

Dark Secrets

**A One-Round High-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of Hantei, 1143 (Spring)**

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What will you do when you uncover a secret that could cause a war?

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

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

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

Reminder

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

Adjusting for Party Strength

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

Although the main challenge here is 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 parties:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank 4): The GM may reduce the TN of rolls during the Investigation in the “Dreams of Death” Section by up to 10, at their discretion.

Adventure Summary and Background

Tradition is a powerful force in Rokugan. Many of the conflicts that have plagued the Empire for the last decade stem from the changes that have happened over the thousand years of its history in even the relatively stable culture of Rokugan. The returned spirits brought with them a wide variety of traditions from across the entire spectrum of that history, and the modern era has proved challenging for many of them to adjust to. And, of course, due to Rokugan’s inherent reverence for their ancestors, many of the modern samurai have a hard time not deferring to those who came before.

Another set of conflicting traditions have caused a major issue for the Unicorn Clan: most of the New Moto who came to the Empire from the Burning Sands have had some difficulty in adjusting to their new culture in one way or another. In fact, a sizable group of their prouder warriors have been engaged in their old ways of raiding. Their attacks have plagued the western Empire for several years now, though they are few enough in number to have largely avoided attracting major attention to their clan. A major investigation into their depredations has been going on behind the scenes by the Emerald Magistrates under Shinjo Shirasu, and the leaders of the raiders have been rounded up for punishment.

The PCs will be involved in the creation of a new tradition, one meant to unify the returned spirits with the modern Empire as they oversee the efforts of the next generation of young samurai. Intended to replace the Test of the Topaz Champion, the Dark Edge Tournament sponsored by the Imperial Regent will have some political statement associated with it – though the recent alliance between the Regent and the

Emerald Champion against the upstart Army of the Black Lion has resulted in something of a change in tone for the proceedings.

Unfortunately, the tournament will be delayed by an attempted assassination on the Imperial Regent; from there, the PCs will be asked to bear witness to the resolution of the Unicorn’s conflict. Another assassination, targeting the Unicorn Clan Champion’s son, will be successful and the PCs will help investigate the matter. If they are successful, they will be placed in a position to determine who the Khan will blame for the death of his son... though quite possibly at a cost to their own Honor.

Note for the GM: The focus of this module is on what the PCs choose to do, more than what they are capable of. The investigation portion is not intended to be a major hindrance – while Kitagi is a skilled Scorpion agent, his assassination is relatively impromptu and it should not be terribly difficult for the PCs to discover what is going on. Rather, they will have a hard time proving it to the satisfaction of the Rokugani legal system. More, even upon confronting him, the decision of what to do will likely involve a great deal of debate among the players. The GM should pay attention to the time spent in discussion amongst the players while they come to a decision.

Character Notes

Check the PCs’ character sheets for the following:

- Skill of 5+
- Emerald Magistrate/Yoriki or other strong affiliation with the Emerald Champion’s faction
- Owl or strong affiliation with the Imperial Regent’s faction
- “Noticed by the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang”

Introduction

Kurayami-ha Mura lies in the eastern Unicorn lands, a prosaic village passed over by history. Though the Test of the Emerald Champion was held here for centuries, one hundred and fifty years ago Hantei XXVIII moved the Test to the Plains of Thunder (ostensibly to ensure a neutral location for the Empire’s greatest tournament). In the generations since, Dark Edge Village has become a footnote in the Empire’s history – still remembered by those with an interest in the past but of little relevance to the present.

Today, its renowned Dueling Fields are again bustling with activity, and the village itself shows signs of renewed vigor. A veritable army of tents are pitched on the rolling hills outside town, banners from every clan snapping on the breeze that blows toward the distant line of the Dragon mountains barely visible on the horizon. A grand tournament has been announced by the Imperial Court, and the Empire has returned to Dark Edge Village.

The Imperial Regent has organized a tournament to replace the tradition of the Topaz Championship, to give the new samurai of the Empire a chance to demonstrate their abilities before the rest of the clans. (The Topaz Championship has not been held in seven years, of course, after the death of the Empress at the last tournament; with such an inauspicious tragedy, it is unlikely that there will ever be another Topaz Champion.)

An event of this scope and nature is rife with political implications. As Hantei Okucho and Kakita Toshiken have recently agreed to an alliance against the forces raised by Toturi Daio, the Son of the Black Lion, this tournament has become a chance to highlight the cooperation between their factions. This, of course, does not mean that their conflict is over, and it is expected that the factionalism will have an effect on the proceedings.

The PCs are present to act as observers and judges for the tournament. (Even those characters most vocal in their opposition to the Imperial Regent will have been sent by their lords, potentially sending a message simply with their presence.) As the tournament is planned to have a wide variety of events, it is highly likely that any given PC will have a Skill relevant to one of the contests. In general, if a PC has five or more ranks of a Skill, they are qualified to act as a judge for an event utilizing that Skill. Of course, this only applies to socially-acceptable uses of the Skills; Low Skills or esoteric Lores are not appropriate for such use.

The tournament is being run by Otomo Saruko, an experienced Imperial courtier (PCs may recognize her from SoB07: Delicate Negotiations or SoB44: Winter Court: Shiro Chuda). A highly capable bureaucrat, she has developed a reputation in the last few years as one of the more reasonable Otomo courtiers who have given their support to the Imperial Regent. She has delegated most of the details of the event to a staff of several competent samurai:

There are three rough categories of events: martial, physical, and social. Martial events (Weapon Skills, Jujutsu, and Battle, for the most part) will involve

direct contests of some nature, and are being overseen by Mirumoto Raikan. Physical events (Athletics, Games, Horsemanship) run a wide range of games and sports and have been organized by Utaku Xianhi. Ikoma Takeshi has taken up the task of coordinating the social events, which include debates on various Lores, as well as demonstrations of deportment (Etiquette) or revered niche Skills such as Tea Ceremony. In addition, there are a few spiritual matters that will be attended to under the direction of Yogo Kitagi.

It is assumed that PCs will be working with one of these NPCs; if they have a Status higher than 3.5 as well as an appropriate Skill at 5 or higher, they can take over if they choose, though completely reorganizing the events is problematic at this late date (and somewhat outside the scope of this mod). Note that a shugenja PC wishing to oversee the rituals and ceremonies will need the Lore: Theology Skill at 5 or higher to replace Kitagi; while he is not a shugenja, he is well-known as a theologian. As the tournament is a framing device and not the focus of the module, however, it is important that the player not focus too much effort on such plans.

The PCs will arrive about a week before the tournament is scheduled to begin; this will give them ample opportunity to explore the area, learn who the guests of significance are, and introduce themselves to each other.

Notable NPCs

The PCs are far from the only characters or even judges present; the promise of a notable tournament to replace the Topaz Championship has drawn attendees from across the Empire. More than a hundred samurai have come to Dark Edge Village, from all of the Great Clans and a few Minor Clans as well as ronin and Imperials. The most significant are detailed here (and in Appendix #2) but it can be assumed that any clans not specified here do have representation.

Moto Gaheris: Though the Khan has notably avoided speaking his mind concerning the divide between the Emerald Champion and the Imperial Regent, he has nonetheless allowed Okucho to put together his tournament in the Unicorn lands. This is entirely about wishing to promote the Unicorn Clan and has nothing to do with his actual preference between the two men (he actually cares for neither of them). Whatever his reasons, the tournament has caused rumors that he has decided to support the Regent (see below). His actual concerns are elsewhere, having been convinced by Ide Gokun to provide the injured clans a spectacle for their sense of justice. Gaheris is willing to meet with

Unicorn or Crane PCs and has no compunction about describing his reasons for his actions.

Shosuro Yudoka: The daimyo of the Shosuro family is not actually all that interested in the tournament but is present to put pressure on the Unicorn regarding the raider issue. Yudoka will only grant an audience to any Scorpion PCs; he will make it clear that the Scorpion expect to wring concessions from the Unicorn for their depredations, but causing a scene at the tournament is not in the clan's interests.

Otomo Saruko: The tournament organizer is too busy to meet with most PCs; only those with strong Imperial ties would be granted an audience (members of the Imperial Families or an organization such as the Imperial Legions, Owls or Emerald Magistrates). She is actually somewhat irritated by the political by-play, and is trying to minimize the factionalism as much as possible – a difficult task given that so much of the event has been designed for that specific purpose.

Utaku Tamami: The local gokenin is very ambivalent about the current situation. The tournament was arranged by clan-level negotiations, and while she is glad for the potential prominence of her village, she is nervous about the fact that the provincial daimyo Utaku Ruri has taken up the banner of the Black Lion. Tamami herself has avoided speaking against her liege's decision, but is quite aware of the threat posed by the Imperial attention in the province. She has thrown herself into the minutiae of managing local affairs and will be unavailable to any PC who does not have a Status of 4 or higher (even with such PCs, she will go out of her way to be vague and noncommittal about political issues).

