

Dark Eyes on the Wall

**A One-Round Mid-Rank SHADOWLANDS Adventure
for Heroes of Rokugan (Champions of the Emerald
Empire)**

by Rob Hobart

The Emperor has sent you as escorts for one of his shisha to learn what is happening in the Crab lands. There you find yourselves with a chance to save a sacred Crab relic and perhaps end a deadly civil war.

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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, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

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.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD! Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

This adventure is a Mid-Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 2 through 4 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table. Rank 1 characters can play, but should be warned up front that they run a serious risk of death.

All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate. Sometimes, reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly

needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Please note that this is a SHADOWLANDS module, and as such, presents a much greater threat of death and Taint than is normally found in other Heroes of Rokugan adventures. Non-combatant PCs, especially courtiers, are likely to be very much out of their element in this scenario. The GM should make this clear from the beginning, so the players can choose whether or not to play a particular character in this adventure.

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. The following may be considered as guidelines:

- Performing an act of selfless, sacrificial loyalty to one's daimyo or clan: +1 point of Honor.
- Abiding by the tenets of bushido when one could gain an obvious advantage from breaking them: +1 point of Honor.
- Betraying or disobeying your duty, Clan, or family: lose 1-10 points of Honor and Glory, depending on the severity of the failure.
- Crying out in pain when injured: lose one point each of Honor and Glory.
- Using sneaky, underhanded, or treacherous methods when at an Honor rank higher than zero: lose 1-5 points of Honor.
- Using poison: lose 1-10 points of Honor, depending on the circumstances (there is always an Honor loss for using poison).
- Performing a socially acceptable public act of extreme courage and skill: +1 point of Glory.
- Drunk, insulting, or otherwise ill-mannered in public: lose 1-5 points of Glory.
- Made ronin: Glory drops to zero.

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 or lower):

- The TNs to detect/evade the various traps in the Kaiu Walls are 5 lower.
- Reduce the number of trolls in the Kaiu Tunnels to three.
- The Shadowlands Plant takes full damage from normal weapons.
- The Dark Oracle can be dodged at TN 15, inflicts 4kX damage, and can be driven away with 80 wounds of damage.

High End Party (average party Rank above Three):

- Increase the number of trolls in the Kaiu Tunnels to five.
- The vault is located in Armory 3b (home to the Shadowlands Plant). The plant has Strength of 4 and is Invulnerable.
- The Dark Oracle of Air will automatically notice the PCs, whether or not any of them have him as a Sworn Enemy.
- The Dark Oracle must be dodged at TN 25, and inflicts 6kX damage.
- If the Battle Table is used, add one unkept die to the damage totals inflicted on the PCs.

Adventure Summary and Background

This adventure takes place in Crab lands, during the civil war which is tearing the Clan apart. Hida Sukune has exposed the plan of his father, Hida Kisada, to ally with the Shadowlands in order to seize the Emerald Throne. Sukune, who blames Kuni Yori for “leading my father down a false path,” has raised the banners of revolt. Many have answered, especially from the Hiruma family, who understand too well the dangers of underestimating the Shadowlands. But the majority of the Crab Clan remains loyal to their Champion, Hida Kisada. The resulting conflict threatens to destroy the Clan on whom the defense of Rokugan depends.

And from the walls of the fallen Fifth Tower, the armies of Fu Leng watch and laugh. Hida Atarasi, the first and greatest of the akutenshi (evil angels), has come out of the deep Shadowlands to lead the armies of Fu Leng. In the Fifth Tower he is gathering his forces, pretending allegiance to Hida Kisada while plotting the destruction of all Rokugan.

Little word of this has reached the outside world, for the recent alliance between the Crab, Unicorn, and Mantis has resulted in the Unicorn and Mantis Clans stationing troops and ships on the Crab borders. Now the young Emperor, Hantei the 39th, has decreed that this secrecy must end. He has dispatched one of his shisha heralds, Miya Kotomi, to visit Crab lands and learn the truth of what is happening there. The PCs have been sent as her escorts, to ensure that she does not fall prey to accident or war.

Once the PCs reach Crab lands, they will have the opportunity to learn the truth of what is happening – and perhaps, to save a great artifact of the Crab Clan, one which could have a decisive impact on the Clan’s internal struggle and on the future of Rokugan itself.

Notes on Running This Adventure: There are several Advantages and Disadvantages which may become relevant when running this adventure. The GM should review all the PCs’ character sheets beforehand and make note of any PC who possesses these traits:

- **True Friend: Hiruma Imai.**
- Any sort of **Ratling Allies**, especially the Odd-Eye Clan and the ratling Rit’chuk’Tak (from the adventures *Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina* and *Drawing Out the Darkness*).
- **Sworn Enemy: Dark Oracle of Air and Curse of the Dark Oracle of Air.**

Introduction

It is assumed that any non-Crab have been chosen by the Imperial house to accompany Miya Kotomi to Crab lands. Ronin PCs have been hired by Kotomi herself, at the rate of 3 koku, to serve as her personal guards and assistants.

Crab PCs face a more complex situation. They have several choices:

- They can choose to have been outside of Crab lands since the civil war began. This is a reasonable choice for Crabs who have been out in the Empire running through other Heroes of Rokugan adventures. Regardless of whether they will eventually support Hida Kisada’s “loyalists” or Sukune’s “rebels,” these PCs know little more of what is happening in their lands than anyone else, and may be presumed to be returning home to learn what is really happening.

- A player may choose to declare that his PC has already been living in Crab lands and perhaps even fighting on one side in the civil war. In this case, the PC will join the party when they reach the appropriate location in Crab lands – Yasuki lands for members of that family and for neutral members of the Hida family, Kyuden Hida for all “loyalists,” Shiro Kaiu for Kaiu family PCs and neutral Hiruma PCs, and Razor of the Dawn Castle for all “rebels.”
- This means that some PCs may not be able to participate in the adventure for a significant portion of its length. The GM should make this clear to the players ahead of time, so they can make their decision with “eyes unclouded.”

Miya Kotomi

Kotomi is a small, deceptively delicate young woman with a plain face and intent, penetrating eyes. She dresses in a practical traveling kimono inscribed with the Miya mon, and carries no weapons, only a fan and a small pouch of money and personal belongings. During this trip, she also wears a sashimono, or “back banner,” a small banner worn on a thin bamboo staff strapped to the back. These are most commonly used during battle, to identify a samurai’s unit. Kotomi’s banner bears the mon of the Miya family and the Hantei chrysanthemum. She wears it any time she is in public, to ensure that nobody can mistake who she is and who she serves.

PCs who have played the adventures *Occult Murders* or *Flower’s Kiss* have met Kotomi before. She is a woman deeply dedicated to the traditional Miya goals of peace and harmony. Kotomi is determined to carry out her duty here, which is to learn the truth of what is happening in Crab lands and report this information back to the capital.

The PCs (except possibly some of the Crab) will have a chance to role-play with Kotomi before the storyline gets rolling. Aside from her general attitudes, she has the following specific information and beliefs.

- Kotomi is deeply concerned about current events in the Empire, especially the ongoing Lion-Crane war and the new conflict between the Dragon and the Phoenix Clans (in which the Lion are participating as allies of the Phoenix). There is an effort underway to broker a truce between the Lion and Crane, but so far it has met with little success. Meanwhile, the Unicorn Clan’s sudden annexation of the City of the Rich Frog has once again

ratcheted up tensions between them and the Lion, raising the specter of war spreading to another front.

- Kotomi has also heard rumors that the Lion plan an attack through Beiden Pass against the Scorpion. She will comment disapprovingly that the Lion seem ready to go to war with everyone at the slightest excuse. If there are any Lion PCs, she will try to point out the error of their ways. “The duty of the Lion is to defend the Emperor, not to seek wars without need.” If there are no Lion PCs, she’ll make her disapproval more plain. “The Matsu are mad. Next, they’ll be marching down to the Crab border, or storming the Mantis Isles. Is there no end to such foolishness?”
- Kotomi disapproves of the alliance between the Unicorn, Mantis, and Crab. She is especially concerned about the Unicorn Clan, which she admires, and believes the Unicorn have allowed themselves to be tricked by the overly ambitious leaders of the Crab and Mantis Clans. Given the chance, she will try to gently persuade any Unicorn PCs to see the error of their Clan’s ways.
- Kotomi is secretly uneasy about the ascension of her new daimyo, Miya Satoshi, who was raised by the Lion Clan. She will speak of such concerns with anyone who strikes her as properly enlightened and peaceful (especially Crane, Sparrow, and Isawa).

Journey to Crab Lands

The scenario begins with Miya Kotomi and her escort riding a trade barge down the River of Gold, the major inland waterway of western Rokugan. Kotomi boarded the barge in the Scorpion city of Ryoko Owari, the second largest city in Rokugan and a major trade hub. The merchant who owns the barge, Zatsu, is a servant of the Yasuki family, and was happy to provide passage in exchange for a few extra koku.

The weeklong trip downriver is uneventful, as the barge (carrying Scorpion medicinal opium, Unicorn cloth, gaijin goods, and diamonds, and Dragon Clan gold jewelry) passes south of Scorpion territory and skirts the rocky, barren lands of the Sparrow Clan. There the PCs spot Unicorn patrols on the riverbank, but at the sight of the Miya mon flying from the banner at the front of the barge, the horsemen draw up and salute respectfully. The barge continues on its way, and the river finally enters a narrow gorge which cuts

through the Kabi ue no ho ni sa Umi (the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains).

As the river emerges from the low but rugged mountains, it passes beneath a massive arched wooden bridge, a wonder of Kaiu engineering, wide enough for twenty men to march abreast. Beyond the bridge, the river-gorge opens out and you see before you the splendid expanse of Earthquake Fish Bay, the largest bay in the Empire. Near at hand, to your right, is Sunda Mizu Mura (Clear Water Village), a large town which is the heart of the Yasuki mercantile empire. Across the bay to your left you can see the frowning splendor of Yasuki Yashiki, the seat of the Yasuki family, a magnificent castle perched on the side of a low mountain.

It is mid-morning, and scores, no, hundreds of fishing vessels dot the placid waters of the bay. The light of Mother Sun turns their small square sails as white as the clouds which dot the late-spring sky. Beyond them, on the southern horizon, you can just make out the low line of the tidal land-bridge which marks the edge of the bay. There, four centuries ago, the Daidoji daimyo Masahigi sacrificed himself and his men to stop a Shadowlands incursion, earning his family the Crab nickname, “Iron Cranes.”

Scene One: The Yasuki Lands

Miya Kotomi plans to visit the Yasuki Palace and speak with the highest-ranking person available. The PCs are free to accompany her or to explore the area on their own.

If any of the PCs are Crabs of the Yasuki family, or Hida PCs who are neutral in the civil war, they can join the party at this point. The Yasuki family will ask these PCs to accompany Miya Kotomi to the rest of Crab lands, taking advantage of her protection to learn what is happening elsewhere.

Yasuki Yashiki

The Yasuki palace is a splendid castle, eight stories high, the interior resplendent with decorations and artwork. Although not a match for the magnificence of the Crane castles, it is still quite impressive, especially compared with the cold, blunt practicality which characterizes other Crab castles.

After Kotomi (and any accompanying PCs) present their chops, they will be welcomed into the castle and served a splendid meal. Attending the meal is Yasuki

Yoshinori, the daimyo of the castle, and one of the highest-ranking members of the Yasuki family (Glory 7.8). He apologizes for the absence of the family daimyo, Yasuki Taka, explaining that “Taka-sama has many demands on his time, and sadly cannot be here to welcome you himself. I shall endeavor to offer my own humble hospitality in his place.”

Yasuki Yoshinori is a skinny middle-aged man with a balding head, receding chin and long, thin fingers. He is a charming conversationalist, albeit in a rather oily, mercantile fashion which may inadvertently offend more traditionalist PCs. The conversation with him will touch on the following topics:

- He will express great anxiety at the state of affairs within his clan (the civil war), not only due to the disruptions in trade (which always comes first in his mind), but also because it may weaken the Crab Clan’s military strength against the threats from the Shadowlands and from “other unfriendly neighbors.” (He will not name any specific Clan, and if anyone takes offense he insists he was speaking only abstractly.)
- Yoshinori is careful to take a nuanced position with regard to the civil war. *“My first loyalty must always be to my Clan Champion, of course, that goes without saying. And yet accusations such as Sukune has made are very troubling. Certainly there has never before been in instance of such a revolt occurring within the family of the Clan Champion.”*
- If the PCs ask for details about these “accusations” (Miya Kotomi will ask if none of the PCs do), Yoshinori looks troubled, and finally ventures that “perhaps it’s best if you see for yourselves.” He gives the PCs HANDOUT #1, and explains that “we received this from Hida Sukune-san about a month after his revolt began.”
- Yoshinori knows little about what is happening elsewhere in Crab lands, and expresses interest in finding out more. “All we know is that Sukune-san began his revolt at Shiro no Kaiu, although there have been reports of fighting from many other areas as well. Any information you can learn, we will be indebted if you can share it with us on your return journey.”

Sunda Mizu Mura

“Clear Water Village” is actually a fair-sized city, a major hub for trade in the southern Empire, and home

to more than 4,000 people. The city is very busy and aggressively mercantile, full of fishermen, merchants, and craftsmen, all competing in the endless struggle to earn more koku. There are relatively few actual samurai here, and many of them are Yasuki merchants working to earn their own money.

There is nothing of especial note here as far as the scenario is concerned, but the PCs will easily be able to pick up on the local gossip. Any PC who spends a couple of *bu* at an inn or teahouse, or who rolls **Sincerity/Awareness**, **Courtier/Awareness**, **Commerce/Awareness** or **Kuenai/Awareness** at TN 10, can pick up the following gossip:

- Hida Sukune's claim that his father and Kuni Yori are allying with the Shadowlands is well-known. Almost everyone has an opinion on the matter. Overall, sentiment is about 7-to-3 against the truth of Sukune's accusation.
- It is also widely known that the Fifth Tower of the Kaiu Wall fell to the Shadowlands at the end of last winter. Many regard this as a very bad omen, a sign of worse things to come. "In three hundred years we have never lost any of the Kaiu Wall to the enemy. It cannot be coincidence that this happened just before our Clan was beset with civil war."
- Very few Hida troops remain in the area, because most of them have left to fight on one side or the other of the war. Many of the locals worry that they might be attacked by the Crane or Scorpion while their lands are undefended.

Journeying On

After meeting with the Yasuki and learning what they know, Miya Kotomi will prepare to continue her journey. She expresses the desire to visit Kyuden Hida first (it is closer, only a few days' travel) and then visit the "rebel" territories. She will expect the PCs to accompany her.

If any PCs express an opposing view (such as wanting to visit the rebels first), Kotomi will listen politely and respectfully to their viewpoint, but her opinion will remain unchanged: she intends to visit Kyuden Hida next.

If any of the PCs are Crab who are neutral or rebel-sympathetic, they may feel some concern at visiting Kyuden Hida. Miya Kotomi will assure them of her protection. "As my escorts, you are here on Imperial

business, regardless of your Clan affiliation. An attack on you would be tantamount to an attack on my own person."

Scene Two: Kyuden Hida

It will take four days for the PCs to reach Kyuden Hida. They will be stopped several times by patrols of Crab "loyalists" who scrutinize their travel papers fiercely and do their best to intimidate the PCs into turning back. (Kotomi will be imperturbable in the face of such provocations.) They will be especially suspicious of any Crab PCs, suggesting strongly that such PCs belong in the ranks fighting the rebels.

On the morning of the fifth day, the PCs come within sight of the castle:

Built into the side of a rugged hill is a mighty fortress, squat and broad, the most formidable military structure you have ever seen. Armored bushi patrol its battlements, and you can see heavy siege equipment as well. A single road circles up the side of the hill to the gate, under direct observation from the walls at all times. Over the gates of the castle hangs the massive skull of an Oni, the size of a large wagon. Its empty eye-sockets seem to glare at you with baleful, if impotent, menace.

Kotomi and the PCs will be halted well shy of the gates by a shouted command from the sentries on the walls. A single servant emerges from the gates and walks forward, offering a paper for the PCs to stamp their chops, and asking humbly: "May this one ask what business the great samurai have with our Lord?"

