

Duty at the Wall

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

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A visit to the Crab lands is a simple but unpleasant duty... one that could turn deadly when you are sent into the Shadowlands on a scouting mission.

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A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three 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 TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

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. It is probably too deadly for Rank 1 characters, although they can play if they wish (accepting the consequences).

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."

Important Note: this is a SHADOWLANDS module. As such it presents a higher-than-usual threat of death or Taint. The GM should warn players up front what sort of module this is, so they can decide whether or not to play and if so, which characters to run. (Courtiers, for example, will be singularly ill-suited to the challenges found here.)

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. 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):

- If the Shadowlands war council notices the PCs, the initial attack is only the Oni no Shikibu. The Oni no Ugulu does not join the fight until after

three rounds, and each subsequent enemy is likewise delayed by three rounds.

- There is only one goblin hunting party (the first one) during the retreat from the Shadowlands.
- Ignore the extra unkept damage die on the Battle Table.
- Lower the TNs for Heroic Opportunities by 5.

High End Party (at least two characters are Rank Four and no more than one character is Rank Two):

- The Oni no Ugulu is immune to Jade Strike instead of to Tomb of Jade.
- If the PCs are delayed by the Oni no Sanru, the reinforcing Oni and Moto will arrive after four and seven rounds, rather than six and nine.
- The extra damage die on the Battle Table is a kept die, not an unkept die.
- The Special Challenge (the fight with Konami the Akutenshi) can take place.

Adventure Summary and Background

This module presents a brutally straightforward challenge. The PCs have been sent by their respective daimyo for a tour of duty on the Kaiu Wall, helping the Crab to defend the Empire against the monsters of the Shadowlands. Various suggestions have been offered as to why PCs from different Clans may be here, but the GM should encourage the players to develop their own reasons as well. This should be particularly important if a player decides, despite warnings, to play a courtier or other non-combat character.

After the PCs have endured some of the mingled horror and boredom of their duty, they will make the acquaintance of Hiruma Imai, a female Crab scout who is worried about reports of a gathering danger in the Shadowlands. The rest of the adventure will be dependent on Imai persuading the PCs to help her scout out this menace. Of course, this will also require the PCs to persuade the local Crab commander that he should allow them on a dangerous mission across the Wall.

If the PCs can survive their journey into Fu Leng's realm, they will be able to warn the Crab Clan of an impending danger: a huge army is gathering in the Dark Lands, under the leadership of one of the terrible Akutenshi, the evil angels who are the personal creations of Fu Leng. The enemy's goal is to capture one of the Twelve Black Scrolls, which has recently

come into the possession of the Crab daimyo Kuni Yori.

Brave and capable PCs may be able to return to the Wall in time to warn the Crab of the impending attack. Regardless, the adventure concludes with an epic battle against the forces of the Shadowlands, and the PCs will be put to the severest test.

Note on purchasing jade, crystal, and armor

PCs will likely begin looking for jade, crystal, or heavy armor the moment they learn they have been assigned to the Kaiu Wall. Under no circumstances should they be allowed to purchase such items before the scenario begins. Once the adventure is underway, PCs may be able to acquire such gear from Crab merchants, or from the local Crab authorities. See "Preparing for the Dark Lands" under Scene 3 for details of what the PCs can get, and how.

Player's Introduction: The Call of Duty

The scenario begins with the PCs being assigned to a three-month tour of duty on the Kaiu Wall. The following section presents possible reasons why they have received this dubious honor.

Crab: Crab PCs are here because it is their duty to be here. Almost every member of the Crab Clan spends at least some time on the Wall, and the PCs are here to fulfill that obligation. This is particularly fitting for experienced Crab PCs, who have undoubtedly spent a considerable part of their recent lives away from here.

Crane: Daidoji PCs are probably here as part of their family's traditional pseudo-alliance with the Crab Clan. The motivations of other Cranes are less clear, especially given the recent political tensions between the two Clans. Perhaps the PCs have gotten caught in some sort of political maneuver, perhaps they have displeased their daimyo in some way, or perhaps they are simply here to prove their own courage.

Dragon: Who knows why the Dragon do anything? They are here. That is all that matters.

Lion: War has broken out between the Crane and the Lion, and the Lion Clan is interested in the military and financial support of the Crab. Any Lion PCs are here to win the trust and respect of the Crab, hoping thereby to sway them toward supporting the Lion Clan against

the hated Crane. Matsu PCs in particular have been instructed to prove their courage and honor to the Crab.

Phoenix: The Elemental Council is growing increasingly concerned about the rising power of the Fu Leng, especially with rumors circulating that one of the Black Scrolls was opened last autumn. The Council has also found clues that another of the Scrolls may be in Crab hands. Under these circumstances, it seemed only prudent to send a few bushi and shugenja to observe the situation in Crab lands firsthand.

Unicorn: As part of a political agreement reached at Shiro Kyotei last winter, the Unicorn Clan pledged 3,000 troops to support the Crab on the Wall. In return, the Crab promised to support the Unicorn Clan's ambitions toward the City of the Rich Frog. The PCs are among the promised 3,000.

It should be noted that horses (and all animals for that matter) intensely dislike being close to the Shadowlands. It takes a **Horsemanship/Awareness** roll at TN 15 (TN 10 for Otaku warhorses) just to get a mount close to the Wall, and the roll must be repeated every day to prevent the beast from fleeing back toward Unicorn lands. Since mounts are not allowed on the Wall anyway, Unicorn PCs may do best by stabling their beasts at Shiro Kuni, a few miles behind the Wall.

Ronin: Wave-men are here for the work – the Crab are always hiring. Each ronin PC has been promised 4 koku for their service.

Minor Clans: These PCs are here in hopes of earning the favor of the Crab for their daimyo or Clan. The Badger and Falcon Clans have been historically close to the Crab, and the Mantis have recently been courting the Crab to support their petition for Great Clan status.

Imperial Families: Seppun bodyguards are most likely here to protect another PC who has connections to the Imperial house (an Otomo, someone with Ear of the Emperor or Imperial Spouse, a Clan PC with allies in an Imperial family, and so forth). If no such person is here, the Seppun is awaiting the later arrival of such a person, and in the meantime is protecting the Empire like a good samurai.

Otomo PCs are highly unlikely to be here at all, although they might be inspecting the Wall on behalf of the Emperor.

Miya PCs have been sent here by the family heir, Miya Satoshi, who is determined to remake his family of peacemakers into soldiers and warriors.

Arrival at the Wall

Once you have established why each PC is present, the scenario begins with their arrival at Shiro Kuni, the Castle of the Land, command center for the Kaiu Wall. Allow the PCs a chance to describe and introduce themselves, and perhaps to role-play a bit, before moving into the first scene.

Shiro Kuni is less a castle than a walled camp, squat and square, home base to thousands of Hida bushi who patrol the Carpenter Wall. Troops march constantly in and out of the massive gates, and the scars of sieges by the forces of the Shadowlands mark the exterior. The surly gate wardens inspect your papers, laugh grimly, and gesture you inside. No one else pays you the slightest attention.

The PCs will eventually be brought before Hida Tampako, the commander of the Kaiu Wall.

You are led into a bare stone chamber, devoid of the paintings, colorful shoji screens, and other pleasures you would find in a normal castle. The only furnishings are the general's chair and a plain wooden table covered in scrolls and maps. Hida bushi in full armor stand along both walls. The commander, Hida Tampako, is likewise in full armor and sits with his tetsubo across his knees. He ignores you, instead listening to a pair of Kuni shugenja who are reading to him from various scrolls – apparently reports on the most recent actions on the Wall.

Eventually the reports are completed and Tampako gives the PCs a few moments of his valuable time. (Anyone who tries to draw his attention before then will be ignored, or expelled from the room if they are persistent.) The Crab general reviews the PCs' orders and looks irritated. "So you're here to help? Feh. More useless ponies. Well, go to the Weeping Tree sector – they could use a few warm bodies." He gestures sharply, closing the interview, and one of the bushi escorts the PCs out of the castle.

If any PC asks what the "Weeping Tree" sector is like, the bushi grins unpleasantly. "Nice and quiet," he says. "Perfect for you." He hands the PCs a scroll with their orders and points southwest along the wall. "Five miles that way."

If any PC asks where the name “Weeping Tree” comes from, the Crab will share a grim tale of a Crab samurai and samurai-ko who became lovers. Their passions distracted them when they were on watch, and the Shadowlands forces were able to breach the Wall. Unable to escape, the two stood their ground beneath a large, twisted tree that grew just behind the Wall. Their suicidal stand delayed the Shadowlands forces long enough for reinforcements to arrive – but by then, both lovers were dead.

The gray stone wall rises more than ten stories – higher than the Imperial Palace in Otosan Uchi. There is no sense of warmth or safety from this massive edifice, but there is a certain grim comfort in knowing what massive force would be needed to overcome the gigantic fortification.

With some awe and not a little hidden trepidation, you take your place on the parapet. The nearby Crab bushi sneer and turn their backs on you, muttering the word “koma” – ponies – under their breath. You try to ignore their gibes – and to ignore, also, your memories of all those stories about the terrible things that happen on the Kaiu Kabe.

If the PCs ask, there is indeed a large, twisted, ugly tree behind the Wall, next to an Inn which serves off-duty bushi.

Scene 1: The Edge of the Abyss

You have been on the Kaiu Wall for over a month. Days at a time are spent on the top of the fortification, its cold, impersonal, monolithic presence the only thing standing between you and the festering evil beyond.

Fortunately, the “Weeping Tree” sector seems to be quiet. You have not yet seen any attacks, and the Crab confide that this is one of the easiest assignments on the Wall. “That’s why you’re here, ponies,” they grin. “Frees up more Crab to fight where they’re really needed.”

Any Crab PCs have been left here under specific orders to make sure the non-Crab don’t screw things up.

If any PC asks the meaning of the insulting term “koma” (“pony”), the Crab will be happy to explain. “Old custom. The Yasuki send us ponies that are old or gone lame, and we stake them out in the Shadowlands

to serve as bait for the ogres and oni.” The Crab grins at the PCs, making sure they get the joke.

Standing Guard

The PCs’ current guard rotation is three days long, with minimal sleep and constant drills to stay alert. None of the PCs has been able to bathe, and they have spent all their time in full armor. To stay sharp and avoid succumbing to fatigue, each PC must make two **Simple Stamina** checks. The first is at TN 10, the second at TN 15. Each failed check adds a cumulative +5 TN penalty to all the PCs’ actions.

On the last day of their guard duty, just after dawn, have all the PCs roll **Hunting/Perception** at TN 10 or **Simple Perception** at TN 15. Success indicates they spot the following:

In the pallid dawn light, you can just make out a furtive motion in the distance.

Players may make a **Hunting/Perception** roll at TN 10 (or **Simple Perception** at TN 20) to determine what is in the distance. Remember the penalties for failed Stamina checks.

