

The Price of Loyalty

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

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A trip to Scorpion lands to disprove a slanderous rumor turns into a dangerous quest for a lost relic of the Empire.

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

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

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

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

GM's Information

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

This adventure is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1, 2, or 3 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 4 or 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table.

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."

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

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank One):

- The Oni no Jimen spawn take half damage from normal weapons.
- Lower all skill roll TNs by 5, at the GM's discretion.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank Two and Three):

- The Oni no Jimen spawn take only half damage from Fine/Excellent steel weapons.

- Yogo Showa has Earth 4 and Fire 3.

Adventure Background

This adventure centers around an ancient and powerful artifact, Kenshin's Helm, a kabuto (war-helm) conceived in hatred and corrupted by the power of Fu Leng, which has exerted a malign influence on the history of Rokugan for many centuries. The full history of the Helm is given in Appendix #2.

Over the centuries, Kenshin's Helm has become a vessel of dark power, imbued with the foul energies of Fu Leng himself. The dark god placed a part of his own soul into the helm, so that if he is ever destroyed his power will live on in whoever is foolish enough to don the helm.

Some years ago, as his power began to stir once more, Fu Leng became concerned that the helm might be tracked down by his enemies, especially one of its old victims, the undead samurai Akodo Godaigo, whose soul yet remains pure. The dark god sent out word to his servants, the Dark Oracles. An Oni no Jimen, an elemental terror of earth, obtained the helm and carried it far under the earth, depositing it in a hidden cavern deep below Kyuden Bayushi. Once men had been there, leaving artifacts of power. They would come again.

The helm's presence tortured the spirits of the earth beneath the castle, triggering frequent small earthquakes. As Fu Leng began to stir and the helm's power grew, the quakes became more frequent, finally opening a chasm to the Bayushi tunnels. Soon enough, a team of Yogo investigators explored the chasm, discovering the cave which had been sealed for so long.

The time of destiny approaches. The Empire is riven with war, the Crab turn against themselves, the Black Scrolls have begun to be opened, and the Living Darkness has crept out of the shadows to ally itself with the Shadowlands. Fu Leng has decided it is time to unleash Kenshin's Helm upon the Empire once more.

The Current Situation

Two years ago, rumors spread throughout the Empire of some great find which the Scorpion had made in a cavern under Kyuden Bayushi. Although the Scorpion did their best to quash these rumors, eventually the Imperial Court announced that an investigation team would be sent to sort through the rumors once and for all.

Luckily for the Scorpion, this investigation was delayed when a catastrophic earthquake struck the capital city, Otsan Uchi, taking the life of the Emperor and many senior daimyo. The Scorpion made good use of the delay, clearing the ancient artifacts out of the cavern – among them, scrolls of ancient prophecies, items of black obsidian, and... a certain helm.

The helm and most of the other relics were given into the care of Yogo Junzo, daimyo of the Yogo shugenja family. One of his apprentices, Yogo Showa (a member of the kuroiban, or Black Watch, the Scorpion maho investigators) learned that the helm contained powerful magic, although he could not discover what kind. He also discovered the Miya mon, and an inscription from Miya Kenshin, beneath the helm's crumbling lacquer.

Yogo Showa is acquainted with Miya Yumi, a prominent member of the Miya family, cousin to their daimyo. He proposed to his daimyo that they use the helm to take control of the Miya family.

The current Miya daimyo, Satoshi, is a militant and emotional young man who dreams of leading his small family to prominence on the battlefield. Many of the Miya object to this violation of their family's traditional role as heralds and peacemakers, and Miya Yumi is the most prominent of these malcontents. The Scorpion could use the "return" of this ancestral helm as a device to invite Yumi to Kyuden Bayushi... and offer her the support of the Scorpion in overthrowing Satoshi. This would eliminate the threat from Satoshi (who favors the Lion Clan) and replace him with a Miya daimyo indebted to the Scorpion Clan.

But while the Scorpion waited the months for Miya Yumi to arrive from her latest assignment, Yogo Showa began to succumb to the power of Kenshin's Helm. He found that by touching or wearing the kabuto he could commune with the powerful spirit within it. The foul relic quickly corrupted Yogo Showa with its subtle magic, hiding his Taint from his fellow Scorpion and encouraging him to keep his discoveries for himself. Eventually he succumbed to madness and paranoia, hiding the helm away in the very caves where he had first discovered it, and plotting to murder any who might try to take it from him.

The Player Characters

The PCs enter this situation as the long-awaited investigation team, dispatched by Miya Satoshi to settle the rumors of a strange cave beneath Kyuden Bayushi. Not coincidentally, this mission will place them in the

Scorpion castle at the same time that Miya Yumi is there – Satoshi is suspicious of Yumi’s intentions, and knows she has been in correspondence with someone in the Scorpion Clan. Satoshi plans to use the PCs to quash whatever Yumi and the Scorpion have planned... and if they can also dig up something incriminating on the Scorpion Clan to help his Matsu allies, so much the better.

All the while, Kenshin’s Helm waits and listens, using its slave Yogo Showa to learn what is happening. A bitter and hateful soul like Miya Satoshi would be most agreeable to it... but Miya Yumi will work just as well. Either way, it will be unleashed on the Empire, and the Miya family will fall prey to its power once more.

Yogo Showa, driven mad by the Helm, will attempt to murder any PCs who seem likely to discover his treasure. The PCs may find that, ultimately, their only chance of escaping the tunnels beneath Kyuden Bayushi will be to befriend the small tribe of zokujin (copper goblins) who dwell there.

Notes on Running This Adventure

This scenario creates a situation in which different PCs may be working directly at cross-purposes with each other, possibly even leading to armed clashes (although the scenario does not encourage PCs to murder each other). This conflict is deliberate. Rokugan is not a fairy-tale world, and the PCs are not all selfless heroes working together for the greater good. The GM should be prepared for the possibility of conflict, and possibly even violence, between the PCs.

It is possible, depending on the composition of the party, that the PCs may all wind up sabotaging the investigation and never visiting the caves beneath Kyuden Bayushi. This is a perfectly valid conclusion to the scenario, and may be considered a victory for the Scorpion Clan.

Player’s Introduction

It is the fifteenth day of the Month of the Hare (April), the Month of Amaterasu in the high usage, in the first year of the reign of Hantei the 39th. The capital of Otosan Uchi is coming alive after a long winter, and everywhere signs of reconstruction can be seen as craftsman work to restore the city from last autumn’s devastating earthquake. The land also show signs of renewal: sakura (cherry) trees fill the airs with fragrant pink blossoms, wild flowers bloom along the road, and the chrysanthemums in the

Imperial garden open their buds to the renewed embrace of Mother Sun.

The PCs have arrived in the capital at the request of Miya Satoshi, the Imperial Herald. Satoshi has hurriedly called in a number of favors in order to put together this investigation in time to interfere with Miya Yumi’s activities. If any of the PCs are ronin, Satoshi was forced to hire them (at 3 koku each) in order to round out his team – there was not time to summon enough Clan samurai.

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves to each other if they do not know each other already. Once they are finished, move on with the scene.

The gates to the Forbidden City are 70 feet high, adorned with a massive carving of the Imperial mon in crystal and jade. Soldiers of the Imperial Legions check your travel papers politely but meticulously, while others patrol the walls above.

Some of the PCs may have been into the Forbidden City before, in the adventure *Winter Court: Kanrinrin’s Duty*. They can see that it was not spared the destructive power of the earthquake – the palaces of the Hantei and Otomo were burned to their foundations, and now are massive construction sites as hundreds of workers labor to rebuild them.

Nevertheless, life in the Forbidden City goes on. The guest houses of the Clans are crowded, and elegant courtiers in elaborate kimonos stroll between them with umbrellas and scented fans. Most of them wend their way toward the Seppun Palace, where the young Emperor has placed his throne until his own home is rebuilt. The PCs, however, turn toward a smaller palace: Kibo (“Hope”), the palace of the Miya family. If the PCs were here as kanrinrin, this is the palace where they stayed then as well.

The Miya Palace is built upon an outcropping of the main wall, separated from the other Imperial family palaces. A gruff shisha, whose bears himself like a warrior, checks your papers and then tells you to wait while the lord is informed of your presence.

For a palace of an Imperial family, Kibo is surprisingly simple, almost spartan. No depictions of ancestral heroes adorn the shoji screens. In place of paintings and artwork are maps and displays of humble family artifacts, banners and hats and fans.

After a twenty minute wait, you are led into an audience hall. A man in his mid-twenties awaits you,

seated cross-legged on the floor, his hair long and cut in a loose style favored by the Lion Clan. His fine kimono displays the mons of the Miya family and the Matsu bushi school. A small frown flits across his lips while he waits for you to bow and seat yourselves across from him.

Again, some PCs may have met Miya Satoshi before, notably in the adventure Occult Murders. Regardless, it should be obvious that he is not the typical Miya. He has a commanding presence, but exudes a sense of impatience and poorly-restrained anger. A roll of Heraldry/Intelligence or Etiquette/Intelligence at TN 5 will note that the Matsu mon is worn closest to his heart, showing how much he values his education with the Lion (although calling him “Matsu-sama” would be highly inappropriate).

“Greetings, samurai.” If there are any ronin or Minor Clan samurai present, Satoshi will hesitate a moment, glowering darkly at them, before continuing. **“I have summoned you here, with the permission of your daimyos, to assist the Imperial House in a task that has been long delayed. Last year, it was decided a group of investigators from the Imperial families would be sent to investigate the rumors of strange caves and treasures underneath the Scorpion Clan’s chief castle, Kyuden Bayushi. Due to the... tragic events of last autumn, we have been unable to attend to this duty. But the task cannot be put off any longer. Therefore it has been decided that you shall undertake this task on our behalf.”** If there are any ronin in the party, Satoshi will pause and then offer a weak quip to the effect that this is a good opportunity to dispel his image of being an enemy of wave-men. PCs can tell he is being insincere with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 10. **“Our informants have confirmed the existence of caves beneath the castle. Your duty is to find out what, if anything, the Scorpion discovered in those caves, and what they did with it. If you should find anything to show the Scorpion Clan has deceived the Imperial House, you must report back to me so that sanctions can be taken against them. After all, everything in that cave belongs to the Hantei,”** At this point, if there are any Scorpion PCs in the party, Satoshi smiles tightly at them. **“I wish to be fair to the Scorpion Clan, of course. Your presence will ensure that our investigation is honest, and not merely an attempt to hang slanders about the neck of your Clan.”**

Once the PCs have acknowledged their mission, Satoshi moves on to what is, for him, the most important part of the mission. **“As an Imperial daimyo, and the Imperial Herald, I have a favor to**

ask of you. My young cousin, Miya Yumi, has been absent from our lands for some time, despite my dispatching letters ordering her to return. I have heard reports of her traveling to Scorpion lands, in the company of some...ronin. While you are at Kyuden Bayushi, please locate my young cousin and find out why she has not responded to my orders. I would hate for her inexperience to inadvertently lead her, or our family, into any trouble or disgrace. I assure you, your efforts in this regard will not go unnoticed. The friendship of the Miya family will spread a samurai’s name through all the courts of Rokugan.”

Satoshi regards the PCs as nothing more than tools, and rather irritating tools at that (especially if some of them are ronin, Minor Clan, or “traditional” Miya). He will not take the time to answer many questions, and becomes quite irritated if the PCs seem hesitant or uncertain about their mission – he will berate such PCs for questioning the authority of the Imperial Herald.

- Satoshi knows nothing about the caves beyond what he has already told the PCs. He will impatiently remind the PCs that it is their job, not his, to learn what is there.
- If the PCs ask more about Miya Yumi, he will say that her last assignment was in Phoenix lands, trying to mediate their upcoming conflict with the Dragon. She was ordered to return home after that task. Satoshi will not identify the informants who have placed her in Scorpion lands.
- If the PCs ask about the ronin who are accompanying Yumi, Satoshi shrugs. “Two wave men, a bushi and a shugenja, that is all I have been told. Why should it matter?”