Ide Magobe: Master of the Calm Heart Dojo, Magobe is a highly competent swordsman who is also a devout pacifist in his own way. He views the use of the sword as necessary to keep the peace, but espouses his dojo's philosophy that violence must be controlled in order to be used for the betterment of society. He is almost entirely apolitical, having no real opinion about larger matters outside his dojo walls. Any PC who wishes to spend time at the dojo may do so, and could easily meet the sensei.

Moto Asara: The local Emerald Magistrate has served as Shinjo Shirasu's assistant in several matters, including the recent investigation into the raiders. She was, in fact, instrumental in helping to find their leaders, though she is unlikely to advertise that fact (her brother was one of the prominent raiders who is now awaiting execution). Asara is a New Moto, from the desert, and one of the very few that has been granted a

position as an Emerald Magistrate. She is absolutely dedicated to integration in the Empire, and has very few gaijin mannerisms, but even so her duties have kept her in the Unicorn lands. She will seek out the PCs to speak with them when they arrive, both to sound them out about their politics (and determine if they are likely to be an issue) and to see if they have any news regarding Shinjo Shirasu, who she expects to arrive shortly. Though she has little to do with the tournament other than providing a legal presence, she will play a larger part in the mod after Part One.

Utaku Xianhi: Tamami's sister is rather more outspoken than her older sibling, but even she is remaining silent about larger political issues. Personally, she agrees with her daimyo about the need for strong leadership in the Empire, but understands that the tournament is not the proper venue for such frank discussions. She will speak with any PC that approaches her about the tournament, and can be drawn into deeper discussion but will try her best to avoid direct confrontation over politics. Her contests are designed along the lines of sporting events, with a wide variety of Athletics-based games as well as no less than three mounted activities.

Ikoma Takeshi: Known as a genial courtier with a fair amount of experience with other clans, Takeshi is helping arrange the court events. Though he is a well-respected Owl and devoted to the Hantei, he has a great deal of respect for the Emerald Champion and is going out of his way to downplay the factionalism inherent in the event. He is more than happy to discuss any and all topics with the PCs, though he is always careful to avoid speaking ill of any higher-ranking samurai. The events he has devised entail using a variety of Social Skills and Lore Skills; Courtier, Etiquette, and Sincerity are common, as well as debates on the law or history and identification of heraldry.

Mirumoto Raiken: A relatively late addition to the tournament staff, Raiken is present as a belated attempt to defuse some of the factionalism; the Dragon Clan has presented a unified front in support of the Emerald Champion. That said, Raiken is a very quiet samurai, skilled enough to have achieved his rank as a junior sensei of the Iron Mountain Dojo but who has never made a significant name for himself or been involved in controversy. He is actually quite ambitious and willing to act to gain advantage for himself or the Dragon (largely in that order), though more than willing to avoid attention. His events run a wide variety of martial skills, using multiple weapon styles and types of contests from a grand melee to kata demonstration and even a traditional iaijutsu competition.

Yogo Kitagi: Like Raiken, Kitagi was included in the preparations at the last-minute to give the Emerald Champion's faction more involvement. He is, however, much more outspoken against the Imperial Regent, as befits a loyal vassal of Shosuro Atsumori (the daimyo of Ryoko Owari). He has a reputation as a scholar and theologian, though he is not a shugenja; he is educated as befits one of his family and serves as a spiritual advisor to a powerful daimyo. He will make a point to seek out each PC in order to determine which of the Imperial factions they give their political support, though he will avoid being blunt about it. Kitagi will speak (at least at first) instead about the ceremonies he is overseeing; a **Courtier / Awareness** roll at a TN of 40 will allow the PC to determine his actual goal. Attempting to mislead him requires succeeding at a **Sincerity / Awareness** with a TN of 60.

Locations in Dark Edge Village

Exploring the area is easily-accomplished. The village shows signs of recent expansion and refurbishment, and though there are relatively few local residents, the Unicorn have provided ample resources for their guests.

The Dueling Fields

The most notable feature of the village lay along the northern edge of town: the areas established for the various contests held here. Though largely unused for a century and a half, like the rest of town, they have been recently restored. A large circle of sand marks the main dueling arena, where the Test of the Emerald Champion was held. Grounds for various other contests are arrayed around the main site, all clearly visible from red lacquered viewing stands. Fields for horsemanship contests, an archery range, an obstacle course, tents for gentler competitions, and even a small pond have all been cleared or set up. It is expected that PC judges will be involved in the various preparations.

Shrine to the Duelists

Though most Rokugani shrines are dedicated to specific ancestors, Fortunes, or the teachings of Shinsei, this structure is devoted to all those who settle their differences in honorable combat. It stands just to the south of the main dueling field, ancient but well-cared-for; ancestral tablets naming all those who actually fought on this field are found here, and PCs who wish to pray to or leave offerings to the likes of Kakita, Matsu, or Doji Hatsuo are welcome to do so.

Calm Heart Dojo

A modest structure near the center of town, the only dojo in town is primarily known for its subtle non-lethal techniques. This has led to a certain amount of controversy in the clan, particularly among the Moto, but Ide Magobe, the head sensei, is almost entirely

apolitical and devoted entirely to teaching. Any PCs who are willing to demonstrate minimal courtesy are welcome to train at the dojo, though obviously the unique techniques of the sensei are not taught to outsiders.

Administrative Center

The area of the village given over to housing and offices for the samurai residents is referred to as the "Administrative Center", due to their duties primarily revolving around tending to the historic dueling fields. The village buildings are a subtle blend of traditional Rokugani architecture and gaijin design elements, though they tend to be simple. There is an air of "restrained opulence" to the town; the Unicorn have spared little expense with their recent refurbishments.

Inns

No less than three inns have recently been built in the village to provide housing for the more important or renowned guests, taking the number in town to four. PCs with Status of 3.5+ or Glory of 8.0+ will be given rooms at the new inns, while others will simply have to make do with a tent. The inns are comfortable, though not terribly opulent – the Unicorn spent freely in order to manage swift construction, with priority for quantity of rooms over lavish appointments. Still, the servants are welcoming, the food is plentiful, and the furnishings are restful.

Tent "City"

More than a hundred samurai have come to the village, either to take part in or observe the tournament in some fashion. Housing for so many guests is problematic, leaving most of them to sleep in tents in the fields outside of town; they are grouped by clan, for the most part. The Unicorn have provided servants to see to their comfort, and supplies to ensure their guests are well-fed; a wide variety of beverages are available as well, as the general attitude of the encampment is one of jovial celebration.

Rumors

Gathering information from the assembled samurai present at the event requires a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, 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. (PCs with "Oath of Fealty: Utaku Ruri" receive a Free Raise for this roll.) The rumors include:

- The tournament is likely to have some impact on the forces being raised for the coming battle against the Black Lion. Those samurai who distinguish themselves will have a greater chance

of earning leadership positions in the forces being called up for the summer conflicts.

- The local samurai are friendly and welcoming, but very cautious about opening up to their guests. The daimyo of the province, Utaku Ruri, is one of the leaders of the Army of the Black Lion. There is speculation that the event was located here in order to put pressure on her vassals.
- The military alliance between Hantei Okucheo and Kakita Toshiken has done little to assuage the political wrangling between their factions. This event is an example of the conflict operating on multiple levels: Dark Edge Village was once most famous for hosting the Test of the Emerald Champion, a contest that Kakita Toshiken did not win to gain his position.
- The forces loyal to the Emerald Champion and Imperial Regent are mobilizing near Ootosan Uchi in order to supplement the Imperial Legions under the command of Seppun Murayasu. It is expected that their combined forces will move against the Army of the Black Lion at the start of summer.
- The raiding parties that have committed attacks along the western Empire for the last few years have been tracked down, and their leaders captured by the Emerald Magistrates. The Scorpion Clan in particular has been highly vocal about gaining justice from the Unicorn for these actions. There are rumors that the Khan is planning to provide a public demonstration of his control over his troops.
- The Unicorn Clan Champion is quite happy to announce that his first grandson was born over the winter at Shiro Moto. Moto Gaheris Koghun married a Doji two years ago, helping to cement the Unicorn's place in the Empire. The infant, named "Chagatai" for one of the Khan's ancestors, will undoubtedly find his place as a bridge between the Unicorn and the Crane.
- Following the eruption of the volcano now known as Tamori's Furnace in the Dragon lands, the mountain clan's food reserves are notably low. The Dragon Clan would be near famine at this point, but has narrowly avoided it by virtue of aid from the Unicorn, Scorpion, and even the Phoenix.
- The Crab lands are in a state of confusion after recent events [detailed in Poisoned Thread]. Hida Tsuneo has returned to Kyuden Hida to assist in restoring order and is expected to be there for quite some time.