Miya Kotomi will say that she is here "on behalf of the Son of Heaven, to learn the nature of the problems troubling the Crab Clan and report back."

Kotomi and the PCs will be allowed inside after an hour's wait. However, any Crab PCs will first be questioned by guards at the gate, who demand to know whether they remain loyal to "our true lord Hida Kisada."

- If the PCs honestly claim to be loyal to Kisada, they will be allowed inside without any further problem.
- If the PCs honestly claim to be loyal to Sukune's rebels, the guards are momentarily non-plussed, but then attempt to arrest them. Miya Kotomi will intervene, explaining that the PCs are traveling in her company and under her protection. The guards

relent, snarling, but order the “traitors” to leave their weapons at the gates.

- If the PCs claim to be Kisada loyalists, but are lying, they must roll **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Acting/Awareness** at TN 15 to be convincing. Otherwise, the guards react as above, calling them traitors and trying to arrest them.
- If the PCs attempt to withhold judgment, or express neutrality, the guards will berate them as cowards. “Our Lord Kisada-sama is beset with treason,” they bellow. “How can you fail to stand at his side? Are you a traitor yourself?” If the PCs cannot defuse the situation, and violence seems imminent, Miya Kotomi will again intervene, explaining that “these honorable Crabs” seek only what she herself does – to learn the truth, so they can decide where the path of honor lies. The gate guards grudgingly retreat in the face of this statement.

Once inside the castle, Kotomi and the PCs are hustled to a bare, cold waiting room, where they are left alone for a couple of hours. Finally, they are ushered in to meet with the Great Bear.

Hida Kisada awaits you in a large, bare hall, lit only by the red late-afternoon sunlight beaming through a few high, narrow windows. The mighty Crab champion is dressed in a massive suit of full battle armor, adorned with spikes and serrated edges. The monstrous helm which accompanies the armor rests on a table at his side, along with Chikara, the clan ancestral wakizashi. To his left stands a short man in black robes, his Kabuki-masked face peeking out from under a hood. He is guarded by a slim young bushi with boyish good looks, who regards you all suspiciously. Several other bushi are gathered behind them, most of them in armor, and among them is a remarkable sight: a young woman, her hair chopped short and her face roughened by war, dressed in the same heavy, practical armor as the men around her. A dai tsuchi (war hammer) rests easily across her shoulder, and she regards you with an expression of dark amusement in her eyes.

The table which holds Kisada’s helmet is covered in heavy sheets of paper – maps and battle-plans. If any of the PCs are of questionable loyalty, the Crab will have covered the maps and plans with a sheet of black silk.

The man in black robes is of course Kuni Yori (PCs who have played the adventure *Fist of the Earth* or the

interactive *Winter Court: Shiro no Kaiu* have met him before). PCs who played the adventure *Drawing Out the Darkness* will recognize his bodyguard as Hida Keihaku, a young Crab they rescued from the Shadowlands (who is actually an Oni no Pekkles). The woman among the bushi is Hida O-Ushi, the daughter of the Clan Champion. If the PCs have not personally met any of these persons, they can identify Yori and O-Ushi by rolling **Lore: Crab Clan/Intelligence** at TN 15 or **Heraldry/Intelligence** at TN 20 (**Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 15 will also work for Yori.)

Hida Kisada glowers at his unwelcome guests – especially at any “questionable” Crabs – and demands to know their business. “I have a war to fight, and an Empire to defend,” he snarls. “Only the prestige of your family, Kotomi-kun, prompted me to grant you a few minutes of my precious time. What do you want?”

Kotomi will repeat that she is here to learn the truth of what is happening and report back to the Emperor. “For if the Crab are riven with strife, does this not bode ill for the safety of the Empire?”

Kisada will answer by angrily denouncing his “maddened son,” who has endangered the entire Empire by rebelling.

- PCs who roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20, or **Courtier/Awareness** at TN 15, can tell that there is an element of personal bitterness and betrayal in Kisada’s wrath – his son’s rebellion has hurt him deeply.

Kotomi will not immediately mention the letter from Yasuki lands. (She prefers to take a more cautious approach, listening to each story in turn before questioning any of them.) If any of the PCs mention the letter, or show a copy of it, Kisada will turn purple with rage, momentarily unable to speak. It is Kuni Yori who answers, his whispering voice seeming to creep out from beneath his twitching moustaches. “This is the foolish lie of a boy desperate to justify his mistake,” he hisses.

- Any PC who rolls **Courtier/Awareness** at TN 15 or **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 will suspect that both Kisada and Yori are very concerned that Sukune’s accusations have reached those from outside the Clan.
- If the PCs make a Raise above those TNs, they will also suspect that Kisada’s rage is partially a cover

for guilt. Yori, on the other hand, seems untroubled by the accusation.

Kotomi will continue to quietly question the Crab lords, establishing the chronology and facts of the revolt according to them. She will know better than to ask about anything that could be construed as a military secret. If any PC asks such a question (e.g. “how has the fighting gone so far?” or “do you plan an attack soon?”), Kisada will glower at them suspiciously and declare that “this foolish rebellion will soon meet the fate it deserves.”

- PCs who roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20, or **Battle/Awareness** at TN 15, can tell that Kisada’s confidence is not feigned – he expects victory. If the PC makes at least one Raise on the roll, s/he also notices a sense of deep unease and guilt associated with Kisada’s confidence. With two Raises, the PC also notices that Kisada’s eyes briefly dart at Yori when he speaks.
- If the Crab did not cover up the maps and plans (e.g. if none of the PCs are “suspect” Crab), any PC can try to get a glimpse of these by rolling **Battle/Perception** at TN 20. With a success, they can see that Kisada is preparing for a major attack toward the northern Crab lands. With at least one Raise, the PC can tell that the attack will have one spearhead coming from Kyuden Hida and the other from the direction of the Kaiu Wall. If the PC makes at least two Raises, they can see the exact point of origin for the second attack: the Fifth Tower.

Miya Kotomi will conclude her interview by asking whether Sukune and his rebels are still located at Shiro no Kaiu, since she intends to speak with them next. This will both infuriate and alarm Kisada and Yori, who both demand (in their distinctive fashions) to know why Kotomi would possibly want to speak with such “contemptible traitors.” Kotomi will simply calmly repeat her earlier statement that she is here to learn all she can before reporting back to the Emperor. Kisada will have little choice but to back down before such a statement – however, if any “loyalist” Crab PCs have not yet joined the party, Kisada will demand that “some of my own” accompany Kotomi in order to ensure her “safety” from these “untrustworthy rebels.”

Once that is settled, Kisada will growl that “the traitor” was expelled from Shiro no Kaiu after the Kaiu family declared itself neutral in the civil war. He is currently located somewhere north of that castle. Kotomi nods

and declares that she will speak with the Kaiu before going in search of Sukune.

Hida Keihaku

Some players may have participated in tables of the adventure *Drawing Out the Darkness* where Hida Keihaku was unmasked as an Oni no Pekkles. However, the campaign storyline result was that he made it back to Crab lands undetected. The GM should remind players of this before they take some bold or violent action to try to “unmask” Keihaku. Here in Kyuden Hida, any action which could be interpreted as an attack, open insult, or other violation of hospitality is likely to get the PCs swiftly and brutally killed.

Since Keihaku is an Oni no Pekkles, his Taint cannot be detected by any normal means – jade will not burn him, and he is immune to magic such as *Jade Strike* or *Evil Ward*. The only way to unmask him is to injure or cut him – his blood is oily black. He is quite adept at concealment and the PCs will be hard-put to expose him even if they can manage to inflict some minor injury on his person.

If any PCs speak to “Hida Keihaku,” or ask about him, they can learn that he has been Kuni Yori’s yojimbo for the last year.

Neither Yori nor anyone else in the room will tolerate any accusations or attacks made against Keihaku. He is a known and trusted Crab, and the PCs are strangers. PCs who openly attack Keihaku are asking to be thrown into the dungeon and executed.

The Taint?

Some of the PCs may suspect that Kuni Yori (or possibly even Kisada) is Tainted. The Crab will not tolerate any attempt to openly test them for Taint – Yori and Kisada’s rank renders them above suspicion, at least for this castle-full of “loyalists.” If a PC finds some way of testing them without permission (such as stumbling into them with a piece of jade), it turns out that none of them are Tainted (Yori has not yet actually succumbed to the lure of the Shadowlands, although his Honor is swiftly crumbling).

As before, such actions will meet with dire consequences. However, this is not quite as bad as an open attack, so if the PCs speak eloquently they can probably get away with a stern warning. (If the PCs in question have impressed Miya Kotomi favorably, she will speak on their behalf.)

O-Ushi Speaks

Once Miya Kotomi has announced her intention of visiting the “rebels,” Hida O-Ushi (who has kept silent up to this point) will step forward. “Father. I will accompany them.”

Kisada is angry, and bellows at O-Ushi: “I forbid this! We’ll not hand you over to that traitor as a hostage!” Kuni Yori smiles his sinister smile and whispers: “I hope this is not an attempt to join your traitorous brother, Ushi-chan.”

The Crab woman stands firm in the face of their accusations. “I wish to hear these accusations from Sukune’s own lips. I know my brother, have known him since we were both little children. I want to see him face-to-face, look into his eyes as he makes his claims.” She stares hard at Kuni Yori. “I will know if he is lying.”

Kisada fumes for a moment, his eyes shifting from O-Ushi, to the other samurai in the room, to Miya Kotomi and the PCs. Finally he throws up his hands. “As you will! But I will expect a proper apology when you return.”

Traveling to Shiro no Kaiu

Miya Kotomi will spend a night at Kyuden Hida before traveling on to Shiro no Kaiu. This will be a very uncomfortable night for the PCs (especially any non-loyalist Crabs), as they are subjected to endless sneers, insults, and suspicious glares from the Crab garrison. Hida Kisada will refuse to have anything else to do with the PCs, and instead it is Kuni Yori and his creepily handsome bodyguard, Hida Keihaku, who host the guests for dinner. Yori and Keihaku will spend the evening sniping and offering subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) put-downs, and Yori will make it clear that he and Kisada consider Miya Kotomi’s visit an insult: “This is a Crab private matter, and not anything which should concern the heralds or the Son of Heaven.”

The next morning, the weather is cold and cloudy. Hida O-Ushi is waiting for the PCs outside the castle gates, her mighty war-hammer slung across her shoulder. She grins at them cheerfully and makes a few crude, blatant passes at attractive male PCs (she prefers muscle to elegance).

O-Ushi does not conform to any of the Rokugani norms of female propriety – her mother died when she was a toddler, and she was raised in the same manner as her brothers. For her part, she is confused and irritated by

“normal” women, who she regards as simpering weaklings. She generally has a low opinion of other Clans, considering them as fools who don’t understand the true dangers of the Shadowlands – but she has a warrior’s respect for Unicorns, Lions, and Daidoji.

O-Ushi is generally a boisterous and outspoken person. She will treat all the male PCs, Crab or otherwise, with a casual, rough-handed camaraderie, and makes no distinctions between “loyalists” and “traitors” among Crabs. “We are all Crab,” she says. The only thing which will make her quiet or thoughtful is discussion of the upcoming meeting with her brother. To non-Crabs she will only say, “I will make no judgment until after I speak with my brother.” When speaking with fellow Crab bushi, she will confess a little more of her true feelings. “Sukune-kun has always been a loyal and true Crab. He would do anything to make my father and older brother proud of him. I cannot believe that he would simply throw all that away. There must be something behind this revolt.” At the same time, she is also unwilling to believe that her father would betray the Crab Clan’s principles by allying with the Shadowlands. “There must be some kind of misunderstanding.”

It will take six days for the party to reach Shiro no Kaiu. The trip is uneventful – after three months of skirmishes, these lands are empty of bushi, and the inns are glad for a few guests.

Scene Three: Shiro no Kaiu

The massive bulk of Shiro no Kaiu is, in some ways, even more impressive than Kyuden Hida. It seems to have been hewn from a single block of stone, the additions of later years integrated into the original structure so flawlessly that you cannot tell them apart.

The massive walls are studded with siege weapons, and the open ground around the castle would clearly be a deadly killing-ground for any army foolish enough to assault it.

You can see many sentries on the walls, and several of the siege weapons turn on their mountings to track you as you ride up the single narrow causeway to the castle gates. When you finally reach the gates, you discover several Crab bushi in full armor waiting for you. One of them, a massive fellow with a barrel-shaped torso, steps forward and bows as you approach.

The waiting man is Kaiu Utsu, the family daimyo. He will greet the party politely, in a deep booming voice, and bows especially low to Hida O-Ushi (who he calls “Ushi-chan”). He will not immediately invite the PCs inside the castle, but instead speaks with them at the gates, inquiring as to what they need from the Kaiu family.

Assuming somebody asks about Hida Sukune (Kotomi and O-Ushi will do so if nobody else speaks), Utsu will sigh and stroke his chin. “I could not allow Sukune-san to remain here, for that would be giving him the allegiance of the Kaiu family, and we have not yet decided where our duty lies in this unfortunate quarrel. He departed some weeks ago to the north, to the Castle of the Razor’s Dawn, with those of my family who saw fit to follow him. You will find him there.”

Once he has made his position clear, and assuming nobody is hostile or insulting, Utsu will relax and invite the PCs to spend the night as his guests. If any of the PCs were in the Shiro Kaiu interactive, Utsu will apologize that his castle cannot offer the same hospitality now as it did then. “In times of open war, we have less to spare for luxuries, I’m afraid.”

While entertaining his guests, Utsu will do his best to avoid discussing the civil war, and will also avoid speaking of the Shadowlands to samurai from other Clans who might find such topics distasteful. However, through careful questioning the PCs can pick up the following gossip:

- The Kaiu are deeply disturbed about the loss of the Fifth Tower. They consider this to be an even graver crisis than the civil war. Unfortunately, due to the civil war, only a small unit of Hiruma is currently posted opposite the fallen Tower. The Kaiu fear that the Shadowlands will soon expand its beachhead in Crab territory, but their own armies are too small to do more than hold their own lands.
- Kaiu Utsu has received the same letter (HANDOUT #1) from Hida Sukune – indeed, it was given into his hands by Sukune himself right before he left for Razor of the Dawn Castle. Utsu does not know quite what to make of Sukune’s accusations against Kisada and Yori. He is alarmed at the idea of an alliance with the Shadowlands, but cannot quite bring himself to believe that Kisada would do such a thing.
- Utsu is aware that Hida Kisada has designs on the Emerald Throne, but will discuss that only with

members of the “Triple Alliance” (the Crab, Unicorn, and Mantis clans). He shares Kisada’s belief that the Hantei dynasty is on its last legs, but suspects the Crab may have moved too boldly by openly allying with other Clans.

- The Kaiu have heard rumors of a powerful new akutenshi (evil angel) leading the Shadowlands armies that took the Fifth Tower. This demon is said to wear armor with a Crab mon. If Utsu is speaking with fellow Crab, he will confide a terrifying rumor: this monster is said to be none other than Hida Atarasi, the original Crab Thunder, corrupted by Fu Leng and now turned against his own Clan.

Traveling to Razor of the Dawn Castle

From Shiro Kaiu, it is another three days to Razor of the Dawn Castle. Miya Kotomi will push ahead with the journey, determined to meet with Sukune as soon as possible. O-Ushi will, of course, accompany her.

Beyond Shiro Kaiu, the PCs will begin to encounter small patrols (one to three men) of Hiruma Scouts. These men will watch the party from a distance but will not approach, staying beyond bow range and ready to duck out of sight. They are scouts for Hida Sukune (most of the Hiruma family is supporting him), and will keep him informed of the PCs’ approach.

Scene Four: Razor of the Dawn Castle (Kamisori sano Yoake Shiro)

Ahead of you, the low, jagged peaks of the Mountains of Twilight rise from the horizon. Nestled between them is another castle, a formidable structure whose battlements frown down at you like bared teeth. You can see many spears glinting on the castle walls in the afternoon sunlight, and a small troop of cavalry on sturdy ponies rides out to meet you.

The PCs will be escorted into the castle courtyard, where they are politely but firmly disarmed. O-Ushi will lever up her hammer threateningly, growling that she is not here to assassinate her brother, and the guards will reluctantly leave her alone. All other guests, however, will be disarmed, even if they are “rebel” Crab. Servants will take their chops (names) and then escort them to the baths.