The motion is coming from a single goblin “spy.” The goblin rather ostentatiously sneaks and skulks back and forth, staring at the Wall and pretending to write on a piece of bark. (It is imitating the behavior of the Hiruma scouts it has seen in the Shadowlands.) If the goblin is left alone it will eventually grow bored with “sneaking” and begin making faces, rude gestures, and so forth. Finally it will wander back into the Shadowlands.

The goblin is 200 yards out from the Wall, making it a more than difficult shot with an arrow. If any PCs decide to take a shot at it, the base TN to hit is 10, with a range penalty of +25. None of the Crab will bother to waste their arrows on a single goblin, and they will jeer at any samurai who take shots and miss. “You think arrows are free, samurai?”

If the goblin is shot at and missed, it will caper and make rude gestures at the “stupid samurai.” A near-miss (or a hit) will cause it the squawk and dart away out of sight, unless the hit inflicts 15 or more Wounds (killing the creature).

If any PC is foolish enough to propose going into the Shadowlands after the goblin, the nearby Crab will laugh uproariously and ignore the suggestion. Single goblins are not worth such trouble... and this might be

an attempt to lure inexperienced samurai off the Wall and into an ambush.

After this encounter, have the PCs make one more **Simple Stamina** check at TN 20. Again, failure means another cumulative +5 TN penalty.

Goblin Ambush

As evening sets in, the PCs are eagerly expecting to be relieved from their duties for a 24-hour break. However, the Shadowlands may not let them off lightly. Have each of them make a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 15. Remember to apply the penalties for failed Stamina checks.

Success means the PC hears a noise from over the side of the wall: a faint scraping and scratching, mingled with low mutters. If the PC looks over the side of the wall, they see the following:

Four goblins are plastered to the side of the Wall, digging their sharp claws into the cracks in the rock as they inch their way up the sheer face. Each goblin has a large crude barrel strapped to his back, and the lead goblin has a smoldering twig clenched between his yellow teeth. The goblins' eyes go very wide as they see you looking down on them.

The goblins are TN 5 to be hit, and any blow inflicting more than 5 wounds causes them to lose their grip on the side of the Wall and plummet to their doom. It will take them two rounds of frantic climbing to reach the top of the Wall, where they can fight and use their bombs (see below).

If none of the PCs makes the **Perception** roll, their first warning is when the goblins reach the top of the Wall:

A loud shriek breaks your reverie. Standing on the edge of the Kaiu Wall are four goblins, each clutching a large crude barrel almost as big as themselves. The largest of the four goblins is clenching a smoldering twig between his teeth, and now he pulls it out, whirls it around, and plunges it into the top of his barrel. Orange flames shoot out of the barrel as the goblin tosses it onto you.

The goblin has hurled a barrel-full of flaming Magic Mud (oil) at the PCs. All PCs must roll **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 10 or **Simple Reflexes** at TN 20 (remember penalties) to avoid being splashed with burning oil for 3k2 damage. The remaining three goblins will hurl a barrel into the conflagration each round until all four have been used (unless the goblins

are killed or shoved off the parapet first). Each barrel-full of oil will require another **Defense/Reflexes** roll from the PCs.

Stats for the goblins should use the “Typical Goblin” listed in the “NPCs and Monsters” section at the end of the adventure.

After the ambush is over (one way or the other), the PCs’ relief arrives, and they are free to depart the Wall for a 24-hour rest.

Scene 2: The Weeping Tree Inn

Weariness and fatigue cover you all like a blanket as you make your way off the Kaiu Wall. Your three-day shift has ended. You do not have to be back on the wall for a full day. At last, a chance to rest, bathe, eat hot food, sleep without fear.

The PCs are assigned to stay at the Weeping Tree Inn, which is the standard posting for samurai in this sector who are on leave. The Inn is a large two-story structure, built with sturdy lumber to survive the antics of boisterous Crab bushi. The famous “Weeping Tree” itself looms behind the Inn, a massive leafless oak with twisted limbs and a trunk swollen and rent by past injuries.

The Inn offers all the basic amenities – a bathhouse, a dojo for workouts, and plenty of food and drink. There is also a stable for horses, although mounts seldom come this close to the Wall. (The PC can choose to keep mounts here if they do not want to leave them back at Shiro Kuni. Horses are not allowed on the Wall.) It will be mid-evening by the time the PCs arrive at the Inn:

Light blazes from the Weeping Tree Inn, and a wave of warm air and loud noise greets you as you step through into the common room. Dozens of samurai, nearly all Crab, are crowded into the room, eating, drinking, and talking back and forth. The noise is ear-stunning. The innkeeper, a harried-looking commoner in work-stained clothing, hurries from table to table with a heavily-laden tray. His servants are similarly busy. One of them, a teenage boy, takes a breathless moment from his work to slide open the weapons cabinet by the door. It is already packed with the blades of the visiting samurai. “Your weapons here, please, honored sir.”

The PCs will have to deal with the boisterous and aggressive Crabs at the Inn. A secondary goal of the encounter (which should be introduced after the PCs have had time to enjoy “Crab hospitality”) is the meeting with Hiruma Imai, who is the gateway to the rest of the scenario.

“Crab Hospitality”

There are close to three dozen Crab bushi in the Weeping Tree Inn, and they will look for excuses to make fun of non-Crab PCs, perhaps even provoking them into a good, tension-relieving brawl. PCs who belong to peaceful or courtly Clans, or who appear to be non-combatants, will be especially favorite targets. (Courtiers, shugenja who favor Air or Water, samurai from the Phoenix or Scorpion Clans, non-Daidoji Cranes, and so forth.)

The Crab will take especial pleasure in poking fun at PCs who display courtly or fastidious mannerisms. They will also point out (at great and grisly length) how little the PCs know about the Shadowlands, how useless their fancy techniques are against monstrous Oni, how often “ponies” like them meet with horrible fates, and so forth. A few sample insults:

To a Lion: ***“Looking for your servants, boy? Someone to help you clean up and put on your armor? No time for those niceties here.”***

To a Crane: ***“Some sake here!oh, sorry, thought someone as pretty as you must be a maid-servant.”***

To a Scorpion: ***“Feh! You think you can blackmail Oni? You think you can seduce a goblin? Go back to your courts, little Scorpion.”***

The Crab will avoid insulting a PC with Glory of 4.0 or higher, but otherwise their words will be unconstrained and merciless. They are eager to let off steam with a good brawl and will be especially insulting and crude toward PCs who attempt to take the “high road” or act as peacemaker. On the other hand, they have no interest in a lethal duel – if a PC asks for one, or implies that one might be in the offing, the Crab laugh and suggest a wrestling contest instead. “No fancy duels here – we can’t afford to lose men to such foolishness.”

Clever PCs may be able to divert the Crabs’ attention (and avoid a brawl) by suggesting a contest of strength (wrestling, cutting wood, hurling boulders, and so forth) or, better yet, a drinking contest.

A PC who returns insult for insult will soon provoke a violent brawl, complete with tumbling furniture, smashed crockery, and so forth. The Crab will stop short of completely destroying the Inn but otherwise join into the brawl with a will, despite the terrified bleating of the innkeeper. A total of eight Crab bushi will participate in the brawl. PCs who did not directly provoke the fight will have to decide whether to join in or leave their comrades to a thorough beating.

Use the “Typical Crab bushi” stats at the end of the module. The Crab will continue to fight until they have defeated all the PCs (in which case they wake them up with buckets of water and then ignore these weaklings for the rest of the night), or until at least half their own number have been disabled (in which case they show the PCs much more respect thereafter).

Treat all Wounds suffered in this brawl as bruising damage, which will heal at an hourly rather than a daily rate.

Note that any PC who escalates the fight by using weapons or spells will be in serious trouble. The Crab will stop pulling punches and fight “for real” against such persons. Any survivors will be arrested and kicked out of Crab lands.

Friends and Allies?

PCs who are Crab themselves, members of the Daidoji family, or who have Crab Allies or a Crab Bride will be safe from the harassment which other PCs will suffer. The Crab will ask such PCs for news from the rest of the Empire.

If any PC claims to have visited the Shadowlands, the Crab will demand that the PC recount the tale. If the PC can offer a suitably dramatic, courageous, and harrowing story, the Crab will show that PC respect and will stop harassing him/her. A false story, on the other hand, will earn a violent beating and utter contempt.

Rumors

Over the course of the evening, the PCs may be able to overhear a number of rumors from the Crab, who tend to speak loudly and with little concern for who might overhear them.

- Hida Tampako is a skilled and sensible general, not like his predecessor, Hiruma Makasu, who died during the Battle of Twilight’s Honor three years ago. Makasu-san was a brave man, but lacked the prudence and pragmatism needed by a commander at the Wall.

- There's something going on at Shiro Kuni. The Kuni daimyo arrived back from a journey last week, and since then he's been closeted with the other shugenja. Even General Hida Tampako has gotten hardly a word out of them.
- A few weeks ago, a report came in of an entire squad that simply vanished while on night watch at the Eighteenth Tower. When a replacement squad stood guard the next night, the lost men reappeared and insisted they had never been gone. The Kuni tested them, but they didn't seem to be Tainted. Their commander is still suspicious, so they've been sent to guard the inland border against the Crane.
- A particularly scarred and grizzled Crab, Hida Choitsu, will claim to have had a vision of a great Crab hero returning from the Shadowlands to lead the Clan the glory. His fellows humor him but clearly think the strain of duty on the Wall has damaged his mind somewhat.

Hiruma Imai

At some point after the PCs have either fought or avoided a brawl, Hiruma Imai will arrive at the Inn. She will find a corner table and sit alone, drinking sake and eating a bowl of ramen noodles. Imai is a quiet, brooding young samurai-ko, with rough-cropped short hair that is knotted into uncombed clumps. Her skin is weather-roughened, her limbs muscular, and her hands are calloused by the grip of weapons. She wears only the simple, travel-stained garments of a Hiruma scout. Despite Imai's harsh appearance, the PCs will notice that she could be very pretty if she bothered to wash up and comb her hair.

Imai is an extreme rarity among the Crab, a female scout. (The Hiruma usually keep their women safely at home to birth new generations.) Imai's brother Gohaku, also a Hiruma scout, was slain in the Shadowlands many years ago, and she took up her oaths as a bushi in order to avenge him. Her parents have urged her several times to end her dangerous life, marry, and carry on the family line, but she has always refused. Her brother's unquiet spirit haunts her, and she will not leave her duties until he is placated. How much (or little) of this she shares with the PCs depends on how well they get along with her, but any PC who can see ancestors or ghosts will notice the spirit which lurks around her.

Imai is basically a lonely, bitter, and unhappy young woman, but hides her emotions beneath the mask of duty and grim determination. A courageous and dedicated PC who seems sympathetic to her situation (but not condescending) can earn her trust and friendship. Any obvious attempt to seduce or romance her will fail utterly. However, a male PC who is a steadfast companion, and who shows a real willingness to learn about the dangers of the Shadowlands, may inadvertently gain her affections.