Any amount of asking around will gain the PC the following rumor as well:

- Though the original plan for the event had not included his presence, there are rumors that the Imperial Regent will be putting in an appearance.

Recent arrivals have mentioned seeing troops from the First Imperial Legion, the Legion that has been guarding Ootosan Uchi and the Imperial Court, in the area; this indicates there is something to these rumors.

PCs with a more underhanded approach will largely be disappointed; the village is too small to support much of an underworld economy. Even the few smugglers that had operated in this area (due to its proximity to the Dragon border) are laying low with the influx of guests. PCs who succeed at a **Lore: Underworld / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 25 can find a meeting place in the back room of a sake house where a handful of the local criminals hang out. This will allow them to purchase minor contraband (ninja weapons or equipment, gaijin gear, or untaxed metal goods from the Dragon lands, but not poisons). Additionally, if they roll 35 or higher, they will hear rumors that indicate there are spies present among the guests. There are no specifics, though the likeliest candidates are Scorpion agents. However, the PCs will not be able to identify these infiltrators.

PCs who learn about both the Regent's arrival and the presence of spies in town will discover a few days before the tournament's opening ceremonies that Tsi Yoji, a senior Owl in service to the Imperial Regent, has arrived in Dark Edge Village to ensure the Hantei's security. Yoji remains well out of sight as he goes about his duties.

Part One: The Rage of the Regent

Two days before the tournament is scheduled to begin, word circulates through the village that the Imperial Regent and his escort are on their way into town. It does not take long for the advance scouts from the First Imperial Legion to arrive, and a full division of troops (roughly 750 soldiers, what a clan army would call a "legion") follows in short order. They set up their camp in military precision outside the village, while the dignitary they guard, the Imperial Regent, will take over one of the newly-constructed inns for the use of himself and his entourage.

The newcomers are not terribly welcoming to curious PCs; the First Imperial Legion is made up almost entirely of troops loyal to the Regent and the escort is exclusively staffed by those the Hantei can come closest to trusting. Under the command of the controversial returned spirit Doji Meihu, the Regent's Guard are insular and dedicated to their duty.

Roughly a dozen members of the Owls accompany the Regent as part of his entourage. Senior Owl Tsi Yoji is in charge of the Regent's security detail, and he will be too busy with those duties to allow him to speak with any PCs. Owl PCs can confer with their other, lower-ranking colleagues, but there is relatively little information to be gained from interacting with them. The Regent wishes his event to go off without a hitch, and the Owls (among others) have been counseling him to caution as regards some of his more "energetic" reactions to being stymied.

The next day (the day before the opening ceremonies are scheduled), the Imperial Regent will address the attendees and organizers of the tournament on the dueling fields. Being as the speech takes place during the middle of the day while the samurai are going about their business, it is expected that they will have their wakizashi or daisho; Crab PCs could get away with wearing armor or carrying around heavy weapons, though doing so does cost them Honor (as a Major Breach of Etiquette).

PCs who choose to not be present for the speech will lose Honor for their lack of courtesy (Minor Breach of Etiquette) and be noted later.

The dais on the edge of the main dueling field where the tournament's ceremonies will be performed is surrounded by watchful Imperial Legionnaires. A luxurious palanquin emblazoned with a metallic chrysanthemum is borne through the press of guards, and the tall form of the Imperial Regent steps out to ascend to the dais, where Otomo Saruko, Moto Gaheris and Shosuro Yudoka wait patiently. Despite the crowd of guards, Hantei Okucheo appears strangely isolated without the customary presence of the Stone Crab. The assembled crowd falls silent, the higher-ranking members closer to the front showing polite curiosity about what the last Hantei wishes.

The PCs should be given the chance to roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at this point; those who roll a 40 or more will take note of several minor functionaries of the court pressing close to the line of guards. In general, higher-Status or Glory characters, including the PCs, are closer to the front as they are usually deferred to; not only are these much lower-ranked NPCs out of place, they are carrying concealed knives. PCs who roll more than 60 actually spot the well-hidden form of a returned spirit atop the closest structure – the Shrine to the Duelists, about fifty yards away. This is Tsi Yoji, who has set himself up on the only available vantage point to watch over the proceedings.

Hantei Okucheo raises his hands in a gesture of benediction. "Welcome to the first Dark Edge Tournament! The opening ceremonies will be tomorrow, but we wished to take this opportunity to thank those who have given their service to this worthy cause." He turns a slightly sardonic eye on a group of samurai around the Unicorn Emerald Magistrate in the crowd, and a thin smile tugs at the edge of his on. "We realize that you do have other duties, but we are confident that before the summer is out, your efforts will assist in dealing with..." He breaks off as three men in the crowd suddenly converge on the line of Imperial guards, breaking open a space for a fourth to charge the dais. Steel flashes and blood flies into the air, as the Regent falls back before the sudden assault.

PCs who wish to be able to take actions during this combat must roll Initiative; they are surprised and suffer a -20 to their Initiative Score unless they succeeded at the earlier Investigation roll to spot the armed functionaries.

It is highly probable that some PCs will have no interest in involving themselves in this situation; indeed, the Imperial Legion will eventually overcome the assassins themselves without assistance from the PCs. However, the PCs are probably close enough to be able to intervene, are armed, and are in open public view of more than a hundred other samurai. Inaction will have consequences as much as action does.

It is also possible that a PC may wish to assist the assassins in their objective. Players interested in this option should be reminded (once) that they are in public, and that the Regent's Guard is in a state of heightened alert. An overt attack will be subject to the mechanics below. Subtle attempts to provide assistance are likely to fail simply due to the number of guards that will become involved. Magical attempts, even with such mechanics as the Soshi Technique, will be detected and tracked to their source by the Hidden Guard shugenja. Ultimately, it is up to the GM to adjudicate any attempts to hide their involvement while remembering that there are multiple Seppun Guardsmen and Seppun Shugenja in the area.

The combat should be fairly short, and is not intended to be a significant threat to the PCs – the important question here is what the PCs choose to do more than whether or not they are capable of defeating the attackers. There are four Kolat Assassins; in the first Round, three of the Assassins are engaged with the Regent's Guard while the fourth advances on the Regent himself. It requires a Complex Action to climb

custody of the remains of the assailants. Uncertain, the assembled samurai move off.

Trying to assist the guards earns a PC two points of Glory, and a point of Honor (three points if they have less than 3 Ranks of Honor, and none if they have Honor 9 or 10). If such a PC has “Sworn Enemy: Hantei Okucho”, they may remove it from their sheet (at the player’s choice); if he was a Nemesis instead, they may reduce him back to a standard Sworn Enemy. Even if they have him as an enemy, they gain a Favor from the Imperial Regent.

Those who waited passively to see what would happen instead of being involved in the confrontation in some fashion lose three points of Glory, and gain the “Banished from the Imperial Presence” Disadvantage. In practical terms, this has little effect on most PCs. As far as the Imperial Regent is concerned, they are not allowed to attend Imperial Court, and are not to be in the same area as the Empress or any gathering at which she is present. On the other hand, it is unlikely that this proclamation will be supported by the Emerald Champion, who has custody of the Empress, so there is probably no great change to the PCs’ lives.

A PC who attempts to assist the assassins will be rounded up with any survivors and dragged away to be questioned.

It is not technically beyond the realm of possibility that a unified table or a particular set of extremely good rolls would allow a PC to strike the Regent down; he cannot be killed outright by any means at the PCs’ disposal. Doing so certainly results in the death of the PC(s) involved, as there is no way to avoid the consequences; there are too many Legion troops to fight or escape. A PC truly loyal to the Emerald Champion might qualify for the Truest Test cert. The Regent will be some time recovering, which results in the rest of the module proceeding largely the same for any survivors.

After the Attack

The tournament will be indefinitely delayed; Otomo Saruko will announce later that the Regent wishes to get to the bottom of the incident before proceeding. The Owls will take over the prisoners and begin their investigation by torturing the assassins. Any Emerald Magistrate PCs will be coolly thanked if they offer their assistance (as an assault upon an Imperial samurai is normally entirely within their jurisdiction) but it will be made clear that the Imperial Regent wishes the matter handled by his own vassals.

In the meantime, the PCs will be approached by Moto Asara. The Emerald Magistrate was one of those

banished from the Imperial Presence, as were two of the tournament organizers – Mirumoto Raiken and Yogo Kitagi.