Razor's Dawn Castle is, like most Crab castles, bare and practical in design. After bathing, the PCs will be escorted to a plain, undecorated chamber where Hida Sukune awaits them. Hida O-Ushi will not be with them – she will meet with Sukune alone, later.

The youngest son of Hida Kisada is a slim man of nineteen years, with pale skin and dark rings under his eyes. He looks as though he has not slept well in many days. His formal kimono, on the other hand, is immaculate. He moves stiffly within it, and you wonder if today is the first day he has worn it since his revolt began three months ago. His voice is raspy and thick as he bids you welcome to the castle of the Razor's Dawn.

Sukune is exhausted and suffering from a cold (he was a sickly boy in his youth, and the strain of leading a revolt against his father has left him weak and prey to illness once again). His behavior, however, may lead some PCs to suspect him of having the Taint. If any PCs suggest this, Sukune will sigh but allows them to test him – over the last three months he has grown accustomed to proving he is not a Tainted madman.

Eventually, either Kotomi or one of the PCs will ask Sukune to explain the reason for his revolt. He will describe it thusly:

“During the last winter court, I... became aware that Kuni Yori, daimyo of the Kuni family, was disappearing into the Shadowlands for days at a time. He would not explain these trips, but I knew he had been holding many secret meetings with my father since the previous autumn, and I suspected something treacherous might be afoot. I arranged for Yori to be followed by a group of samurai who were staying at the Winter Court – among them, an Isawa earth shugenja and a Kitsuki magistrate. They reported back to me that Yori was negotiating an alliance with the forces of the Shadowlands, for their armies to fight alongside our own! Moreover, the price of this alliance was to be no less than the Fifth Tower itself. When the tower fell to the Shadowlands a few days later, I confronted Yori with my knowledge of his treachery. He claimed that he had merely done what my father commanded, arranging allies for the Crab armies. I... refused to believe him. If my father commanded such a thing, it can only be because Yori deceived him onto a false path. The Great Bear would never betray the Crab Clan's struggle against the forces of Fu Leng.”

Sukune still clings to the belief that his father has been misled by “false counsel.” If the PCs tell him about

their meeting with Kisada, he will be saddened but not surprised. He will find great significance in the fact that Kisada saw them in the presence of Kuni Yori. “If only my father could be separated from Yori for a time, he might realize what a terrible error he is making.”

Apart from this general information, Sukune can share the following specifics (if the PCs ask the right questions):

- Sukune has sent out letters to all of the Crab families, telling them the truth and asking for their aid. So far, most of the Hiruma family is supporting him, but only a small portion of the Hida family. Some individuals from the Kaiu and Kuni families have come to his side, but not many.
- The reports Sukune has received suggest that Kisada is massing a large army to attack him, probably under the leadership of his elder brother Yakamo. Sukune fears that this army may include monsters of the Shadowlands in its ranks.
- Sukune knows he will probably be defeated, although he plans to fight as well as he can. “I am told that I have some skill as a general,” he says with a sad smile. He is more worried about what will happen to the Crab Clan afterward. “Even if my father can somehow be convinced to forsake Yori's counsel, I fear this war will leave our Clan too weak to resist the forces of Fu Leng.”
- Sukune will urge Miya Kotomi to carry the truth back to the Emperor, and appeals for the Emerald Legions to intervene. “The word of the Blessed Hantei will bring an end to this madness. The Emperor has fought at the side of the Crab before, in the reign of Hantei Fujiwa. Please, tell him of the situation here, and of our need.”
- If any of the PCs ask about the Fifth Tower, Sukune looks grave. “The reports I have received say that the defense against the fallen tower will not last much longer. If only I could spare troops to retake it.”
- If any PCs ask about Hida O-Ushi, Sukune explains: “My sister and I will have our own meeting later. Your mission concerns the Crab Clan, not our family's private affairs.”

A Desperate Request

After the meeting with Sukune is over, Kotomi and the PCs will be served a plain but satisfying meal. Kotomi

will announce that she plans to set out for the Imperial capital tomorrow, by way of the northern road known as Ebisu's Way. She feels confident that she can leave Crab lands safely. "I do not expect the Unicorn will hamper anyone coming *out* of the Crab territories," she remarks.

After the meal, the PCs are free to relax a bit before going to bed. At that point a servant will approach some of the PCs and requests that they meet with Sukune. Those chosen for the invitation will include the following:

- Any Crab PCs, regardless of loyalty.
- Any non-Crab PCs trained in Crab schools.
- Any bushi PCs from other Clans.
- Any non-Crab shugenja PCs who are skilled in Earth or Fire.
- Any PCs who have expressed strong opposition to the forces of the Shadowlands.

The servant will ask these PCs to attend "my lord Sukune-sama" atop the castle walls. They are free to decline, of course.

Hida Sukune stands on the ramparts of Kamisori Yoake Shiro, dressed now only in a simple kimono which the wind plasters against his lean, almost gaunt frame. As you approach, he turns toward you and you are shocked to see a livid purple bruise covering the left side of his face, the eye on that side almost swollen shut. He manages a small smile at your expressions. "My sister has been scolding me for my foolishness," he says, lifting his fingers to gently touch the bruise. "I am afraid she does not know how to do so in the manner of a woman, with gentle words and disappointed looks."

After some more small talk in this vein, Sukune will get to the point, looking back out at the lands beyond the castle, gripping the battlement with thin, bony fingers. "Three months ago, the Fifth Tower fell to the forces of the Shadowlands," he says. "This was no mere defeat – the castle was deliberately sacrificed to the forces of Fu Leng, to seal the bargain between them and Kuni Yori. It has become a stronghold of evil, a gathering place from which the forces of darkness can strike elsewhere in the Empire, or..." he grimaces, "reinforce my father."

Sukune knows, from his own experience, that the dungeons of each of the Kaiu Wall's towers contain extensive stockpiles of equipment and supplies – including many powerful items and relics of the Crab Clan, kept close at hand in case they are needed against

the forces of Fu Leng. "All that was within the cellars of the Fifth Tower may be lost... but perhaps not. The Kaiu protected those vaults with powerful locks whose secrets were closely guarded. It may yet be possible to rescue some of those treasures... if anyone can be spared to undertake such a task."

This is the crux of the matter. Sukune wants desperately to make an attempt to retrieve the artifacts, but he cannot spare troops from his army – he is outnumbered and expects to be attacked soon by Hida Kisada's forces. He is asking the PCs to undertake this quest. "Even if I am defeated and my rebellion crushed, the Crab will still face the armies of the Dark One, and every treasure which we can snatch from Fu Leng's grasp will save the life of innumerable Crabs. For the sake of my Clan, and of the Empire, I beg you to undertake this quest. It may already be too late... but someone must try. As the Hiruma say, the only thing necessary for the victory of evil is for good men to do nothing at all."

It is up to the PCs whether or not to help. However, any Crab PC who refuses Sukune's request will lose 2 points of Honor. The PCs can recruit other party members who were not "invited" if they wish, and Sukune will not reject anyone who is willing to help.

Miya Kotomi will not object to any PCs assisting Sukune – as she said earlier, she is planning to leave Crab lands and does not expect any trouble or interference. She will be quite concerned about the PCs undertaking such a dangerous mission, and wishes them the blessings and protections of the Fortunes.

Going to the Fifth Tower

Assuming that some or all of the PCs do agree to try to recover the artifacts in the Fifth Tower, Sukune will provide them with a written travel pass to reach that section of the Kaiu Wall. He will also give them a sheet of paper containing instructions for bypassing the lock on the secure vault below the Fifth Tower. Smart PCs will memorize these in case the paper is lost – this will require a **Cipher/Intelligence**, **Nazado/Intelligence**, or **Research/Intelligence** roll at TN 15, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25. (PCs with Clear Thinker get one free Raise, PCs with Precise Memory get two Free Raises.)

Unfortunately, Sukune does not have any jade fingers to offer the PCs. If none of the PCs have jade powder, he will offer them two pouches of it, provided they pledge to return any unused powder afterward.

From Razor of the Dawn Castle, it will take four days' hard travel to reach the Fifth Tower. The PCs will encounter almost no military traffic, although the roads are still heavily traveled: peasants, merchants, and other common folk are fleeing the region of the Fifth Tower, fearing a breakthrough by the forces of the Shadowlands.

Scene Five: Arrival at the Fifth Tower

Ahead of you, the regular outline of the Kaiu Wall changes. Great gaps have been torn in the wall, isolating the massive squared-off bulk of the Fifth Tower from the rest of the structure. The broken wall is tied together by an irregular semicircle of fortifications: wooden palisades, spiked pits, and zig-zagging earthen trenches face the dark mass of the Fifth Tower from a distance of over a half-mile. The ground before the fortifications has been scoured and pitted with the marks of battle.

As you approach, it appears at first as though the Crab fortifications are unmanned. Finally, however, you spot the helmets of a few Crab bushi, peering over the crude parapets at the distant tower. One of them briefly raises his arm and brandishes a yari, and as if in answer, a bolt of seething black flame shoots out from the top of the Fifth Tower, exploding against one of the palisades.

A single sentry will emerge from one of the communication trenches to challenge the PCs. Any Crab PC can recognize him as one of the Hiruma family. Other PCs can identify his family with a **Heraldry/Intelligence** roll at TN 10. The sentry, holding a yari with a white-knuckled grip, will question the PCs very carefully and looks over their pass from Hida Sukune before taking them down into the local command post.

The sentry leads you down one of the trenches and then turns aside into an opening in the earth. Steps descend into a low room, its packed-earth walls and ceiling braced with heavy oaken beams. A single candle burns on a low table in the middle of the room, and seated behind it is a thin, middle-aged Crab bushi in beaten-in, tattered full armor. He looks up sharply as you enter, and the vast weariness and loss which gazes at you out of his dark eyes makes your skin crawl. The sentry bows briefly and announces: "These samurai have come on a mission from Sukune-sama, Taisa [Captain]."

The commander introduces himself as Hiruma Tatsuno. He is a man beaten down, but still somehow unbroken, by a lifetime of pain, tragedy, and loss. All of his family have died, leaving him in his fifties without an heir to his line. Tatsuno always speaks slowly and softly, with a quiet and terrible dignity. He fully believes that the defense against the Fifth Tower is a lost cause... but he is a Crab, and he will not falter in his duty.

Tatsuno will read the pass from Sukune and then listens quietly and carefully to the PCs, his hands clasped before him and his eyes lowered. Once they have finished (and assuming they don't say something monumentally foolish or asinine), he will take a deep breath and then explain the current situation:

"We have had to demolish the Wall on both sides, to keep the enemy from advancing up it and flanking the other Towers, north and south. The gap is closed with fortifications, as you have seen. To hold this line, over three miles wide, I have less than four hundred men. A month ago, I had seven hundred. A month from now, or perhaps two, I will have none, and the Horde will spill into the Empire... unless our brothers in the Clan cease to battle each other, and come here instead, to fight the true enemy."

"If you advance across the open fields, the enemy will destroy you. Oni stand on the Tower walls, ready to fling hellfire and Tainted slime. There are so many goblins that their arrows turn the sky black as night. An assault on the Fifth Tower would require five thousand men and all the siege weapons of the Kaiu... and even then, it might fail."

What happens at this point depends on whether any of the PCs has one of the advantages mentioned at the beginning of the module.

If a PC has True Friend: Hiruma Imai: While Tatsuno is explaining the situation, there is a noise behind the PCs and a short, athletic woman with ragged, unkempt hair ducks into the room. This is Hiruma Imai, who recognized the PCs from a distance and came to learn what had brought them back to the Kaiu Wall. She will bow before Tatsuno and offers to guide the PCs into the Kaiu tunnels. "I can get them safely very close to the Fifth Tower, Tatsuno-sama. From there it will be possible for them to infiltrate through the tunnels the rest of the way." Assuming the PCs are satisfied with this idea, Tatsuno will sigh and agree.

If no PCs have Imai as a True Friend, but at least one PC has a Ratling Ally or a Favor with a ratling:

The conversation with Tatsuno is interrupted by the sudden appearance of a ratling bushi, bouncing from one foot to the other and squeaking for attention. The ratling has one gray eye and one brown. Tatsuno breaks off his talk and turns to the creature. “Yes, what is it, Rit’chuk’Tak?”

PCs who have played the adventure *Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina* have met this ratling before. Rit’chuk’Tak chitters eagerly: “Boss-man, lots of ugly-ugly greenskins come through tunnels. What you want do?”

Tatsuno will immediately dispatch a unit to activate the traps and destroy the goblins coming through the Kaiu tunnels. Afterward, Rit’chuk’Tak will approach the PCs and say, “This rat-rat hears you wanting go in nasty bad-magic tower, yes?” He will offer to guide the PCs into the tunnels in exchange for a few “shine-shinies” (small, bright, shiny objects, such as jewelry) or possibly something “sharp-sharp” (such as a tanto).

If none of the PCs has Imai as a friend, and none of them has a Ratling Ally: If some of the PCs are Crab, or have Allies or Favors with the Crab Clan, Tatsuno will grudgingly mention that if they are “truly intent on entering the Fifth Tower” they might be able to get in through the Kaiu tunnels. He will offer to have one of his bushi guide the PCs as far into the tunnels as is safe.

If none of the PCs are Crab, and none have Allies or Favors with the Crab, Tatsuno will volunteer nothing. It will be up to the PCs to figure out a way into the Fifth Tower. If they come up with the idea of using the Kaiu Tunnels on their own, Tatsuno will still provide them with a guide to the edge of the “safe zone.”

Effects of the Shadowlands

The Fifth Tower has been irretrievably Tainted by the foul bargain which Kuni Yori struck with the forces of Fu Leng. As a result, inside the tower the PCs are considered to be in the Shadowlands, and the following special conditions apply:

- Wood, cloth, and other flammables will not burn properly, emitting only a weak, sputtering blue flame which offers little or no heat (but does attract nocturnal predators). Dead bodies also are reluctant to burn naturally, should the PCs need to perform an emergency cremation (the Crab usually use spells).

- Wounds will not heal naturally. Curative magic (such as *Path to Inner Peace*) and nemuranai (such as Crane fetishes or Dragon Clan potions) will work normally, however. Also, any time a PC is injured, they must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain a point of Taint.
- All spellcasting rolls (except for *maho* spells) are at +10 TN due to the unfriendly nature of the local spirits.
- Void points and spell rings do not recover naturally (e.g. through rest). The Meditation skill will still work for recovering both Void and spell rings. It is impossible to perform a Tea Ceremony inside the Fifth Tower.
- Unless the PCs have acquired pieces of jade (such as the jade “fingers” which the Crab issue for Shadowlands excursions), they will be vulnerable to the Taint. They must roll **Simple Earth** for each day and each night they spend unprotected in the Fifth Tower. The TN is 5 for the first roll, 10 for the second, 15 for the third, and so forth. If a roll is failed, the PC gains a point of Taint immediately, and one additional point each day and each night thereafter until they leave.
- Food and water will quickly become Tainted and diseased unless it is stored in proximity to jade. Likewise, any food or water the PCs scrounge inside the Fifth Tower carries the Taint. Eating Tainted food or drinking Tainted water requires a **Simple Earth** roll at TN 15 to avoid getting 1-5 (1 die halved) points of Taint.

Scene Six: Getting Into the Fifth Tower

As Hiruma Tatsuno explained, a direct approach to the Fifth Tower across open ground is little more than a flashy way to commit suicide. It will take fifteen rounds of movement to close the distance to the Tower (twelve rounds on horseback). On each round, each of the PCs will be attacked by five goblin arrow-shots, and one PC will be targeted with the black fire of Oni no Kyoso. Halfway to the Tower, a siege weapon will fire, unleashing a barrage of heavy boulders, and all PCs must roll **Simple Reflexes** at TN 20 or take 5k3 damage from a plummeting stone. On the last two rounds (last one for riders), they will climbing the stairs to the tower’s communications level, and will be attacked with gobbets of black, burning pitch, pouring

down from the Tower walls. Each PC must roll **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 20 to dodge the pitch – a failed roll will result in 4k3 damage (and 3k2 damage for two subsequent rounds as the pitch continues to burn).