Talking with Imai

PCs should notice Imai, since she is such a contrast to the other Crab at the Inn. If they do not approach her, Imai will eventually speak with them. She will preferentially speak with a samurai-ko, or a PC who shows some knowledge of the Shadowlands threat (Crab, Witch-Hunter, Inquisitor, Kuroiban).

Imai is worried about news she has just received from a ratling ally, Black Tail of the Tattered Ear Tribe. Black Tail has told her that there is some kind of strange gathering taking place about three days into the Shadowlands. The ratling was unable to be more specific (language barriers), but seemed to think it was very important. On the other hand, Black Tail has been wrong several times in the past, so Imai doubts she can get permission for a large patrol solely on the word of the ratling. She knows better than to go that far into the Shadowlands on her own, much as she might like to.

Given the chance, Imai will try to recruit the PCs into helping her investigate Black Tail's reports. She will be especially eager if the PCs are a group composed mostly or entirely of "ponies" – outsiders – since they can be spared from their duties more easily. If the party is largely or completely Crab, on the other hand, Imai will be more cautious, and tries to persuade them to support her in a petition to the commander, Hida Tampako, for a patrol. Either way, Imai emphasizes how worried Black Tail seemed to be, and the potential importance of the information.

It should be noted that while Imai is determined to check out Black Tail's report, she is also somewhat embarrassed at having to ask the PCs for help, especially if they are non-Crab. (This can be detected with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 15.) The other Crab in the Inn look a little askance at Imai as she speaks with the PCs. If a PC speaks to them about her, they will say that she is much too grim and obsessive for a woman, and perhaps imply that she is slightly insane. "She belongs at home raising children, not out patrolling the Shadowlands. Losing her brother was

too much for her, I'd say. And she sets too much store in that ratling's word."

If the PCs do agree to help Imai, she asks them to accompany her for an audience with Hida Tampako tomorrow morning, before they are due to return to the Wall. "We will need his permission for such an undertaking. He may be more likely to agree if I have you with me."

Sleep?

As mentioned, the PCs have a total of 24 hours of free time in the Inn before they are scheduled to return to the Wall. As long as they spend at least 6 of those hours in sleep, the penalties from the earlier **Stamina** checks will be eliminated. If they fail to get at least 6 hours of sleep, the penalties will remain in place. If they get little or no sleep, they must make another **Simple Stamina** check at TN 20. Failure indicates that they suffer additional +5 TN penalty on all actions until rested (cumulative with any other penalty from failing the stamina checks earlier).

In order to reach Shiro Kuni in time for an audience with Hida Tampako, the PCs will have to leave very early in the morning (5 am or so), so make sure to find out when they are retiring for the evening.

Scene 3: The Brink of the Abyss

The PCs must get permission from Hida Tampako, general in command of the Wall, in order to leave their duties and trek into the Shadowlands with Hiruma Imai. They will need to leave the Inn of the Weeping Tree at five a.m. in order to arrive at Shiro Kuni in time for an audience before their 24-hour leave expires. Hiruma Imai will of course accompany them, and will even send a servant to wake them if they seem in danger of oversleeping.

Once the PCs arrive at Shiro Kuni, they will have to wait in an antechamber for about three hours before their audience with Tampako. Many other samurai come in and out while the PCs are waiting – clearly they are a low priority.

While the PCs are waiting, ask them how they are preparing for their second meeting with Tampako. Court fineries are considered frivolous by the Crab, and any PC who is especially well-dressed (excellent kimono, etc.) will be viewed as a useless poser. On the other hand, dressing poorly is also likely to offend him, since it is a mark of poor discipline. Simplicity and

practicality will impress Tampako the most, although he will accord an automatic basic respect to any Imperial Family PC and any PC with Glory of 5.0 or better.

After the PCs have waited long enough, they are lead into the same austere audience chamber:

The bare stone chamber seems little changed from your last visit, although you notice that the Kuni shugenja are absent this time. Several Crab officers are winding up their reports on actions of the last week, and they tramp out of the room without even a glance in your direction. Commander Hida Tampako, dressed as always in full armor, gestures impatiently for you to step forward.

Hiruma Imai bows and speaks in a low voice. "Hida Tampako-shogun-sama, I am Hiruma Imai, of the Third Scouting Kaisha. I respectfully request permission to cross the Wall at the Weeping Tree and investigate the Bleeding Rocks region, beyond the Gray Waste. My Nezumi contacts have given me reports of unusual activity in that area."

Hida Tampako raises a thick eyebrow. "Hiruma-san. You would travel alone on such a mission? That would be a waste of a valuable bushi."

"Hai, shogun-sama. I request to be accompanied by," she calls each PC by name. "These samurai have offered to assist me. And they are not... regulars to the wall."

The Hida commander's lips form a small smile. "And thus their presence will... not be missed." He looks you over sternly. "What say each of you? Do you understand what you have asked for, where this Hiruma will lead you?"

Presumably the PCs will agree to help Imai (otherwise there isn't much of an adventure). Tampako listens to their responses and then asks, *"Why do you choose to undertake this task? Do you go to serve the Empire or do you go to serve your own glory?"*

Regardless of their answers, Tampako will allow them to go. However, the quality of their answers, and the general impression they made, will be important later in the adventure. See Scene Six, "Storm Warning," for details.

"Very well, Hiruma Imai-san, I give my permission. You may take this... group to the Bleeding Rocks."

Smart PCs will petition for jade at this point. If none of the PCs think of it, Hiruma Imai will ask for them. Tampako will issue each of them one finger of jade on a thong necklace (the standard Taint-protection device of the Crab).

Preparing for the Dark Lands

After the audience with Tampako is finished, Hiruma Imai will lead the PCs out into the main courtyard of Shiro Kuni. She tells the PCs that they will leave at the beginning of the Hour of the Horse (noon). (In high usage, this is the Hour of Akodo, but Imai uses the common measure.) She tells them to meet her outside the castle gates, and departs to make her own preparations. (She is off to write a letter to her parents, begging their forgiveness for her selfishness in continuing to lead the life of a bushi. This is her ritual action before every trip into the Shadowlands.)

The PCs will be free to spend the morning trying to equip and prepare themselves as best they can. The only equipment which will automatically be issued to them are the fingers of jade and six days' worth of food and water.

There are numerous Yasuki merchant stalls located in the vicinity of Shiro Kuni. The PCs can also petition Hida Tampako (during or after their initial audience) for additional equipment. The following should serve as a guide to any PC attempts to acquire gear:

Armor. If the PCs actually have enough money, they may try to purchase armor from one of the Yasuki merchants. Light Armor will cost 25 koku, and Heavy Armor will cost 40 koku. The armor is plain, functional, and displays the Crab mon and colors. The merchants will not offer any discounts, not even under the most severe pressure – they are in their own lands and have the protection of the Hida. A PC who tries to barter or haggle with the merchants will be engaging in dishonorable merchant activity and should be charged a point of Honor.

Crab PCs can appeal to their superiors for armor (they are within their own lands, after all). The appeal will be granted unless the PCs behave in a cowardly or foolish manner.

Non-Crab PCs who request armor (whether Light or Heavy) from the Crab will need to be persuasive and explain why the Crab Clan should waste some of its valuable armor on them. High Glory (4.5+) and other social advantages (Emerald Magistrate, Imperial Family, Ear of the Emperor, and so forth) will help, but

the PCs will still need to make it clear that they will be using the armor for a valid purpose. (Merely pleading self-preservation will not impress the Crab.) The armor will of course have to be returned at the end of the adventure.

Jade. The finger of jade which each PC receives will protect them from the Taint for seven days. The PCs will not be given additional fingers unless they have made a very good impression on Hida Tampako.

Jade powder (to coat weapons) is likely to be the PCs' most urgent request. Again, Hida Tampako's decision will be based on how the PCs have impressed him. If they come across as both very brave and very practical (and especially if there are some Crab among them), they can attempt an **Etiquette/Awareness** or **Sincerity/Awareness** roll at TN 15 to convince Tampako to help them. If successful, he will issue the party one pouch of jade powder. If the PCs make TN 25 or more, he will also give them permission to purchase additional jade from the Yasuki merchants.

It should be noted that Ronin will not be able to get any such consideration from Tampako, no matter what they do or say. He has no intention of wasting resources on mere wave-men.

Getting jade from a Yasuki merchant will be far more difficult than getting armor, since the sale of jade is strictly controlled by the Crab Clan:

- If the PCs have permission from Tampako to purchase jade, they may buy pouches of jade powder at the rate of 4 koku per pouch.
- If the PCs do not have permission, they can try to find a corrupt merchant who will sell them jade anyway. This will require either a **Commerce/Awareness** roll at TN 20, an **Investigation/Awareness** roll at TN 25, a **Manipulation/Awareness** roll at TN 20, or a **Stealth/Awareness** roll at TN 20. The cost of illegal jade powder will be 8 koku per pouch. Regardless of whether jade is purchased or not, the PC will lose 3 points of Honor for such grubby, dishonorable activity.
- A PC who actually steals jade powder (with the Sleight-of-Hand skill, for example) should lose a full Rank of Honor (half a Rank for dishonorable types like Scorpions). If such a PC is caught in the act, they will be executed without appeal.

- A pouch of jade powder is good for one application to a single weapon (or a sheaf of twenty arrows). The weapon will do full damage on the first hit, half on the second hit, one-quarter on the third hit, and so forth, as the powder wears off. Any unused powder must be returned at the end of the adventure.

Crystal. No crystal is available.

Healing. If the PCs were injured by the goblin ambush, they may wish to seek healing before entering the Shadowlands. If the PCs make an effective appeal to Hida Tampako (citing the practical need for survival will work best), he will order a Kuni shugenja to heal each of them by 9 Wounds.

Pooling Resources. PCs may think of trying to pool their money together so that some of them can purchase armor or jade. This is potentially an extremely gauche and uncouth act, since it carries the implication that the PCs' lords do not properly provide for them. (Giving money to a samurai can be construed as an insult to his/her daimyo.) Besides, samurai are not supposed to concern themselves with money and commerce.

Smart PCs may be able to couch such activities in a form which avoids offense. If not, the GM should penalize them appropriately. As a guideline, asking to borrow money is a 2 point Honor loss for any samurai of Honor Rank 2 or higher. Giving money to a samurai is a loss of 1-3 points to both PCs involved, depending on their behavior and respective Glory ranks. (There may be some Glory loss involved as well, if the incident occurs publicly.)

Scene 3: Into the Abyss

Effects of the Shadowlands

Once the PCs depart the Wall, they will be in Fu Leng's deadly realm. The following effects will apply to the PCs while they are in the Shadowlands:

- 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 magics (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 in the Shadowlands, they must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain a point of Taint.