Asara meets the PCs at her office in the Administrative Center. ***“I thank you for your time, my friends. As the tournament is indefinitely delayed, and it has been made clear that my presence in the area would be awkward, I should like to ask for your assistance. I have been awaiting the arrival of my superior, Shinjo Shirasu, to assist him in overseeing a matter between the Unicorn and several other clans – the Scorpion primary among them. Shirasu-sama is, unfortunately, several days behind schedule and I should feel much more comfortable taking over the issue if I had witnesses from other clans present. It will involve some travel, but our destination is only a day or two away. I would like to depart in the morning, assuming you are willing...”***

Asara has no problem explaining herself or her request: she feels the need to remove herself from the immediate area in order to avoid confrontation with the Regent and his entourage, and is offering an honorable duty to any PC who was also Banished, as well as to Mirumoto Raiken and Yogo Kitagi. PCs who were not are instead being invited as a courtesy, to gain more witnesses to the resolution of the negotiations between the Scorpion and Unicorn.

As mentioned in the rumors (and as Asara will explain if necessary), the Emerald Magistrates under Shinjo Shirasu have recently taken custody of just over two dozen of the leaders of the Moto raiders responsible for attacks along the western Empire over the last few years. The Scorpion Clan has been most vocal about the issue, and the Unicorn have decided to give them as much justice as the Khan deems appropriate. While she will be a little vague on the details, Asara will make clear that the prisoners are to be executed. Observers from the Dragon, Lion, and Crab Clans are also present already, and Asara feels it is fair for other clans to see what will happen so that the tale can spread in the Empire. Owl PCs will be invited in order to assure the Imperial Regent has an observer as well.

PCs who choose not to accompany Asara are essentially writing themselves out of the rest of the module. They should be assured that the tournament will not take place without them, and that providing assistance to an Emerald Magistrate is a much better use of their time than waiting in the village would be. Refusing to go along earns them two experience and ends the module for them.

Part Two: The Khan's Justice

Assuming the PCs are willing to accompany her, Asara will be entirely forthcoming about her intentions and the situation. Moto Gaheris Koghun, the son of the Khan, is in command of a military encampment a little over a day's ride away from Dark Edge Village, where the prisoners are awaiting public execution with delegations from four other clans interested in serving as witnesses.

The next morning, as the PCs are preparing to depart, they will be joined by Ikoma Takeshi. The friendly Lion courtier offers a smile and a pleasant greeting, explaining his presence if asked by simply saying he was tasked to observe by the Owls. Even if there are other Owls present (among the PCs), he has been specifically sent along by the Regent. The other NPCs view Takeshi's presence with various degrees of suspicion or exasperation, but Moto Asara will give him a distant welcome as the rest of the group mounts up. Mirumoto Raiken's expression is perhaps more speculative, while Yogo Kitagi's mask prevents his reaction from being obvious.

The group travels through the day and arrives at the Koghun's camp a little after sundown, where Asara is recognized by the guards. The party will be sent to Moto Gaheris Koghun, while grooms will tend to their steeds and servants take their luggage to tents that will be assigned for their use. The camp holds roughly three hundred Unicorn samurai, while the other clans have between twenty and forty guards accompanying their delegates in their own parts of the camp.

The sounds of celebration hang on the crisp air of the spring evening. Several bonfires have been built through the camp, each serving as the center of activity for a group of bushi relaxing for the night. The largest fire burns at the center of the camp, a towering inferno casting sparks to rival the stars in the heavens, and the voices raised in song here are loudest and proudest. A tall form, cup lifted as he leads the singing, turns to you at your approach. He smiles in welcome, nods his head, and finishes his song before stepping forward. "O-hai-yo, my friends!" he calls out in welcoming, faint accent weathered away by the years. "Come, I offer the hospitality of my tent to you this eve."

This is Moto Gaheris Koghun, son of the Khan, commander of the Junghar Army, and a respected bushi in his own right. He is somewhat over average height

for a Rokugani, with a lean frame and the bowed legs of a veteran horseman. Intelligent and capable, he has begun to come into his own as a leader and the vast majority of the Unicorn are confident in his ability to take over the clan when his father eventually steps down. Both the Khan and the Koghun are determined that the Moto will integrate into the Empire's culture while still remembering their origins.

Gaheris Koghun is quite friendly, and greets Asara as an old friend; her response is somewhat more formal, though she does seem relatively at ease with him. She introduces the PCs – those who have encountered him in the past (primarily SoB32: Winter Court Shiro Moto, though he does have an appearance in SoB51: Stolen Property) will be remembered and made welcome. There is a substantial amount of alcohol present, and Gaheris makes certain everyone has a drink "to knock the dust from the road out of your throat", sending servants to prepare tea for those who refuse sake or shochou.

Gaheris leads you to his tent, where you can sit in comfort with less distraction. Settling himself onto the cushions, he gestures with his cup to Asara, and asks, "So what brings you here so soon? The tournament starts tomorrow, yes? You and Shirasu-san were supposed to be here in three days, unless I've lost a day somewhere..."

Asara grimaces and shakes her head. "No. I was hoping Shirasu-sama had come here, actually. He is a week overdue... Well, at any rate, the tournament has been delayed." She describes the attempted assassination in terse, precise terms, finishing with a sigh and tossing back the contents of her cup.

The Koghun looks into his cup pensively. "I dislike this, Asara. It is a hard duty, waiting to make a show of these deaths. I have been running drills during the day, and letting the men relax at night." He waves vaguely in the direction of the other bonfires. "I think we will end this, then. I will give the order – we will finish things tomorrow." He reaches out with the bottle and refills Asara's cup. "But for tonight, we relax with drink and song."

It may seem a bit odd that the troops guarding what is essentially an execution detail are celebrating, but Gaheris is aware that their morale is extremely low due to their duty. During the day, he keeps them occupied with training and at night he allows them to blow off steam (apart from those with guard duty, of course).

The PCs will be made fully welcome at the Koghun's camp. He makes every effort to be pleasant company,

and while the general atmosphere may be a little on the rough side for more refined sensibilities, Gaheris is genuinely glad to have the group present. (If nothing else, he is relieved to be getting the executions over and done with.) The Unicorn, predominantly Moto, are happy to teach the PCs their songs, or learn those from other clans. Besides music (accompanied sometimes by drums), the bushi of the Junghar entertain themselves by engaging in spontaneous martial contests – sparring, wrestling, kemari, or even less physical games like shogi.

PCs from the Crab, Dragon, Lion, or Scorpion clans are welcome to join their respective clans in their sections of the camp; Raiken, Kitagi, and Takeshi all do so. Otherwise, the PCs will be given tents near the Koghun's in the center of camp. They are relatively comfortable accommodations, for a military encampment – thick rugs on the ground, a soft futon, warm blankets. While everything is of Unicorn supply, there is no attempt to force samurai to accept “barbarian” equipment like furs or leather.

Things in camp do quiet down around midnight; it is a military encampment and their day does start at sunrise.

NPCs in Camp

There are a number of NPCs in the camp that may be of interest to the PCs, and they do have the evening to meet with some of them. More information can be found on these NPCs in Player Handout #2.

The Koghun's Riders: In the Moto tradition, Moto Gaheris has a small group of bushi that serve as his “riders”, essentially a group of boon companions that act as his personal guard. Gaheris will introduce them to any PCs that stay at his tent for the evening. They are led by his second in command, Moto Chudai. The others are Moto Jetei, Moto Khuchar, Utaku Hioko, and Ide Watanabe. (Jetei and Khuchar were members of this group during SoB32, and Hioko was present at that Winter Court as well.)

Moto Vordu: the Junghar does not have many shugenja assigned to it, mostly getting its magical support from the Baraunghar Army. Vordu is one of the few shugenja in the army, and is assigned specifically to the Koghun to assist him when necessary.

Ikoma Masakazu: The Lion delegate is only present to oversee the death of more Unicorn. He doesn't care too much about the raids themselves, seeing them simply as part of the constant skirmishing between two mighty military powers in close proximity.

Shosuro Tsuyoshi: Tsuyoshi is more irritated over the Moto attacks against the Scorpion lands than outraged, but he is more than willing to turn it to the clan's use in the courts in order to maintain Scorpion political supremacy – and being able to put pressure on their rivals in the Crane through their alliance with the Unicorn is an adequate tactic.

Kitsuki Hatoku: A peaceable Dragon courtier, Hatoku was sent to represent his clan in order to attempt to continue strengthening the ties between the Dragon and Unicorn that were started with the military alliance of last summer. His wife Kayuri acts as his yojimbo, though the two have a fairly strained relationship.

Yasuki Sawako: A courtier and merchant patron (though one specializing in higher fashion), Sawako has several ties to the Ide and is more comfortable with the Unicorn than many other Crab. She is more interested in business than politics, and has no shame in trying to use the gathering to expand her contacts.

Politics in the Camp?