As soon as possible, Satoshi dismisses the PCs to their task. Once they leave the audience room, they are greeted by Satoshi’s hatamoto (assistant), who hands them a new set of travel papers, along with writs appointing them as Imperial investigators for the duration of the mission. If any of the PCs lack steeds of their own, the hatamoto will lead them to the castle stables, supplying each PC with a fine quality riding pony (+1 horsemanship skill) to use for this mission.

Part One: To the Lair of the Scorpion

From the Imperial capital, it is almost a three week journey overland to Kyuden Bayushi. The first two

days are in the peaceful lands immediately around the capital, where the Emperor's Road is well-maintained and the lands are prosperous and safe. None would dare defame the lands near Otosan Uchi.

From there, the PCs travel for twelve days through the Crane territories, first those of the Kakita family and then those of the Daidoji. Here the signs of war are evident:

You notice many contingents of bushi in the splendid blue and white armor of the Crane. As you move south into the Daidoji territories, fortifications become a common sight around every village and castle, along with levies of ashigaru drilling in the fields. These lands have already seen battle the previous autumn, and the Matsu have not yet halted their attacks.

Next comes the most nerve-wracking part of the journey, crossing the border between the Crane and Lion territories. Here that border is marked by Mizuumi no Fuko, the Lake of Sorrows, said to haunted by all those who have died in battle nearby. Whether that is true or not, crossing the lake's still waters on a ferryboat is an eerie experience. On both sides of the lake, the PCs are stopped repeatedly by Crane and Lion patrols, their papers scrutinized suspiciously. However, neither the Lion nor the Crane will stop those who bear the mon of the Imperial Herald.

The PCs spend two days in Lion territory, passing close by the formidable Shiro Matsu, center of the Lion war effort. Massive armies of Lion troops march north, east, and south, and couriers race up and down the roads at breakneck speed. It seems the entirety of the Lion strength has mobilized for war.

At last the PCs enter Beiden Pass, taking them through the Spine of the World Mountains. This takes two more days, unpleasant days spent in a barren, wind-swept gorge with only lonely roadhouses for evening shelter. On the far side, the PCs finally reach Scorpion lands:

Though the Scorpion are not known for being a martial clan, Beiden Village might give the opposite impression. The small village is heavily fortified, better defended than many castles, and sizable contingents of Bayushi bushi are patrolling the entrance to the pass, watching for the invasion which the Matsu have threatened since last autumn. The Scorpion troops look over your papers, smiling when they see your destination, and offer you a courteous welcome to the lands of the Scorpion.

It takes only two more days to reach Kyuden Bayushi.

Arrival at Kyuden Bayushi

The castle of the Scorpion Clan's ruling family is as ostentatious and grand as the palaces of the Doji and the Mantis Clan. The castle stands eight stories high, decorated with fluttering banners and carvings of masks and the Bayushi mon. Beautiful gardens surround the castle on two sides, including a maze composed of carefully groomed hedges.

As the PCs approach the gates, they are met by a squad of Bayushi bushi wearing elaborate facial masks, only their eyes visible as they politely ask for their visitor's business. Once the PCs present their papers, the guards bow deeply, and one of them strides into the castle to announce their presence. After a half-hour wait the PCs are admitted to Kyuden Bayushi.

As you are escorted through the halls, you pass many ornately carved sculptures, glass windows stained red, and silk screens covered in beautiful paintings. Scented incense burns in all the halls, lending the castle a pleasing aroma, and the floors squeak softly beneath your tread. Courtiers in crimson robes and a bewildering array of masks pass to and fro. Some seem to stare at you, though it is difficult to be sure through their masks. Others whisper quietly behind raised fans.

You arrive in a large audience chamber on what seems to be the castle's second floor. Upon the raised dais at the end of the hall are two splendid thrones carved from obsidian. One rests empty; in the other sits a tall man wearing crimson robes and an elaborate porcelain mask, painted to resemble human features with red emerald teardrops running down the cheeks. Silk cords hold the mask tightly against his face, concealing all his features except his intense brown eyes. His bare right hand grasps the arm of the throne tightly, while his left, covered in a red silk glove, rests in his lap.

Behind the seated man, who must be the legendary Bayushi Shoji, stands a man in much simpler robes, wearing a mask sculpted like a phoenix's head. His hands are clasped in supplication, but his eyes watch your movements like a hawk watching its prey.

Other courtiers are seated on their knees along either wall of the hall, leaving a clear path between you and the Scorpion daimyo.

If the PCs look for anyone unusual among the courtiers, or if they are keeping an eye out for Miya Yumi, have them roll **Heraldry/Perception** at TN 10. With a success, they notice a young woman in a fine black and light-brown kimono with the Miya mon. She is flanked by two male shugenja in plain, unadorned garments, obviously ronin, one young and the other well into middle age. Any PC who rolls **Lore: Ronin/Intelligence** at TN 15, or **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 15, will recognize the older ronin as the infamous shugenja, Koan. (According to legend, there has been a ronin shugenja named Koan in every generation since the beginning of the Empire. The current Koan has a rather bad reputation – he won a shugenja tournament in Phoenix lands some years ago, and was later named as a criminal for stealing a cache of scrolls from that Clan. It is rumored that the Phoenix still have a price on his head.)

Once the PCs have offered the proper obeisance, Shoji greets them in a quiet, raspy, but clearly audible voice.

“I am Bayushi Shoji, lord of the Scorpion. You are <insert the names of all the PCs>. I have been expecting you. Please, be welcomed; we are honored to have so many guests in our home. Can you tell me, please, your business here in Scorpion lands?”

Allow the PCs the opportunity to present themselves as best they can. Shoji will not interrupt, waiting patiently until they have finished.

It is important to realize that under his porcelain mask, Bayushi Shoji is wearing one of the Scorpion nemuranai, a simple silk mask that makes it impossible to detect deception in his words by any means. No matter what die rolls or tests the PCs may make, they will find themselves unable to tell if he is lying. In fact, they will want to believe his words, which seem reasonable and plausible.

“Ah yes, the story about the caves. Courtly gossip mostly, I am afraid. How curious, though... the Miya family seems quite interested in this simple cave.” <Shoji motions his gloved left hand toward Miya Yumi.> *“Miya Yumi and her...assistants here were asking me about these famous caverns as well. Oh yes, there are caverns beneath Kyuden Bayushi, but no great secrets lie there.” He chuckles. “Let me see, how did it begin..? Two years ago, a tremor struck, not uncommon in this area. There is a... caretaker, underground, who looks after a certain lake to make sure it is not disturbed. The place was precious, you see, to my divine ancestor Bayushi. She reported to*

me that a new chasm had appeared there. We did not wish any hazard to threaten that sacred place, so a team of Yogo shugenja was sent to explore the chasm. What they found, well... it is probably not worth your while. A worn staircase ruined by rockslides, a room in the side of the cliff with a smashed door, some ancient bones, and tons of fallen rock.”

Shoji heaves a sigh. “If it is your duty to explore this, then of course I shall help you. Beside me stands one of the Yogo who explored the cavern, Yogo Showa, an apprentice to my faithful servant Yogo Junzo. He lead the team that investigated the chasm and room. He will be able to answer all of your questions, and provide for any needs if you should choose to explore the caverns yourselves. Yes, I give you permission to explore, since you are on official business.”

Shoji rises to his feet, his robes swirling around him. “We of the Scorpion Clan are at your service. I offer you the hospitality of our castle until you have finished your investigation. Tonight, we shall hold a feast in honor of your visit to us.” He pauses, then continues. “I do hope that our perfect cooperation will quell these foolish suspicions in the Imperial Courts. Now, if you will excuse me, honorable samurai, I must prepare for this evening, and my wife requires my attention. She has not yet quite recovered from the burns she suffered in the capitol last fall.” Everyone assembled bows deeply as Bayushi Shoji sweeps out of the audience chamber. Some of the courtiers depart as well, while the others rise to their feet and begin to converse in low voices, no doubt gossiping about what just happened.

Miya Yumi and her ronin companions will bow and depart. If any of the PCs approach her, she will be willing to grant them only a brief interview, explaining that she must prepare for the dinner. See “Interviewing Miya Yumi” below for details.

Interviewing Yogo Showa

Once Shoji leaves, Yogo Showa will step forward, smile, and bow to the PCs, offering his assistance. “Honorable samurai, what questions may I answer? Or would you prefer I show you to your rooms?”

The PCs will have time to question Showa before dinner, if they wish. They will also have time to question either the other Yogo who explored the caves with him, or Miya Yumi, but not both unless they split up. There will not be time to visit the caverns themselves now, but Showa promises that a visit can be arranged as early as tomorrow.

If the PCs ask him questions (now or later), Yogo Showa can share the following information with them. Showa does not have the benefit of a magical mask to protect his falsehoods, but he does have the power of Kenshin's Helm. The PCs will have to be suspicious enough to demand a test of his sincerity, and then beat him on a **Contested Awareness** roll. He gets two Free Raises due to the Helm's power.

Note that Showa is Tainted, but due to the protection of Kenshin's Helm, his Taint cannot be detected by any means short of touching him with jade.

- **The Caverns:** Far beneath Bayushi castle there has always been a tremendous cavern, holding a body of water called the Sleeping Lake. Normally, only the daimyo of the clan and the caretaker of the lake have access to it. (Truth, as far as it goes. The exact nature of Sleeping Lake is a Clan secret and will never be revealed to non-Scorpion.)
- **The Earthquake:** The quake took place almost two years ago. The caretaker at the time, Bayushi Shindei, reported that the quake had revealed the existence of a previously unknown underground chasm near the Sleeping Lake. (Truth.)
- **The Caretaker:** Bayushi Shindei has since returned to her ancestors. Her granddaughter, who bears the same name, has assumed her position. Shindei the younger is available for interview, if the PCs ask. (Truth.)
- **The Investigation:** Showa's master, Yogo Junzo, ordered him to assemble a team of five shugenja to explore the chasm. It seemed to stretch as deep as the earth itself. Trying to learn more, they used magic to lower one of their own, Yogo Nachita, several hundred feet down into the rift. There, he discovered a worn staircase, left almost unusable by centuries of cave-ins and rock slides. (Truth.)
- **Exploring the Stairs:** The Scorpion built a pulley and elevator so they could reach and explore the staircase safely. Eventually the stairs led them to a chamber with a half-destroyed wooden door of extreme age. (Truth.)
- **The Chamber:** The Yogo explored the chamber, which was half-collapsed, filled with broken stone. The open half of the room contained three skeletons, lying near a large metal case. Showa remarks that many in his Clan believe the remains

to be of ancient Scorpions, perhaps even the vanished Bayushi himself. (All of this, as far as it goes, is true.) After Yogo Junzo himself inspected the room, it was agreed the remains and the box they guarded would be left undisturbed. Nothing else was found or excavated. (A lie.)

- **The Other Yogo:** If the PCs ask, Showa will identify the other Yogo from the investigating team as Yogo Kosaka, Yogo Yasuko, Yogo Nachita, and Yogo Shuko. All of them are here in Kyuden Bayushi if the PCs wish to interview them.
- **Who Has Been There:** Showa will claim that aside from the original five Yogo, the only others who have visited to the chamber have been Yogo Junzo (daimyo of the Yogo family) and Soshi Bantaro (daimyo of the Soshi family). This is a lie – Bayushi Shoji, his wife Kachiko, and his faithful brother Aramoro have also been to the chamber.
- **Current Status:** Showa will claim that, due to the possibility of war and the tragic injury to Bayushi Kachiko (not to mention the occasional hazardous earth-tremor), all further investigations of the chasm have been halted. If any of the PCs seem superstitious, he will also mention that there are old legends of goblins, oni, and ghosts haunting the lower reaches of the labyrinth. (This is a partial truth – the Scorpion have halted explorations because they have removed everything they found in the chamber and they had to prepare for the Imperial investigators.)
- **Miya Yumi:** If any PCs ask about Miya Yumi, Showa will claim he has no idea why Yumi asked about the caverns. "Perhaps she has the same interest as Miya Satoshi-sama?" If the PCs later ask him about Yumi's claim that he is her friend, he will claim he did not wish to betray her confidence. "The lady Yumi-san has many friends among the Scorpion, not just my humble self. We have corresponded for some years now, ever since she managed to resolve an incident between the Yogo and Kitsu families." (This is true as far as it goes, but Showa in concealing something about Yumi, namely the real reason she is here.)