- All spells cast in the Shadowlands (except *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 in the Shadowlands.
- If the PCs should lose their jade fingers, they will be vulnerable to the Taint. They must roll **Simple Earth** for each day and each night they spend unprotected in the Shadowlands. 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 the Shadowlands.
- Food and water brought into the Shadowlands will quickly become Tainted and diseased unless it is stored in proximity to jade. Likewise, any food or water the PCs scrounge or hunt while in the Shadowlands (except food offered by ratlings) 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.

A Land of Evil

The PCs will cross the River of the Last Stand in one of the Kaiu tunnels which riddle the lower levels of the Wall. Hiruma Imai leads the PCs swiftly and unerringly through the tunnels, avoiding the various traps. On the far side of the river, the party emerges from a camouflaged opening behind a large boulder. They are now in the Shadowlands.

The mere touch of the filthy, tainted soil of the Shadowlands on your sandals seems to drain all pleasant feelings from you. Clouds cover the sky, allowing only a pale dreary light. The landscape is barren and blasted, broken only by a few misshapen, leafless trees. Thick gray dust puffs up from your footsteps. Even the very rocks seem to glare at you like intruders.

The GM should establish the party's marching formation (Hiruma Imai will need to be at the front, since she is the only one who knows where they are going). The GM should also listen carefully to any precautions the PCs are taking, where they are putting their gear, and so forth. Pay particular attention to what they do with their jade fingers. A PC who does not specify is presumed to be carrying their jade finger around their neck. (If anyone asks, Imai keeps her jade inside her food packet.)

The three-day journey into the Shadowlands is mostly dreary and monotonous (the region the PCs are crossing is known as the Gray Wastes), but with the constant threat of underlying danger. The GM should try to play up the sense of lurking menace, the feeling that the PCs are in an alien land where everything is against them. The following is a list of sinister and threatening sights and incidents which the GM can use to unsettle and alarm the PCs:

- Shadowy figures are spotted moving on the distant horizon. They appear to be humanoid but no details can be discerned. It is impossible to tell whether they notice the PCs or not. Eventually they are lost to view.
- A stunted, leafless shrub lies near the PCs' route. As they approach, it twists and moves itself, much like a small animal cowering away from danger. If they damage the plant, it shudders and bleeds red sap.
- A loud wind roars across the landscape, whipping up thick, boiling clouds of gray dust. The PCs seem to hear the voices of children laughing and shrieking on the wind.
- Something HUGE flies through the clouds, its vast bat-like wings churning up the heavy vapors. The PCs never get more than a vague glimpse of its massive body. Fortunately, it does not notice them.
- A zombie dressed in the rotten, splintered armor of a Phoenix bushi staggers out from behind some trees and lurches toward the PCs. The zombie bows to the PCs, gestures with its hands, and clacks its tongue-less mouth, apparently trying to ape the courtly samurai behavior it knew in life. It makes no hostile move and can be easily destroyed, if the PCs wish. Depending on how they react to this awful spectacle, some PCs may need to make Honor checks.

- A large group of ogres are stretched out on some rocks, resting after a big meal. Splintered bones of dead samurai lie nearby. There are over thirty ogres, making this an impossible combat challenge. Luckily, the ogres are sleepy after their meal and will take no notice of the PCs so long as they stay quiet and move on quickly.

Hiruma Imai will follow a policy of quiet and caution in the face of these dangers, and will urge the PCs to do likewise. "In the Shadowlands, one should never go in search of trouble," she remarks. "It will find us well enough on its own."

Apart from these alarming but non-lethal incidents, the first day of travel will pass uneventfully. That night, the GM should ask the PCs what precautions they are taking with their camp. The night will also pass uneventfully, except for the following incident, taking place around 3am:

A strange clacking sound rises in the distance, a noise like the rattling of hundreds of chopsticks against each other. The sound swells and grows closer and closer, until it is all around you, echoing loud. Then, just as quickly, it fades away again.

If the PCs make light, they will see the ground is carpeted with tens of thousands of large insects, each the size of a man's fist, crawling relentlessly forward with a clacking of limbs. The insects will not attack the PCs, but anyone who crushes one of the monstrous bugs will suffer 2 points of damage from the spray of its acidic body juices.

The Second Day: Hanemuri Ambush

Around noon of the second day, the party will be ambushed by a large swarm of hanemuri, small flying creatures with a vague resemblance to tiny winged goblins. This will begin as follows:

You have reached the end of the Gray Wastes. Ahead, the land becomes forested, covered in twisted, malevolent-looking trees. The bare limbs of the trees intertwine like clutching fingers, and thorny vines wrap around their trunks. Luckily, the trees aren't dense enough to slow you down, but they do greatly reduce visibility.

If the PCs ask Hiruma Imai about whether it is wise to go through the forest, she will explain that the only way to reach the Bleeding Rocks quickly enough is to

follow this route. Anything else will add two days to the journey, which is more than their jade can survive.

Once the party is inside the forest, allow everyone a **Hunting/Perception** roll at TN 10 (or **Simple Perception** at TN 20) to notice the swarm of creatures roosting in the branches of the trees. Characters who fail to notice the creatures are caught by surprise when the swarm suddenly launches into the air and swirls around them. Surprised characters will automatically act last in the first round of combat.

There is a noise that seems a hideous blend between bird-call and the shrieking of agonized children. A swarm of tiny winged creatures, each the size of a man's hand but with a wingspan of almost two feet, rushes at you, filling the air with their filthy, flapping wings. Their small mouths glisten with sharp teeth.

Three of the hanemuri will attack each PC, but they will only attack for two rounds before fleeing as quickly as they struck. Two of the attackers will latch onto each PC and bite, chomping coin-sized chunks out of the PC's flesh, while the third creature will try to snatch something from the PC – preferably an exposed jade finger, although they will also go for food, small weapons, and any other such item they could reasonably grab and carry.

PCs will need to make a **Contested Reflexes** roll to hang on to whatever the hanemuri is trying to snatch. Hiruma Imai will not lose any items, and will adopt a strategy of rolling on the ground to crush the creatures which are attacking her.

A hanemuri which steals something will immediately fly away. The other creatures will continue to attack until two rounds have elapsed or until they are dead, whichever comes first.

If the PCs try to use bows or ranged spells to destroy the retreating hanemuri, they will have only one round before the trees obstruct their line of sight.

If the PCs pursue the hanemuri (not a bad idea if they've stolen some jade), they will need to chase them for some time before they can get clear sight of them again (the creatures are slow on the ground but fly very quickly). A PC will have to roll **Athletics/Stamina** at TN 10 (or **Simple Stamina** at TN 20) to keep up the chase long enough. Hiruma Imai will call after such PCs, warning them not to run off on their own.

If the PCs make the roll, they will close the distance enough to get off a single melee attack on the

hanemuri. If the PC fails the roll, or fail to kill the hanemuri with their single attack, they must decide whether to give up or keep pursuing. A PC who maintains the chase will eventually chase their quarry into a swarm of thirty hanemuri, which will turn and viciously attack. The PC(s) will have to kill at least twenty of the swarm in order to drive the rest away. In that case, the hanemuri will finally drop any stolen items.

Hanemuri (vicious Shadowlands pests)

FIRE 2 Agility 5	AIR 1 Reflexes 4
EARTH 1	WATER 1

TN to be Hit: 25

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 2k1

Wounds: 3: +5; 6: Dead.

Scene 4: The Abyss Stares Back

After the encounter with the hanemuri, the PCs will be able to proceed through the forest without further incident. The trees gradually thin out until, by evening, they are again sparse and the land is open to view. The GM can continue to insert disturbing or unsettling encounters as seems appropriate.

On the second night, it rains. The PCs are soaked to the skin by filthy, brackish water. The rain finally fades into a damp, stinking mist around dawn.

Early on the third day, the ratling Black Tail (whose true Nezumi name is Rrch'tek, "Clever Scout") will begin tracking and observing the PCs. Allow all the PCs to make a **Contested Perception** (or **Hunting/Perception**) roll against Black Tail's **Stealth** roll of 33. Hiruma Imai will make her roll (she knows what to look for) but will not say anything unless the PCs speak first. Then she will remark, "He is making sure you are friends. He will speak to us when he is ready."

Meeting Black Tail

Whenever the party stops to rest or eat, Black Tail will quietly scuttle out of the undergrowth and squat down next to Hiruma Imai. (This may come as a shock to PCs who didn't notice the ratling.)

The ratling called Black Tail does, indeed, have a long tail tinted a dark color. The creature's actual fur is a mottled gray, although that is difficult to see through the dirt and filth ground into it. A crude short-bow is slung across the ratling's back, and what appears to be a wakizashi – with a saya in the dark colors of the Crab, no less – hangs at his waist. His pink nose wrinkles and twitches as he regards you dubiously.

Imai will speak amiably to the creature in the nezumi tongue (PCs with the Ratling Speech skill can understand and participate in this conversation). Meanwhile the ratling will bob up and down on his hind legs, darting glances this way and that, and occasionally scratching at the vermin that burrow through his fur.

Black Tail speaks Rokugani, but will not reveal this until he can do so with maximum impact (for example, when responding to an arrogant or insulting comment by one of the PCs). Hiruma Imai will take the ratling's side in any disagreement with the PCs, and will not hesitate to point out that Black Tail is native to these lands and knows them well. Listening to the creature may save their lives.

If any PC mentions the wakizashi, Imai will explain that she gave it to the ratling in return for past services. She will ignore any PCs who express outrage at giving such weapons to ratlings.

Once Black Tail unbends a little, the following conversation will ensue:

“Late. Days ago. Many-many days ago you were to be here.”

Imai nods gravely. “It could not be helped. I had trouble getting support.”

“You bring noisy-noisy loud-louds.” The ratling's tail quivers frantically as he points to all of you.

Imai responds in a placating tone. “These samurai are here to help me make it back. They do not have to get close to what you are showing me.”

The ratling snorts and blows out his whiskers. “Th’wat’ch. If you say good, then good. You bring shine-shinies?”

“As agreed.” Imai hands over a small cloth pouch, and smiles as the ratling eagerly roots through it.

“Those should definitely earn you a good niche somewhere.”

If the PCs look at what Imai has given to the ratling, they see an assortment of fairly high-quality polished stones and minor jewelry items. These are a step above the normal cheap items which Crab use when trading with ratlings (any Crab PC will know this). If a PC comments on this, Imai shrugs, remarking that it is her decision and the PCs need not concern themselves on the matter. PCs may be able to deduce that Imai sees Black Tail as a kindred spirit, a fellow struggler against the Shadowlands.

A PC who offers Black Tail any small, shiny objects will earn his friendship and trust. The ratling will offer a “gift” in return – a rice ball and some dried meat, free of Taint.