Though there is only a single night, it is possible that the PCs will try to immediately involve themselves in the politics going on in camp. Their arrival after dark means that the clans have largely already separated into their own sections of the camp, but it is possible for them to find out what is going on. (It is not a particularly important question immediately, but the players may have an interest in it.)

The Unicorn are on relatively good terms with all four of the other clans, which is part of why the Khan was willing to go through this public demonstration of justice for them. The Scorpion have, perhaps, been the most vocal (and from the Unicorn perspective, least pleasant) about the raiders, but there is little strife between them and any of the other clans – having allied with the Dragon last summer and achieved an only slightly uneasy truce with the Lion. The Crab are not on good terms with the Dragon or Lion, due to the Crab's allies in the Phoenix and Crane causing major issues with those two clans, but the Crab and Scorpion work well enough together. The Lion and Dragon enjoy one of the strongest alliances in the Empire, and the Unicorn and Lion have a great deal of mutual respect born from their regular skirmishing.

Part Three: Dreams of Death

During the night, the Koghun will be murdered in his sleep by Yogo Kitagi. The Scorpion makes use of his

own abilities, as well as previously-prepared ward scrolls provided to him by the shugenja of his family to supplement his own capabilities. A description of the event is provided here for the GM to understand what clues will be available for the PCs to uncover; as this act is the result of Kitagi seizing an opportunity rather than from a well-thought-out plan, there are any number of flaws with the operation that the PCs may be able to exploit.

Between his Stealth Skill and ward scrolls, Kitagi is easily able to steal one of Ikoma Takeshi's kimono to wear while performing the murder and then to plant the evidence of his crime in Takeshi's tent. The killing itself is simply accomplished; again, Quiescence of Air prevents any sound from escaping, while he simply slits Gaheris' throat. Though Kitagi held Gaheris' head, the Koghun still managed to wake enough to punch him in the ribs before losing consciousness from blood loss and dying. Kitagi then wiped the blade clean on Takeshi's kimono, left through the same hole he cut, and headed to Takeshi's tent where he duplicated his stealth in order to hide the kimono, knife, and a forged letter indicting Takeshi and the Owls.

It may seem like there is no way for the PCs to avoid the death of their host, and that is entirely the case. It is, however, not their fault either and there should be no question of that. If the PCs were to do something to interfere, then logically Kitagi would wait until after the PCs had departed – preventing them from being able to decide what will happen as a result of the Koghun's death.

Moto Dream

Any PCs who have “Noticed/Marked by the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang” has a disturbing dream that night. PCs who stayed with Gaheris through the evening must make a **Void** roll at a TN of 20 or they suffer through it as well.

The scent of death hangs heavy on the air, brought to you by a cold wind from the north. You are on a shadowy, featureless plain, with a baleful moon gazing down on you the only way to tell one direction from another. The whispering of the wind rises, and you begin to be able to discern words in it... “We are coming... we have not forgotten you...” Shadows cluster around you, and dance in the breeze. “We will be remembered...” Nine figures rise from the dark ground, tattered robes fluttering and skeletal masks dully reflecting the moonlight. “The blood of the Khan...” The tall figures press in on you, and you are suddenly less sure that their faces are masked. “We claim his soul...” A sudden presence looms behind you, a tenth form reaching down toward you.

“We have returned...” Just before its grasping, boneless fingers close on you, you start awake.

Any PC who has this dream must roll **Willpower** (TN 15; 25 for any PC of Burning Sands descent). Failure means that they are temporarily possessed by the Lords of Death when Gaheris is slain; the death of the heir to the Khan gives them enough power to reach into the mortal Realm to remind the Moto of their existence.

The first intimation that most PCs will have that something has gone wrong is the sound of shouting at the center of camp.

Shortly before dawn, you are awoken by the sound of cries of surprise and fear from the camp around you. Ten figures stand in the center of the camp, surrounded by a spectral wind and clad in tattered gray robes. Their faces are covered in crimson, blood streaming from no visible source but flowing across their features in unsettling waves. As one, they raise their arms to the dim pre-dawn sky, and they raise their voices in a ghostly chant: “The blood of the Khan! We claim his soul! We have returned!” With the last word, they collapse as one.

Any PCs who were possessed will wake to find themselves clad in the tattered robe in the middle of the camp. The blood has vanished, along with the wind, and the possessed characters remember nothing besides the dream itself before waking. The rest of the forms are Moto bushi from the camp, most of them unknown to the PCs. One of them is Moto Jetei, the Koghun's youngest rider.

The camp is abuzz following this spectral manifestation. A sizable crowd forms, as it becomes clear that there was no immediate physical threat (Moto Asara and Mirumoto Raiken are visible in the crowd, though neither Ikoma Takeshi or Yogo Kitagi are). Moto Vordu, the Koghun's shugenja aide, will examine the possessed samurai, but before he can do much more than ask a few minor questions, another cry goes up through the camp: the guards have discovered that Moto Gaheris Koghun was slain.

When he examines the victims of the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang's possession, Vordu will pronounce them free of further influence though he will keep an eye on them. The little shugenja knows little about the Lords of Death, just the ghost stories told by the Moto for generations – lost gods that the Moto abandoned when they joined the Unicorn Clan. If pressed, he will admit a theory that the death of the Khan's heir gave them a path to follow to find the modern Moto. For the most part, their attention should be on the line of the Khan,

as the Moto chieftain holds a particular place with their abandoned pact with the lost gods.

Investigation

The Unicorn are stricken with grief and anger. Moto Asara takes over the situation immediately; as an Emerald Magistrate, she is of higher Status than any of the Unicorn in the camp, though Moto Chudai is the next in the chain of command. Asara is as upset as any of the troops, though she is capable of putting her emotions aside to deal with the problem.

She will, naturally, ask the PCs for their assistance in discovering what happened to the son of the Khan (the PCs almost certainly have a reputation by this point for having helped deal with problematic situations in the past). Mirumoto Raiken and Yogo Kitagi will also volunteer their help. Asara needs to deal with the Unicorn, helping Chudai keep the troops in line and deciding what to do with the delegations from the other clans, so the PCs will once again be largely left on their own to discover what happened. Asara tells the PCs, *“I will send a message to my lord. It would be best that we have an answer for him as soon as possible, preferably accompanied by the guilty party.”*

This investigation is supposed to be relatively straightforward for the PCs. Apart from the frame on Ikoma Takeshi (a frame that is meant to be found), there are no significant complications. There are only a handful of clues listed here, but if the players devise a method of looking into things that is not detailed, the GM is encouraged to allow them a reasonable chance to discover both the frame and the truth.

The Crime Scene

Examination of the physical crime scene is only likely to turn up a few clues. It is obvious that the attacker entered through a cut in the rear wall of the tent, and Gaheris was still in his sleeping furs when his throat was cut. Blood has splashed onto the floor and on the tent wall by his bedroll. An **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll will turn up a few clues:

- **20:** There is a bit of blood on the cut in the tent wall, indicating that the assassin used it as both entrance and exit. The cut is extremely neat, and was obviously made with a very sharp blade.
- **30:** There are drops of blood smeared on the ground outside the tent, forming a rough trail of sorts where bloody clothing passed over the grass. (At the GM’s discretion, this can also be found or followed by using the Hunting Skill.)
- **40:** The interior of the Koghun’s tent is fairly crowded, with the seating area the group used last

night, a planning table covered in papers, supplies, and Gaheris’ military gear. The assassin cut into the tent at a relatively clear point and navigated through the clutter without stumbling or knocking anything over, indicating that they had seen the layout prior to their entrance.

- **50:** Immediately above the cut in the tent, the PC can barely see a miniscule hole as if from a pin.

Examining the body is possible, though without using one of the camp’s eta, the PC will lose a great deal of Honor (Blasphemous Breach of Etiquette). This requires very little in the way of a roll – he was slain within the last hour, so rigor mortis has not yet set in and the body is barely cold. The wound was caused by an extremely sharp blade, and a **Medicine** or **Lore: Anatomy / Perception** roll (TN 25) will allow the PC to positively identify it as a knife rather than a longer weapon like katana or even wakizashi. A general examination of the body turns up nothing else; he was asleep when he was attacked, but if the PC rolls **Medicine / Perception** at a TN of 50 or specifically asks after defensive wounds, they will see that there is a slight bruising of his right hand difficult to see through the lividity of the corpse, but indicative that he might have been able to strike his attacker reflexively.

Magical investigation will turn up roughly the same information, with the addition that an Air spell was released in the tent just before the death of the victim (it is worth note that identifying the spell as having come from a ward-scroll will require being fairly specific with the questions asked the spirits). None of the spirits can positively identify the killer, however; even a Water spirit will not have a good image of the killer’s face, though their kimono will be brown and gold in the light from the cut.

