  
(obsidian skin)      Complex) or 9k5 (4  
claws and 1 bite,  
Complex)  
**Reduction:** 10/crystal      **Damage:** 8k2 (khandas)  
or ivory      or 5k2 (claws) and 6k3  
(bite)

**Initiative:** 8k5

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand (Atemi) 4,  
Investigation 3, Lore: Theology (Destroyer) 8, Stealth  
5, Swordsmanship (Khandas) 4

**Wounds:** 20 (+5), 40 (+10), 60 (+15), 80 (Dead)

**Special:** *Fear 4*

*Swift 3*

*Shapeshifting:* Bitahatyara can assume the shape of a beautiful young Ivindi woman at will; as this is an actual change of form, it cannot be pierced by magic or other means

*Many-Armed:* Bitahatyara has 6 arms and a mouth full of fangs. As a single Complex Action, she can launch a many-armed flurry of attacks as listed in the attack line above, either with weapons or the claws that tip each hand, although she cannot attack a single target more than twice per round. In addition, if she successfully activates an atemi kiho as a Simple Action, she may use her two free hands to deliver the atemi attack as part of the same Complex Action as her other attacks, and may use the kiho on a target she has already attacked twice.

*Corrupted Guru:* Bitahatyara has magical abilities similar to the ability of monks to use kiho. She is treated as though she were a Rank 3 monk, with access to the following kiho:

Destiny's Strike (Fire 4, Martial), Earth Needs No Eyes (Earth 3, Internal), Falling Star Strike (Fire 7, Martial), Flame Fist (Fire 3, Martial), Freezing the Lifeblood (Water 7, Martial), Grasp the Earth Dragon (Earth 5, Internal), Ride the Water Dragon (Water 3, Kharmic), Riding the Clouds (Air 3, Mystical), Soul of the Four Winds (Air 4, Internal), Stain Upon the Soul (Air 3, Martial), Waves in All Things (Water 4, Mystical), Way of the Earth (Earth 4, Martial)

Bitahatyara rolls 9k5 in lieu of any Meditation/Void roll to activate her kiho, and cannot spend Void Points to do so.

If the cultists are forewarned about the PCs' presence in the city, Bitahatyara has Ride the Water Dragon and Soul of the Four Winds active when they arrive, increasing her Armor TN to 47.

## Matsu Turi (divided-oni form)

Air 3      Earth 6      Fire 4      Water 7      Void 5  
Reflexes 5      Agility 5  
Honor 0.0      Status -10.0      Infamy 9.5  
**Armor TN:** 30      **Attack:** 10k5 (unarmed,  
Simple) or 10k5  
(grapple, Complex)  
**Reduction:** 15 (5 vs      **Damage:** 7k2 (unarmed  
jade or crystal)      or grapple)  
**Initiative:** 10k5+5      **Spellcasting:** 10k9  
(Water only)

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Battle 5, Jujitsu (Grappling) 6,  
Investigation (Notice, Interrogation) 4, Kenjutsu  
(Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: History 4, Lore:  
Shadowlands 6, Lore: Spirit Realms 6, Meditation 4,  
Spellcraft 6

**Mastery Abilities:** Adds +1k0 to damage with swords,

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Hands of Stone

**Wounds:** 30 (+0), 42 (+3), 54 (+5), 66 (+10), 78 (+15),  
90 (+20), 102 (Down, +40), 114 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 6

**Special:** *Fear 5*

*Two Heads:* While in his divided form, Turi can take two full Complex Actions each round. He will typically use this ability to cast a spell with one head and attack via melee with the other, but this might change on circumstances. When grappling, Turi is only considered to have the Grappled condition if both heads are engaged in grapples at the same time.

*Drowning Embrace:* Opponents grappled by Turi must hold their breath or risk drowning, exactly as if they were immersed in water. As Turi's water is Tainted, anyone who is immersed must also make an Earth Roll, TN 15, or gain 1k1 points of Taint.

*Endless Reach:* Turi's shapeshifting allows him to lengthen his arms enough to be able to attack his opponents anywhere they might be within line of sight.

*Oracle's Sanctuary:* Oracles cannot take action against or harm anyone who has neither attacked them nor been granted a boon by them. Until the PCs attack him, Turi will only cast spells on himself or Bitahatyara. (Teleportation to a harmless location, such as to the middle of the rice paddy, does not count as an attack.)

*Spellcasting:* Turi can cast spells as though he were a Rank 6 shugenja with an Affinity for Water, but he cannot cast any spells that are not Water spells. He knows all the spells listed as Water spells in the core 4E book. He is fond of using Strike of the Tsunami to force opponents back and Cloak of the Miya to increase his Armor TN, as well as using the many spells available to enhance Bitahatyara's power. He suffers the same +10 TN penalty that all Rokugani shugenja experience while in the Ivory Kingdoms.

If the cult has been alerted to the PCs' presence in Balishnipur, Matsu Turi has just finished casting Heart of the Water Dragon (with enough raises to gain 3k1 healing each time) and has also placed a casting of Path to Inner Peace on "hold" via Silent Waters (triggered when he speaks a certain nonsense phrase).