The “correct” route – or at least the less suicidal one – is to infiltrate the Tower through the Kaiu Tunnels. Although the Wall itself has been torn down to prevent a direct assault from the Tower, the tunnels which riddle the foundations below are still connected, and the PCs can approach through them.

If the PCs get a guide – either Hiruma Imai, a ratling, or a guide assigned by Hiruma Tatsuno – they will be able to safely traverse the Crab-controlled portion of the tunnels. Each of them will be given a paper lantern to light their way. Their guide will lead them to the tunnel which accesses the “fallen” portion of the Wall (marked “Enter” on GM’s MAP #1) and depart from them there, delivering an appropriate farewell/warning:

Hiruma Imai: *“Past this point is the domain of the enemy. I do not know how many of the old traps are still functional, so be cautious. I do know that the enemy has guards in these tunnels – I have heard them, speaking to each other in their foul voices. Good luck, my friends – may Osano-Wo guard your path.”* If none of the PCs have jade, Imai will offer to let one of them (preferably one of her True Friends) borrow her finger of jade to protect them from the Taint.

Ratling: *“Bad-bad things past here! Lots of snap-crush-kill things also, gray-gray men make them before, and some still work. Kill you dead-dead, you not careful!”*

Generic Crab guide: *“We do not control past here. Be alert, some of the old traps may still be working.”*

Some PCs may fail to get a guide, and attempt to infiltrate the tunnels themselves. In this case, they are likely to die, since the Hiruma defending their own portion of the tunnels will slay any unauthorized intruders. The GM can use the same map and simply substitute Hiruma bushi for the various monstrous guards.

The Kaiu Tunnels

These tunnels are a mixture of fitted stone construction and excavation through natural earth and rock. The walls and ceiling are braced periodically with heavy oak beams. In most areas there is no light – the monsters of the Shadowlands do not need it – so the

PCs will need to take care of their lanterns. Also, of course, the PCs are considered to be inside the Shadowlands once they enter this area.

The GM should try to present this “dungeon crawl” as an exercise in creeping tension, broken by occasional moments of shock, terror, and violence. Rokugani heroes do not make a practice of crawling through monster-infested tunnels, and doing so should be a dreadful trial.

1. False Door. This curving passage slopes upward. At the end is what appears to be a heavy, iron-reinforced oaken door. This is a trap, designed to lure in Shadowlands enemies who have entered the tunnels. The door opens outward (there is a heavy iron ring to pull on), and is wedged firmly shut – opening it requires a **Simple Strength** roll at TN 20 (up to two PCs can try at the same time). With a success, the PCs find themselves face-to-face with a wall full of round holes: there is a ratcheting clank as spring-propelled spears shoot out of the holes. Anyone standing in front of the door suffers three attacks (each attack rolling 5k2 to hit and inflicting 3k2 damage). Once discharged, the trap is inert – the Crab would reset it from a different room higher in the Wall.

2. Guard Post. Each of these locations would formerly have housed a squad of Crab troops, and there are shattered remains of furnishings (cots, weapons racks, etc) scattered around the floor, along with sprays of dried blood – the men here died hard.

Guard post 2a is currently empty, except for the wreckage. The name “Yukima-chan” has been scratched into one of the walls. Crude disgusting graffiti has been smeared onto the wall around the name with some unmentionable substance.

Guard post 2b also appears to be empty, and most of the wreckage is piled in a noisome heap in one corner of the room. The PCs will hear a faint rustling from the heap of soiled, splintered wood. The noise is from a pair of blood eels (Tsumunagi) which will attempt to grab hold and drain the blood of anyone who meddles with their lair. Smart PCs will simply move on without trying to dig through the wreckage.

Tsumunagi (blood eels)

FIRE 1	AIR 1
	Reflexes 4
EARTH 2	WATER 1

	Strength 4
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TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 3k2 from above or by surprise, 2k1 otherwise.

Damage: 6k3

Wounds: 5: +5; 10: Dead.

3. Exit to Shadowlands. This heavy iron double-door would normally be blocked from within by both an oak crossbeam and an iron portcullis. Now the oak beam is gone and the portcullis has been wrenched apart, leaving rusted fragments. The door itself is slightly ajar, letting in pale light from outside.

Beyond the door is a shallow gully leading out into the bleak, wasted landscape of the Shadowlands. This would normally have been camouflaged with brush, but now it is open to the air. The PCs can clearly see a huge army, thousands of goblins, zombies, and ogres, gathering in the fields beyond the Fifth Tower. They will be wise not to linger here for long...

4. Closed Portcullis. This passage is blocked by a heavy iron portcullis. Lifting this will require an **Athletics/Strength** roll at TN 30; up to three PCs may try at one time (one primary, two assisting). Each failed attempt will produce a loud clang as the portcullis drops back down into place.

Smart PCs will find ways to muffle the noise, or to get past the portcullis magically. If the portcullis is dropped more than twice, it will alert the quartet of trolls lurking in the underground river (location **8**). These beasts will come rumbling up from their lair and attempt to skewer the PCs through the portcullis with their filth-encrusted yari.

5. Drawbridges. These are two wooden drawbridges, heavily-constructed and sturdy, with thick rope railings. Each has a large winch on one side (shown on the map) which can be used to raise them. Presently, drawbridge **5a** is raised (blocking passage), while drawbridge **5b** is lowered to allow free movement.

Raising a drawbridge can be done instantly by pulling out a wooden chock on the winch, causing a counterweight to rapidly raise the drawbridge. Lowering a bridge is a slower process, since the winch must be turned (and then chocked) to raise the counterweight. This will normally require four rounds, although that can be halved with a **Simple Strength** roll at TN 20.

A bridge can also be lowered by cutting the ropes which connect it to the winch. This will drop the bridge instantly, but will leave it unable to be raised again.

When the bridges are raised, they leave twelve-foot gaps in the passageways. PCs who do not have access to flying magic can try to jump these gaps with a running start and an **Athletics/Agility** roll at TN 20.

When the bridges are lowered, they are solid and sturdy. However, they are also narrow (allowing safe crossing only in single file) and their low rope railings offer only modest protection against falling over the sides. Fighting on the bridges can be hazardous, and any hard blow (15 or more points of damage) will require a **Simple Agility** roll at TN 15 to avoid being knocked over the side. (PCs with Perfect Balance need only make TN 5.) Falling PCs might be able to grab the edge or the rope railing with a **Simple Reflexes** roll at TN 20.

A PC who falls the thirty-five feet into the stony, shallow underground river below suffers 4k3 damage. Such an unfortunate victim will also be stunned and unable to act for one round.

If the PCs beat back the trolls at the portcullis (location **4**), the creatures will retreat across bridge **5b** and make a stand there, attempting to knock the PCs off the bridge. The trolls are not very smart and haven't figured out how to raise the bridge by pulling the chock. They will retreat once the PCs get across the bridge.

6. Chute Trap. This long passage is trapped with a counterweighted pit. Beyond the pit is a ragged opening in the wall which leads down to the underground river and the trolls (location **8**). At the end of the hallway, a staircase ascends to area **12**.

In order to notice the pit, the PCs will have to be watching the floor (or else pursuing retreating trolls – the trolls will run around the edges of the pit). A roll of **Traps/Perception** at TN 10, **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15, or **Simple Perception** at TN 20 will notice the bestial tracks which circle to either side of a six-foot-wide section of floor. The spell *By the Light of Lord Moon* will also detect the outline of the trapdoor, which otherwise blends in with the rest of the floor.

The trap will activate when three or more people step on at once – this will be enough to overcome the counterweight. The floor will abruptly tilt down, dumping the victims down onto a sloping ramp for 2k1

damage. PCs can try to leap clear by rolling **Athletics/Reflexes** at TN 25.

PCs who fall down the ramp will be dumped into the river (location **8**). They will be stunned and unable to act for the first round after landing, making them easy targets for the trolls (unless the trolls have all been slain already).

7. Barracks. This room formerly housed a squad of Hida bushi, ready to charge up the stairs and reinforce the Wall at a moment's notice. Now a pack of vile goblins nests here, squatting on the cots, dressing in bits and pieces of oversized Crab armor, writing disgusting graffiti on the walls, and making enough noise and commotion to be heard for some distance. A goblin berserker is the nominal "leader" of these creatures, although he usually enforces his authority by the simple method of beating the others with a large stone-headed club.

Smart PCs will realize that they have nothing to gain by fighting this large pack of goblins. Unless they actually enter the room, the goblins will not notice them, and they will be free to sneak past.

If the PCs do fight and destroy the goblins, and nerve themselves to scrounge through the noisome filth of the barracks room, they will find some pouches of jade powder which have been ripped open and smeared around. Most of the jade has gone black and corrupt, but there is enough intact jade for a half-dose on one weapon. Such PCs will also lose at least 1 point of Honor (more for fastidious PCs) for touching the blood and bits of dead flesh scattered through the wreckage.

The PCs may manage to capture one or more of the normal goblins (the berserker will always fight to the death). The creatures are shameless and will beg for their lives in the most craven manner imaginable, promising anything if the PCs will spare their lives. They do not actually know very much, however:

- They know the Fifth Tower (the "big stone place we took from stupid Crab-samurai!") is commanded by a powerful being: "Like a man, but stronger, much stronger! Oni bow down to him!"
- They were sent here by a lesser being, Kyoso no Oni. "She will be very angry at us for losing!"
- Most of the troops in the Tower are on the upper level, and Kyoso no Oni is usually on the roof. The "great one" and his servants are sometimes on one of the upper levels, sometimes in the basement.

Typical Goblin

FIRE 2	AIR 1
	Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 1

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 3k2 (sword or arrow)

Wounds: 8: +10; 15: Dead.

Goblin Berserker

FIRE 1	AIR 1
Agility 4	Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 2

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 4k2 (stone-headed club, ignores light armor)

Wounds: 30: Dead

Special Abilities: Due to his deadened pain sense and psychotic frenzy, the berserker doesn't have any Wound Ranks, and keeps fighting just as hard until killed.

The stairs at the back of the barracks lead up to the top of the Kaiu Wall. PCs who go there will be fully visible from the parapet of the Fifth Tower, and will come under immediate attack just as though they were advancing across open ground. However, it will only take them four rounds to reach the Tower.

8. Underground River. This natural tunnel contains an icy-cold, foul-smelling river which varies in depth between two and four feet. The water is filthy and Tainted, and anyone who is submerged in it (such as by falling from above) must roll **Simple Stamina** at TN 10 or swallow some of the water, suffering 1-3 points of Shadowlands Taint.

This dark, wet, filthy place is the lair of a pack of four trolls. These creatures have armed themselves with an array of looted weaponry (yari and tetsubo) and are nominally assigned to guard this section of the tunnels against any Crab infiltrators. They normally spend their time lolling about, trading insults and blows, or feasting on the meat of the dead bodies in **8a**. However, if they are alerted to the presence of intruders (such as by hearing the portcullis at **4** dropped, hearing one of the drawbridges move, or having someone drop

down the chute trap at **6**), they will react quickly, snatching up weapons and doing their best to slay all intruders.

The trolls cannot be taken alive, although they have enough sense of self-preservation to retreat from a losing fight. If need be, they will hide under the water and wait for the PCs to give up and leave.

Trolls (4)

FIRE 3	AIR 1
	Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 1
Stamina 5	Strength 5

TN to be Hit: 30

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 6k2 (yari) or 6k3 (tetsubo)

Carapace: 7

Wounds: 10: +5; 20: +10; 40: +15; 55: Dead.

In the pool marked **8a**, beneath the water, are the rotting corpses of several dozen dead Crab bushi. The bodies are normally unmoving, and the PCs' first knowledge of them is likely to be when they step on one. At that point the waterlogged corpses will begin to animate, rising up all around the PCs and attempting to rip them apart. There are a total of 43 corpses here, but there will not be more than eight of them active at one time (new ones rising up as the PCs strike down the initial foes). Smart PCs will flee this area quickly. The zombies will lose interest and lapse back into torpor once the PCs leave the area.

Zombies

FIRE 1	AIR 0
EARTH 0	WATER 1
Stamina 3	Strength 3

TN to be Hit: 10 (5 without light armor)

Attacks: 1k1

Damage: 3k1 (bare hands)

Carapace: 7

Wounds: 60: Dead.

Special Abilities: Zombies take half damage from slashing weapons and one-quarter damage from crushing weapons, rounded down. They are not affected by lost limbs, which will continue to slither after the zombie. If they are decapitated, they die instantly.

9. Roller Trap. The floor at this point consists of a set of heavy cast-iron rollers, carefully balanced to rotate at the slightest touch. Each roller is studded with sharp points which mesh together into a giant grinder. Walking across this surface is almost impossible – the rollers will spin, forcing feet and legs in between them to be mangled and crushed.

The section of rolling iron grinders is fifteen feet long, and stretches from wall to wall. Crossing it with a jump will require at least a twenty-foot running start and an **Athletics/Agility** roll at TN 20 (or **Simple Agility** at TN 25). Failure means the jumper lands short and falls into the grinders.

Anyone caught in the trap takes 3k2 damage, and one leg will be trapped between the rollers. (If the damage total is over 20, both legs are trapped.) Pulling a leg free will require a **Simple Strength** roll at TN 10 and costs another 2k1 wounds. Furthermore, it cannot be done unless the person pulling has a stable place to stand – which can be problematic for someone who tried to leap the rollers and landed halfway across.

Clever PCs may be able to bypass the trap in various ways, such as by jamming the rollers or having a shugenja fly over them.

PCs who examine the walls on either side of this obstacle can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20 (or **Engineering/Perception**, **Siege/Perception**, or **Traps/Perception** at TN 15) to notice narrow slots in the walls. These house heavy beams which can be winched into place, covering the trap, using the wheels in the upstairs guard post (location **11**). Clever PCs may be able to come up with other uses for these slots.

10. Hall of Ancestors. The walls of this hallway are lined with six-foot-high alcoves. Each alcove contains a statue of a Crab bushi in a menacing pose. The yari which are gripped in their hands are real weapons, with steel points, and close examination (**Simple Perception** at TN 15, or **Traps/Perception** at TN 10) reveals that the yari actually extend into holes in the walls.

There are counterweighted pressure plates on the floor, spaced about every eight feet, each one corresponding to one of the alcoves. These plates can be spotted by examining the floor and rolling **Traps/Perception** at TN 10, **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15, or **Simple Perception** at TN 20. The spell *By the Light of Lord Moon* will also detect the outlines of the pressure plates, which otherwise blend in with the rest of the floor.

If a weight of fifty pounds or more is placed on a pressure plate, it will drop about an inch (with a sharp “clunk” sound) and the adjacent yari will shoot forward, skewering the victim for 4k2 damage (3k1 if the target is wearing Heavy Armor). The spear can be dodged with a **Defense/Reflexes** roll at TN 20.

Once discharged, the traps cannot be reset until someone goes to the guard post in location **11** and pulls the levers there, resetting the counterweights.

Advancing down the hallway without setting off the traps requires a **Simple Agility** roll for each trap. If the PC is moving slowly and carefully, the TN for each roll is 5. If the PC is moving at a normal pace, it is 10. If the PC is running, it is 20.

Each time the PCs set off a trap in this area, roll **Simple Perception** for the ogre, Mohar, in area **11**. If he makes TN 10, he is alerted to the PCs’ presence, and will step to the end of the hallway and hurl a nage-yari at them. Mohar then taunts and insults them, trying to lure them into charging down the trapped hallway. If the PCs hit the ogre with spells or arrows, he falls back into the guard room and waits for them there, perhaps resetting some of the traps to harass them further.

11. Upper Guard Post. This room would normally house a Kaiu engineer and a pair of bodyguards, charged with controlling the traps and obstacles in this area. Now it is the nest of a single great ogre, who has piled broken furniture, human and beastly bones, and strange, twisted Shadowlands plants together into a foul nest the size of a small hut. It takes up about half the room. A human skull, still wearing a Crab helmet, sits atop one twisted branch like a grotesque trophy.

Any PC who rolls **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15, **Hunting/Perception** at TN 20, or **Simple Perception** at TN 25 will notice a set of levers and wheels set into the walls, barely visible behind the filthy nest. They can also be found by any PCs who force themselves to systematically search the room (perhaps accidentally touching dead flesh).