Finding tracks outside the Koghun’s tent is largely impossible, though the blood-trail can be located by rolling either **Hunting (Tracking)** or **Investigation (Search) / Perception** (TN 30). The trail does lead toward the Lion part of the camp, avoiding any of the high-traffic areas, but it will have dried out before it can be followed to a specific tent.

Asking Around Camp

The guards on the Koghun’s tent have very little to report. About an hour before dawn, they heard Gaheris stop snoring; one of them poked his head into the tent to see if their commander had woken up, but seeing him asleep in his bed, thought nothing more about the matter. (This was when Kitagi placed his ward, preventing any sound from escaping the tent.)

Asking around the camp requires an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll.

- **25:** Some of the servants recall seeing a Lion walking around near the command tents about an hour before dawn.
- **30:** A groom saw Mirumoto Raiken outside the camp quite early in the morning.
- **35:** One of the guards on duty at the camp's perimeter passed a messenger through late in the night yesterday, and then saw him leave about ten minutes later. He does not know who the message was for, other than it was one of the non-Unicorn clans (it was an unmounted peasant messenger).

Searching the Tents

While most of Rokugan does not care for the concept of evidence, the Unicorn are in general slightly more inclined to trust it if it seems logical. Getting permission to search for evidence requires a logical reason to do so – the trail leading to the Lion tents is enough reason for Asara to authorize it.

A search of Ikoma Takeshi's tent requires an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll (TN 30) to find a small hole dug into the ground under one of the rugs (the spell *By the Light of the Moon* will also locate this). In the hole is the bloody kimono, a plainly-decorated (but extremely sharp) knife, and a letter from Otomo Dsichi authorizing Ikoma Takeshi's murder of Moto Gaheris Koghun (Player Handout #3).

A search of Kitagi's tent turns up essentially nothing, even with magical assistance. An **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll (TN 40) will allow them to find his recently-used writing desk with still-wet ink in the bowl, indicating he was writing at some point within the last four hours or so. All incriminating evidence is on his person – there are a few blood-spots on his under kimono where Gaheris' blood soaked through before he planted Takeshi's kimono to be found, he keeps the wards in his obi, and he has a letter from Shosuro Atsumori instructing him to secure the Khan's support by any means necessary (Player Handout #4). He also has a couple of cracked ribs from Gaheris' death throes. Searching Kitagi, on the other hand, requires some more justification. Asara will support it if the PCs have a good reason – wishing to examine everyone for signs of the Koghun's last blow, for example.

Confronting the Suspects

Rokugani justice, even Unicorn justice, hinges on testimony, so inevitably the PCs will need to speak with whoever they

Takeshi will protest his innocence. *“I would do nothing of this nature! I don't even know which Unicorn slew my brother, and I certainly would not dishonor his memory by seeking revenge in anything less than an upright and proper fashion.”* If asked where he was during the manifestation of the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, he mutters, “Visiting the latrines. I was awoken by the uproar, but when I saw it was just another gaijin spectacle, I chose to ignore it.” Takeshi rolls 10k4, with the Emphasis, for Sincerity (Honesty). As he is telling the truth, the players will not really be able to tell if he is lying or not – he is convincing, but whether that is because he is honest or a very convincing liar is essentially impossible to know.

If the PCs question Mirumoto Raiken, he will calmly claim to have been exercising out of the camp. Again, this is true, and he rolls 6k3 for his Sincerity roll – however, if a PC beats his roll, they will be able to tell that he is keeping something back. With typical Dragon mysticism, he will avoid anything but a blunt question but if the PCs are direct, he admits to having seen a message delivered to the Scorpion camp just before midnight last night. *“After that, my curiosity was piqued, and I caught sight of Yogo Kitagi entering the Lion part of camp just before the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang manifested in the center.”* If asked why he would keep this to himself, he shrugs. *“Perhaps I was waiting to see if it would be important, or useful.”* At this point, he is not lying or keeping anything back – he was simply motivated by the potential for personal advancement.

If confronted, Kitagi requests to speak with the Emerald Magistrate without the presence of any Owls or other supporters of the Imperial Regent. He is more than willing to include PCs that support the Emerald Champion in the discussion, however.

After any supporters of the Regent have left the tent, or if it becomes obvious that they won't leave, Kitagi will obliquely come to his point. *“I bear no particular ill will toward the young Lion in question, but it seems to me that there is sufficient reason to think him guilty. Additionally, you should carefully consider the future ramifications of the Unicorn lord's death. His father is not known for his deliberation: the Khan will act in order to seek vengeance. Would you not rather see his anger directed at the Imperial Regent? It is only a matter of time before the Hantei and the Emerald Champion come to open war. The armies of the Unicorn, led by the Khan, may well be of great value in the coming conflict.”*

The implication is that Kitagi killed Gaheris, though he will not say so outright. He is not proud of doing so,

but is devoted to his duty. With Gaheris already dead, there is nothing to be gained for anyone but the Imperial Regent by the truth coming out, and Kitagi is not interested in that at all. He is willing to die for his actions, but his mission is to get the Khan's support for the Emerald Champion, so he will do everything he can to ensure that happens. His mysterious death in the middle of the investigation would cast doubt on the cover story, though he will kill himself rather than be subject to torture that would let the truth be confirmed.

It is up to the PCs to decide what they wish to do. Asara is stricken by the conflict between her desire for vengeance and the genuine fear that the Khan will blame the Emerald Champion for the death of his son, so will go along with whatever they recommend.

There is no "good answer" here; supporting any resolution that conceals the truth is a dishonorable action, but it is obvious to anyone with the slightest familiarity with the Khan that the Unicorn Champion will seek a bloody vengeance on whoever is blamed. Kitagi is publicly known as a firm supporter of the Emerald Champion, and his attempt to frame the Regent will likely turn the Khan against Toshiken. The simplest way to prevent this is to allow Kitagi's plot to go forward, making the PCs complicit in the coverup. Even one PC choosing to go public will cause enough of an uproar that it is unlikely that the truth will not come out.

A direct accusation against Kitagi will allow him to insist on a duel to the death to resolve the matter. Asara can approve it, as an Emerald Magistrate dealing with a legal matter, and will do so if the PCs agree to the matter. Kitagi is a moderately skilled duelist, but unlikely to survive an encounter with a trained bushi, so is deliberately sacrificing his life at this point as expiation for his failure. Because duels are, by their nature, public affairs, this will result in the frame of Ikoma Takeshi being dispelled.

It is to be expected that some players will try to find a third option; because of the binary nature of the situation, these are mostly unlikely to work. Even an attempt to shift the blame to a third party (the Son of the Black Lion, for example) would only work if all of the PCs are agreed and they manage to convince Kitagi to go along with it. A PC willing to sacrifice themselves to provide cover for an alternate story will mitigate the Honor loss for the other players (preventing their sacrifice from being in vain) but not eliminate the loss.

It is highly likely that the players will discuss this matter at length, so it is suggested that the GM pay attention to the time remaining in the slot.

Conclusion

After overseeing the executions of the Moto raiders, Asara will go back to Dark Edge Village to report in to Gaheris personally, and ask the PCs to accompany her. Whatever the PCs decide, the wrath of the Khan will fall on one of the most powerful samurai in the Empire.

If the PCs place the blame on the Regent:
Moto Gaheris listens to Asara's report with a dark face. He draws a shuddering breath, then grates out "So you are convinced the Imperial Regent is ultimately responsible for my son's death?" Asara hesitates, looking at you, and simply nods. (At this point, if they discovered the truth, any PCs with "Can't Lie" must roll a Willpower Trait roll at TN 20 to avoid correcting the Emerald Magistrate...)

The Khan rises to his feet and stalks to the door. Out in the street, he roars, "OKUCHEO! COME OUT HERE, DOG!" His guards scramble around him, attempting to contain his wrath but largely failing.

After a few minutes, a troop of Imperial Legionnaires assembles in the street; it is difficult not to note that the Unicorn are outnumbered. The Imperial Regent steps out of the inn behind them, an almost amused expression on his thin features. "Yes, barbarian? You require something? A lesson in manners, perhaps?"

Gaheris spits to one side, and the Hantei raises an elegant eyebrow. "Do you think you could have my son killed and get away with it? Blood calls out for blood, murderer! I will tear your heart from your chest with my bare hands!" He takes a step forward, and the Imperial troops draw their steel, three times as many of them as Unicorn.