If any PC attempts to get a general read on Yogo Showa's personality or attitude, they can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 25 (or **Ichimi Awareness** at TN 20). With a success, they sense that, while Showa is outwardly a dutiful Scorpion, beneath the surface is a boiling torrent of emotions, chiefly anger, fear, and

jealousy. They also sense that many of these emotions are focused against them.

Once the PCs are through asking questions, Showa will summon servants to show them to their rooms in the castle guest quarters (the fourth floor). He reminds them that the servants can also guide them to the baths, dojos, and areas for meditation, as well as supplying tea or other drinkables.

Interviewing the Other Yogo Apprentices

Yogo Showa can summon one or all of the other four Yogo shugenja who accompanied his investigation of the chasm. All of them are Rank Two Yogo-school shugenja. Regardless of whether they are interviewed together or separately, they will all repeat the information given by Yogo Showa, except for the additions mentioned below.

Yogo Kosaka: A man in his early twenties, quiet and reserved. He knows the younger Bayushi Shindei, the new guardian of Sleeping Lake. If the PCs ask about her or the lake, he will mention that she once told him of seeing a ghost walking around the lake, when she was a little girl. Kosaka expresses concern that their excavation may have disturbed the ancestors of the clan.

Yogo Yasuko: A woman in her early twenties, perky and energetic, with a cheerful personality which well-disguises her ruthless loyalty to the Scorpion Clan. Yogo Showa is her sensei, and she will flatter him as a skilled and effective leader of their explorations.

Yogo Nachita: A man in his mid-twenties, with a brash and outspoken personality, it was Nachita who first descended into the chasm and found the staircase. He will claim that during that first trip, he heard strange echoes and whispers on the wind. He feels that other things dwell deeper in the labyrinth. If the PCs are abrasive or accuse him of deception, Nachita will challenge them for insulting his honor.

Yogo Shuko: A female prodigy in her late teens, with a pretty face and flirtatious, seductive personality. Shuko is one of those who believes some of the remains in the cave were of Bayushi himself. If so, that makes it the most holy place in the Scorpion Clan, and she hopes not to have to defile it by opening it again.

Interviewing Miya Yumi

Miya Yumi will meet briefly with the PCs before the feast, answering a few questions. Her ronin companions are absent – if the PCs ask about them, she explains that they are meditating before dinner, and suggest they seek them out after the meal.

Yumi will be very cautious and guarded toward the PCs (she suspects the true reason they are here) unless those who speak with her are limited to “traditionalist” Miya, Scorpion, ronin, or members of a Minor Clan. In that case, she will be more frank, as outlined below.

- If the PCs ask her business here at Kyuden Bayushi, she explains that she is here to see her friend Yogo Showa, with whom she has corresponded for a couple of years. (This is true as far as it goes, but a successful **Contested Awareness** roll will sense that she has other, deeper reasons which she is not revealing.)
- If the PCs ask why she has not returned home as per Miya Satoshi’s request, she will reply that this is a private matter between her and her cousin. If the PCs press her on this (such as by pointing out that Satoshi ordered them to get her reply), she will still politely refuse to answer, and attempts to suggest that Satoshi is dishonorably dragging the PCs into a private quarrel. (Again, a **Contested Awareness** roll will sense that there is more to this than she is saying.)
- If the PCs ask about her companions, she identifies them as two shugenja named Yayu and Koan. Yayu can be identified as a former Otomo with a **Lore: Ronin/Intelligence** or **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** roll at TN 15, or **Lore: Imperial Families/Intelligence** at TN 20. Koan’s story can be recalled (once the PCs hear his name) with a roll of **Lore: Ronin/Intelligence** or **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 10. According to legend, there has been a ronin shugenja named Koan in every generation since the beginning of the Empire. The current Koan has a rather bad reputation – he won a shugenja tournament in Phoenix lands some years ago, and was later named as a criminal for stealing a cache of scrolls from that Clan. It is rumored that the Phoenix still have a price on his head.
- If the PCs mention Koan’s reputation, Yumi will claim (or suggest obliquely, if some of them are Phoenix) that the Phoenix Clan is jealous of Koan’s magical knowledge, and resent his audacity

at winning the tournament and exposing their ill-treatment of ronin shugenja. She will also point out that Koan kept company with her esteemed uncle, the late Miya Yoto-sama, the previous daimyo of the Miya family. (Yumi is being completely sincere about this.)

- If all the PCs speaking to her seem sympathetic (e.g. they are all “traditional” Miya, Scorpions, ronin, or Minor Clan, or they all openly express sincere opposition to Miya Satoshi), she will quietly plead with them not to do whatever Satoshi has sent them to do. She promises to discuss this at greater length after dinner.

Part Two: Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner

This part of the scenario is a key role-playing situation. It is here that both the Scorpion and Miya Yumi will attempt to dissuade some or all of the PCs from prying further into the mystery of the cave. This should be an intense role-playing situation, one in which the ruthless talents of the Scorpion Clan are displayed to full effect.

Once the PCs have properly prepared for dinner (bathing, changing into their finest kimono, etc), they will be led to the dining hall on the castle’s third floor.

The sweet scent of incense fills the air of Kyuden Bayushi’s main dining hall. A sweet melody drifts through the air, as an ensemble of musicians performs from behind shoji screens, offering music of the biwa, hayashi flute, and tsuzumi drums. Courtiers in elegant crimson robes, all wearing masks of silk, porcelain, or wood, move to and fro. For now, nobody has taken their seat – it seems they are waiting for the daimyo.

No one will sit for dinner until Bayushi Shoji arrives. During this time, several Scorpion courtiers will approach the PCs and introduce themselves:

- **Bayushi Fumi:** a petite, beautiful, and intelligent woman, this shugenja-ko (rank three Soshi school) is an accomplished seductress, a master of using men’s emotions and desires against them. PCs may have met her before in adventures such as Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina.
- **Bayushi Tenkawa:** an older courtier, his hair thinning and his body language careful and deliberate. He puts on the air of a quiet, gentle man who is troubled by the sordid maneuverings of

Rokugani politics. This is a front: he is actually a Scorpion agent of supreme skill and ruthlessness. PCs may have met him in the adventure Lies, Lies, Lies.

- **Bayushi Hanamoto:** a slim, stylish man with a mask shaped like a fox-spirit, Hanamoto has delicate, almost effeminate mannerisms, but beneath that deceptive cover he is as steely and ruthless as any Scorpion one might be unfortunate enough to meet.
- The GM should feel free to improvise additional courtiers as the situation demands.

The brief flurry of introductions ends as Bayushi Shoji enters the room, accompanied by the daimyo of the two Scorpion shugenja families, Yogo Junzo and Soshi Bantaro. Shoji’s wife Kachiko is absent. As everyone takes their seats, you find yourselves placed together, not far from the main table.

The dishes are excellent. Pheasant, fish, rice, boar, vegetables, and rice are served in abundance, along with both tea and sake. Gentle music from concealed instruments drifts through the hall, and the courtiers continue to gossip quietly to each other. You can feel their eyes upon you during the meal, although their masks make it difficult to be sure.

After dinner, everyone will be free to circulate, talk, and gossip for a time. This is when the Scorpion courtiers will strike. It is also when Miya Yumi and her ronin aide, Koan, will attempt to enlist the support of any PCs she deems sympathetic.

The Scorpion Strike!

The Scorpion have had plenty of time to study the PCs and learn their weaknesses, and will strike at those weaknesses: namely, the PCs’ Disadvantages. A list of Disadvantages follows, accompanied by the approaches which the Scorpion will take toward each one. The goal in all cases, of course, is to convince the PC to sandbag their investigation and leave the tunnels alone.

These approaches will be made subtly or directly, as befits the PC involved, and only in one-on-one conversations between the PC and a suitable courtier. The GM should play this sequence to the hilt – the Scorpion will be absolutely ruthless in trying to force the PCs to bend to their will.

The Scorpions will not approach Minor Clan or ronin PCs unless those PCs have already rejected Miya

Yumi. They will only approach Miya family PCs if those PCs are supporters of Miya Satoshi.

- **Adopted Blood:** The Scorpion will offer the PC a prestigious bride, a daughter of one of their lesser daimyo, accompanied by appropriate dowry and wealth. If the PC accepts the offer, the new bride negates one Rank of the Adopted Blood disadvantage and awards the PC two ranks of the Wealth advantage, along with Minor Allies: Scorpion Clan.
- **Bad Reputation:** The Scorpion propose to enhance the PC's reputation in the courts, offering stories to offset the negative ones circulating about the PC. If accepted, this will negate the PC's Bad Reputation (removing the disadvantage).
- **Black Sheep:** The Scorpion offer to train the PC in the Bayushi Bushi, Bayushi Courtier, Soshi Shugenja, or Yogo Shugenja school. (The shugenja schools will only be offered if the PC is already a shugenja.) If accepted, the PC may purchase the Multiple Schools advantage at the next Insight Rank and enter the chosen Scorpion school. The PC also gains Obligation: Scorpion Clan, even if s/he helps block the investigation here.
- **Compulsion/Chemical Dependency:** Depending on the nature of the compulsion/dependency, the Scorpion can offer the PC ownership of a sake works, a gambling den, or geisha house to enhance their wealth and satiate their desires. If accepted, this is considered to be equivalent to having a Fine Holding under the Gentry advantage, but the PC earns only 2 koku per year (instead of 4) due to enjoyment and use of their product. If the PC is an opium addict, the Scorpion will arrange a supply of legal "medicinal" opium for the rest of their life, at no charge. (A prominent Scorpion Shugenja will declare the PC to have a disability requiring the use of the drug to soothe their pain.) To resist these offers, the PC must make a **Willpower** roll as though resisting their addiction. An Honor roll can be used as a back-up, with the usual risks.
- **Dishonored:** The Scorpion offer to produce previously undiscovered "evidence" which will prove the PC was unjustly accused. If accepted, this will negate the disadvantage. However, the PC gains a Dark Secret instead, and will be considered to be blackmailed by the Scorpion.
- **Fascination:** This may or may not be open to Scorpion manipulation, depending on the nature of the Fascination. In general, the Scorpion will offer the PC something which feeds their fascination. For example, if they have a fascination with horses, the Scorpion could arrange a gift of an excellent quality steed. If it is with swords, then a gift of an excellent quality katana. And so forth. For a fascination with something strange or obscure (such as the Burning Sands or gaijin), the Scorpion could supply a rare text that awards +2 ranks in the appropriate Lore skill (note that the Scorpion cannot supply any information on things like the Kolat, the Living Darkness, or the Naga). Other appropriate offers can be extrapolated by the GM from the above examples.
- **Frail Mind:** A handsome/beautiful (and Dangerously Beautiful) Scorpion will attempt to seduce the PC into a night of dishonorable passion. This will be Contested Roll of **Seduction/Awareness** against the PC's **Willpower** -- don't forget the three unkept dice for Dangerous Beauty and the two Free Raises awarded for Frail Mind. The PC can hazard an Honor roll at TN 20 as a back-up.
- **Greedy:** The Scorpion will offer the PC a very substantial sum of money (40 Koku) to forget about this mission. This is a Contested roll of the courtier's **Awareness** against the PC's **Willpower**, with the Scorpion getting a Free Raise for every point of Greed the PC has. Due to the nature of the disadvantage, no Honor roll can be made in this case.
- **Gullible:** The Scorpion courtier will offer a heart-wrenching tale of how the Clan will be cursed by their angry ancestors if the tomb of Bayushi is violated again. The ancestors will bring down terrible vengeance, but who would believe such a tale from a Scorpion? If only the PC could stop the others from violating the tomb... The courtier needs only a **Sincerity/Awareness** roll at TN 5 to convince the PC this is true.
- **Insensitive:** The Scorpion will point out at great length how dangerous it will be for the PC to explore this useless, empty labyrinth. There are tales that the place is full of ghosts, goblins, and oni. Surely a wise samurai would find another use for their skills than risking their life in a pointless gesture on behalf of Miya Satoshi. The Scorpion may try to bribe the PC in some other way, but regardless, due to the disadvantage the PC must

lose a Void point each day they continue the investigation (which constitutes risking their life for another).