If a sympathetic PC expresses genuine interest in how Hiruma Imai came to meet and befriend Black Tail, Imai will tell the story:

“It happened two years ago, when I was on one of my first scouting missions in this accursed land. My comrades and I were ambushed, and I lost most of my gear. I still had my tanto, though, and a pouch of jade powder. That was enough. I found a bog hag torturing that poor ratling. She had already slain and eaten all the rest of his pack. Torpid with her meal, she hardly noticed when I crept up and slit her throat with jade-dusted steel. The ratling was able to help me in turn, giving me un-Tainted food and water so that I could live and return to the Wall. He has been a good ally to me since then, even if he is sometimes a little... erratic. It can't be helped. Ratlings are like men – the past haunts them.”

PCs may be able to deduce that Imai is also haunted by the past. Black Tail can offer his own, uniquely ratling-styled version of this story, if a PC is actually willing to question him about it.

To the Bleeding Rocks

Once Black Tail has been paid, he leads the PCs into a rugged, stony landscape of steep hills and narrow, jagged valleys. Sharp rocks jab cruelly at the PCs' sandals and leave bruises and scrapes on exposed flesh. The ratling scampers effortlessly through the landscape, pausing frequently to stare back and chatter, “Hurry-hurry. May already be gone.”

The ratling will not describe much of what he is taking them to see. “Big talk-talk. Lots of bad-magic things.

You see-see when we get there.” Imai takes him at his word that this is important. If asked why she trusts him, despite his being wrong sometimes in the past, she will quietly observe that she would not be alive today without Black Tail’s advice.

As the day darkens into evening, Black Tail grows more cautious, stopping frequently to look around and sniff the air. The PCs catch occasional glimpses of small groups of goblins and ogres, apparently patrolling the area – Black Tail skillfully avoids interception by these creatures.

Finally, as the ground becomes even steeper and rockier, Black Tail drops to all fours and begins crawling toward the top of the next ridge. Hiruma Imai joins him, slowly crocodile-crawling forward to the edge, and motions for the PCs to wait behind. Once Imai looks over the crest for a few moments, she will motion the rest of the party to advance and join her.

A Gathering of Demons

The stinking dust and filth of the Shadowlands coats every inch of your body and armor, and the acrid odor of it stings your nostrils. But the sight beyond the ridge is enough to drive all such superficial discomforts from your mind.

A large circle of figures, some of them human-like and others horribly inhuman, stand around a huge flat boulder which rests about a hundred feet below you. Torches that flicker with an unholy green light illuminate the scene. Beyond the circle of putrid light, you can make out huge siege weapons, towers, ladders, battering rams. Goblins, ogres, and other foul creatures swarm over the machines, putting them in readiness and assembling more from piles of mangled trees.

But your attention cannot remain long on that sight when such a council of evil lies just below you. For that is what it is, a council – even from here, you can catch the guttural sounds of conversation, and occasional words in the Rokugani tongue. Some of the creatures gesture and point at the large flat rock, where some sort of map or diagram has been drawn with an unimaginable ink. Others simply stand, not speaking.

Once the PCs start asking for details on this unholy council of war, the GM can supply the following information:

There are at least ten oni gathered around the flat stone. The smallest is the size of a large man, while the largest looms almost fifteen feet high. The details are mercifully indistinct in the green-lit gloom, but you can make out bulging eyes, glistening fangs, multiple limbs that resemble the appendages of beasts or insects, and other such horrors.

Standing alongside these demons are what appear to be several men and women, samurai in the purple colors of the Unicorn, with white battle-mask mons that are starkly visible even from here. The Dark Moto’s eyes shine with malice, and they join eagerly in the discussions with the oni.

But the most terrifying sights of all are four others, three men and a woman, who stand together. They are the most beautiful people your eyes have ever seen, standing tall and proud, with armor and weapons that glitter wondrously in the green torchlight. Two of the four, including the woman, have white gossamer wings, like purest silk, floating in the air behind them. A third wears no armor at all, only a wispy garment that clings to his flawless frame like mist.

But your attention is drawn most strongly to the fourth figure, a hugely tall man with a rich, heavy beard. He stands with the casual arrogance of a powerful samurai, and is dressed in a massive suit of heavy armor. One powerful hand balances a strange heavy sword, like the primitive ancestor of a katana, on his shoulder. When he speaks, in a deep, rumbling voice, all the others fall silent and listen.

The Oni and Dark Moto can be identified as such by any PC with even a single rank in **Lore: Shadowlands**. Also, any PC who rolls **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 20 will recognize the four beautiful creatures as akutenshi, “evil angels,” the most powerful of Fu Leng’s servants.

The large male akutenshi who leads the entire group is Hida Atarasi, the original Crab Thunder, first and most powerful of the akutenshi. If the PCs ask for information on him, they will not be able to make out any more details from this distance unless they can roll **Heraldry/Perception** at TN 20 or **Simple Perception** at TN 25. (A gaijin spyglass can help, and some types of magic might help as well.) A successful roll can make out an oddly crude, primitive version of the Crab mon on his dark armor. PCs who sneak up close – see “Spying on the Council,” below – can make out the mon with a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 10. Such PCs will also notice a gaping wound in the man’s

throat, a wound which pulses with a sickly golden-red light.

Hiruma Imai will be baffled as to who this man might be, although she is sure he is the leader of this unholy war-council. A PC who rolls **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.

Spying on the Council

Hiruma Imai will want to get close enough to hear what the evil council is discussing. She whispers to the PCs that she will proceed alone from here. If any of the PCs want to accompany her, she warns them they must be absolutely certain of their ability to go silently and unobserved. She will strongly suggest the PCs should hold back here to cover her retreat if things go badly.

Black Tail will not approach a single step closer to the Shadowlands creatures, and is obviously very frightened, trembling and whimpering.

Hiruma Imai (and any accompanying PCs) will need to roll **Stealth/Agility** at TN 20 to approach the council unnoticed. Imai will spend a Void point on the roll. If anyone fails their roll, go immediately to Scene 4b: “Seen on Approach.”

If Imai (and any PCs) make the **Stealth** roll, they will be able to overhear the Shadowlands war council. The monsters are planning an assault on Shiro Kuni, and their plan is sketched out on the large flat boulder (they use a severed human finger as their writing implement). There is much discussion of different attack groups, diversionary actions, and so forth – a very unusual level of planning for the minions of Fu Leng. There are also several references to a “prize” within Shiro Kuni, a scroll of some kind. The man in Crab armor rumbles that the scroll must be brought back to him the moment it is captured – apparently he does not plan to lead the attack himself.

PCs who want to get a detailed understanding of the Shadowlands battle plan will need to roll **Battle/Intelligence** at TN 15 or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25. (Make a roll for Hiruma Imai – it is not guaranteed that she will understand.) A successful roll allows them to deduce the plan from the markings on the table and the comments of the various creatures:

- Large diversionary assaults are planned for several different sectors of the wall. One of the oni or akutenshi will lead each assault.
- The main attack will be in the Weeping Tree sector, which is described as “weak and poorly-manned.” The attackers are expected to cross the Wall and push on quickly to Shiro Kuni, taking it by surprise.
- The winged female akutenshi, who is named as Konami and sports the mon of the Mantis Clan on her kimono, will lead the assault on the Weeping Tree sector.
- The attack is scheduled for the evening, exactly two days from now.

Once Imai and the PCs have either deduced the battle plan or failed to do so, Imai will make hand-signals that they should fall back to the ridge. She is pale and her jaws are clamped tightly, clearly unnerved at the sight of such a powerful and unified Shadowlands force assembling. Her goal now is to get back alive to warn the Wall.

If a PC speaks to Imai (even in a low whisper), make a 3k3 roll for the Shadowlands council to overhear them. The roll is TN 5 to hear normal conversation, TN 15 to hear a whisper. If they do hear the PCs, go to Scene 4b: “Seen While Leaving.”

Assuming this does not happen, Hiruma Imai and any accompanying PCs will have to sneak back to the ridgeline. This will again require a **Stealth/Agility** roll at TN 20. (Imai will again spend a Void point.) If Imai or a PC fails the roll, this will again lead to Scene 4b: “Seen While Leaving.”

If everyone makes it back without being spotted, go to Scene 4c: “Not Seen at All.”

Regardless of whether Imai and the PCs make it out unobserved or not, Imai will immediately tell the party that they must return to the Wall with all possible haste. It is imperative that Hida Tampako be warned of the impending attack, of the enemy battle-plan, and of the powerful creatures which are cooperating to lead the attack.

Scene 4a: Seen on Approach

If Hiruma Imai and/or the PCs are spotted while trying to sneak up on the Shadowlands war council, Imai will shout for the PCs to buy her some time while she sprints forward, trying to get a glimpse of the battle plan sketched out on the flat boulder.

Assuming the PCs do not run immediately, they will be engaged by two monstrous Oni. One of them is a thirteen-foot-tall humanoid with purplish hide, claws, horns, and a tongue like a serpent of flame (Oni no Ugulu). The other is a squat, bloated creature resembling an obese old man with sharp fangs and thickly-muscled clawed hands (Oni no Shikibu). Stats for these two Oni are listed at the end of the module.

After two rounds of combat Imai will come running back, sprinting as fast as a horse, screaming for an immediate retreat. “Run! Now! We must get back to the Wall!”

If the PCs do not retreat after the second round of combat, another Oni will join the fight, a gigantic bloated sack of flesh with spindly claws and a mouth that gapes taller than a man (an Oni no Tsuburu). If they stand and fight for another two rounds, a Dark Moto will also join the action, and another Moto will join in two rounds after that. At this point, if the PCs have not fled, they are certainly doomed.

Smart PCs run, or at least execute a fighting retreat with the Full Defense maneuver. Such PCs should be allowed to get away – the Oni and their dark masters are confident of hunting down these foolish mortals before they can return to the Kaiu Wall.

Hiruma Imai will be able to deduce enough from her brief glimpse of the enemy plans to know that an attack on the Wall is imminent and that the ultimate goal is Shiro Kuni. She will not know that the Weeping Tree sector is key to the attack, and will not have any clue as to why these Shadowlands creatures are so eager to take the castle.

Scene 4b: Seen While Leaving

If Imai and/or the PCs are spotted after they managed to eavesdrop on the Shadowlands war council, Imai will immediately run for her life, shouting for the PCs to do the same. Black Tail will take off like a shot.

Anyone who does not immediately declare that they are fleeing will be engaged by the first two Oni (Oni no Ugulu and Oni no Shikibu) the following round. Imai will not stop to help the PCs – she regards her first duty as making it back to the Wall to warn of the attack. As with Scene 4a above, the PCs will be quickly overwhelmed, their number of enemies increasing every two rounds, if they do not flee the scene.

Scene 4c: Not Seen At All

If Hiruma Imai and/or the PCs manage to sneak away from the war council without being seen or heard, there will be a chance for them to hold a brief whispered discussion. Imai will discuss what she learned and explains that they must return immediately to the Wall and warn Hida Tampako of the impending attack. “We must take back warning as swiftly as possible, no matter what the cost.”