The Regent blinks, and glances at the Oriole samurai next to him. (PCs who succeed at an Investigation (Notice) / Perception roll with a TN of 30 see that Tsi Yoji gives a miniscule shake of his head at Okucheo's inquiring glance.) He then snorts derisively. "You will do nothing of the sort today, it appears. We do not know what you are ranting about, gaijin. But let us offer our condolences on the loss of your heir. A pity for the future of your clan." Okucheo pauses, then a cold smile appears. "Oh, and let us not forget to offer congratulations on the birth of your grandson... Perhaps he will grow into as bright a hope as his

father was. Shiro Moto is rather remote, but perhaps we can send an appropriate expression of our respect in the next few months.” As the Khan’s face goes white in utter rage, the Regent turns his back on him. “We will leave this place now. The air is... disagreeable.”

Gaheris’ hand closes on his sword, but one of his guards leans in and whispers to him, obviously an entreaty of some sort. “Not this day, perhaps, dog. But one day, I will have your heart’s blood.”

Okucheo turns a pitying glance back on him as the Imperial Legion forms up. “Sentimental fool. What use has a samurai for a heart?” With that, his guards escort him out of the village.

The Dark Edge Tournament will fall through at this point, with the ill-feeling between the Unicorn Champion and the Imperial Regent.

If the PCs allow the blame to fall on the Emerald Champion:

Moto Gaheris listens to Asara’s report with a dark face. He draws a shuddering breath, then grates out “So you are convinced the Scorpion killed my son as a ploy in support of the Emerald Champion?” Asara hesitates, looking at you, and simply nods.

The Khan rises to his feet and stalks to the door.

The PCs may choose to follow him or not, as they wish. Otherwise, they will simply hear about the meeting between the Khan and the Regent later. Those who choose to follow can witness the following:

The Khan stands in the street outside the inn that Hantei Okucheo’s troops have taken over for his use. He announces to the air, in a voice that shakes the doors and windows, “I would have words with the Imperial Regent! Now.” The Imperial troops, flustered, attempt to reason with him, but he ignores their words, burning gaze fixed on the inn.

After a few moments, the Regent comes to the door, a displeased frown on his face. “This is unseemly, Moto-san. There are ways-”

Gaheris interrupts the Regent, voice hot. “My son is dead, slain by the lackeys of the Emerald Champion. Your enemy is now my enemy. I will see his head atop a pike on the walls of Shiro Moto.” A flash of rage crosses Okucheo’s face for a moment at being cut off, though as the Khan’s words penetrate, he regains control of his expression. He glances at the Oriole

*samurai next to him and raises an eyebrow. (PCs who succeed at an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll with a TN of 30 see that Tsi Yoji gives a miniscule shake of his head at Okucheo’s inquiring glance.) *Shaking his head with a sigh, he looks back to the Unicorn Champion. “Please let us offer our condolences on the loss of so bright a hope for the future of your clan. As far as the matter of justice is concerned...” He pauses for a moment, evidently pondering the issue. “You can claim the right to blood feud, if you wish. Certainly none here would gainsay you.”**

“Help me or not, as you choose,” Gaheris growls. “But those who stand in my way will find the same fate as our enemy.”

The Regent nods equably. “Of course, Gaheris-san. Come, let us discuss this in private...”

The Dark Edge Tournament will eventually be put on, though the PCs will likely be sent on other duties while it is being adjusted.

Aftermath of the Assassination

Regardless of where the blame falls, the PCs will find out that the investigation into the attempted assassination on the Imperial Regent was a Kolat plot; the would-be assassins confessed to their association with the conspiracy and were put to death. (If a PC was taken prisoner, they will not be mentioned, as their rationale for participating in the attack is likely not due to Kolat sympathies.)

Over the next several days, it becomes clear that the Imperial Regent was not the only high-ranking samurai targeted by the Kolat. Assassinations have been carried out through the Empire, most of them by small groups of suicidal, knife-wielding maniacs. A few are carried out with more subtlety, such as the death of Lion Champion Kitsu Motso and several of his command staff (murdered by poison, his ronin hatamoto Kado is now missing and wanted for questioning) and Master of Water Isawa Tomo (slain by a mishap with the ritual to restore his connection to Ningen-do, engineered by the retired Iuchi Barashi). It becomes obvious that the Kolat are striking back at the Empire as the pressure is increasing against them.

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:	+2XP
Investigating the Death of the Koghun:	+1XP
Total Possible Experience:	4XP

Honor

PCs who assist the Regent's Guard with the assassins gain one point of Honor (three points if their Honor is less than 3 and no points if their Honor is greater than 8.)

PCs who discover the frame on Ikoma Takeshi and allow it to go through will lose three points of Honor for every full Rank of Honor they have.

Particularly honorable behaviour when determining the group's course of action may be worth an Honor gain at the GM's discretion. PCs who support the Emerald Champion may gain or lose, depending on what they choose to do and why.

Glory

Assisting the Regent's Guard gains the PC two points of Glory.

Doing nothing during the assassination attempt costs the PCs three points of Glory.

If the PCs find someone to blame for the death of the Koghun, assisting an Emerald Magistrate in her investigation, they gain 5 points of Glory (-1 point for every Rank of Glory they have, to a minimum of 1 point).

Other Awards/Penalties

Assisting the Regent's Guard gains the PC a Favor with the Imperial Regent; additionally, and PC who does so with "Sworn Enemy: Hantei Okucho" may remove it from their sheet at the player's discretion (keeping the enemy is easily possible if the player chooses, they simply have to say something else inflammatory and it comes right back). PCs with "Nemesis: Hantei Okucho" may reduce it to "Sworn Enemy", similarly at the player's discretion.

PCs who do nothing during the assassination attempt gain "Banished from the Imperial Court."

PCs who discover Kitagi's frame of Takeshi but choose to hide it gain "Dark Secret: Knows the Truth about the Koghun's Death." They may also choose to gain either "Blackmail: Shosuro Atsumori" or a Scorpion Clan Favor.

GM Reporting

Were any of the PCs Banished from the Imperial Presence?

Did any of the PCs attempt to attack the Regent?

Was Kitagi's frame of Takeshi uncovered?

GM must report this information BEFORE (6/12/2015) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Yogo Kitagi

Kitagi wears a full mask that leaves only his eyes uncovered, a finely-crafted ceramic piece with a dramatic lightning bolt motif. He is a highly-trained Scorpion agent, used to operating on his own with minimal oversight, but recently has been put under great pressure to accomplish his current mission.

Air 5 Earth 3 Fire 5 Water 3 Void 4

Honor 1.8 Status 3.5 Glory 3.1

Initiative: 10k5 **Attack:** 10k5 (knife)

Armor TN: 30 **Damage:** 4k1 (knife)

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

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 3/Shosuro Infiltrator 3

Techniques: *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.

The Path of the Shadows: Lose no Honor for use of Low Skills or Ninjutsu Weapons in the service of the Scorpion Clan (subject to GM approval). +2k0 to Stealth Skill Rolls.

Strike From Darkness: When attacking an opponent who is unaware of presence until, Raises are not limited by Void and roll additional dice equal to School Rank on the attack roll. Roll half this number of additional unkept dice on an attack roll made against an opponent who is suffering from a Condition effect (such as Stunned or Fatigued). These two effects are not cumulative.

Steel Within Silk: When attacking from ambush as described above, or when using ninjutsu weapons (including any weapons with the Ninja keyword), may make attacks as a Simple Action.

Skills: Acting 5, Athletics (Climbing) 5, Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Gossip) 6, Etiquette (Conversation) 5, Forgery 5, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation (Search) 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Ninja-to) 5, Knives 5, Lore: Theology 6, Ninjutsu 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 6, Spellcraft 4, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth (Sneaking) 7, Temptation 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Luck, Silent / Contrary

Special: Kitagi carries several pre-made ward scrolls supplied to him by his family. They include multiple copies of Quiescence of Air, as well as Force of Will, Fires of Purity, Reversal of Fortunes, and Symbol of Air.

Player Handout #1: NPCs at the Dark Edge Tournament

Moto Gaheris: Champion of the Unicorn Clan; Status 8.0, Glory 9.2

Called “the Khan”, the leader of the Unicorn was given his position by divine mandate from the Lady Shinjo due to his service on her return to the Empire. He is one of the mightiest bushi in the Empire, with a lifetime of raiding behind him. To many, he is the epitome of the Unicorn Clan: a fierce warrior on the battlefield but an uncultured barbarian in the court.

Shosuro Yudoka: Family Daimyo of the Shosuro; Status 7.0, Glory 6.4

Dark and enigmatic, Yudoka was little more than a child when his clan was exiled to the Burning Sands, but he returned with the Moto a veteran warrior. Today, he represents the threat of the Scorpion that few wish to think about, and none discuss in public.

Otomo Saruko: Tournament Organizer; Status 6.9, Glory 5.8

Saruko is an experienced courtier and renowned go master, and under normal circumstances organizing a tournament would be beneath her skills. Ensuring the event goes without incident, however, may task even her abilities.