- **Jealousy:** If the jealousy is directed toward another person, the Scorpion offer to arrange the public humiliation of this person in a manner of the PC's choosing. This "buys off" the disadvantage but creates an Obligation toward the Scorpion. If the jealousy is connected to a skill, the Scorpion will offer specialized training which grants the PC a free Rank in the skill.
- **Junshin:** The Scorpion offer to forgive the PC and accept him/her back into the Clan, if the PC is willing to renounce and apologize for past misdeeds. This negates the disadvantage... but the PC must play as a loyal (and therefore dishonorable) Scorpion henceforth.
- **Lechery:** As with "Frail Mind" above, a Dangerously Beautiful courtier attempts to seduce the PC, making a Contested roll of **Seduction/Awareness** against the PC's **Willpower**, with three unkept dice for Dangerous Beauty and one Free Raise per rank of Lechery. The PC may not make an Honor test to resist.
- **Obligation:** If the Obligation is to the Scorpion Clan, they will offer to forgive it if the PC sabotages the investigation. If it is to someone else, the Scorpion offer to take it off the PC's hands. (For a two-point Obligation, the PC also gains Minor Allies: Scorpion Clan. A four-point Obligation is simply cleared away with no other benefit.)
- **Social Disadvantage:** If the PC is ronin, the Scorpion offer to adopt them into their Clan (though not into a family), allowing them to join an appropriate School (Bayushi bushi, Bayushi courtier, or if the PC is a shugenja, Soshi shugenja or Yogo shugenja). A PC who suffers from some other type of Social Disadvantage will be offered a prestigious bride (as with Adopted Blood above).
- **Soft Hearted:** As with "Gullible," the Scorpion courtier will offer a heart-wrenching tale of how the tomb of Bayushi must not be violated again, lest the ancestors curse the entire Clan. The courtier (preferably a woman) will say she has been ordered to convince the PC to leave the tomb alone, and if she fails, she and her family must commit seppuku for failing the Clan. On the other hand, if the PC does leave the tomb untouched, she

promises to donate 40 koku to Miya's Blessing to alleviate the suffering and destruction so prominent in Rokugan today. The PC is entitled to try to resist this plea (**Willpower** at TN 20), but if successful, the courtier and her family really will commit seppuku – the PC will be wracked with guilt and at +10 to all TNs for the remainder of the adventure.

- **Spoiled:** The Scorpion will offer the PC a splendid gift – either an excellent quality item (a weapon the PC specializes in, a kimono, heavy armor, etc., basically any item of normal equipment), a spell scroll (any one mastery level one or two spell from the *Player's Guide*), a Unicorn riding horse, or a grant of land in their home province (one rank of Gentry). The PC can resist the offer with a **Willpower** roll at TN 20.
- **Sworn Enemy:** The Scorpion offer to eliminate the enemy, either through assassination, public dishonor leading to seppuku, or by arranging an "honorable" duel with a Scorpion bushi, depending on the PC's preference.
- **True Love:** Not all True Loves are useful for manipulation. The GM should use creativity and good judgment in dealing with this disadvantage. For example, if the True Love is one who could be attained if only some obstacle could be removed (such as a betrothal or a spouse), the Scorpion will make suitable arrangements (no assassinations of other PCs in the same adventure, however). If the True Love dislikes the PC, the Scorpion could employ the services of Bayushi Kisagarasu, the Imperial Matchmaker, to force a marriage. High-Glory NPCs will not be available through this offer, of course – even the power of the Scorpion Clan extends only so far.

PCs who role-play very effective refusals of the Scorpion offers are entitled to one or more Free Raises (GM's discretion) on their Willpower and/or Honor rolls to resist the Scorpion. Once a PC succumbs, however, they must live up to their obligations. After all, they choose to take the disadvantages!

In the case of seductions (Frail Mind and Lecherous PCs), the PC can refuse any subsequent blackmail attempts, but this will have catastrophic effects: the PC will be publicly accused of robbing the poor girl's virtue (or betraying their oath of chastity if they are female). This will lead to duels, disgrace, and possibly seppuku or reduction to ronin status.

PCs with multiple disadvantages will probably be the targets of multiple manipulation attempts by different Scorpion courtiers. The Scorpion Clan is playing for keeps here, and will not pass up any opportunities.

Miya Yumi Negotiates

While the rest of the party is getting worked over by the Scorpion courtiers, Miya Yumi and her friend and ally Kaon will try to enlist supporters of their own. Yumi will approach any “traditionalist” Miya PCs (she knows better than to appeal to those who already support Satoshi), and any Minor Clans PCs. Koan will approach any ronin PCs. They will make individual appeals to each such PC – the GM should handle these as one-on-one role-playing.

“Traditional” Miya: Yumi will speak to these PCs quietly but with great vehemence and eloquence. *“I wish to speak of family matters, something those not of the Miya cannot understand. The Miya have always had the duty of sowing peace throughout the Empire, bringing succor to those who suffer from war. This has been the case ever since our beneficent founder established Miya’s Blessing.”* Her cousin Satoshi, she says, has forsaken the duty of the Miya, instead embracing the warlike aggression of his Matsu friends. He wishes to give them an excuse to attack the Scorpion, allowing the Lion to save face from failing to prove their case in court last autumn. *“If the strong can use war to bypass the law, what will become of Rokugan, and our fledgling Emperor?”* Yumi urges the PC(s) to abandon their mission. This, she promises, will allow *“those of us who wish to see Satoshi’s ways end,”* to gather the strength to displace him and *“return our family to its proper goals.”* If the PC asks how this will be accomplished, Yumi explains that the Scorpion Clan has found an heirloom of the Miya family and has offered to turn it over to her. *“With this important symbol, I can reunite our family and force Satoshi to step down. If you continue this investigation, Satoshi will surely find out about this relic and obtain it for himself, trapping our family on the path of war, and death.”* (Any Contested Awareness rolls or similar attempts to test her sincerity will reveal she is telling the truth as far as she understands it.)

If the PC agrees to help her, Yumi is deeply grateful. She thanks the PC from the bottom of her heart and urges him/her to persuade the rest of the party to abandon the investigation. On the other hand, if the PC refuses, she will heave a deep sigh as her face creases with sorrow. *“I understand, it is hard to betray your daimyo even if he is betraying our duty and the spirit*

of our ancestors. I hope that peace shall somehow prevail in the Empire, and that you will work toward that end.”

Minor Clan Samurai: Yumi will take a somewhat different approach, reminding them that the Miya have a long history of being friends to the Minor Clans, speaking for them in the Imperial Court, and making sure their rights are not trampled underfoot by the Great Clans. *“Alas, my cousin Satoshi-sama, the new daimyo of our family, has other ideas. One only need look at the debacle three winters ago, when he appointed Moto as kanrinrin of the Imperial City to sabotage the caretakers chosen by his father, to see where his values lie. He also supports the sanctions against the Mantis Clan, and constantly urges the young Emperor to further action against them. Satoshi-san is no friend of the Minor Clans.”* Yumi goes on to claim that “many in the Miya family” have not forgotten the Minor Clans, and then proceeds to explain the Scorpion discovery and offer (as above). She will make the same appeals as before, but focuses on the threat to the Minor Clans if Satoshi’s Lion allies are able to rampage across the Empire with impunity.

As before, if the PC agrees, Yumi is deeply grateful and promises that the Minor Clans will soon have a friend in the courts once again. She urges them to convince the rest of the party to withdraw from the investigation. If the PC refuses to help, Yumi is disappointed, but understanding: *“I realize it is hard to betray the Imperial Herald. I hope that peace shall somehow prevail in the Empire, and that you are able to find other friends to help you in your times of peril.”*

Ronin: Koan will approach at least one ronin PC, preferring a shugenja over a bushi. The old man has a friendly twinkle in his eye as he draws the PC aside and speaks:

“Greetings, samurai-san. I am glad to have the chance to speak to you as waveman to waveman. All these Clan samurai do is prattle and dance around. Few of them ever understand our lives, or care about our perils and woes.”

Having thus established a sense of camaraderie, Koan goes on to explain the situation. *“Miya Yoto-sama was a man of compassion and honor, who understood and value the wave-men. But his son Satoshi is a madman, full of hate and malice towards anyone he thinks less than a true samurai. Whatever he may have promised you, he will never deliver. At best,*

you'll wind up as fodder for the wars of his Lion friends."

Koan explains his own motives thus: *"I am here with Yumi-chan to set things right. The Scorpion are having the screws put on them by Satoshi's friends, the Lion Clan. It's probably why you and your companions were sent down here, as part of that campaign. But they're meddling with the wrong Clan. The Scorpion have found something that just might help Yumi-chan take the Miya family back from that bastard Satoshi. That will make things better for all of us. In a world where Satoshi triumphs, nothing good will come for any wave-man, nothing."*

Koan wants the PC to help sandbag the investigation, denying any excuse for aggression from the Lion, and also to avoid any action against Miya Yumi. That will buy here time to receive the Scorpion gift and take action against Satoshi.

Since the PC(s) are ronin, Koan will not expect them to do this for free. He offers three koku, plus an additional incentive depending on whether they are a shugenja or a bushi:

- If they are shugenja, he offers to serve as their sensei – this awards them the Sensei advantage and results in their gaining one new spell each time they gain an Insight Rank.
- If they are bushi, he offers to connect them with a friend in the City of the Rich Frog who can teach them the Gaze of Sun Tao technique (from the *L5R Player's Guide*).

If the PC accepts Koan's offer, he smiles broadly and slaps them on the back, thanking them and promising not to forget their efforts. If the PC refuses, Koan looks disappointed, crossing his arms and frowning. He wishes the PC luck: "You're going to need it, in the world Satoshi will make."

Scorpion PCs Get Their Orders

Any Scorpion PCs who are not Junshin or Black Sheep will eventually be approached by Yogo Junzo, the daimyo of the Yogo family. He will speak with each PC individually, in a private corner where they cannot be interrupted. The balding, middle-aged daimyo explains the situation thusly:

"Loyal cousin, the situation here is an important one. Indeed, far beneath in the room many important

things were found in the cave. I cannot say what exactly... but they relate to the threatened return of Fu Leng, and ancient prophecies that will help us to prevail when that dark day arrives. We are still studying all that we have found, and we will need more time yet. The other Clans are not ready for this knowledge. Even if we were to warn them," he smiles with world-weary air, "would they believe us?"

Junzo orders the PCs to stall, distract, and generally discourage the investigation. He does not want them to take open or violent steps – that would incriminate the Clan – but encourage their companions to accept the Scorpion version of events and declare that nothing of note was found in the cave. If possible, discourage the others from actually visiting the cave – although the Scorpion have done their best to remove anything incriminating, there is always the possibility that something might be found.

Junzo will emphasize the threat here: *"Dark forces abound over all of Rokugan; we have sensed the Black Scrolls containing Fu Leng's power have begun to be opened. We need time to prepare, and to defend the Empire."*

Junzo will also inform the PC of the plan to support Miya Yumi against Miya Satoshi, although he will not specifically identify the Helm, instead merely saying, *"We have located something, something that will help Yumi-chan take control away from Satoshi. This will put her in our debt, as well as eliminating the threat from Satoshi's support of the Lion. Such an opportunity cannot be foregone."*

Presumably the PC will agree to support the Clan. If for some reason the PC refuses, Junzo's eyes will narrow and his voice drops to a menacing hiss: *"That is most... unfortunate. All true Scorpion are taught to prize loyalty to the Clan above all things. A pity that you chose to abandon that virtue at this critical moment."* He gestures sharply, and a squad of Bayushi guards immediately seize the PC and haul him/her away. The PC is expelled from the castle (and the adventure) and declared ronin.