There are heavy wheels here which close the covers over the roller-trap (area **9**), levers which reset the spear traps in the hall of ancestors (area **10**), other levers which activate and reset the trap beyond the portcullis (location **12**), and another, larger, wheel which raises the portcullis itself.

The ogre, Mohar, has been ordered to guard this area by the Kyoso no Oni in the Fifth Tower, and he will fulfill this task to the best his limited intellect allows.

He knows how to reset the traps, and has a nage-yari which he will hurl before entering melee.

If the PCs somehow manage to question Mohar, he will only tell them that “great ones, powerful ones” rule in the Fifth Tower, and he was sent here by one of their servants, Kyoso.

Mohar the Ogre

FIRE 3	AIR 1 Reflexes 3
EARTH 2 Stamina 6	WATER 1 Strength 6

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 8k2 (big club) or 6k2 (nage-yari)

Carapace Armor: 7

Wounds: 15: +5; 30: +10; 45: +15; 60: Dead.

12. Portcullis. This passage is blocked by another heavy iron portcullis, similar to the one in location **4**. However, while the PCs are here, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15, or **Traps/Perception** at TN 10, to notice that the ceiling above the passage (the location marked with a trap symbol on the map) is actually a steel double-door. PCs who specify they are looking at the ceiling can notice this with a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 5.

As before, lifting the portcullis will require an **Athletics/Strength** roll at TN 30; up to three PCs may try at one time. (One primary, two assisting.) Each failed attempt will produce a loud clang as the portcullis drops back down into place.

If the PCs have not yet encountered Mohar the ogre, he can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 5 to notice the noise from their attempts to open the portcullis. Once alerted, he will pull the lever to activate the trap, then rush out and throw his nage-yari at any survivors.

Unless the PCs somehow jammed the steel doors shut, they will drop open and dump a rain of heavy, jagged rocks on everyone below. Each unarmored PC will take 4k3 damage, PCs in light armor will take 3k2, and PCs in heavy armor will take 3k1. PCs near the back of the trapped area can roll **Simple Reflexes** at TN 15 to leap back out of the way.

13. False Door to the Shadowlands. This passageway was designed to lure Shadowlands creatures which had gotten into the tunnels and were

looking for a way out. It ends in what appears to be a simple wooden doorway. However, the “door” is actually carved and painted stone (PCs can detect this from halfway up the tunnel if they roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15).

If any PCs advance up this tunnel, they will step on a pressure plate which activates a set of gears and pulleys behind the walls. The PCs can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 or **Traps/Perception** at TN 10 to notice when this happens. At that point, the PCs have a few seconds to flee back up the passage before a massive stone block is released and plummets down from the ceiling, sealing the passage at the point marked on the map.

PCs who flee immediately can make it out of the tunnel in time. PCs who hesitate before fleeing will be in danger of being crushed by the block – they must roll **Simple Reflexes** at TN 20 to avoid being crushed to death. PCs who fail to flee will be trapped behind the block.

There is no easy way to get past the block once it falls – cutting through the stone would require mining tools and many days of effort. Clever shugenja PCs may be able to find ways of getting past the block with magic. Otherwise, anyone who is trapped behind it is probably doomed to a slow, bitter death. Seppuku may be the best choice.

14. Prison. This chamber was originally used to house Shadowlands creatures who were taken prisoner for interrogation, as training targets, or for experimentation by the Kuni. It contains a dozen cells, built with heavy iron bars and strong locks, and an assortment of torture and interrogation gear, including a rack, a furnace for heating up hot irons, and so forth.

Currently, there are five prisoners in the cells – three Crab bushi, a peasant, and a disobedient goblin. All the human prisoners are badly Tainted, and one of the bushi is gruesomely mutating as the Taint takes over his body and transforms him into an akutsukai.

This place is the domain of Korhhut, a bloated, mutated goblin shaman who takes fiendish delight in torturing and mutilating the prisoners. He pays especial attention to the disobedient goblin, Nobbuk, and whenever the PCs first approach this place he will have Nobbuk strapped down on a table, torturing him with red-hot metal prods. The goblin’s shrieks echo down the corridor outside. Korhhut will be intent on his work and the PCs will be able to slip past to area **15** easily enough... if they are willing to leave the other prisoners to his mercies.

If the PCs attack, Korhhut will be a more difficult foe than he first appears, due to his *maho* skills and unnatural strength. Given the chance, he will try to flee through area **15** to the Tower, calling for reinforcements from the barracks level.

Korhhut, Mutated Goblin Shaman

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 4k2 (red-hot metal probe)

Wounds: 24: +10; 48: Dead.

Carapace: 6

Spells: Korhhut can cast a modified/improved form of the maho spell *Pain*, focusing the power through his hot staffs to cause agonizing burns (2k1 damage, and helpless with pain for one round) to appear on his target. He rolls 4k3 to cast this spell, with a base TN of 10, and loses 2 Wounds each time he casts it.

Korhhut can also draw strength from the pain of others. Any time he successfully casts this spell, he can choose to either heal the amount of damage he inflicted with it, or roll and keep one extra die on any one action the following round.

If the PCs slay Korhhut, they will face the problem of what to do with the prisoners. The goblin, Nobbuk, will claim to be a friend, disparaging the “nasty masters” in the Tower, and promises to help the PCs any way he can – however, he is a cowardly liar who will flee or betray at the first opportunity.

The Tainted bushi cannot be helped, except by slaying him – within a few days, his agonizing mutations will end with him a servant of Fu Leng.

The other two bushi and the peasant are still outwardly human, although all three have Taint of at least Rank One. They have been badly tortured and are in no condition to travel, let alone fight. If the PCs have access to *Regrow the Wound* or a similar powerful healing spell, they can get these men functional again – otherwise there will be little they can do other than offer them the mercy of a quick death.

If the PCs do heal the two bushi, they may try to recruit them to help in their mission. They will have to find equipment for them (the prisoners have none) and do

something about the poor peasant (who is certainly not going to follow them into the Fifth Tower).

None of the human prisoners has any current knowledge of conditions in the Fifth Tower, although the Crab can describe the tower's basic layout.

15. Guard Post. This was formerly another barracks room, housing the Crab bushi and Kuni shugenja who watched over the prisoners in area **14**. Now it is home to the sadistic Korrhut, who has turned it into a filthy den. Noisome remains of human and inhuman bodies are all around this place, often arranged like trophies. Moving through here will require a strong stomach – PCs must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 10 or be violently sick.

If the PCs do not interrupt Korrhut's torture session in area **14**, they will be able to move through here undetected and proceed on to the Fifth Tower.

Scene Seven: The Vaults of the Fifth Tower

If the PCs make it through the tunnels, they will enter the bottom level of the Fifth Tower, as shown on GM'S MAP #2. Once, this was a stronghold of the Crab Clan, housing hundreds of troops along with their supplies and equipment. Now, it has become a domain of evil, the headquarters of a mighty Shadowlands army. Hida Atarasi, the akutenshi (evil angel) who commands the armies of Fu Leng, has made his home here, and the Dark Oracles attend him to present the wishes of Fu Leng.

Currently, Atarasi is preparing to march his forces to attack Hida Sukune, in accordance with his "alliance" with Hida Kisada. The PCs may have a chance to learn about this and warn Sukune.

While the PCs are inside the Fifth Tower, they will feel a constant crawling sense of being watched by something hateful. The Tower itself has been Tainted, and is dimly aware of the presence of the PCs. The stones here are covered in a horrible blackened incrustation, which feels slimy and foul to the touch. Any PC who stares long at the walls must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 10 or begin to believe that they see faces in the stone, staring out at them with expressions of malice and insanity.

The PCs should realize that their objective (the vault) is on the bottom level, where they arrive, but brief

descriptions of the upper levels are offered for any who are foolish enough to venture there.

The Staircases

There are four main staircases in the corners of the Tower. The steps are of heavy oak planks set into stone walls. Each staircase ascends from the vaults all the way to the roof of the Tower. The stairs are normally empty, so the PCs are free to venture up and down the tower levels without being noticed. However, on the upper levels, venturing outside the stairwells is an invitation to sudden and brutal death.

Three flights up one of the staircases (the lower-left one on the map), the PCs will encounter something ghastly: a living Crab samurai suspended in a mass of greenish-white semi-solid slime. The Crab is paralyzed, his body emaciated, only his eyes able to move as they roll frantically at the PCs. The PCs can clearly see that beneath the slime, something (or perhaps several somethings) is moving inside the Crab's abdomen. He has become an incubator for Oni spawn, spawn which will soon hatch and burst free of their nest. It is up to the PCs whether to offer the mercy of death to this poor Crab.

The Parapet Level

The roof of the Fifth Tower is covered with the scattered bones of its former defenders, many of them gnawed on or cracked open for marrow. The siege weapons which formerly defended the Wall are now turned inward, and scores of goblins perch on them, snooze beside them, or wander about the roof, waiting for an attack from the "stupid samurai-men."

Coiled in one corner of the roof, casting a malevolent yellow-eyed gaze out onto Crab lands, is the fearsome shape of a Kyoso no Oni. Atarasi has assigned her command of the Fifth Tower's defenses, a role which she considers beneath her power and status – consequently, she carries it out with especial vicious cruelty. If any PCs look out on the roof for more than a few moments, she will notice and attack them.

Kyoso no Oni

FIRE 3 Intelligence 4	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3 Willpower 4	WATER 3 Perception 4

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 5k3 (three attacks per round)

Damage: 2k1 (claws) or 3k2 (unholy fire, see below)

Carapace Armor: 10

Wounds: 12: +5; 24: +15; 60: Dead.

Spells: The Oni can cast 11 different spells (4 Earth, 4 Fire, 2 Water, 1 Air) like a Rank 3 shugenja with no Proficiency/Deficiency. Treat all spells as innate abilities. The GM should choose whatever spell seems most useful to the circumstances.

Special Abilities: Fear 3, Invulnerability. The Oni's "Unholy Fire" (blasts of dark fire, hurled from the hands) has a range of over five hundred yards and ignores armor. Those struck by it must roll **Simple Void** at TN 10 or lose a Void point. If this is the PC's last Void point, the PC falls unconscious.

If the PCs survive a fight here, they will be able to look down into the Shadowlands and gain a panoramic view of the massive army which is assembling there. PCs who played through the adventure *Duty at the Wall* will realize that the host gathering here is even larger than the one they faced in that scenario.

The Barracks Level

If the PCs come up here, they will be in serious danger. There are literally hundreds of Shadowlands creatures on this level – foul goblins, brutal ogres and trolls, and terrifying lesser Oni. They have torn out most of the intervening walls on the level and turned the place into one vast bedlam of filthy nests and lairs. They spend most of their time quarreling with (and sometimes killing) each other, as well as feasting on meals whose content is best left unmentioned. Like the goblins above and below, they will not notice PCs who stay hidden in the stairwells, but any intrusion (or loud noise) will bring them swarming out in limitless numbers. In such a situation, the PCs' only hope of survival is abject flight, perhaps with one or two of them staying behind to block a passageway for a while.

The War Room Level

This place is now the headquarters of Hida Atarasi, the horrifically powerful akutenshi (evil angel) who commands Fu Leng's forces here. The stairwells give onto a dark and silent level, lit intermittently by candles set in human skulls. PCs entering this level will immediately feel a feverish chill run through their bodies, and detect a stench of blood in the air. The level is arranged like the living quarters of a powerful daimyo, but with motifs of darkness, depravity, and death. Shrines to the Ninth Kami are scattered around the level. The Taint in this area is especially high, and the PCs must roll for Taint contamination every ten minutes they spend here.

If the PCs come here early on (instead of going into the Main Storage Hall of the Armory level), the place will be empty – Atarasi is below, consulting with the Dark Oracles. The PCs will be free to explore the level.

If the PCs arrive later, Atarasi will be here, putting the final touches on his battle plan. They would be well-advised to have good Stealth skills if they want to explore this level without being detected by him.

The principle location of interest on this level is the large central room, where a three-dimensional map of the central and northern Crab territories has been laid out on a huge table. Anyone who looks at this map for more than a moment can roll **Battle/Perception** at TN 15 to figure out that Atarasi is planning a massive assault, designed to break through the Hiruma defense lines and eventually reach Razor of the Dawn Castle.

If the PCs encounter Hida Atarasi here, their best chance is simply to run for their lives.

The Communications Level

This level is dominated by a wide, high-roofed (twelve foot high) tunnel which runs the length of the Tower, connecting the Wall on either side. When the Tower was held by the Crab, couriers and patrols would pass through here, marching or riding the length of the Wall.

Aside from this tunnel, the principle feature of this level is a set of arrow-slits which look out on the Shadowlands. The creatures of Fu Leng have battered holes on the inward side of the level to give similar views onto the lands of the Crab Clan.

Over a hundred goblins are assigned to this level, equipped with crude bows and barrels of filth-smeared arrows to fire through the holes at any Crab attackers. At any given time, only a few goblins are looking out the holes – the rest are busy eating, sleeping, talking, quarreling, and so forth.

The goblins will not notice the PCs if they stay quiet and keep inside of the stairwells, but any PC who ventures out into the level will quickly come under attack by over fifty goblins.

Typical Goblin

FIRE 2	AIR 1
	Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 1

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TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 3k2 (sword or arrow)

Wounds: 8: +10; 15: Dead.

If the PCs assault the Fifth Tower from outside, they will eventually reach this level from two staircases which descend the inner face of the Wall. Of course, the PCs will have to be formidable indeed to survive a charge across the open ground below the Tower.

The Armory Level

This is where the PCs will arrive from the Kaiu tunnels. Individual locations on this level are as follows:

1. Guard Rooms: There is a guard room next to each tunnel entry point on the level. In former times these would have been manned by Crab bushi and Kaiu engineers, controlling access to both the tunnels and the stairwells. Now they are empty except for broken furnishings and bloodstains.

2. Main Storage Hall: A vast open chamber, the ceiling supported by eight massive stone pillars. In former times, this place housed stockpiles of supplies – food, lumber, cloth, rope, barrels of water, and everything else imaginable. Much of this is now gone, and what remains is tainted and diseased. Furthermore, this place has been converted to a shrine to the Ninth Kami, and a gathering place for the evil forces which guide the Shadowlands occupation of the Fifth Tower.

In the center of the chamber sits an altar of black obsidian, stained with the blood (both fresh and old) of numerous sacrifices. An unnatural, blue-green fire burns in four obsidian braziers set around the altar. A sickening aura of Taint and evil hangs around this entire place. Any PCs who meddle in this area (trying to extinguish the fires, touching the altar, etc) must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain 1-3 points of Taint.

Whenever the PCs first peek into this area, they will witness the following scene. (Exception: if the PCs explore the rest of the tower first, and spend a long time doing so, this evil conference will already be over by the time they make it back down here.)

In front of the black altar is a hugely tall man with a rich, heavy beard. He kneels before the altar, looking not unlike a samurai bowing to his lord. He is dressed in a massive suit of heavy armor, dark as

night, and a strange heavy sword, like the primitive ancestor of a katana, rests on his knees.

Four other figures stand around the man, all genuflecting before the altar. One of them is a bipedal being, shaped vaguely like a woman swathed in greenish-yellow fire, its eyes visible as searing points of white-hot light. A second is a heavy-set man with skin of a horrible gray tone, like a mushroom, naked save for a loincloth. He rests his hands on the haft of a tetsubo made of stone, its color little different from his own foul hide. A third figure, apparently a naked woman, shifts and wobbles in your vision, the light seeming to pass through her translucent body, scattering in nauseous sparkles. The fourth figure is a pale man, floating just above the floor – his pallid body is completely without skin, and muscles and sinews shift and writhe horribly as he moves.

The man in armor is Hida Atarasi, and the four figures are the four Dark Oracles. PCs who have played the adventures *Legacy of the Dark One*, *The Ties That Bind*, or *A Heart of Vengeance* can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 10 to recognize the pale skinless figure as Isawa Gidayu, the Dark Oracle of Air. All of the Oracles can be recognized as what they are with a **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** roll at TN 25. PCs who look closely at Hida Atarasi can spot a primitive Crab mon with a **Heraldry/Perception** roll at TN 15. If they spot the mon, they can roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 30 or **Lore: Crab Clan/Intelligence** at TN 25 can recall a very obscure legend, a tale alleging that Hida Atarasi, the Crab Thunder, did not die in the Shadowlands but was instead corrupted and became the first of the akutenshi. Otherwise, they will only be able to identify him (with a **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** roll at TN 20) as an akutenshi (evil angel, someone who has taken Fu Leng's blood into their own veins).