Utaku Tamami: Local Governor; Status 4.0, Glory 3.7

A bushi given responsibility for this quiet, out-of-the-way village instead of seeking retirement when she was wounded in battle during the purge of the Dark Moto, Tamami has been a competent if not brilliant administrator.

Ide Magobe: Master of the Calm Heart Dojo; Status 4.0, Glory 4.6

Magobe is the head sensei of the dojo in the village, which is most famous for its controversial emphasis on non-lethal techniques. He himself avoids conflict with the grace of any Ide, despite his bushi training.

Moto Asara: Local Emerald Magistrate; Status 4.5, Glory 5.2

One of the very few New Moto to have been given an Imperial position, Asara is devoted to the Empire that has become her family’s home. She eschews most of the gaijin trappings of her tribe, though her duties rarely take her beyond the borders of the Unicorn lands.

Utaku Xianhi: Gunso of the Local Guard; Status 3.5, Glory 3.9

Xianhi is Tamami’s sister and has served as the officer over the village guard for several years. She is quite athletic, and her training regimen is noted for keeping the local bushi in excellent condition.

Ikoma Takeshi: Political Advisor to Ikoma Gohesu and Owl; Status 3.5, Glory 4.1

Though he once served as advisor to Matsu Akane of the Yama Province, Takeshi has recently come to the attention of the Ikoma family daimyo. He also serves as one of the Imperial Regent’s Owls, and is known to have made many efforts to stem the conflict between those loyal to the Regent and those loyal to the Emerald Champion. He is a friendly and outgoing courtier with a reputation as a

Mirumoto Raiken: Junior Sensei of the Iron Mountain Dojo; Status 3.5, Glory 2.8

Raiken is a quiet, unassuming warrior who has spent little time outside the dojo. He has fought with distinction in tournaments and exhibition matches, but is relatively unknown due to never serving on the battlefield or fighting a duel in earnest.

Yogo Kitagi: Spiritual Advisor to Shosuro Atsumori; Status 3.5, Glory 3.1

An outspoken courtier, scholar, and theologian, Kitagi serves the powerful daimyo of Ryoko Owari. Both Kitagi and his liege are staunch supporters of Kakita Toshiken, despite the Scorpion Clan Champion’s recent feud with the Emerald Champion.

Player Handout #2: NPCs at the Unicorn Camp

Moto Gaheris Koghun: Son of the Khan and Rikugunshokan of the Junghar; Status 7.0, Glory 6.3

The Khogun is highly respected by both the Unicorn and their enemies, a clever warrior and able leader who inspires the best from his troops. He is dedicated to making the Moto fully part of the Empire while still remembering their roots.

Moto Chudai: Leader of the Koghun's Riders; Status 4.0, Glory 5.2

A longtime friend of Gaheris Koghun, Chudai is a pragmatic and practical warrior who is reported to view the ways of the Empire with something like "amused tolerance."

The Koghun's Riders: Status 3.5, Glory 3-5

- Moto Jetei is young, happy-go-lucky scout who is more than happy to share a few games of dice or drinks with anyone.
- Moto Khuchar is as young as Jetei, but intense where his friend is joyous, and always on the lookout for ways to prove himself worthy. He is a skilled swordsman, though it is with the spear that he truly shines.
- Utaku Hioko is a fairly gregarious battle-maiden who gained her place at the Koghun's side by virtue of her will more than her skill at arms. She is unarguably the best rider in the group, and is one of the few Unicorn to have beaten Gaheris in more than one race.
- Ide Watanabe is a quiet, placid bushi from one of the more peaceful families in Rokugan. His demeanor in combat is reportedly entirely different, however, where he unleashes a fury to give a Matsu pause.

Moto Vordu: Shugenja Advisor to the Koghun; Status 4.0, Glory 3.6

A short, swarthy shugenja with far too much fondness for furs, Vordu is often blisteringly sarcastic but is good enough at his duties to avoid much censure for his rough tongue. His cleverness is best appreciated at a great distance, but the Koghun and he seem to have enough mutual respect to work well together.

Yasuki Sawako: Crab Envoy; Status 3.0, Glory 3.3

Sawako is a pretty woman, famous for the quality of kimono produced by her vassals and traded through the Empire by virtue of her vast network of commercial contacts. She has many friends in the Unicorn lands, undoubtedly why the Crab sent her here as an observer for the proceedings – and if the clan can profit from her journey, so much the better.

Kitsuki Hatoku: Dragon Courtier; Status 4.0, Glory 2.9

Calm and reserved, Hatoku is known for his ability to avoid confrontation in the court, indicating that the Dragon are eager to avoid alienating their neighbors to the west even over this issue.

Ikoma Masakazu: Lion Emissary; Status 4.0, Glory 5.2

The leader of the Lion delegation is a bushi, not a courtier. He has some experience in the courts, though his reputation is more as a duelist than negotiator. While capable of being polite enough for these proceedings, his presence is undoubtedly meant to be some form of message to the Unicorn.

Shosuro Tsuyoshi: Hatamoto to Shosuro Yudoka; Status 6.0, Glory 3.1

A returned spirit who has gone through the ritual to regain his ties to Ningen-do, Tsuyoshi has served as advisor to Shosuro Yudoka for the last four years though few people know where he came from before that. He is rumored to have held a higher position in his first life, though he seems content to remain behind the scenes. He is unquestionably quite brilliant, even if he has come into conflict with the Scorpion Champion once or twice and his enmity for the Dragon is well-known.

Player Handout #3: Letter to Ikoma Takeshi

Takeshi-san,

Your need for revenge against your brother's killer is understandable, and it is unfortunate that your lord denied your petition for blood feud. Be assured that the Regent supports your vengeance. Yet, so as not to shame your lord by publicly overturning his judgment, we suggest you use some discretion when you claim the life of Moto Gaheris. His death can be made to serve the Regent.

- Otomo Dsichi
Political Advisor to the Imperial Regent
Master of the Owls

Player Handout #4: Letter to Yogo Kitagi

Make an opportunity.

The Khan must be directed as is best for the Empire.

The death of his son will provide motivation.

Atsumori-sama said, "Any means necessary."

Make it happen.

No more excuses.

- Bayushi Sadayoshi
Captain of the Lightning Guard

Player Handout #5: Kolat Attacks Across the Empire

Killed

Kaiu Utsu, Daimyo of the Kaiu Family
Asahina Koji, Daimyo of the Asahina Family
Daidoji Shinnin, Failed Courtier
Doji Reju, Sensei of the Ruby Dojo
Kakita Rensei, Commander of the Kakita House Guard
Kitsuki Yasu, retired Daimyo of the Kitsuki Family
Kitsuki Otojiro, Emerald Magistrate
Kitsuki Baishon, Daimyo of Shinjutsu Province
(many other Kitsuki)
Mirumoto Ukira, Chui in the First Imperial Legion
Kitsu Motso, Lion Clan Champion
Yoritomo Hogosha, Political Advisor to the Emerald Champion
Yoritomo Masasue, Military Advisor to the Mantis Champion
Yoritomo Taihime, Mantis Representative to the Imperial Court
Isawa Tomo, Master of Water
Shiba Kyukyo, Voice of the Council
Yogo Masuhiro, Daimyo of the Yogo Family
Horiuchi Shoan, Daimyo of the Horiuchi Family
Ide Tadaji, Imperial Advisor
Otomo Dsichi, Master of the Owls

Survived

Hida Rohiteki, Crab Clan Regent
Hida Tsuneo, the Stone Crab
Kuni Utagu, Jade Champion
Yasuki Kiromayu, Imperial Treasurer
Doji Kurohito, Crane Clan Champion
Kakita Yoshi, Kakita Family Daimyo
Kakita Toshiken, Emerald Champion
Kakita Narumi, Crane Clan Regent
Agasha Chosai, Agasha Family Regent
Kitsuki Mizuochi, Kitsuki Family Daimyo
Mirumoto Takejiro, Mirumoto Family Daimyo
Akodo Ginawa, Akodo Family Daimyo
Ikoma Ken'ō, Rikugunshokan of the First Imperial Legion
Ikoma Gohesu, Ikoma Family Daimyo
Ikoma Sumiko, Gohesu's wife
Kitsu Toju, Kitsu Family Daimyo
Moshi Akemi, Moshi Family Daimyo
Shiba Tsukune, Phoenix Clan Champion
Bayushi Yojiro, Scorpion Clan Champion
Bayushi Tange, Sensei of the Bayushi Bushi Dojo
(rather more unsuccessful attempts not publicly acknowledged)
Ide Gokun, Ide Family Daimyo
Shinjo Shono, Shinjo Family Daimyo
Otomo Mitsuhide, Imperial Chancellor
Miya Yumi, Imperial Herald
Otomo Sorai, Otomo Family Daimyo