Scene 5: Fleeing the Abyss

At this point, the PCs’ objective is to make it back to the Wall alive. Although they have four days’ worth of jade remaining, the Shadowlands attack is due in two days. It took the PCs three days (a total of 36 hours of travel) to get here. In order to make it back in time, they will have to squeeze those 36 hours of hiking into the next 48 hours.

Remember that the PCs reach the Shadowlands war council on the evening of the third day, so if they start marching immediately, they must do without sleep.

For every twelve hours the PCs travel without resting, they must roll **Simple Stamina** to avoid becoming exhausted. The TN is 10 for the first set of 12 hours, 15 for the second and third sets of 12 hours. Each failed roll imposes a +5 penalty to all physical actions (including subsequent **Stamina** rolls). Also, this will stack with any residual exhaustion from the beginning of the adventure.

Black Tail

Once the party has left the scene of the Shadowlands council (whether or not they were spotted), Black Tail will consider his job done and will head off on his own.

Imai has no more shiny objects with which to pay him, and in any case knows he will be able to survive better on his own. PCs who do have small shiny objects (jewelry and similar trinkets, not coins) can choose to

pay Black Tail to keep helping them. (He will insist on payment up front, due to the higher risks now involved.)

If Black Tail does help the party, he will be able to speed their return journey by three hours (due to leading them through shortcuts, avoiding obstacles, and so forth). He will also be able to make sure they avoid the goblin hunting bands (see below).

Pursuit from the Council

If the PCs have been spotted by the Shadowlands forces, they will be attacked as they retreat from the area. Two flying Oni will pursue them: man-sized things with two legs, four arms, batlike wings and a vague bodily resemblance to human females (Oni no Sanru). These creatures will swoop down from the dark-clouded sky and attack, executing their aerial Full Attack maneuver (see their stats at the end of the module). These creatures are relatively weak (at least by Oni standards) and their main goal is to delay the party until more powerful pursuers arrive. The two creatures will alternate attacks with defensive maneuvers (swooping back up to avoid attack), trying to draw the PCs into a lengthy battle.

If the PCs flee at any time, the two Oni no Sanru will pursue, trying to keep the PCs in sight for their masters, and guiding the goblin hunting parties (see below) to intercept them. Since they can fly faster than the PCs can run, outdistancing them will be impossible. Hiding from these Oni will require finding concealing terrain (such as forest) and then making a **Contested** roll of the PC's **Simple Intelligence**, **Stealth/Intelligence**, or **Hunting/Intelligence** against the Oni's **Perception** of 3. Magic such as *Mists of Illusion* could also be used to throw off pursuit.

If the PCs fight the Oni no Sanru for six or more rounds, then the Oni no Tsuburu will teleport in to join the combat. After another three rounds, one of the Dark Moto will arrive, riding an Onikage. Additional reinforcements will arrive every three rounds until the PCs are dead. To flee once this has happened, the PCs must either have higher **Water** rings than their enemies, or must make **Contested Stamina** (or **Athletics/Stamina**) rolls against the monsters' **Stamina**.

If the PCs cannot get away, Hiruma Imai will shout for the fastest PCs to accompany her while the rest of the party buys them time. Whether or not the PCs agree, Imai will then take off for the Wall at top speed (she

can run as fast as a horse). This is not cowardice – it is Crab practicality at its most brutally cold-blooded.

Goblin Hunting Parties

On the way back to the Wall, the PCs will encounter two goblin hunting parties. They will meet the first after ten hours of travel and the second after twenty-two hours. The first hunting party is composed of eight normal goblins and is led by a goblin warmonger. The second party is composed of ten goblins, a goblin shaman, and a goblin berserker. (Stats for all these goblins are listed at the end of the module.)

If Black Tail is helping the PCs, he will scent the goblins and hides the party before the creatures arrive. So long as the PCs are quiet, the goblins will not find them.

If Black Tail is not along, the PCs will need to roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 to notice the goblins in the distance. If the PCs hide immediately, they can roll **Contested Intelligence** (or **Stealth/Intelligence** or **Hunting/Intelligence**) against the goblins' **Perception**. Success means the goblins do not notice them. Failure means the goblins spot them and attack, shrieking like demented children.

If the two Oni no Sanru are still pursuing the PCs, they will guide the goblin hunting parties to the PCs' location. In this case the goblins will get three Free Raises to any roll to spot hidden PCs.

Creative use of magic may be able to thwart the goblins from spotting or attacking the party.

Rest?

If the PCs stop to rest at any point during their flight back to the Wall, they will still encounter the goblin patrols at the designated times. If the Oni no Sanru are pursuing them, they will attack as soon as the PCs stop to rest.

Remember that inside the Shadowlands, wounds do not heal naturally, nor do Void and spell rings recover with rest. Some PCs may want to stop just long enough to meditate and recover spells rings or Void – this is a wise move, but they will not be given the time to meditate if the Oni no Sanru are pursuing them.

If the PCs do manage to rest for at least six consecutive hours, they will recover from any exhaustion penalties they are suffering.

Getting Lost

If the PCs are separated from Hiruma Imai (for whatever reason), they may have trouble finding their way back to the Wall. If they paid Black Tail to keep helping them, he will be able to guide them back safely. If not, they are on their own.

To find their way back to the Wall, the PCs will need to make either a **Hunting/Intelligence** roll at TN 15 or a **Lore: Shadowlands/Awareness** roll at TN 15. Crab PCs get a Free Raise on the roll. Each failed roll costs two hours of travel time, after which the PCs can roll again... but the TN increases by 5 each time. PCs who are unable to find their way back to the Wall are lost to the Shadowlands.

Crossing the Wall

With a little help from the Fortunes, the PCs make it back to the Wall in time. Hiruma Imai will lead the PCs directly to one of the hidden entrances to the Kaiu tunnels, guiding them back the same way they came. If the PCs were separated from Hiruma Imai, they can remember the location of the tunnel entrance with a **Simple Intelligence** roll at TN 15. Another **Intelligence** roll at TN 15 will be needed to remember the safe route through the tunnels. (A PC can substitute an **Engineering/Intelligence** or **Traps/Intelligence** roll at TN 10). Advantages such as Precise Memory or Clear Thinker can be helpful here.

PCs who decide to advance through the tunnels without remembering the safe route are gambling with their lives. Have each such PC roll **Simple Void** at TN 15. Failure means the PC is caught in a deadly trap and gruesomely killed.

If the PCs cannot remember the location of the tunnel entrance (or if they don't trust their ability to get safely past the traps), they can approach the Wall and roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 10 to remember the password for the guards. Failure means the PCs will be treated as hostile, and must role-play a convincing appeal to the Crab guards lest they be peppered with arrows.

Scene 6: Storm Warning

Once the PCs reach the Wall, they will presumably ask to see Hida Tampako. If Hiruma Imai accompanied them, she will demand this immediately, before even tending to any injuries. If Imai was separated from the party, or killed, then it is up to the PCs what to do now.

If Imai was separated from the party, she never makes it back. The fate of the Crab is in the PCs' hands.

An Emergency Audience

The guards at Shiro Kuni will take the PCs' report and pass it on to Hida Tampako. How quickly he responds depends on how well the party impressed him earlier in the module. If the PCs came across as solid, reliable, honorable samurai, the general will see them within fifteen minutes. On the other hand, if they came across as foolish, cowardly, or arrogant, he will make them wait for up to two hours. If they actually angered him, he will make them wait for four hours.

If Hiruma Imai made it back, Tampako will see them within an hour regardless.

Once the PCs arrive in the audience chamber, they find it much as it was before they left. However, there is one addition to the scene: a Kuni shugenja, dressed in dark robes and a hood that shadows his kabuki-mask-painted face. This is Kuni Yori, daimyo of the Kuni family, who can be identified with a **Lore: Crab Clan/Intelligence** roll at TN 10, **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 15, or **Heraldry/Intelligence** at TN 20. Yori will listen quietly to the conversation, a faintly sinister smile on his face, and contributes only an occasional razor-sharp question or observation in a low whisper.

Hida Tampako will ask the PCs what was so important that they had to see him immediately. Let the PCs answer as they see fit – Hiruma Imai will fill in their story if they miss anything important. Once the PCs have finished their story, Tampako will grow more energetic and begins asking questions. Any key points the PCs may have missed in their presentation will be brought out by this questioning. For example:

- “How many Oni were present? How many Moto?”
- “Describe the four human figures.”
- “What type of siege weapons did you see?”
- “What is their battle plan?”
- “What do they hope to gain from this attack?”
- “When will the attack occur?”

If the players cannot remember this information, their characters can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15 (TN 5 with Precise Memory) to recall the relevant details.

If the PCs mention the enemy's discussion of a “scroll,” they can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 (or **Ichi Miru/Awareness** at TN 15) to notice a very brief look

of surprise and alarm cross Kuni Yori's face. He will deny this if questioned, of course.

If the PCs mention anything about Hida Atarasi, both Tampako and Yori will grow tense and alert. They will ask for every detail the PCs can remember, especially for descriptions of the man's mon and blade. Once the PCs have described everything they can, both Crab grow silent, and Tampako is visibly pale. He looks at Yori. "Could it be true? The story said this was the herald of..."

Yori cuts him off with a gesture. "That was the claim of a Tainted monster, transmitted through the words of a tortured, half-mad soul. No need to think on it further." Tampako nods, looking unconvinced.

If a PC actually mentions the name of Hida Atarasi, Kuni Yori will let out a hissing breath, while Tampako will glare at the offending PC. "That is not to be spoken of, samurai!"

Preparations and Rest

Once the PCs have finished their report, Tampako thanks them with great sincerity, then shouts for messengers. He calls for food and drink for the PCs, and orders Kuni Yori to have his shugenja heal their injuries. Yori's apprentices will cast a total of six *Path to Inner Peace* spells on the PCs, each spell healing 4 Wounds. While this is happening, Tampako begins barking out orders for reinforcements, supplies, and other emergency preparations.

Once the PCs have eaten and healed, Tampako orders them back to the Weeping Tree sector: "We will need every bushi able to stand and lift a weapon."

Whenever the PCs return to the Weeping Tree sector, they will find it a beehive of activity as the Hida prepare for action. Bushi strap on heavy armor, ready their weapons, and bring out barrels of jade powder. Any Crab PCs (except shugenja) will be automatically issued heavy armor if they do not have it already. Bushi from other Clans will also be issued heavy armor if they ask for it politely. Every samurai on the Wall will be issued a pouch of jade powder (unless they still have some from earlier).

If the PCs made it back early enough, they may have time to catch some sleep. If they manage to sleep for at least six hours before the battle begins, they will recover their Void points and spell rings, and heal their normal amount.

Arriving Late

If the PCs dawdled or got lost, or if they made a bad impression on Tampako earlier in the adventure, it is possible that the Shadowlands attack will begin while they are at Shiro Kuni. In that case, a messenger will arrive in the midst of their audience to announce the assault. Tampako will hurriedly order all possible reinforcements to the Weeping Tree sector, including the PCs.