Assuming the PCs are not foolish enough to expose their presence or attack these beings, they will be able to overhear their conversation:

Hida Atarasi (straightens up): *Our... allies... have called for aid. Against the one called Sukune.*

Oracle of Earth (in a grating, harsh voice): *This was not the agreement. We were to march at their side against the Hantei, not to fight in some feeble local struggle.*

Oracle of Water (smooth, silky voice): *This is the first step to the greater goal. Every path has a first step. Even the fool Shinsei knew that.*

Atarasi: *Yes, a first step, to crush those who do not accept the alliance. None of my Clan will dare resist after that.*

Oracle of Fire (soft, sibilant whisper): *The plans are already made. My terrors await your command.*

Atarasi: *We march within the day.*

Oracle of Air (looks around, as though hearing something, then speaks in a soft, chilling tone): *What of our... other allies? Will they aid us here?*

Atarasi: *They have their own duties in the plan. While we march against the Empire, they will rip out its innards. By the time we reach Ootosan Uchi, the gates will open before us.*

(General inhuman sounds of approval and dark amusement.)

Oracle of Water: *And our Lord? How soon will He be able to walk among us once more, that we might bathe in the light of His gaze?*

Atarasi: *His vessel is being prepared. The Dark Daughter has charge of him.*

Oracle of Fire: *And the prophecy will be fulfilled. The last Akodo will doom the last Hantei.*

More inhuman laughter echoes through the chamber. Then Atarasi gestures dismissal. *“Gather your terrors. I must finish my plans before the Horde marches.”* He turns and heads for one of the staircases (away from the PCs). The Oracles simply vanish, as though sliding through holes in the fabric of reality... but if any of the PCs have the enmity or Curse of the Dark Oracle of Air, they see that Oracle pause a moment, its bare eyeballs rolling back and forth, before disappearing.

3. Armories: These three rooms each contain massive stockpiles of equipment and ammunition. All of the jade is gone, of course, but there are still massive quantities of armor, rack upon rack of heavy weapons such as tetsubo and yari, and great bundles of arrows. The PCs can freely equip themselves with this gear if they wish – but all of it is Tainted, and any PC who uses it must make a **Simple Earth** roll (TN 5 for arrows, 10 for weapons, 15 for armor) or gain a point of Taint. PCs who keep the equipment long-term (that is, once they get back to the Empire) will automatically gain 1-3 points of Taint per adventure, and will also

lose Honor for keeping gear that belongs to the Crab Clan.

Armory **3a** contains the steel door to the vault which the PCs are seeking. In addition, two of these armories contain special dangers:

Armory 3a, which houses the vault, is currently being visited by a goblin sneak, a skulking goblin dressed in dark rags and a black skull-cap, who specializes in stealth and assassination. This foul creature will be startled by the appearance of the PCs, and lets out a squawk of alarm before recovering himself and attempted to flee with the help of his stealthy skills. Given the chance, he will try to steal something first (such as a scroll with instructions for opening the vault...) If he is not stopped, he will escape and soon alert the nearest enemies (most likely the goblins on the Communications Level).

Goblin Sneak

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 4
EARTH 2	WATER 1 Perception 2

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 3k3

Damage: 3k2 (knife)

Wounds: 10: +10; 20: Dead.

Skills: Sleight of Hand 6, Stealth 5.

Special Abilities:

Goblin Stealth: The sneak has an uncanny knack for blending into darkness and shadow. As long as there is any darkness for him to hide in, PCs must succeed at a Contested roll of **Hunting/Perception** or **Investigation/Perception** against his **Stealth/Agility** in order to spot him.

Assassination: If the goblin strikes an unprepared opponent (such as one who cannot see him due to his stealth abilities), he may gain a Kept die on damage for every two Raises he calls.

Armory 3b has become the domain of a grotesque plant-like monstrosity which has immigrated from the Shadowlands in the corpse of a fallen Crab. PCs who enter this armory will notice a huge mass of gray tendrils, hard and bony in appearance, coiled up in one corner of the room. Just visible beneath the mass are the desiccated limbs of a corpse. Nothing will happen unless a PC moves within ten feet – at which point the tendrils suddenly uncoil, revealing barbed claws, and

try to grab the PCs and drag them into a central maw which vaguely resembles a giant venus flytrap.

Shadowlands Man-Eating Plant

FIRE 1 Agility 3	AIR 0 Awareness 2
EARTH 4	WATER 2 Strength 3

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3 (two tendril attacks per round)

Damage: 2k1 (tendrils)

Carapace Armor: 5

Wounds: 16: +5; 32: +10; 48: +15; 64: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 2, Partial Invulnerability (half damage from normal weapons). Any foe hit by a tendril will be dragged in to the maw – the victim has one round in which to destroy the tendril (inflict 16 or more points of damage on it) or break free (Contested Strength roll) before being stuffed into the plant’s gullet. PCs inside the plant take 3k2 damage per round and cannot do anything but scream in agony. The plant can only digest one victim at a time.

4. The Vault: The entrance to the vault (located in the back wall of armory **3a**) is a heavy steel door with an elaborate trick lock. If the PCs have kept the instructions from Hida Sukune, or successfully memorized them, they will be able to open the lock easily (**Simple Intelligence** at TN 5). PCs who lost the instructions and failed to memorize them can try to remember them now by rolling **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25 (TN 15 if they have Precise Memory).

If the PCs do not have the instructions and do not remember them, they will have to try to figure out the lock for themselves. This will require either a **Cipher/Intelligence** roll at TN 15, **Nazado/Intelligence** at TN 15, **Research/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Traps/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 30. If the PCs fail three times, they will trigger the lock’s fail-safe – there is a loud “clang” from inside as reinforcing bars slam into place, rendering the lock unopenable for 24 hours (at which point it resets).

The PCs may also be able to get through the lock with magic, such as by *Communing* with spirits in the lock to show them how to open it, weakening the Earth spirits in the hinges so that they can be broken, or even melting through the door if they can invoke powerful enough Fire magic. The GM must adjudicate such

efforts based on the spells involved and the number of Raises which the shugenja manages.

The vault itself is a single large chamber, the walls lined with steel plate. Behind the steel is heavy stone which has been interlaced with jade and ground crystal. While inside the vault, the PCs are considered to be “outside the Shadowlands” and are protected from Taint. Shadowlands creatures find the vault an painful place, and the lesser ones will not voluntarily enter it. (More powerful entities such as the Dark Oracles can enter the vault without harm, although they still prefer not to do so.)

The vault is empty except for several wooden shelves along the three walls. The majority of these shelves are empty – the Crab grabbed some of the equipment here before the Tower fell – but the following items are still present:

- A jade-studded tetsubo.
- Fifty jade-tipped arrows, in bundles of ten.
- A yari with a blade of awakened crystal (crystal strength 3).
- The Jade Hand. This sacred relic of the Crab Clan resembles a simple carving of a large human hand, but at close examination, it can be seen that the hand is jointed and fitted to move like a real hand. It glows very faintly, a light green luminescence that is barely visible.

PCs will be free to use these relics for the remainder of their adventure in the Shadowlands. Once they return to Crab lands, they will be expected to hand these weapons back to the Crab Clan – failure to do so will mean a major Honor loss (at least a Rank). However, if they fight with Sukune in the battle against the Shadowlands, they will be allowed to keep the weapons for the duration of that battle.

Claiming the Jade Hand?

It is possible (unlikely, but possible) that one or more PCs on this adventure might be missing their right hand. Such a PC can attempt to claim the Jade Hand for their own by touching it to the stump (it must be a missing hand, not a missing arm – the Jade Hand will not lengthen itself to replace a lost arm). Provided the PC has an Honor Rank of at least 1.0, the Hand will fuse to their arm. The Jade Hand will never attach itself to a PC who deliberately cuts off his/her own hand.

There is only one Jade Hand, and consequently, only one PC in the campaign can claim it. If a situation

arises in which a PC can claim the Jade Hand, the GM should contact the Campaign Administrator at <youta@rollanet.org> to determine whether or not the PC is actually eligible to have the Jade Hand cert.

The Dark Oracle Takes Notice

If at least one of the PCs has the Dark Oracle of Air as a Sworn Enemy, or carries the Curse of that Oracle, the following scene will occur whenever the PCs leave the vault (or give up on trying to enter it):

The air shimmers in front of you, and the stench of fresh blood is suddenly thick in your nostrils. The shape of a skinless man, his muscles and veins writhing horribly, appears before you, floating just above the ground. His flesh is pale and faintly translucent. His naked, staring eyeballs glow with hatred as he stares at you, seeming to look directly into your soul. “You,” he hisses, in a voice that seems to writhe into your ears like squirming maggots. “Again you return to plague me. No more. This is the last time. Your empty lives are at an end.”

If any PCs have the Curse of the Dark Oracle, the curse will activate now.

The Dark Oracle stretches out his pale skinless hands and tries to reach into the bodies of those who are his enemies (he will target Sworn Enemies first, then other PCs). PCs can dodge these attacks by rolling **Defense/Agility** at TN 20. If an attack hits, the PC suffers damage of 5kX, where X is the PC’s Air ring.

The Dark Oracle continues to attack until the PCs flee the Fifth Tower (going directly from the vault to the nearest exit will take three full rounds), and then departs to warn Hida Atarasi of the intruders.

Alternatively, some PCs may be able to drive the Dark Oracle away. Most physical weapons cannot harm Isawa Gidayu, but crystal or obsidian will hurt him, and anti-Taint magic can harm him as well. If the PCs manage to inflict 100 or more wounds with these attacks, the Oracle will retreat immediately.

Scene Eight: Escape and Warning!

Assuming the PCs did not alert the major occupants of the Fifth Tower, they will be able to leave the place easily enough by retracing their steps through the Kaiu Tunnels. (The Dark Oracle of Air will only pursue them as far as the entrance to the tunnels.)

If the PCs did “raise the alarm,” they will have to flee from pursuit by overwhelming numbers of Shadowlands creatures. Clever PCs may be able to use the traps and obstacles in the Kaiu tunnels to block pursuit, and shugenja PCs might be able to use magic for the same purpose. Otherwise, some of the PCs will probably have to die in order to buy time for the rest to escape.

If the PCs flee outside of the Tower (across open ground), they will face the same awful gauntlet of attacks as if they were advancing on the Tower.

Option: Ratling Rescue

If the PCs are in a hopeless situation (trapped inside the tower, cornered in the Kaiu Tunnels, etc), the GM can opt to offer help from ratlings – provided at least one of the PCs has a Ratling ally (or possibly just a skill related to ratlings, such as **Ratling Speech** or **Ratling Culture**). A ratling will pop out of a previously unnoticed hole in the wall or floor and chitter (in its own language), “This way, man-mans!”

If the PCs follow the ratling, he will lead them through a winding tangle of narrow tunnels, chewed out of earth and stone by strong ratling teeth. Eventually the PCs will come out of a ratling burrow near the Hiruma fortifications.

Delivering Warnings

Assuming the PCs do make it back from the Fifth Tower alive (whether or not they have the Jade Hand), they will probably be aware that the Shadowlands forces are planning an attack within a day, with the Castle of the Razor’s Dawn as its final target. No doubt at least some of the PCs will wish to warn somebody in the Crab Clan about this threat.

Hiruma Tatsuno will dispatch messengers to all the major Crab strongholds. (Hiruma Imai will be sent to Razor’s Dawn Castle, and the PCs can accompany her if they wish.) Tatsuno expresses little hope that any help will be forthcoming. He instructs the rest of his soldiers to prepare to sell their lives as dearly as possible. PCs can, if they wish, remain here and die fighting the Horde – there is no possibility of victory against the overwhelming strength which is gathering in and beyond the Fifth Tower.

If the PCs head directly back to the castle of the Razor’s Dawn, they can reach it in four days – three and a half if they push themselves to the limit. See

“Showdown with Sukune” below for details of what will happen.

If the PCs are more interested in getting help as quickly as possible, they have another option. Any Crab PC will know (and Tatsuno can tell those who don't) that the nearest Crab stronghold is Shiro Kuni, the Castle of the Land, which lies less than three days' travel southeast down the Wall. PCs who have played through the adventures *Face of Fear* or *Duty at the Wall* have visited Shiro Kuni before, and have probably met its commander, Hida Tampako.

If the PCs go there, however, they will be disappointed. Tampako will inform them that he has been ordered, by Hida Kisada himself, not to interfere with anything occurring in the sector of the Fifth Tower. Tampako realizes something is not right about this, but he is a loyalist Crab and will not disobey a direct order from his Clan Champion.

Showdown with Sukune

When the PCs reach Razor of the Dawn Castle, they will find a striking scene:

The walls of Razor's Dawn Castle bristle with armed bushi, and a sizable force of infantry is assembled in the narrow mountain valley leading up to the castle. Small forces of cavalry guard both flanks. The personal banner of Hida Sukune flutters above the troops as they wait to defend the castle. Opposite them, resting on a low ridge about two miles distant, is a far larger army, flying the banners of the Crab Clan and Hida Kisada. Despite its greatly superior numbers, Kisada's army has so far made no move to attack.

Sukune's troops will quickly escort the PCs inside, and Sukune himself will receive them in the main hall of the castle. He is dressed in the massive, imposing, full-body armor which is his trademark, and his face is pale and sweaty beneath his monstrous, crab-claw-shaped helmet. His sister Hida O-Ushi waits grimly beside him, her face set in a furious scowl.

Even while the PCs are speaking with Sukune, alarms will sound and couriers rush in to report the approach of another army from the southwest. It is Hida Atarasi's foul army, come to fulfill its bargain with Hida Kisada.

Kisada's army will draw back slightly, not interfering with the battle. Sukune's followers must fight for themselves. They will do so grimly and without

hope... unless the PCs have brought back the Jade Hand. In that case:

- If the Hand is not attached to anyone, Sukune will stride out onto the castle battlements and hold the sacred artifact aloft, shouting out to his men that the Fortunes have not yet abandoned them. He calls for a volunteer to take up the burden of the great weapon, and soon a veteran one-handed Crab is found to accept the Jade Hand.
- If a PC has “put on” the Hand, Sukune will beg them to fight at his side against the forces of the Shadowlands. A PC who refuses could potentially lose significant Honor, depending on the reason (cowardice in the face of Fu Leng's forces is inherently dishonorable). Assuming the PC agrees to fight, Sukune harangues the troops as above.
- Either way, the Hand will flash with a bright green light that is visible from Kisada's army. That army visibly shifts, clearly unhappy with its orders.

Regardless of whether or not the PCs brought back the Jade Hand, a desperate battle will soon commence. It is up to the PCs whether or not to participate in it. If they choose not to, Sukune will be bitter toward Crab PCs but sadly understanding to non-Crab. He will offer them safe passage out of his territory.

Crab PCs who do not fight for Sukune, and depart Razor's Dawn Castle, will be intercepted by riders from Kisada's army. The riders demand that the PCs show their loyalties and join Kisada's force. Yasuki and Kaiu PCs can still get away with refusing, but any other Crab PCs become Clan ronin if they refuse to take sides at this point.

The Battle of Razor's Dawn

The battle begins in mid-afternoon and lasts until almost 2 a.m. – six rounds on the Battle Table. Appendix #2 contains material for GMs who wish to play out the battle. If there is insufficient time left in the round, or if the players are uninterested in playing through the battle, the GM may instead employ the following abstract version:

If the Jade Hand is not in the battle: The fight goes badly for Sukune's forces, which are heavily outnumbered. By midnight they have been forced back into the castle, and the Shadowlands forces are storming the walls. Hida Sukune orders his sister O-Ushi to take as many soldiers as possible (including the PCs) and escape through the tunnels under the castle,

while he remains behind with a picked guard to delay the enemy. “Stay alive,” he orders, “and keep the truth alive, so that our brethren elsewhere in the Clan may find their way back to their proper duty. It is not yet too late.” O-Ushi argues at first, but finally obeys, her eyes dark with unshed tears. PCs can choose to flee, or to stay and die as lost heroes.