Part Three: Continuing the Investigation

The next morning, the PCs will be free to decide what to do next. Depending on how the evening's negotiations turned out, some or all of the PCs may be ready to give up on the investigation. It is possible for the scenario to end at this point, if all the PCs agree (for

whatever reason) that there is nothing more to investigate.

Assuming that does not happen, the PCs still have several other people they can interview before trying to visit the caves.

Interviewing Yogo Junzo

The daimyo of the Yogo family is a stocky, balding man in his thirties, wearing a mask that looks like it was made from the front upper half of a skull, accentuating his dark eyes. He smiles and bows politely, his crimson robes swirling around him, before giving each of you an appraising look. “How may I assist your investigation, honorable samurai?”

Junzo will deliver much the same information that Yogo Showa offered earlier. Specifics are as follows:

- He admits readily to ordering the investigation of the new chasm, explaining that as a student of history he wished to see if the old rumors of a labyrinth under Kyuden Bayushi were true.
- Junzo claims the skeletons were left untouched, and claims that he performed funerary rites upon the room before they departed, so that those poor souls might find peace in the afterlife.
- He is unsure if the bodies are connected to the first Bayushi, although he admits it is a possibility. “Nobody knows where Bayushi met his end after he went in search of Soshi.” Many of the apprentices certainly believe it might be Bayushi.
- Junzo knows nothing about any oni, ghost, or goblins in the caves, though he has heard old tales of such dwelling in the labyrinth. He regards them as superstition. “If creatures of Fu Leng dwelt beneath this castle, we would have found and destroyed them long since.”
- Junzo claims (honestly) to be unhappy with the current situation in the Empire, and expresses the hope that peace may soon return, allowing him to resume the explorations of the caverns.
- If the PCs express interest in visiting the cave, Junzo warns them that he does not recommend it: the earth-tremors have been active of late. (This is actually the truth, although Junzo does not realize the reason for the increased tremors – the presence of the helm and the Oni no Jimen are angering the earth spirits.)

As one might suspect, most of what Junzo says is lies. However, given his high Awareness, it is unlikely that the PCs can see through him. Only the most foolish of PCs will call the daimyo of the Yogo family a liar to his face.

Interviewing Soshi Bantaro

The daimyo of the Soshi family is a thin, almost emaciated-looking man in his late thirties. His mask is a dark red in color, mimicking a splatter of blood upon his face, and his lips quirk in a sly, unnerving smile. His head seems too large for his thin neck, and he wears a long, stringy, greasy-looking moustache. His elaborate red kimono sits oddly upon his thin frame. You feel a gentle breeze in the air as he bows to you. “Ah, honorable servants of the Emperor, how may I assist in your endeavors this day?”

Like Junzo, Bantaro will confirm Yogo Showa’s earlier story. He concurs that due to the current demands on the clan, shugenja have more important things to do now than continue exploring caves.

If asked his opinion regarding the discoveries in the cave (e.g. the bodies), Bantaro shrugs. He did not detect anything with his spells, and considers the find uninteresting. “Junzo-san has an interest in maps and tombs. I have more current concerns.”

Bantaro is lying, of course, but as with Junzo, the PCs will be able to do little to question his words.

Interviewing Bayushi Shindei

The PCs will have to wait a few hours for Bayushi Shindei – she must be summoned from the cave deep beneath the castle.

Bayushi Shindei is a young woman, perhaps 18 or 19 years of age. She is short but lithe, with the elegant athleticism of a bushi. Her mask is a simple piece of red silk that shields her face below her nose. She bows briefly but politely. “I am honored to assist your investigation, samurai-samas.”

Shindei identifies herself as the latest in a family line which has served as guardians of Sleeping Lake for the last nine hundred years. The duty has been passed from mother to daughter since the beginning. Her own mother died in childbirth, and she was raised by her grandmother, also named Shindei. She replaced her late grandmother as guardian almost two years ago.

- Shindei describe Sleeping Lake as a “place of refuge” for the Bayushi Family daimyos. “They go

there when they have need of peace, safety, and solitude.” This is true as far as it goes – Shindei does not know the true significance of the lake.

- If the PCs ask about the other tunnels, she will say she has never traveled beyond the Sleeping Lake. There are other tunnels below, but she has never explored them, and believes them to be empty.
- If the PCs ask about the earth-tremor that exposed the chasm, she nods and shivers a little, remembering. “It sounded as if the earth were going to split asunder. I worried if the castle would come crashing down upon my head.” Afterward, she reported the new chasm to the Clan. She did not explore it herself.
- If the PCs specifically ask Shindei about rumors of a ghost, or mention the story Yogo Kosaka told them, she will look embarrassed, but tells the story: “When I was very young, samurai-sama, merely a small girl, I went to the Lake to stay with my grandmother and learn her duties. One night, I awoke and saw... a man, wreathed in blue flame, walking above the waters of the lake. He was looking around, as though seeking for something, and he kept calling: Where are you? I can feel you, where are you?” Shindei shivers a little at the memory, whose meaning still troubles her. As far as she knows, she is the only one of her family ever to have ever seen such an apparition.
- Shindei is completely honest with the PCs, and makes no attempt to lie or conceal anything.

Part Four: Into the Mouth of Madness

Whether this part of the adventure takes place will depend in part on whether any of the PCs refused the maneuvers of the Scorpion Clan and the requests of Miya Yumi and Koan. If all of the PCs agreed to sandbag the investigation, they may well decide that an actual visit to the cavern is unnecessary, in which case the adventure is basically over.

If the PCs do decide to proceed and explore the labyrinth (those who oppose the investigation may be hoping to go along and sabotage it somehow), Yogo Showa will arrange supplies for them. The PCs must decide what they will ask for. Showa can provide lanterns, food and water, a map of the explored area, blank scrolls, scribing equipment, and (if they wish to

go beyond the explored area) climbing equipment such as rope and grappling-hooks.

Note that only the PCs and Yogo Showa will be allowed into the cavern. They cannot bring servants or extra troops to carry equipment, and must bear all their gear themselves.

Showa explains that he must accompany the PCs, since their safety is his responsibility. A successful Contested Awareness roll against Showa (remember his two Free Raises from the Helm) will determine that he is, indeed, obeying orders by accompanying the PCs... but will also detect that he has other, personal motives to go with them.

It will take Showa a little over an hour to assemble the proper supplies. Once they are ready, he leads them down a side-tunnel from the ground floor of the castle. He explains that this is a secondary passage that will allow them to avoid disturbing the chambers of the daimyo.

The passage eventually merges into a larger tunnel, the walls and ceiling lined with stone, the floor a descending staircase worn almost smooth by hundreds of years. Following this, the PCs and Showa arrive at the ledge above Sleeping Lake.

Sleeping Lake

You enter a large cavern, your lanterns barely lighting a high arching ceiling decorated with stalactites. You can heard the sound of dripping water echoing in the large space, and cool moisture touches your faces. Ahead of you, a ledge looks down on a vast lake, its waters crystal blue in the lantern-light. A single narrow pathway leads down to the edge of the water. There Bayushi Shindei sits by a lantern of her own, silently keeping vigil. She looks up, noticing you, and offers a polite nod.

To the right, there is a rent in the side of the cavern, through which you can discern a rough, irregular path that burrows deeper into the earth. Yogo Showa gestures there, indicating that the chasm lies in that direction.

Any PC with the ability to detect spirits (such as a half-blooded or true-blooded Kitsu, or someone with the Cloud tattoo) will feel a spiritual presence in the cavern, though actual Ancestor spells will detect nothing.

The PCs can speak with Bayushi Shindei if they wish, although she will have only polite small talk to offer them. She will confirm that the rent in the side of the cave opened during the earthquake, and the chasm lies beyond it.

The water in the lake has no special properties of its own (it is cool and refreshing), and neither Yogo Showa nor Bayushi Shindei will encourage PCs who try to meddle in this area – this is supposed to be the special refuge of the Clan daimyo.

If any of the PCs have Bayushi as an ancestor, have them roll **Simple Void** at TN 20. With a success, they have a vision similar to the one Shindei described: the water of the lake glows blue, and a man in samurai garb walks across the surface of the lake, whispering: “Where are you? I can feel you. Where are you?” The PC(s) suddenly are reminded of all those they care about who have died or been lost. If they have Lost Love, the disadvantage activates at this time.

The Chasm

Once the PCs go through the gap in the wall, they will follow a ragged, irregular tunnel for about thirty yards.

An **Investigation/Intelligence** roll at TN 15, or **Mountaineering/Intelligence** or **Engineering/Intelligence** at TN 10, will determine that the tunnel is natural and relatively recent, but has been heavily traveled since it opened.

The rough, natural passage opens into a huge, spacious cavern whose roof cannot even be seen. Your lantern lights cannot even reach the far wall. Before you is the edge of what can only be described as an underground canyon, dropping away as though bottomless. You can see a large wooden contraption, with pulleys, ropes, and gears, mounted on the edge of the chasm. A man in shugenja robes stands next to it.

The man is Yogo Kosaka, one of the apprentices – the PCs may have spoken with him before. He will help Showa and the PCs load themselves and any supplies onto the elevator platform, then asks their permission before pulling a lever to begin their descent.

Any PC with a Phobia for heights will need to make a **Willpower** roll at TN 10 + (5 x number of points of Phobia) in order to proceed. Otherwise, the PC will have to spend a Void point in order to get onto the elevator.

As you step onto the swaying wooden platform, you hear the planks creak ominously. Yogo Kosaka pulls a lever, releasing a catch, and various wheels and gears begin to spin noisily as the platform descends into the darkness. Your lantern lights can barely illuminate the wall of the chasm next to you, and there is no sign of a bottom.

To the Cave

After a few minutes (although it feels much longer), the elevator stops, swaying and then steadying. Next to it, built into the side of the chasm, is an ancient, worn-down stone staircase which snakes down out of sight.

Getting off the elevator is safe, albeit nerve-wracking. Once the PCs reach this area, Yogo Showa will become very quiet and very anxious – he is nerving himself up to try to murder the PCs. In order to detect his intentions, however, PCs will have to speak with him and defeat him with a **Contested Awareness** roll (remember his two Free Raises for the Helm).

After following the staircase for about twenty yards, the PCs will come to an ancient, half-rotted wooden door in the wall of the chasm. It stands ajar and groans ominously when the PCs open it. The staircase continues down beyond the door, to un-guessable destinations.

Beyond the door is a small cavern, or perhaps a room carved from a cavern. The back of the chamber is half-buried beneath large boulders, and smaller stones, pebbles, and rock dust litter the rest of the floor. Three white skeletons lie on the floor, covered in dust, next to a cabinet of some dark metal, perhaps rusted iron.

Yogo Showa steps aside and holds up his lantern, gesturing for you to proceed. “Here you are, samurai-sans,” he says sarcastically. “The secret treasure-chamber of the Scorpion.”

The moment the PCs enter the chamber, Kenshin’s Helm senses their presence and realizes they will make better tools than the demented Scorpion. It drops its protection of Yogo Showa. From this point on, Showa no longer gains any benefit from the Helm, and his Taint (rank 2.8) will be detectable for anyone who can sense it.

The PCs are free to explore the cavern and investigate its contents. While they are doing so, however, Showa will remain by the door and prepare to slay them. See “Showa Strikes!” below, for details.