Under these circumstances, the PCs will not get any chance for rest or healing (unless they can heal themselves). Nor will they be able to pick up additional equipment, jade powder, or armor – everyone rushes to the Wall exactly as they are.

See "Unprepared?" under Scene 7 for details of how the battle progresses under these circumstances.

Scene 7: The Abyss Comes for Us

As Lady Sun sets behind the thick clouds which hang over the accursed Shadowlands, the sky turns a dark, menacing red. Pouring out of the crimson dusk are monsters uncountable, hordes of goblins, packs of mighty ogres, endless ranks of trudging zombies. Crude but brutally effective-looking siege towers, rams, and catapults rumble forward. Amidst the horde are scores of Oni large and small, directing the actions of the lesser monstrosities.

Floating above the grotesque army is a figure of shimmering white, riding the wind on wings of gossamer silk. Her beautiful, flawless face is set in an expression of exultant bloodlust, and she whirls a long length of chain in one hand, the end tipped with a glittering kama.

Once the battle begins, it will be resolved using the Battle Table on page 239 of the **L5R GM's Guide**. Each round of battle lasts one hour of time. On the first round of battle the Tides of Battle will automatically be Even (unless the Crab were caught unprepared – see below).

To determine the Tides of Battle for each subsequent round, make a **Contested Battle/Awareness** for Hida Tampako and the akutenshi, Konami. Tampako rolls 6k3, while Konami rolls 5k4+5. 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 Tampako will get +5 to his roll for each successful Heroic Opportunity which the PCs resolve, and for each enemy champion which the PCs dispatch with a Duel/Death Touches You event. Konami's automatic +5 is due to the massive size of her army and the careful preparations she has made. She also gets a one-shot +5 modifier for each PC who dies during the battle.

If the Shadowlands wins three straight rounds of battle, go to "Shiro Kuni Besieged." If the Crab win three straight rounds, go to "Victory!" If neither side manages to win three straight rounds of battle, the fight continues until dawn, which takes eight rounds of battle. At that point go to "Fight Until First Light."

Unprepared?

If the PCs did not get back in time to warn Hida Tampako before the Shadowlands attack begins, the Crab will not be properly prepared for the major battle which faces them. In this case, the Crab will automatically be Losing on the first round of battle, and on subsequent rounds Konami will get an additional +5 to all her **Battle/Awareness** rolls.

The PCs in the Battle

Each round of battle, all PCs roll one die and add their **Water + Battle** 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.

Due to the great power and strength of the Shadowlands forces, one unkept die is added to the Wounds from the Battle Table. Thus if the Battle Table says "3 dice of Wounds" the PC will take 4k3 dice of Wounds.

Remember that heavy armor reduces the number of kept 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).

Since this is a battle against Shadowlands, normal Glory awards from the Battle Table are ignored. The Glory results for the battle are listed at the end of the adventure (under "Rewards for Completing the Adventure").

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. 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: Aid of the Spirits. You realize that the spirits of the Wall and the surrounding lands are angry at the presence of so much Taint. Try to cast a *Commune* spell (Air, Water, or Earth) with three Raises. If you are successful, the spirits begin to actively support the Crab against their attackers. All spells of that element cast for the remainder of the battle gain a Free Raise.

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 only one nearby is you. (The PC must roll **Battle/Awareness**, **Oratory/Awareness**, or **Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15 to rally some nearby commoners and wounded to carry the jade powder.)

2: Burn the Corpses. A huge mass of zombies has crested the wall and is pressing toward, trampling the dead and wounded beneath their rotting feet. A Crab whose arms are both bloody ruins screams at you to dump a cauldron of burning pitch onto them all. "They're dead anyway!" (The PC must roll **Simple Strength** at TN 15 to dump over the cauldron of pitch – the levers are broken. The PC will take 1k1 damage from touching the searing-hot cauldron, and the screams of the incinerated wounded will haunt the PC's dreams for years.)

3: Fire Makes it Grow. Roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Perception** at TN 15. With a success,

you realize the vulnerability of a seemingly unstoppable Oni. Acting on your advice, the Crab swiftly defeat the monster. Add +1 to your Battle Chart rolls for the rest of the combat.

4: Infiltrators. Roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20. A success notices that some of the Shadowlands monsters have managed to infiltrate through the tunnels beneath the Wall. With your warning, the Crab quickly cut them off and destroy them.

5: Possession. Roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15. With a success, you notice that one of the Crab unit commanders is behaving strangely. (The PC must strike down the possessed Crab in order to complete the heroic opportunity. A dark spirit flees his toppling body, shrieking in fury. The other Crab nod grim thanks.)

6: Here, Use This. The crew manning one of the massive Kaiu siege engines has been slain. Below, the Shadowlands horde is wheeling forward a siege tower and massing for another assault. (The PC must roll **Siege/Intelligence** or **Engineering/Intelligence** at TN 10, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20, to fire the Kaiu catapult. With a success, the Shadowlands forces are crushed under a massive boulder.)

7: Counterattack! The enemy has made a breach in the Wall, and you must countercharge to block them from exploiting it. The Crab around you nerve themselves, clutching their weapons, and then storm forward with howls and battle cries. (The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 15 to force him/herself to make this desperate attack. Failure means the PC loses a point of Honor for cowardice.)

8: Persistence. An invulnerable Oni is on the Wall, rampaging out of control. Roll **Battle/Awareness**, **Oratory/Awareness**, or **Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15 to rally a pack of archers and swordsmen against it. With a success, you eventually bring the monster down, covered with so many arrows it looks like a porcupine. Gain a loud cheer.

9: Fend off the Horde. You are cut off and surrounded by a massive wave of goblins and zombies. Resigning your soul to your ancestors, you keep hacking... and hacking... and hacking. (The PC must roll **Kenjutsu/Stamina** – or another weapon skill if they are not using a sword – at TN 15 to carve their way clear. Failure means the PC takes an additional two dice of Wounds over and above their normal Battle Table damage.)

10: Ride the Dark Wave. You leap onto the back of a giant monster, hacking at it desperately, and sending it into a maddened rampage through its own troops. (To survive his/her ride, the PC must roll **Simple Agility** at TN 15. Failure means the PC takes 4k3 Wounds as the monster flings him/her loose. Success means the PC gains +2 on all subsequent Battle Table rolls. Either way, the PC must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or take 1-5 points of Taint.)

Duel/Death Touches You

The GM can either roll on this table, or pick whichever option seems to fit the PC best. As with the Heroic Opportunities, additional Duel/Death Touches You results can be created by the GM, based on the ones listed here.

1: Shadowlands Champion: Goblin Berserker.

A goblin berserker targets the PC for personal attention. Begin a one-on-one combat using the goblin berserker stats at the end of the module.

2: Stranded. The PC is momentarily cut off behind the front wave of the enemy attack, and must either run through them (taking two extra dice of damage), find cover (Stealth/Agility at TN 15), or play possum (Simple Willpower at TN 15). The latter two options cost a point of Honor (possibly more, depending on how the PC role-plays the situation). Do not give the PC much time to think about their choice.

3: He's Mad Now. You whack an oni in the face... and it just stares at you. (The PC begins a lone battle with an Oni no Ugulu. Help, in the form of five Hida bushi, will arrive in 1-5 rounds.)

4: Shadowlands Champion: Ogre. An ogre singles the PC out for personal attention. A one-on-one fight ensues, using the stats in the “NPCs and Monsters” section.

5: Kichigai. You have been targeted by some kind of maho spell which drives you mad with killing rage. (The PC will start killing everything and everyone around him/her, tasting their blood and screaming. The PC can resist these awful urges by rolling an Honor test at TN 20. Otherwise the PC loses a half-Rank of Honor from tasting blood, and must roll Simple Earth at TN 15 or get 1-3 points of Taint.)

6. Shadowlands Champion: Goblin Warmonger. A goblin warmonger conceives a personal hatred for the PC and challenges him/her to

single combat. Use the stats from the end of the adventure.

7: Dishonor Calls. A Crab bushi waves you down into one of the tunnels in the Kaiu Wall, where you can hide behind a few corpses until this all blows over. Well? (If the PC hides, they leave the battle and automatically survive the module, but lose a rank of Honor. A PC who refuses the offer gains +1 point of Honor.)

8: Shadowlands Champion: Oni. An Oni no Sanru, preferably one that was chasing the PCs through the Shadowlands, singles out this PC for single combat. Use the stats from the end of the adventure.

9: Magic Mud. A pack of goblin fanatics runs out of a siege tower onto the Kaiu Wall. Each of them is coated with some flaming tarry substance. They run up and down the Wall wildly, shrieking in agony, trying to grab samurai into a burning embrace. (The PC must roll **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 15, **Jiu-jitsu/Reflexes** at TN 20, **Wrestling/Reflexes** at TN 25, or **Simple Reflexes** at TN 30 to dodge the flaming goblins. A burning goblin hug inflicts 4k2 damage.)

10: Trapped. Your leg is pinned by the fallen body of a massive ogre. Hordes of goblins and zombies are closing in on your position. What do you do? (If the PC stands and fights, s/he takes two extra dice of Wounds. The PC can also try to wrench free with a **Simple Strength** check at TN 25, hide under the ogre's corpse with a **Stealth/Willpower** roll at TN 15, cut off their own leg with a **Simple Willpower** at TN 25 and 3k3 wounds, or even beg for mercy, which requires good role-playing, a **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 20, and a rank of Honor.)

The Special Challenge

If the party is high-rank (at least 1/3 of the characters are School Rank Four, and no more than one is Rank Two), the GM has the option of confronting them with Konami the akutenshi. This will most likely happen if the Crab are about to win the battle, in which case Konami will storm into the thick of the fight to try to turn the tide back in her favor. It can also occur if the PCs make a point of trying to challenge Konami. Finally, the GM can offer the challenge to the PCs if the battle is about to be lost, as a last-ditch chance to save the situation.

The akutenshi will swoop down, her lovely wings slowly beating around her, whirling her blood-stained kusari-gama (kama on a chain). The GM should try to

get the entire party in on this challenge, since Konami is almost certain to win any one-on-one fight.

If Konami is slain, the Shadowlands forces lose all formation and organization. The Crab quickly rout them and win the battle.

Shiro Kuni Besieged

If the Crab lose the battle, the Weeping Tree sector falls. Crab samurai and peasants alike run for their lives as the Shadowlands forces pour over the Wall and into the open lands beyond. A frantic call goes out: "Retreat! To Shiro Kuni!"

All the PCs who are not already in the Reserves must survive one round of battle at Heavily Engaged in order to retreat safely to the fortress of Shiro Kuni. PCs in the Reserves can make it to castle with one round of battle at Disengaged.