All PCs who fight in the battle take 9k4 damage, from which they may deduct the total of a **Defense/Reflexes** roll (plus 10 points if they are shugenja or wearing heavy armor). All such PCs must also roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain 1-3 points of Taint.

If the Jade Hand is in the battle: The fight goes badly at first, as Sukune’s forces are driven back toward the castle. But the pure light of the Jade Hand flashes repeatedly, driving back the foul Shadowlands creatures again and again. The Crab hold the line outside the castle, repelling assault after assault. As the battle rages on, it becomes apparent that the Crab numbers are increasing – many of the Kisada loyalists have switched sides and joined the fight. Just after midnight the tide of battle suddenly shifts – Sukune has moved his cavalry around through hidden mountain passes, and strikes at the flanks. The Shadowlands force collapses abruptly, falling back in panic and ruin.

All PCs who fight in the battle take 7k3 damage, from which they may deduct the total of a **Defense/Reflexes** roll (plus 10 points if they are shugenja or wearing heavy armor). Again, all PCs must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain 1-2 points of Taint. If a PC has the Jade Hand, that PC takes 2k1 extra damage but is immune to Taint.

Morning brings pale light to show a wasteland of foul corpses before Razor’s Dawn Castle. Despite heavy losses, Sukune’s army is stronger than it was the day before – thousands of loyalists have switched sides, inspired by the presence of the Jade Hand. Sukune and his sister O-Ushi address the army, praising their courage, fortitude, and honor. Kisada’s army is gone – he has retreated, shaken by the defection of so many of his troops.

Conclusion

If the PCs were unable to retrieve the Jade Hand, they probably witness the destruction of Hida Sukune’s rebel faction, barely escaping with their own lives (if they escape at all). Such PCs will bear a terrible tale back to the rest of the Empire – Hida Kisada has allied

with the Shadowlands, and those who oppose him have been crushed.

If the PCs did retrieve the Jade Hand, the forces of the Shadowlands have been beaten back (for the moment), and Sukune’s rebel faction has been greatly strengthened. The Kaiu family will openly declare for Sukune soon after the battle, although the Yasuki family will still remain officially neutral. Sukune will accept the loyalty of any neutral or loyalist Crab PCs who decide to change their allegiance. He will urge all non-Crab PCs to return to the Empire and tell them the truth of what is happening.

In the unlikely event that a non-Crab PC attached the Jade Hand, Sukune will urge the PC to remain and help him to battle with the enemies of the Empire. However, if the PC insists on leaving (due to other loyalties, duties elsewhere, etc), Sukune will reluctantly accept this.

Regardless, if Sukune was victorious, all PCs who helped retrieve the Jade Hand gain him as an Ally. Sukune will also reward each such PC with a gift of a jade weapon – either a tetsubo or a wakizashi, as the PC chooses.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	2 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
PCs rescue the Jade Hand:	1 XP
PCs warned Sukune about the Shadowlands attack:	1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 5 XP

Honor

Crab PCs gain +2 Honor for rescuing the Jade Hand. All other PCs gain +1 Honor.

Non-Crab PCs who keep any normal Crab equipment after the mission lose 2 points of Honor.

Any PC who keeps (steals) any of the equipment from the vault will lose a full Rank of Honor (half a Rank for Scorpions and ronin). Exception: A PC who managed

to attach the Jade Hand to his/her own arm does not lose Honor.

Glory

Crab PCs gain +2 Glory for retrieving the Jade Hand.

All other PCs gain +1 Glory.

PCs who steal Crab equipment lose Glory equal to their Honor loss.

PCs who fight in a winning Battle earn 5 points of Glory, plus any awards for Heroic Opportunities (see Appendix #2). PCs who fight in a losing Battle earn 1 point of Glory, plus Heroic Opportunities.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who steal Crab equipment gain **Bad Reputation: Thief**.

PCs who successfully retrieve the Jade Hand (and who also return the other relics they got from the Fifth Tower) gain Hida Sukune as an **Ally**, and are awarded the cert for either a jade wakizashi or a jade tetsubo (their choice).

If the Dark Oracle of Air attacks the PCs, any PC who did not already have the Dark Oracle as a **Sworn Enemy** gains him as one now. Any PC who already has the Dark Oracle as a Sworn Enemy gains one rank of **Unluck** permanently.

Appendix #1: NPCs and Monsters

Hida Sukune, Leader of the Crab Clan

Rebels

FIRE 4 Intelligence 5	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3 Willpower 4	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15 (27 in fine Heavy Armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 3.6/6.0

Skills: Battle 6, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Hand-to-Hand (Kobo) 3, Heraldry 3, Katana 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Tanto 3, Tessen 2, Tetsubo 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Great Destiny, Social Position (daimyo's son)/Bad Reputation (rebel), Low Pain Threshold.

Equipment: Fine heavy armor, kimono, fine daisho set, tetsubo, war fan, three pouches of jade powder.

Hiruma Imai, female Scout

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15 (30 against Shadowlands creatures)

School/Rank: Hiruma Scout 3

Rank One: Dance the Razor's Edge. Add 5 per School Rank to TN to be Hit by Shadowlands creatures.

Rank Two: Run Like the Wind. Can run at 10mph for a number of hours equal to Stamina x 2.

Rank Three: Smell the Dark Lord's Touch. Cannot get lost in the Shadowlands, and can sense the Taint in creatures within 30 feet.

Honor/Glory: 2.4/1.6

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 3, Hunting 3, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 6, Ratling Speech 3, Stealth 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Precise Memory, Ratling Ally (Black Tail)/Antisocial, Bad Reputation (woman in the scouts), Driven (to destroy Shadowlands), Haunted (brother).

Equipment: Kimono, hakama, daisho set.

Typical Hida Bushi

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Iaijutsu 1, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 4, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Brash.

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo, yari, bow with 20 arrows.

Typical Kuni Shugenja

FIRE 3	AIR 2
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 with light armor)

School/Rank: Kuni shugenja 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Medicine 4, Meditation 3, Shintao 1, Spell Research 2, Spellcraft 3, Tantojutsu 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Earth 1) *Force of Will, Jade Strike, Tetsubo of Earth*, (Fire 1) *Biting Steel, Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Water 1) *Path to Inner Peace*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Ability (any one Earth spell), Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (creepy).

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, wakizashi, tanto, scroll satchel.

Goblin Warmonger

FIRE 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 3
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EARTH 3	WATER 2

TN to be Hit: 20 (15 without armor)
Attacks: 5k3
Damage: 5k2 (sword)
Wounds: 15: +10; 30: Dead.

Ogre

FIRE 3	AIR 1 Reflexes 3
EARTH 2 Stamina 6	WATER 1 Strength 6

TN to be Hit: 20
Attacks: 5k3
Damage: 8k2 (big club)
Carapace Armor: 7
Wounds: 15: +5; 30: +10; 45: +15; 60: Dead.

Oni no Kaze, Elemental Terror of Air

FIRE 4	AIR 7
EARTH 2	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 35
Attacks: 6k4
Damage: 5k2
Carapace Armor: None
Wounds: 20: +5; 40: +10; 80: Dead.
Spells: the Oni no Kaze knows 10 randomly chosen spells of any Mastery level, and has unlimited spell slots in each element. However, each spell can be cast only once.
Special Abilities: Flight (can move up to Air x 5 feet each round and still act, or double that distance if it does nothing but move), Invulnerability (but takes double damage from all spells), Twisted Elements (all enemy spells cast within 100' have their TN raised by 25 – if the spell fails, the spell-scroll is destroyed and Oni no Kaze gains the ability to cast the spell).

Oni no Mizu, Elemental Terror of Water

FIRE 2	AIR 4
EARTH 3	WATER 7

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TN to be Hit: 20
Attacks: 5k4
Damage: 6k3
Carapace Armor: 5
Wounds: 25: +5; 50: +10; 100: Dead.
Special Abilities: Teleportation (can collapse in on itself and reform anywhere within 500', and can take an action on the same round), Invulnerability (but is vulnerable to fire, taking double damage from it), Engulf (engulfs and absorbs the body of anyone it kills, taking on their form, appearance, and speech, but cannot teleport while mimicking their form).

Oni no Jimen, Elemental Terror of Earth

FIRE 3	AIR 2
EARTH 7	WATER 4

TN to be Hit: 10
Attacks: 5k4
Damage: 7k4
Carapace Armor: 10
Wounds: 35: +5; 70: +10; 140: Dead.
Special Abilities: Stone Passage (can pass through barriers of earth, metal, or stone at its normal movement), Invulnerability (but takes normal damage from steel weapons of Fine or Excellent quality), Quake (the earth shakes all around the Oni – all skill rolls within 100' are at +5 TN, and within 10' are at +10 TN).

Hida Atarasi, the First Akutenshi

FIRE 5 Agility 6	AIR 5
EARTH 8	WATER 6 Strength 7

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 9
TN to be Hit: 25 (39 with excellent Heavy Armor)
School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3/Shadowlands 5
Wounds: 153: Dead
Skills: Athletics 8, Battle 7, Defense 6, Hunting 5, Investigation 4, Jiu-jutsu 7, Kenjutsu 8, Kyujutsu 4, Lore (Crab Clan) 6, Lore (Shadowlands) 10, Shintao 2, Sincerity 5, Tsubojutsu 8, Stealth 6, Torture 8, Wrestling 5.
Advantages: Allies (Fu Leng's forces), Dark Fate (evil version of Great Destiny), Kharmic Tie (his

father Hida), Large, Social Position (general of the Shadowlands).

Equipment: Excellent heavy armor, ancient Crab sword (-5 initiative, 2k3 damage), tetsubo (1k3).

Shadowlands Abilities: *Armor of Death* (has Carapace Armor equal to the number of Wounds inflicted on his last strike, cannot be bypassed by tetsubo or dai tsuchi), *Beyond the Elements* (all non-Maho spells are at +10 TN to affect him), *Blessing of the Dark One* (+1 Wounds per rank), *Command the Taint* (Contested Willpower to control Tainted creatures, but humans get a Free Raise if Taint is not their highest Trait, and two Free Raises if it is their lowest Trait), *Death Never Stops* (Free Raises on attack equal to number of Wound Ranks inflicted on the last blow), Fear 4, *Invulnerable* (magic, jade, crystal, or obsidian to wound him), *Undead Strength* (ignores all Wound penalties until dead), *Unearthly Regeneration* (heal 9 Wounds per minute)

Appendix #2: The Battle of the Razor's Dawn

If the GM and players agree, the Battle of Razor's Dawn may be "gamed out" using the Battle Table. This will add considerable time to the play of the scenario, and so should only be done in a situation where time pressure is not critical.

The battle will last six rounds on the Battle Table (page 239 of the *L5R GM's Guide*). Each round of battle lasts one hour of time. The Crab defenders are automatically Losing on the first round. On subsequent rounds, their status is determined by rolling the Tides of Battle.

To determine the Tides of Battle, make **Contested Battle/Awareness** rolls for Hida Sukune and the akutenshi, Hida Atarasi. Sukune rolls 6k4, and Atarasi rolls 7k5. If one roll beats the other by at least five, that side is Winning and the other side is Losing. Otherwise, the battle is Even.

Hida Sukune will get +5 to his roll for each successful Heroic Opportunity which the PCs resolved in the previous round of battle, and for each enemy champion which the PCs dispatched with a Duel/Death Touches You event. He also gets an automatic +5 every round if the Jade Hand is in the fight. Atarasi gets a one-shot +5 modifier for each PC who dies during the battle.

If the Shadowlands wins three straight rounds of battle, the Crab forces are driven back into Razor's Dawn Castle and the battle ends as described (Sukune sacrifices himself to get his sister and as many survivors as possible out through the tunnels). If the Crab win three straight rounds, they win the battle as described (Sukune flanks the Shadowlands forces and drives them back). If neither side manages to win three straight rounds of battle, the fight continues until the end of the sixth round of battle, at which point the Crab lose if they do not have the Jade Hand, but win if they do have the Hand.

Each round of battle, all PCs roll one die and add their total of **Water+Battle** to the roll to determine their status. Note that because this is a battle against Shadowlands creatures, the PCs can only use ranks of **Battle** skill which do not exceed their **Lore: Shadowlands** skill.

Remember that heavy armor reduces the number of Wound dice by one, and that shugenja automatically take one less kept die of damage than other PCs. Also, remember that a PC can normally only shift his/her level of engagement by one (going from Heavily Engaged to merely Engaged, for example).

If the PCs roll a Heroic Opportunity, use the chart below to generate one. If they roll a Duel, make a roll on the Duel/Death Touches You chart below

Heroic Opportunities

Roll one die. Subtract 2 if the PC is a shugenja, and add 1 if the PC is a bushi. If you run out of heroic opportunities, feel free to make up additional ones, using these as guidelines.

If a PC falls in the battle, but is not dead, the next PC to roll a Heroic Opportunity will automatically get the chance to rescue their wounded friend. Dragging the wounded PC out of the fight will require a **Simple Strength** roll against a TN of the wounded PC's Earth x 5. The rescuing PC is automatically relocated to the Reserves for the next round of battle.

-1: Power of the Kami. You realize that the spirits of the earth are angry at being trod upon by so many Tainted feet. Try to cast a *Commune* spell (Earth) with four Raises. If you are successful, the Earth spirits rise up against the Shadowlands forces, snaring and slowing them. You gain a +2 to your next Battle Table roll.

0: Help Me! A critically wounded Crab bushi begs you for aid. No other shugenja are nearby, and the enemy is about to attack again. (The PC can help the bushi by casting *Regrow the Wound*, casting *Path to Inner Peace* with at least two Raises, or rolling **Medicine/Intelligence** at TN 25.)

1: Guard the Tears. The flow of jade powder to the archers is interrupted when a pack of goblins gets loose among the carriers. (The PC must roll **[Weapon Skill]/Agility** at TN 25 or cast an attack spell with at least two Raises to drive off all the goblins and allow the flow of jade powder to resume.)

2: Raise the Standard! Beside you, a Crab battle standard topples and falls. The men around it falter, ready to flee. (To prevent a panic, the PC must raise the battle standard. This makes them a target for the enemy, increasing their Wounds by one die each round of Battle. However, they are also considered to automatically succeed in a Heroic Opportunity each round they remain standing.)

3. Ambush Pits. A Kaiu engineer goes down with a half-dozen goblin arrows in his body. He croaks to you, gesturing, even as his life-blood spills out: “There! Lure them across that pit!” (The PC must roll **Simple Perception** at TN 10 to spot the camouflaged pit. To lure the attackers onto the pit, the PC can either lead them on and then jump the pit – **Athletics/Agility** at TN 15 – or taunt them into charging across the pit – **Acting, Oratory**, or any similar skill with the **Awareness** trait, TN 15.)

4: What in the Fortunes’ Name is That?! Roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Perception** at TN 20. With a success, you recognize an obscure Shadowlands monster and warn the Crab how to fight it. With your advice, they swiftly bring the creature down. Add +1 to your Battle Chart rolls for the rest of the combat.

5: They’re Behind Us! The PC must roll **Battle/Perception** at TN 10, **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15, or **Simple Perception** at TN 20, to notice that the Crab unit s/he is fighting with has been cut off. If the Crab are warned, they manage to fight their way back out before it is too late. Otherwise, the PC suffers a -2 penalty to the next Battle Table roll.

6: Bloodstrike. Roll **Lore (Maho)/Perception** at TN 10, **Lore (Shugenja)/Perception** or **Lore (Shadowlands)/Perception** at TN 15, or **Simple Perception** at TN 20. With a success, you notice a crazed Shadowlands madman reciting a chant while sawing at his arm with a rusty knife. The blood spilling from his arm coils up into a dark, hungry spirit. (The PC can either strike the maho-tsukai with a spell or missile weapon, or warn the Crab around him/her, in which case the Crab drop the tsukai with arrows. Failure to take some kind of action results in a senior Crab officer being struck down by the foul magic.)