- The skeletons are the complete remains of three adult males, sprawled out near the metal cabinet. Close examination will show the skeletons are complete and undamaged. A **Medicine/Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will note that these skeletons must have been left behind by men who were burned to death – natural decay leaves yellow bones, not white ones. There is no sign of fire anywhere around them, however. The PCs can make of this what they wish – there is no answer to this mystery.
- The metal cabinet is indeed made of iron, and while badly rusted, is still fairly intact. It has two drawers in the front, both of which can be easily opened. Although there is no sign that these were forced, they open quite easily for something hundreds of years old. (The Scorpion opened them with magic.) The drawers are empty except for dust, mold, and what appears to be the crumbled remnants of some ancient scrolls.
- Anyone who rolls **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 (or **Simple Perception** at TN 25), or who casts *By the Light of Lord Moon*, will be able to detect a small square button concealed on the front of the cabinet. If this is pressed, the top of the cabinet pops up slightly as a catch is released, offering access to a hidden compartment. However, the compartment is empty – Yogo Showa hid Kenshin's Helm here, but a young Zokujin stole it. (At this point, Showa will definitely attack. See “Showa Strikes!”)
- If the PCs examine the floor for footprints, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** or **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15 to notice that, while there are plenty of normal footprints from sandaled feet, there are also a number of smaller bare footprints, rather like those of children. A PC who makes TN 20 or better sees that these small prints originate from under the collapsed boulders in the back of the room. TN 25 or better notices that these prints have only three toes.
- If the PCs examine the rockfall at the back of the chamber, an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 15, **Mountaineering/Perception** at TN 10, or **Simple Perception** at TN 20 will recognize that some of the boulders have been recently moved. Shifting these boulders aside is surprisingly easy – they have been hollowed out from behind. Beyond is a narrow tunnel, just large enough to crawl through. (Casting *By the Light of Lord Moon* will

also reveal the tunnel hidden behind the rocks.) The walls of the tunnel are oddly smooth, as though it was eaten out with acid. (This passage leads to Kenshin's Helm and ultimately the Zokujin tunnels. Again, once this tunnel is revealed Yogo Showa will attack if he hasn't already.)

- *Communing* with the spirits here will not be very useful, since the Scorpion took great care to clear away all the local kami during their excavations, leaving none with memories of what has happened here. However, the local Earth spirits are extremely agitated, half-crazed by the presence of Kenshin's Helm and by the Oni no Jimen spawning deeper underground. PCs who *Commune* with these spirits will get an earload of anger and madness, although the spirits will not be able to clearly explain the source of their trouble (they just say that there is “much foulness” in the area).

Showa Strikes!

While the PCs are investigating, Yogo Showa will lurk near the door, his Taint and paranoia driving him to murder them. He will begin casting the spell *Tremors* (Earth 2) the moment the PCs discover the Zokujin tunnel or the secret compartment in the metal cabinet. If they discover neither of these things, he will wait until they are almost ready to leave before finally snapping and casting the spell. He will also begin casting if the PCs detect his Taint.

Showa knows the spell will bring the roof down on his own head as well as on the PCs. In his madness, he believes (erroneously) that Kenshin's Helm will protect him.

Showa will take enough Raises to get the spell off in two rounds, and spends a Void point. If the PCs manage to knock him out or hurt him enough to make the spell fail (or successfully Counterspell it), the spell will misfire, causing only a partial collapse which the PCs might be able to escape. Otherwise a full collapse will occur.

Partial Collapse: Boulders half-bury the front of the room. Everyone (including Showa) takes 3k2 damage unless they manage to roll **Simple Reflexes** at TN 20 or **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 15, in which case they take no damage. The entrance is blocked, but can be cleared with a **Simple Strength** check at TN 25 (only one check allowed for every eight hours of work). Certain types of magic might be able to clear an entrance as well (notably the spell *Know the Ground*).

Full Collapse: This causes 6k3 damage, or 2k1 damage for PCs who make a successful **Reflexes** (TN 20) or **Defense/Reflexes** (TN 15) roll. The entrance is completely blocked and cannot be cleared physically. Magic might still work, although it would require many Raises and/or multiple castings.

If Yogo Showa survives the collapse, he will draw his wakizashi and charge the nearest PC, using his Taint to enhance his attack rolls. He will fight to the death, ranting insanely that the PCs “can’t have it, it’s mine, I found it, it wants *me*, not you!”

After the battle is over, the PCs will have to figure out what to do next. They may very well be trapped in the chamber. Whether they are trapped or not, they will discover that the magical tremor has shattered the hollowed-out stones in the back of the room, revealing the Zokujin tunnel.

The Inner Cave

The eerily smooth tunnel leads into a small natural cavern of earth and stone. A larger tunnel exits out the far side of the cave. Between you and there is a small, crumpled body, the size of a child but with skin of an odd yellowish color. Next to the body, a kobuta (Rokugani war-helmet) lies on its side.

The body is that of a young Zokujin, a creature with a thick, hide-like skin the color of copper. It has long, stringy hair and large blank eyes. One side of its head has been caved in, as though from a massive blow by a blunt object. (The strike of an Oni no Jimen.) The body is not Tainted, but if a PC can detect Taint, there is a faint residue of corruption in the wound itself.

The creature can be identified for what it is with a roll of **Lore: Spirits/Intelligence** at TN 15. Other Lore skills (such as **Lore: Kamis**, **Lore: Shadowlands**, etc) can substitute at suitably higher TNs.

Kenshin’s Helm

The helm which lies near the dead Zokujin is, indeed, Kenshin’s Helm, left here after the poor creature stole it from Yogo Showa’s hiding place. The helm is a traditional Rokugani kabuto (war-helmet), lacquered in the red color of the Scorpion Clan – although the lacquer has worn and flaked off in many places, due to extreme age. Anyone rolling **Armorer/Intelligence** at TN 15 or **History/Intelligence** at TN 20 can tell that this helm is built in an antique style which has not been used in many centuries.

Carefully examining the helm (which will require picking it up) will allow a **Heraldry/Perception** roll at TN 10 to spot a mon, that of the Miya, half-hidden under the flaking lacquer. Closer inspection can make out (**Calligraphy/Perception** at TN 10 or **Simple Perception** at TN 15) an inscription next to the mon: “To Miya-sama, from his loyal servant, Kenshin.”

Anyone aware of this fact can make a **Lore: Miya** or **Lore: Imperial Families** roll (TN 20 and 25 respectively) to deduce this is the famous Kenshin’s Helm, a nemuranai of the Miya family thought lost centuries ago.

The Helm does not detect as Tainted – its magical power is too strong, and hides the evil within. The spell *Reflections of Pan Ku* will only show a man forging the helm long ago – no other information will be forthcoming. A shugenja who *Communes* with other kami in the area will only learn that the helm “feels very strong.”

If any shugenja *Communes* with the Helm itself (this would be communing with Earth), it will identify itself in a smooth, pleasing, and relaxing voice. (This will also happen if a PC uses the Cloud tattoo to speak with the Helm.) “*I am Kenshin’s Helm, forged long ago for an honorable man named Miya.*” It claims that it was taken from Miya’s descendants long ago by men in red masks, who covered it in red to hide their crime.

- If the shugenja takes at least one Raise, the Helm will also say that it was hidden here long ago, but recently a man with a bird mask (Yogo Showa) found it, along with other powerful things hidden with it. It names these things as “scrolls of mighty power,” items of “black stone,” and a “sword of blood.”
- With two Raises (or a second casting of *Commune*), the Helm also explains that the man with the bird mask tried to hide it again, using deceit and magic. But a “small earth spirit” found it and tried to carry it away. The small spirit was struck down by a “larger earth spirit, an angry one.”
- The helm also expresses the desire to return to its rightful owners, the “descendants of Miya.” If the PCs try to explain the distinction between Miya Yumi and Miya Satoshi, it will not express any preference. “They both carry the blood of my true owners, do they not?”

- Finally, with three or more Raises (or a third casting of *Commune*), the Helm will also say that the mask-wearing men are dangerous. “They worship a great shadow, and serve the sword of blood they found hidden with me.” It warns the PCs not to trust them and asks to be taken away from this place.

(Note: Any PC with the ancestor Asahina Yajinden will be able to communicate with the helm directly, without the need for magic. The Helm will remain in telepathic communion with such a PC throughout the adventure, repeating its themes of the evil of the Scorpion Clan and the need for it to return to its proper owners.)

There is, obviously, no way for the PCs to test the truthfulness of the Helm.

Part Five: Escape!

It is possible that the PCs may be able to get back through the cave-in and return to Kyuden Bayushi. In this case, the GM can skip straight to “Part Six: What Now?” The PCs will have to decide what to tell the Scorpion Clan, and what to do with the Helm (if they have recovered it).

It is more likely that the PCs will find themselves trapped in the cave, or at least will find exploring the tunnel an easier option than trying to dig their way out.

In this case, by advancing down the passage past the location of Kenshin’s Helm, they will enter the Zokujin Tunnels, shown on Map #1.

The Zokujin tunnels are a mix of natural passages and sections hollowed out by the creatures (which show the same strange, acid-melted appearance as the entrance tunnel). The passages are usually large enough that the PCs will not have to crawl, but they will definitely have to hunch their shoulders and sometimes, in the narrower passages, squeeze sideways. The ceiling is never higher than six feet. PCs with the Large advantage will have a particularly uncomfortable time. On the plus side, there is phosphorescent moss in many of the tunnels, so PCs who have lost their lanterns will still be able to fumble their way through with minimal visibility.

The PCs should get a general sense claustrophobia and disorientation from exploring these tunnels. There is little sense of time below ground, and the air is fetid and still, without any noticeable currents. The PCs will soon grow tired, not to mention hungry and thirsty.

Getting Out

The exit from the tunnels is on the far side of the Zokujin Village shown on the map. If one of the PCs has Kenshin’s Helm, that PC will receive vague feelings and urges which nudge him/her toward the Zokujin and away from the dead-end side tunnels. Otherwise, the PCs will have no guidance and will have to find their way through the labyrinth as best they can.

PCs with the **Engineering** or **Mountaineering** skills can make skill rolls (with the **Perception** trait) at TN 15 (TN 25 if they do not have lanterns of their own) to notice a slight upward grade in the tunnels which lead toward the Zokujin lair.

Alternatively, a shugenja can *Commune* with the Earth or Air kami to find a way out of here. It will take two Raises to find an Air kami that knows the way out. It will take three Raises to find an Earth kami which is calm enough to give directions (instead of just howling about all the “bad” that is down here).

Traps

The Zokujin have set a number of traps (marked “X” on the map) around the labyrinth, both to protect themselves and to catch various vermin that populate the caves. Each trap is the same: a concealed pit in the floor, covered with thin metal plates and concealed beneath a layer of earth.

A PC who has Kenshin’s Helm will get a sense of danger a couple of paces before the trap. If the PC is in telepathic communication with the Helm, it will warn him/her directly of the danger.

Absent this warning, the lead PC will need to roll **Traps/Perception** at TN 15, **Hunting/Perception** at TN 20, or **Simple Perception** at TN 25 to notice the pit. (If the PC is currently using the spell *By the Light of Lord Moon*, that will also work.) Failure means the PC steps on the trap and plunges forward into the pit. It is eight feet deep, inflicting 2k1 damage. All of the PCs will also hear a strange chiming noise (triggered by a minor bit of Zokujin magic) which echoes through the tunnels.

A few minutes after a trap discharges, a group of four Zokujin warriors will arrive to investigate what set off the chime. See “The Zokujin” below for details.

If the PCs examine the metal plates which covered the trap, they will see that they are copper of unusual purity, but shaped irregularly, almost as if they were molded by hand.

The Oni no Jimen

The tunnels are also infested by several minor spawn of the Oni no Jimen, the elemental terror of earth. As the PCs move through the caves, they will sometimes hear ominous rumbling sounds coming from the ground, beneath their feet, through the walls, or even from the ceiling. Any PC with the ability to detect Taint (such as Witch-Hunters or Rank Two Moto bushi) will sense that there is evil in the area, although they will not be able to pin it down – the Oni are constantly moving, passing through the earth as though it is water.

There are a total of four of these oni-spawn in the tunnels. They will attack whenever the PCs approach one of the areas marked on the map. The first attack will play out as follows:

Ahead of you, two figures rise out of the earth. They resemble small ogres, but with gray, stony skin. Their small red eyes gleam with malice. They each clutch a small boulder in one broad, thick-fingered hand, while the other clutches a heavy stone club.