Once the castle is besieged, the GM should determine how many rounds of battle remain before dawn (remember that the night totals eight rounds). The Shadowlands forces will attack relentlessly, trying to overrun the castle. Konami gets an additional +10 to all her **Battle/Awareness** rolls due to the desperate situation. She need win only two more rounds of battle in order to breach the castle. If that happens, the following scene occurs:

Suddenly a voice rises above the din of battle, shouting a strange and terrible chant. All around you, the bodies of the fallen – Crab bushi, goblins, ogres, and worse – begin to twitch and move. Then they rise to their feet... and turn on the Shadowlands horde! The enemy onslaught momentarily halts as the undead attack catches them by surprise.

Kuni Yori hurries among you, his face pale and beaded with sweat, clutching a small wooden box under one arm. "Now," he hisses, gesturing frantically. "While they are distracted, flee for your lives!"

The PCs may be able to deduce what has happened – Kuni Yori has opened the Black Scroll and used the spell within to animate the dead in defense of Shiro Kuni. Yori will flee immediately, taking a sturdy pony from the stables. PCs who have mounts of their own can flee by rolling **Horsemanship/Awareness** at TN 10 to ride through the Shadowlands army. PCs who flee on foot must roll **Athletics/Stamina** at TN 15 or **Simple Stamina** at TN 20 to make it out. Shugenja

may be able to save themselves (and possibly others) with magic.

PCs who are unable to flee Shiro Kuni are doomed. No matter how valiantly they fight, the castle will fall, and they will die bitter deaths at the hands of the Shadowlands Horde... if they are lucky.

Fight Until First Light

If the battle is still undecided at dawn, the pale light of Mother Sun will reveal a force of over 5,000 Crab bushi marching rapidly up the road: the reinforcements which Hida Tampako requested.

The Crab reinforcements quickly bring an end to the battle, smashing the overextended Shadowlands forces.

The PCs must survive one more round of battle, but it is automatically on the Winning column.

If the Wall has fallen but Shiro Kuni is still holding out at dawn, the reinforcements will turn the tide of the battle. The PCs will have to survive two more rounds of battle on the Winning column before the Horde is finally forced back over the Wall.

Victory!

If the Crab manage to defeat the Shadowlands forces (either by winning three straight rounds of battle, or by surviving until dawn), the enemy attack suddenly runs out of steam. The zombies stop marching and start wandering around aimlessly, the goblins fall to quarreling with each other, and so forth. Konami (if she is still alive) has given up and returned to her superior Hida Atarasi, and without her guidance the Horde loses all purpose and organization.

The PCs and Crab alike collapse in exhaustion. Eta are brought out to dispose of the vast hordes of dead. The fallen Crab bushi are swiftly and efficiently beheaded and cremated to prevent their bodies rising again. There is no triumph here, no shouts of “Banzai,” no recounting of glorious deeds. There is only the grim satisfaction of having held off the forces of Fu Leng once more.

Conclusion

If the Battle of Weeping Tree is a victory, the PCs will be released from their duties on the Wall shortly thereafter, allowing them to skip the remaining two months of their “tour.” The Crab consider their heroic deeds to have fulfilled their obligations many times over, and they quietly thank the PCs for their courage. Ronin PCs who earned at least 5 points of Glory in the

battle (see “Glory” below) will be offered a chance to join the Crab Clan.

If Hiruma Imai made it back with the PCs, she will survive a victorious battle. She says goodbye to the PCs in an almost sentimental manner, assuring them they will always have a friend in her. All remaining PCs gain her as a True Friend.

If the Battle of the Weeping Tree was a defeat, any surviving PCs will wind up in Kyuden Hida, where they are questioned at length about the battle and all events surrounding it. Kuni Yori also makes it to Kyuden Hida, and closets himself with the Clan Champion.

Eventually, a much larger Crab army marches out, led by Hida Kisada himself, and retakes Shiro Kuni at heavy cost. The PCs are apparently forgotten – eventually, someone gets around to dismissing them from their duties and sending them home.

Although the castle is recovered, the damage has been done – the Black Scroll was opened.

The End

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:	3 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
Winning the Battle before dawn:	2 XP
OR	
Winning the Battle after dawn:	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	6 XP

Honor

Crab PCs get +2 Honor for warning the Kaiu wall in time to prepare for the battle.

All other PCs get +1 Honor for warning the Wall.

Glory

PCs survived a victorious battle: +1 Glory (+3 if they are Crab).

PCs survived a defeat: +1 Glory to Crab PCs only.
Crab PC defeated a “Shadowlands champion”: +1
Glory for each champion.
PC completed a Heroic Opportunity: +1 Glory for each
Opportunity if the battle was won, nothing if it was
lost.

Other Awards/Penalties

Any ronin PC who earns 5 or more points of Glory will
be offered a chance to join the Crab Clan.

If the Battle of the Weeping Tree was a victory, all PCs
get Hiruma Imai as a **True Friend**.

NPCs and Monsters

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.

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.

Hida Tampako, commander of Shiro Kuni

FIRE 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 4	WATER 3 Strength 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (32 in heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 2.8/6.2

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 6, Etiquette 1, History (Kaiu Wall) 2, Iaijutsu 2, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 4, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Archery) 4, Lore (Crab Clan) 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Origami 3, Sincerity 1, Stealth 2, Tetsubo (specialized weapon skill) 3, Tsubojutsu 5, Wrestling 4, Yarijutsu 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Ancestor Hida Banuken, Crab Hands, Large, Social Position (commander of the Wall)

Equipment: Fine heavy armor (+2 TN), daisho set, fine jade-studded tetsubo (2k3 damage).

Black Tail (Rtch'tek), ratling scout

FIRE 2	AIR 3
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Agility 3	
EARTH 2	WATER 2

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 4k3 (wakizashi) or 3k3 (bow)

Damage: 3k2 (wakizashi) or 2k2 (arrows)

Carapace Armor: 3

Wounds: 16: +3; 24: +6; 32: +10; 40: Dead.

Special Abilities: Can chew through almost anything, can squeeze through any space his head can fit through, can run quadruple speed on all fours, can't be Tainted, etc.

Typical Goblin

FIRE 2	AIR 1
	Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 1

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 3k2 (sword)

Wounds: 8: +10; 15: Dead.

Goblin Shaman

FIRE 2	AIR 1
	Reflexes 2
EARTH 2	WATER 2

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 4k1 (sharp knife)

Wounds: 10: +10; 20: Dead.

Spells: Any one *maho* incantation which costs 4 Wounds and duplicates the effect of a Rank One non-healing spell.

Goblin Berserker

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

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 5k2 (sword)

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.

Goblin Warmonger

FIRE 3	AIR 2
	Reflexes 3
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	WATER 1
Stamina 6	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 Ugulu

FIRE 2	AIR 1
EARTH 6	WATER 2
	Strength 8

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k2

Damage: 8k3 (claws)

Carapace Armor: 16 (!!)

Wounds: 25: +5; 45: +10; 60: +15; 70: +20; 80: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 4. The Oni no Ugulu is immune to all arrows except armor-piercing ones. It is also immune to the spell Tomb of Jade.

Oni no Shikibu

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

	Strength 3
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TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 2k2

Damage: 2k1

Carapace Armor: 7

Wounds: 6: +5; 24: +10; 50: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear 3. Invulnerable. If it is slain, it can send its spirit into another dead body, twisting it into the same shape. Its spirit can survive for Willpower x 5 rounds if there is no body available. Taking control over a body requires 1-5 rounds.

Oni no Tsuburu

FIRE 1 Intelligence 2	AIR 1
EARTH 1 Stamina 7	WATER 1 Strength 7

TN to be Hit: 5

Attacks: 1k1 or Grapple (Contested Strength)

Damage: 3k2 (claws), 3k1 (teeth), or 1k1 (stomach).

Carapace Armor: 20 (!!)

Wounds: 28: +5; 56: +15; 150: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 5. Invulnerable. Teleportation once per night (allows a surprise attack). Grappled foes can be swallowed on the next round, and once swallowed, can take no action except to scream for help.

Oni no Sanru

FIRE 3	AIR 4
EARTH 4	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 5k3

Carapace Armor: 3

Wounds: 10: +10; 20: +15; 40: +15; 60: Dead.

Special Abilities: The Oni no Sanru can fly, although they are not very good at it. If they spend a round climbing, they are considered to be on Full Defense, and cannot be struck with hand-to-hand weapons unless the attacker beats them on initiative. If they dive on a foe, this is considered a Full Attack and rolls 8k4 to hit, 6k4 for damage.

Dark Moto

FIRE 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
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EARTH 5	WATER 4
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Shadowlands Taint Rank: 6.4

TN to be Hit: 25 (20 without light armor)

School/Rank: Moto Black Guard 3

Rank 1: *Power in the Darkness*. The Black Guard may add twice his Shadowland Taint Rank to all damage rolls.

Rank 2: *Death is an Illusion*. The Dark Moto suffers no TN Penalties from any wound rank.

Rank 3 Technique: *Ride Beyond Death*. By spending an action, the Dark Moto may summon an onikage. If within the Shadowlands, an Onikage simply appears nearby. Within Rokugan, the creature bursts forth from the ground itself.

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 4, Defense 5, Jiu-jitsu 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 6, Horse Archery 5, Horsemanship 6, Hunting 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Stealth 4, Yarijutsu 5.

Wounds: 90: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 3, Undead Strength (no wound penalties), Invulnerable.

Equipment: Light Armor, Katana (6k2+6), bow with 20 arrows (4k2+6), Yari (mounted 5k3+6, dismounted 5k2+6).

Onikage ("demon horse")

FIRE 2	AIR 3
EARTH 4	WATER 4 Strength 6

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 6k2 (claw-hoof) or 6k3 (bite)

Carapace Armor: 5

Wounds: 16: +5; 24: +10; 36: +15; 72: Down; 84: Dead

Konami, akutenshi (evil angel), former Mantis

FIRE 4 Agility 5	AIR 4 Reflexes 6
EARTH 5	WATER 3

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 6.5

TN to be Hit: 30

School Rank: Maho-Bujin 3

Rank One: *Carve the Crimson Road*.

Konami gains a number of additional attacks per round equal to the highest Honor rank among her opponents.

Rank Two: *Corruption Rewards*. Konami can use the Wounds inflicted on her last strike as her Initiative total for the next round.

Rank Three: *Devourer of Purity*. Konami will heal a number of Wound Ranks (10 Wounds per rank) equal to the Honor rank of any opponent she brings to Down, Out, or Dead.

Skills: Athletics 6, Commerce 4, Etiquette 3, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu 4, Nofujutsu (peasant weapons) 7, Sailing 5, Seduction 5, Sincerity 3, Stealth 6.

Wounds: 108: Dead.

Special Abilities: Command the Taint (contested Willpower to control any creature with the Taint, but target gets two Free Raises if Taint is their lowest trait), Flight, Invulnerable, Shapechanging, Undead Strength (no Wound penalties).

Equipment: Kimono (Mantis colors), Accursed Kusari-Gama (3k2 weapon which slices through and ignores armor, and inflicts 1 point of Taint any time one of its damage dice explode).