7: Wisdom of the Crab. A massive Oni shoulders forward, its grotesquely huge shoulders and limbs shedding the blows of Crab bushi like so many fly-bites. “Big rock!” the Crab around you shout. “Big rock!” (The PC must roll **Lore (Shadowlands)/Intelligence** at TN 15, or **Lore (Crab Clan)/Intelligence** at TN 10, to recognize the “Crab code” for a monster that is immune to jade. With a success, the PC knows to pull back and organize archers to wear down the monster slowly. Otherwise, the PC takes an extra 4k2 Wounds from trying to fight the near-indestructible Oni.)

8: Break the Wave. A fresh enemy onslaught storms forward, goblins innumerable, zombies which were comrades only a short while ago, and horrible oni and elemental terrors. Around the PC, the Crab dig in their feet, preparing to withstand the charge by sheer muscle-power. The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 15 to hold his ground in the face of the terrifying enemy attack (failure means a loss of 3 points of Honor as the PC breaks and runs), and **Simple Strength** at TN 20 (or **Athletics/Strength** or **Defense/Strength** at TN 15) to successfully withstand the Shadowlands charge.

9: A Samurai Stands Alone. You look around blinking and realize everyone near you is dead or dying. You alone stand facing an onrushing tide of goblins, ogres, and worse things. You still have a chance to flee... but that will expose the flanks of the units on either side. (If the PC stands and fights, s/he takes 5k3 additional Wounds over and above the normal Battle Table damage. The number of Wounds is reduced by the total of a **Defense/Agility** roll.)

10: The Mountain Does Not Fall. A Shadowlands spearhead has broken through the lines, and a large unit of Crab is cut off, surrounded by monsters. The bushi fight bravely, striking down foes all around them, but their defeat is certain unless the encirclement can be broken. There are a handful of Crab bushi near you, perhaps enough

to smash the foes... or perhaps not. (The PC can roll either Battle/Willpower at TN 15, Oratory/Willpower at TN 20, Intimidation/Willpower at TN 25, or Simple Willpower at TN 30 to inspire the Crab enough to break through and rescue the trapped bushi. Failure means the PC suffers a –2 penalty on the next Battle Table roll.)

11: Hiruma Imai Falls. The PC spots Hiruma Imai going down, knocked unconscious by a blast of dark fire from an Oni no Kyoso. To save her, the PC can either stand over her fallen body (taking an additional 3k2 Wounds) or carry her out of the fight (requiring either **Athletics/Strength** at TN 15 or **Simple Strength** at TN 20). Failure to do either will result in her death.

Duel/Death Touches You

The GM should roll on this table, subtracting 1 if the PC is a shugenja. If multiple PCs at the same Engagement Level roll a Duel/Death Touches You, the GM can allow them to get the same event and combine their efforts. As with the Heroic Opportunities, additional Duel/Death Touches You results can be created by the GM, based on the ones listed here.

0: Shadowlands Champion: Oni no Kaze. A horrible creature resembling a dead baby bird as tall as a samurai targets the PC for personal attention. The Elemental Terror of Air will depart if it drains three or more spells from the PC.

1: Shadowlands Champion: Goblin Warmonger. A goblin warmonger targets the PC for personal attention. Begin a one-on-one combat using the goblin warmonger stats.

2: The Horror, the Horror. A Crab bushi ahead is striking down the enemy left and right, shouting courageous battle cries. Suddenly he shrieks in agony and convulses. A moment later his body erupts like some massive pustule, spraying everyone with blood and foul black ichor. The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 15 (TN 10 for those with Death Trance) or scream in horror, losing a number of Honor Points equal to his/her Honor Rank. The PC must also roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain 1 point of Taint.

3: Black Fire. The PC is targeted by a bolt of black fire from a Kyoso no Oni. The PC is targeted with a 5k3 attack which ignores armor. If it hits, the PC takes 3k2 damage and must roll **Simple Void** at TN 10 or lose a Void point. If this is the PC's last Void point, the PC falls unconscious.

4: Shadowlands Champion: Ogre. An ogre singles the PC out for personal attention. A one-on-one fight ensues, using the stats at the end of the module.

5: Possession. The PC is targeted by some kind of maho spell which attempts to possess and control him/her. The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 20 to resist. An Honor Test can serve as a backup. Otherwise the PC begins killing allies, screaming madly. The PC spends the next round of battle fighting on the Shadowlands side before coming out of the spell. If the PC survives, s/he loses a Rank of Honor and must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 15 or get 1-5 points of Taint.

6. Shadowlands Champion: Oni no Mizu. An amorphous blob of cloudy, polluted water slithers across the battlefield to attack the PC. Combat begins, using the Oni no Mizu stats. Other PCs who get this result can join the fight after one round.

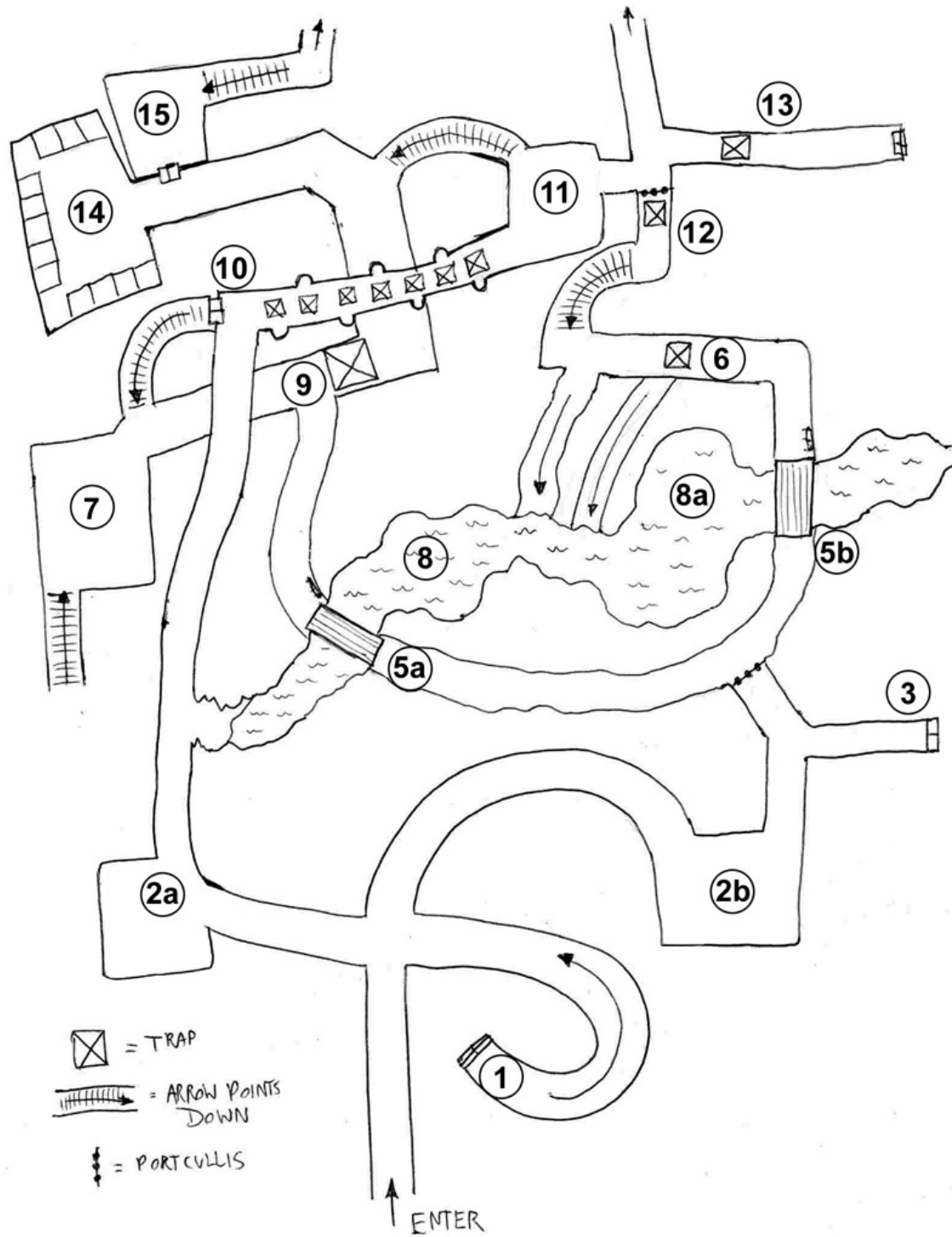
7: The Dark Moto Ride. One of the Dark Moto does a “ride-by attack,” galloping past and stabbing at the PC with a yari. The PC can dodge away with a **Defense/Reflexes** roll at TN 20. Otherwise the PC takes 4k3 damage. The Moto rides away before the PC can strike back. **Alternatively**, this can be a challenge from a PC possessed as a result of #5 above.

8: Incoming!!! A beautiful woman made of unearthly green witchfire hovers above the battlefield – she is an Oni no Taki-bi, an Elemental Terror of Fire. If the PC is male, she will hurl a globe of blazing green fire from her body. This attack rolls 7k7 to hit and inflicts 5k4 damage. If the PC immediately flings himself flat or otherwise takes action to dodge, the damage is reduced by one kept die.

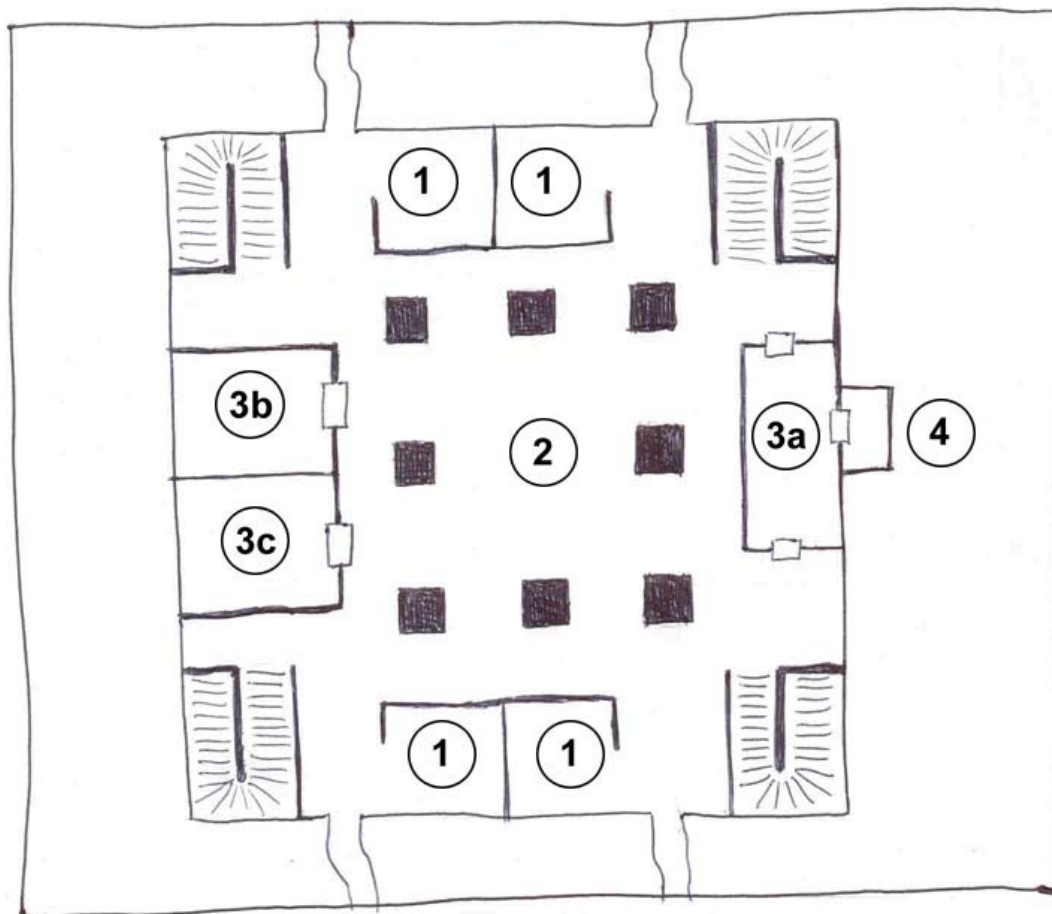
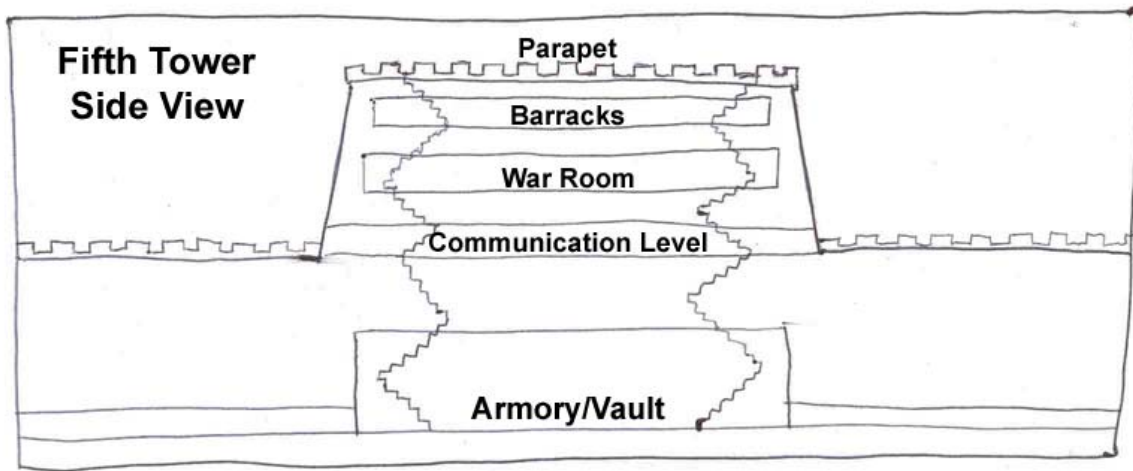
9: Bloody Horror. The PC steps into the chest cavity of a dead Crab ...and the Crab moves, shrieking in agony as the PC's foot crushes his insides! The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 20 or scream in horror, losing 2 points of Honor. An Honor test can serve as a back-up.

10: I... Smash! A fifteen-foot-tall monstrosity, seemingly a giant ogre sculpted from earth, strides to attack. This terrible thing is an Oni no Jimen, an Elemental Terror of Earth. If no other PCs are available to help, Crab bushi will arrive to save the day in 1-10 rounds.

Map #1: The Kaiu Tunnels



Map #2: The Fifth Tower



Handout #1

Brothers and Sisters of the Crab Clan!

Many of you have no doubt already learned that I have raised the flag of revolt against my father, Hida Kisada. I must tell you all why I am doing this, so that you can understand and judge for yourself whether to join my struggle.

Near the end of last winter, as you all know, the Fifth Tower fell to the forces of the Shadowlands. I have learned that this was no mere accident. Before the fall of the Tower, Kuni Yori - the daimyo of our honored and valiant Kuni family - spoke secretly with the minions of Fu Leng, offering the Fifth Tower as a "gift" in exchange for the alliance of the armies of the Shadowlands! This was witnessed and reported to me by five valiant samurai from several different Clans, samurai I had dispatched to watch and follow Kuni Yori.

I did not wish to believe such a thing of Kuni Yori, who has served my father, our lord Kisada, ably and well. But after the fall of the Fifth Tower, I had to believe. I confronted Yori-san and demanded an explanation. What he told me was unbelievable. He claimed that in forming an alliance with the Shadowlands he was merely carrying out the orders of our lord Kisada, my father! I could not believe such a thing. Even if Lord Kisada-sama had ordered Yori to commit such an abominable act, he could only have done so under the influence of another. Most likely Yori himself, who has spent so many years investigating the Shadowlands. We all know many stories of fellow Crab whose studies of the Great Enemy led them to corruption and evil. Is there any doubt that the same has befallen Yori-san? Can there be any question that my father has been led astray by the words of a Tainted advisor? Why else would he betray all the principles of our Clan, and ally us with the enemy we have fought for so many centuries?

I have no wish to fight my father, or my fellow Crab warriors, who are merely obeying the orders of their superiors. But I cannot allow this madness to go forward unanswered. I call on all true and loyal Crabs to reject the evil plans of Kuni Yori, and to show my father the error he has made in trusting to this folly.

Hida Sukune