PCs can tentatively identify these creatures with a **Lore (Shadowlands)/Intelligence** roll at TN 25.

The two Oni no Jimen will hurl rocks at the PCs (4k2 damage), attempting to goad them into charging. PCs who charge will run into a sudden dip in the floor created by the other two Oni, and must roll **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 15 or **Simple Reflexes** at TN 20 to avoid stumbling and falling. The other two Oni will then rise out of the floor and attack the two fallen PCs, using heavy stone clubs. (The fallen PCs will be under the penalties for being prone until they spend an action to stand up).

The Oni will retreat from the initial ambush once one of them is slain or two or more of them take more than 30 Wounds. They simply drop into the nearest wall or floor. They will return at each subsequent attack point, although they will not attempt further ambushes and will simply hurl rocks and then close to melee with their clubs. On subsequent attacks they will retreat each time one of their number is slain.

If the PCs are being escorted by a Zokujin patrol, the Oni will still attack as before, but one of them will attempt to pop up behind the party and slay as many Zokujin as possible.

The Helm's Protection: The Oni no Jimen will never attack the PC who is carrying the Helm, even if that PC is slaying them.

The Zokujin

If the PCs fall into one of the pit traps, a patrol of four Zokujin will arrive a few minutes later to investigate. Allow the PCs a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 20 to hear the faint sounds of the Zokujin's small feet. Otherwise their first warning will be when the copper goblins round the nearest corner ahead of them:

From around the corner comes a group of small, copper-colored bipeds with thick shaggy hair and huge blank eyes in their snouted heads. They wear clothing of what appears to be rough-woven cloth, and carry spears. At the sight of you they halt and chatter to each other in strange, high-pitched voices.

As before, the PCs can try to identify these creatures as the semi-legendary “copper goblins” with a roll of **Lore: Spirits/Intelligence** at TN 15. Other Lore skills (such as **Lore: Kamis**, **Lore: Shadowlands**, etc) can substitute at suitably higher TNs.

The Zokujin will make no hostile move (but will defend themselves as best they can if attacked). They do not speak Rokugani, but will attempt to communicate with the PCs through gestures and sounds, and try to signal that they are not enemies and that the PCs should accompany them back to their village to meet their shaman. They are not Tainted, of course.

If the PCs decide to be hostile, they will be making things very difficult for themselves. Although the initial patrol can be easily defeated, the PCs will then probably have to fight their way through the entire Zokujin village in order to get out of the tunnels.

The Zokujin Village

The PCs may come here in the company of a Zokujin patrol, or they may arrive on their own. Either way, they will see the same thing:

The tunnel abruptly opens out into a large cavern, dimly lit by the phosphorescent moss which covers the ceiling. In the middle of the cavern is a small pool of water, surrounded by what appears to be a couple of dozen small huts, made of stone and with roofs that seem to be sheets of flat metal. There are a couple score small copper-skinned bipedal creatures moving

around this village, mostly carrying rocks or pushing small carts.

If the PCs arrive on their own, they can try to avoid detection by dousing their lights and staying at the outer edge of the cavern. There is another tunnel visible on the far side of the cavern, and if the PCs circle around to it, they will detect a faint breeze of fresh air from its mouth. So long as the PCs are careful to stay at the edge of the cavern and avoid making noise or light, they will be able to slip past the Zokujin and escape.

If the PCs attract the attention of the Zokujin, a large party of warriors (a dozen or more) will quickly approach, spears at the ready but not immediately attacking. The Zokujin will attempt to avoid conflict and, as before, try to persuade the PCs to accompany them into the village to meet their shaman.

If the PCs have already slain a Zokujin patrol, the entire village will be on alert, hiding will be impossible without Stealth, and all the warriors (twenty-eight of them) will converge on the PCs with spears at the ready. If the PCs make a point of being non-violent and trying to apologize for any earlier problems, it will still be possible for them to smooth things over and meet with the village shaman.

The Zokujin Shaman, Ima

When (if) the PCs are led into the village, the following scene occurs:

The strange creatures gather around you, chattering and staring with their strange blank eyes. Your escorts lead you through the village to a slightly larger hut. Another copper-skinned being sits cross-legged before it; this one sports long white hair, and is wearing a cloak-like garment and a number of pieces of carved stone jewelry. It stares at you with its huge, blank eyes, and then speaks, in broken but comprehensible Rokugani: “I Ima, spirit-seeker of Zokujin. Why you big samurai-men long way from home, why you come to home of Zokujin? The deep tunnels our domain, not domain of samurai man! You the ones who take Niza?”

“Niza” is the young Zokujin whose corpse the PCs found back with the Helm.

Ima will listen intently to whatever the PCs say. She is a wise being and a dedicated leader, worried about the evil which has appeared in the tunnels (the Oni no Jimen), and alarmed by the sudden appearance of

samurai after so many years. She will be especially suspicious of Lion PCs, since her folk have legends that others of their kind are held prisoner by “gold-and-brown samurai men.”

PCs who are open and honest with Ima, and show her courtesy and understanding, will earn her trust, cooperation, and gratitude. PCs who are rude or dismissive, or who refuse to treat with her because she is non-human, will arouse her anger. At best she will have them expelled from the caverns – at worst, she will command their deaths, especially if they have already slain other Zokujin.

If the PCs do earn Ima’s trust, she can share the following information with them:

- Ima is very old (122 years, in fact, although she does not count in the same way as Rokugani do). Never within her lifetime have any men come down the tunnels. Her folk do occasionally travel to the surface to gather things and look around, always during the “dark-time” when their eyes are not blinded. They avoid the men on the surface (“red-black men with covers on faces”), who attack them on the rare occasions they are spotted.
- Niza is Ima’s apprentice (“stu-dant”). “I teach him spirit-talk. But he and other younglings discover samurai-men digging in cave, up above. He go see what they do. Not come back for many days.” She makes a sound like an overheated tea-kettle. “Now I forbid anymore Zokujin travel to caves of samurai-men.”
- Any mention of earthquakes or the Oni no Jimen will make Ima shudder and whistle mournfully. “Spirits of earth very upset for many sleep-times now. I not know why. They shake ground, make tunnels cave in, and some spirits become evil and attack Zokujin. This never happen before.” Careful questioning can determine that this has been happening (and gradually getting worse) for the last three years.
- Ima knows very little about the cave where the PCs were investigating. “Is place of samurai-men who wear face-covers. Long ago they go there, keep things there. Then forget, leave alone. Now back again, take away things they hid there before. Niza say one man come back later, man with funny face-cover, like birds

from above ground. So ugly, not know why man wear such a thing. This man bring one thing back and put it where it was before. Very strange.” If the PCs have explained where they found the dead Zokujin, Ima shakes her head. “Niza foolish youngling. Probably think that thing interesting because man hide it again.”

- If the PCs ask her about Kenshin’s Helm, she will not touch it. “That samurai thing, not for Zokujin. Many strong spirits in it.”

If the PCs establish a good relationship with Ima, and especially if they explain the fate of her apprentice, she will become friendly with them and offers them hospitality. The Zokujin can offer the PCs some food (fish and edible fungus – the Zokujin also eat rock, but she knows not to offer that to men) and water. She will also tell them that the tunnel on the other side of the village leads to the surface “about one-sleep away.” She can supply the PCs with additional food and water to tide them over on their journey.

Ima can treat any injured PCs, using a version of the Herbalism skill (healing 3 wounds on each injured PC).

If they are exceptionally respectful, she might even use her “spirit-talk,” casting a ritual that heals 4 Wounds (she can cast it up to three times).

Toward Freedom

If the PCs make it into the tunnel on the far side of the Zokujin village, it will take them about twelve hours of slow, weary travel through the winding tunnels to reach the surface. The air currents will make it fairly easy to find the route to the surface.

At last you see dim light ahead, filtering down from a ragged opening high up the tunnel. It is the most welcome sight imaginable. You are covered in dirt and mud, your bodies bruised and cut by the rigors of underground travel. [If the PCs did not get supplies from the Zokujin:] Your stomachs feel hollow, and your lips are parched and cracked.

At last you pull yourselves up through the hole and emerge on the lower slopes of a mountain. Lord Moon hangs overhead, and by his light you can see for miles around. You are within a day’s travel of the Spine of the World mountain range, and you can just make out the cleft of Beiden Pass from here. In the other direction lies Kyuden Bayushi, though it is too far for you to see now.

Part Six: What Now?

Now that the PCs are out of the tunnels, where do they go, what do they say, and what do they do with the ancient artifact they have discovered? The adventure can spin off to several different resolutions at this point, and the GM will have to do a certain amount of creative improvising. The most likely paths of action are outlined below.

PCs sabotaged the investigation:

If the PCs all agreed to obstruct the investigation, and never entered the chasm, the adventure ends as soon as the PCs declare themselves satisfied and head for home. Yogo Showa’s treachery will later be uncovered by his own Clan, and Kenshin’s Helm will be secretly given to Miya Yumi.

The PCs, meanwhile, will have to report back to Miya Satoshi. He will clearly be quite angry and disappointed with their results, and will practically accuse them of being dishonorable Scorpion agents. All PCs will gain Miya Satoshi as a Sworn Enemy.

PCs give the Helm to the Scorpion and/or Miya Yumi:

If the PCs give the Helm to Miya Yumi, or hand it over to the Scorpion Clan (thereby ensuring that she receives it), they will have Yumi’s personal gratitude. She (and the Scorpion Clan) will urge the PCs strongly not to tell Miya Satoshi about the Helm, and to conceal anything else they learned about the tunnels. All of the PCs gain Miya Yumi as a Major Ally.

They will still have to report to Miya Satoshi. Unless the PCs follow a very unusual path of action, this will probably lead to the same result as a sabotaged investigation (Satoshi becomes a Sworn Enemy).

PCs try to give the Helm to Miya Satoshi:

The PCs will have to head straight to the border – if they linger in Scorpion lands, they will be tracked down by a hunting group of ten Bayushi bushi and a Yogo apprentice, who will demand that the PCs return to Kyuden Bayushi and explain themselves.

If the PCs do head for the border, they will still have to get past the guards at Beiden Village. Smooth talking and good social rolls (Sincerity, Diplomacy, Manipulation, and so forth) can be effective here, or the PCs can rely on Stealth or magic. If they do end up in a

fight, the garrison is over 100 bushi, of whom twenty-five will be assigned to hunt down the PCs (and will pursue them all the way to the far side of Beiden Pass before giving up).

In this case, successful PCs will earn the gratitude of Miya Satoshi, gaining him as a Major Ally. He praises them at great length for successfully retrieving a sacred Miya relic from the clutches of the Scorpion Clan. If they also reveal any dirty secrets about the Scorpion and/or Miya Yumi, so much the better.

Regardless, all surviving PCs now have Minor Enemy: Scorpion Clan. Any PCs who are themselves Scorpion will be made ronin for betraying the Clan.

PCs try to give the Helm to someone else:

Some PCs may decide to give the Helm into the care of some other figure, such as the Emperor or the Emerald Champion. This will require that they make it out of Scorpion lands as described above. Regardless, whoever gets the Helm will most likely present it to Miya Satoshi, since it is a relic of his house.

The PCs will still have to report to Satoshi. How he reacts depends on what sort of report they present – anything that exposes perfidy by the Scorpion or Miya Yumi will meet with his approval, while a “white-washed” report earns his anger.

A PC tries to keep the Helm for him/herself:

It is possible, though unlikely, that a PC may decide to try to keep Kenshin’s Helm. This is a dishonorable act (lose at least a half-rank of Honor, a full Rank for high-Honor or Imperial Family PCs). Also, the PC will have to deal with the reactions of the rest of the party, many of whom may disapprove of such behavior.

A PC who does successfully keep the Helm will be dooming him/herself. The PC automatically gains half a rank (five points) of Shadowlands Taint at the beginning of every subsequent adventure. Other effects of the Helm are described in Appendix #2.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 +

(5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	2 XP
Good role-playing:	+1 XP
PCs bring back Kenshin’s Helm:	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor

Non-junshin Scorpion PCs earn 2 points of Honor for successfully blocking the investigation, and 1 point of Honor for keeping Kenshin’s Helm in the hands of the Scorpion.

“Militant” Miya earn 1 point of Honor if they return Kenshin’s Helm to Miya Satoshi.

A PC who keeps the Helm for him/herself will lose at least a half-Rank of Honor – a full Rank for PCs who have Honor of 3.0 or better, or who belong to one of the Imperial Families.

Glory

PCs who bring back the Helm are awarded 1-2 points of Glory, depending on their Clan affiliations:

- Scorpion and Scorpion-allied PCs earn 1 point of Glory for taking the helm to the Scorpion, or for getting it to Miya Yumi.
- Miya PCs earn 2 points for giving the helm to Miya Satoshi, 1 point for giving it to Miya Yumi. All other PCs earn 1 point for giving it to Satoshi and no points for giving it to Yumi.

Other Awards/Penalties

Depending on the outcome of the Scorpion manipulations and Miya Yumi’s negotiations, the PCs may gain and lose a large number of advantages and disadvantages during this adventure.

Miya Yumi will become a Major Ally to the PCs if they give her Kenshin’s Helm. In addition, PCs may earn Miya Satoshi as either a Major Ally or a Sworn Enemy, depending on their actions.

PCs who give the Helm to anyone other than Yumi or the Scorpion Clan will gain the Scorpion as a Minor Enemy. Scorpion PCs will be made ronin.

Appendix #1: NPCs and Monsters

Miya Yumi, cousin and enemy of Miya Satoshi

FIRE 3	AIR 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Miya Shisha 2

Honor/Glory: 3.8/1.6

Skills: Bard 5, Courtier 3, Dance 2, Defense 3, Diplomacy 6, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 7, History 4, Horsemanship 3, Law 5, Obiesaseru 4, Oratory 3, Yarijutsu 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Quick, Voice, Way of the Land (Lion lands)/Brash, Soft-Hearted, Unluck (rank one).

Equipment: Fine kimono, fan, traveling pack, nage-yari.

Koan, legendary ronin shugenja

FIRE 2 Intelligence 4	AIR 3
EARTH 3 Willpower 4	WATER 3
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Ronin shugenja (Insight Rank 3)

Honor/Glory: 2.4/0.0

Skills: Astrology 2, Bard 2, Bojutsu 3, Defense 3, Calligraphy 4, History 2, Intimidation 3, Lore (shugenja) 4, Lore (Elements) 4, Meditation 5, Shintao 3, Spellcraft 5, Spell Research 5, Theology 3.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, (Air) By the Light of Lord Moon, Call Upon the Wind, Cloak of Night, Essence of Air, Mists of Illusion, Quiescence of Air, (Water) Path to Inner Peace, Bo of Water, Silent Waters, (Earth) Jade Strike, Strength of the Crow, (Fire) Evil Ward, Fires From Within.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Great Destiny, Higher Purpose, Innate Abilities (By the Light of Lord Moon, Call Upon the Wind, Essence of Air, Fires From Within, Mists of Illusion, Path to Inner Peace)/Bad Reputation (Phoenix accusations), Overconfident, Social Disadvantage (ronin), Phobia (cats).

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel, traveling pack, bo staff.

Yogo Junzo, daimyo of the Yogo family

FIRE 3	AIR 6 Awareness 7
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 30

School/Rank: Yogo Shugenja 5

Honor/Glory: 1.1/8.8

Skills: Calligraphy 9, Courtier 2, History 8, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (maho) 7, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Meditation 5, Shintao 8, Sincerity 6, Theology 8.

Spells: Any spells he may require.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Great Destiny, Strength of the Earth (rank two)/Bad Reputation (temperamental), Insensitive, Phobia (women), Yogo Curse.

Equipment: Excellent kimono, wakizashi, scroll satchel.

Soshi Bantaro, daimyo of the Soshi family

FIRE 1	AIR 5
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 0.5/7.4

Skills: Calligraphy 8, Courtier 5, Etiquette 3, Herbalism 6, Law 5, Lore (Maho) 4, Lore (shugenja) 3, Meditation 7, Shintao 7, Sincerity 6, Tantojutsu 5, Theology 10.

Spells: All mastery 1-4 Air spells in the main rulebook, plus any other mastery 1-3 spells he might need.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Higher Purpose (ambition), Shadow Brand/Bad Reputation (overconfident), Brash, Dark Secret (murdered his father), Weakness (Fire).

Equipment: Excellent kimono, scroll satchel.

Bayushi Tenkawa, senior Scorpion courtier

FIRE 3 Intelligence 4	AIR 4 Awareness 5
EARTH 2	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Bayushi courtier 4

Honor/Glory: 0.8/3.1

Skills: Acting 4, Courtier 7, Dance 4, Etiquette 8, Forgery 5, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 6, Kenjutsu 2, Law 6, Lore (all Clans) 5, Oratory 4, Poetry 3, Seduction 3, Sincerity 9, Sleight-of-Hand 5, Stealth 6, Theology 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (many), Apparent Honor (2), Crafty, Heartless/Sworn Enemies (many)

Equipment: Fine kimono, daisho set.

Bayushi Fumi, courtier and shugenja-ko

FIRE 3	AIR 4
EARTH 2	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Soshi shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 0.8/3.4

Skills: Bard 2, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 5, Dance 4, Etiquette 6, Investigation 5, Law 2, Meditation 4, Poetry 2, Seduction 7, Sincerity 8, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 4.

Spells: 5 Air, 3 Water, 2 Fire and 1 Earth, chosen as the GM sees fit.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Dangerous Beauty, Heartless

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel, fan.

Typical Scorpion Courtier (use interchangeably for other courtiers)

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 2 Perception 4

VOID 3

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 1

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.3

Skills: Courtier 4, Dance 2, Etiquette 4, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Law 3, Oratory 2, Poetry 3, Seduction 4, Sincerity 5, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Stealth 3, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dangerous Beauty

Equipment: Fine kimono, fan, wakizashi.

Typical Yogo apprentice (use interchangeably)

FIRE 2	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Yogo Shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 1.4/1.6

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, History 3, Kenjutsu 1, Lore (maho) 2, Lore (shugenja) 3, Meditation 3, Shintao 2, Sincerity 4, Theology 3.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, 4 Air, 2 Water, 2 Fire, chosen by the GM as seems appropriate.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel, wakizashi.

Typical Bayushi bushi (interchangeable)

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 in light armor)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Bard 2, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Heraldry 2, Iaijutsu 3, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (Archery) 4, Sincerity 5, Stealth 2, Yarijutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set, yari.

Yogo Showa, corrupted Scorpion shugenja

FIRE 2	AIR 5
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Intelligence 4	
EARTH 3	WATER 2
	Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Yogo shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 0.2/3.4

Skills: Athletics 2, Courtier 2, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 3, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Meditation 2, Sincerity 3, Sleight-of-Hand 3, Stealth 4.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, (Air) *Cloak of Night*, *Mists of Illusion*, *Secrets on the Wind*, *Way of Deception*, *Wind-Born Slumbers*, (Water 1) *Path to Inner Peace*, *Reversal of Fortunes*, (Fire 1) *Biting Steel*, *Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Earth 1) *Earth's Stagnation*, *Jade Strike*, (Earth 2) *Tremors*, plus can create Yogo school wards as per *Secrets of the Scorpion*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Apparent Honor (1), Innate Abilities (*Jade Strike*, *Tremors*), Quick/Dark Secret (driven mad by Kenshin's Helm), Shadowlands Taint (rank 2.9), Yogo Curse.

Shadowlands Power: Lesser Blessing of the Dark One (+1 Wounds per Rank)

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel, wakizashi (1k2).

Lesser Oni no Jimen, minor elemental terrors

FIRE 2	AIR 1
Agility 3	Awareness 2
EARTH 5	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 5k3

Carapace Armor: 7

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

Special Abilities: Stone Passage (can pass through barriers of earth, metal, or stone at its normal movement), Invulnerability (but takes normal damage from steel weapons of Fine or Excellent quality).

Typical Zokujin Warrior

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

VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 3k2 (spear)

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 3, Hunting 3, Spear 4, Traps 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction/Light-Sensitive, Small

Carapace Armor: 3

Wounds: 16: +5; 32: +10; 40: Down; 48: Dead.

Ima, Zokujin Shaman

FIRE 3	AIR 2
EARTH 6	WATER 2
	Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 2k2 (staff)

Skills: Bard 2, Bo Stick 4, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Herbalism 3, Hunting 2, Lore (tunnels) 5, Lore (Rokugani culture) 2, Meditation 5, Research 2, Rokugani Language 2.

Spells: Ima has the ability to *Sense* and *Commune* with Earth spirits. She can also perform a healing ritual (similar to *Path to Inner Peace*) which heals 4 wounds, up to three times per day.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Clear Thinker, Inner Gift (spirit-speaker), Precise Memory/Dependents (the village), Light-Sensitive, Small.

Carapace Armor: 3

Wounds: 24: +5; 48: +10; 60: Down; 72: Dead.

History of Kenshin's Helm

The helm was originally created by Miya Kenshin, a friend and trusted servant of the first Miya, the founder of the family. Kenshin was a priest to one of the old religions of man, from before the coming of the Kami, and he resented these new divinities and their meddling in the affairs of mankind. He created the helm as a “gift” whose malign power would lead Miya to betrayal and doom. However, the plot failed – Miya’s love for his treacherous friend saved him from the helm’s influence.

Later Miya daimyo were not so fortunate, however, and the helm soon spread a legacy of disaster across the Empire. In the third century, Miya Kazu wore the helm, and helped encourage the Yasuki family to leave the Crane Clan, triggering the great and terrible Crab-Crane War. Later, the helm was gifted to the Kitsu family, and corrupted the Kitsu daimyo Uragiri into a powerful *maho-tsukai*. He in turn gifted the accursed helm to the great lion general Akodo Godaigo, who betrayed his love Matsu Hitomi and was cursed to wander the earth forever as an undead revenant. Godaigo returned the helm to the Miya, unaware of its effect or power.

In the fifth century, the Miya daimyo wore the helm while negotiating with the gaijin fleet which had come to the shores of Rokugan. Battle soon erupted, the Miya daimyo was slain... and his body, wearing the helm, was washed ashore at White Stag. There it was found by Bayushi Tesaguri, who took it for himself and lacquered it deep red so it could not be recognized. Later, he was entrusted with three of the dreaded Black Scrolls, and betrayed his duty to sell them to the Phoenix Clan. He became the first and most infamous inhabitant of Traitor’s Grove.

The Scorpion shugenja Yogo Ichinore, who had revealed Tesaguri’s treachery, also discovered a subtle hint of malevolency and evil within the helm. Hoping to dispose of it, Ichinore hid the helm, along with the eleventh Black Scroll, in northern Phoenix territories. And there, for a time, it remained.

Qualities of the Helm

Kenshin’s Helm is an excellent-quality kabuto (helmet) which adds +1 to the wearer’s TN to be Hit. The owner is also considered to be +2 ranks to all normal Lore skills, and +4 ranks to Shadowlands Lore and Maho Lore, as the Helm whispers dark knowledge directly into the mind and memory.

The Helm will shield its owner against all forms of magical detection and scrying, and also conceal any Taint of the wearer against all forms of detection short of actual contact with jade. The wearer also gets two Free Raises in any attempt to lie or conceal his/her true emotions.

The bearer of Kenshin’s Helm will quickly succumb to its dark power – in game terms, this results in gaining 5 points of Shadowlands Taint at the beginning of every adventure. Also, the victim must roll Simple Willpower at TN 20 at the beginning of every adventure, or else suffer from the disadvantages Brash, Cruel, Overconfident, and Proud for the duration of that adventure.

Map #1: The Zokujin Tunnels

