

Proposal of Peace

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

**by Parvez Yusufji
and
Robert Hobart**

The Phoenix Clan has summoned many samurai to Aojiroi Oku Shiro, Pale Oak Castle, for a tournament to celebrate the artistic virtues of the samurai. Here they will call on all the Clans to embrace the path of peace... but even in the heart of Phoenix lands, there are those who would disrupt harmony.

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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 an Introductory-Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 2 through 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.

Adventure Summary and Background

This adventure is intended to introduce new players to the world Legend of the Five Rings and the timeline and current events of the Heroes of Rokugan campaign. It is also designed to serve as an introduction to criminal investigations in Rokugan, which operate by somewhat different standards of evidence than players may find familiar.

As the adventure begins, the Clans of the Phoenix and the Dragon are drifting closer and closer to war. At the root of the conflict is a personal rivalry between two bushi, a Phoenix daimyo named Shiba Tsumenitsu and a Dragon general named Mirumoto Sanbe. These two bushi are bitter rivals, stemming from an incomplete duel in which each insulted the other's school of swordsmanship. This personal disagreement has escalated, over the last two years, into a series of

violent border incidents which have brought the bushi families of the two clans to the brink of war.

Within the Dragon Clan, the situation has been exacerbated by a breakdown in leadership in the Mirumoto family – the family daimyo, Hitomi, has gone missing, and an ambitious lesser daimyo (Mirumoto Yukihera) has used Hitomi's absence and the crisis with the Phoenix to advance his own power. Although much of the Agasha family opposes war, many of them back the Mirumoto, as do the Kitsuki and many of the Ise Zumi.

Within the Phoenix clan, the Shiba family's position is much less secure. The Isawa and Asako families (working together for once) oppose the Shiba family's headlong rush to war and, in particular, their recent military alliance with the Lion Clan, which threatens to widen the conflict... especially with the Lion already at war with the Crane.

The Isawa shugenja are determined to try one more time for peace. To that end, they have invited samurai from various Clans to attend a new "Tournament of the Samurai" in Phoenix lands. This tournament will be a contest, but not in the bugei skills of the samurai. Rather it will test their courtly and peaceful skills, those which add to the harmony and beauty of the Empire – poetry, painting, dancing, and so forth. During the contests, the Isawa will speak with all their visitors, trying to convince them that peace is preferable to war.

The Murder

The Isawa's plans will be interrupted by a brutal crime – the host, Asako Shizu, will be murdered. It will appear at first that a hot-tempered Dragon, Mirumoto Rai, is the culprit. However, the real criminal is a Shiba samurai named Leikun, whose younger brother was killed during the recent skirmishes. Leikun is mad with grief, and wants to force the rest of the Phoenix Clan into supporting the war against the Dragon – no matter what the price.

Mirumoto Rai proclaims his innocence, but cannot provide an alibi for himself – he is committing a crime of his own, a passionate affair with a married woman, Doji Aiko. The smitten Rai is caught in a bind – he does not want to dishonor his true love, but neither does he want a false accusation to dishonor the Mirumoto family and possibly bring the Isawa into the approaching war. It will be up to the PCs to try to clear his name.

Notes on Running This Scenario

The Phoenix tournament is judged on points. Contestants accumulate points for performing the various arts (poetry, dance, etc), with better performances and role-play earning additional points. Have each player keep track of their own point total. At the end of the scenario, compare the PC totals to those of the various NPCs to determine who has "won" the tournament.

Proposal of Peace is not a combat oriented module, and for that reason, stats are not given for most of the NPCs. The adventure is intended as an introduction to the world of Rokugani courtly intrigue and legal methods. The climax of the scenario should be the PCs providing testimony before the court to either clear or convict Mirumoto Rai. If the PCs learn enough they may be able to put the blame on Shiba Leikun, who will demand a duel to clear his name. One of the accusers will have to face him in the duel... unless they are all shugenja and courtiers, in which case they can call for a champion.

Depending on party makeup, it is entirely possible that some or all of the PCs will choose not to help Mirumoto Rai, or even to work against him. It is also possible that some PCs will simply ignore the crime and remain focused on the tournament. These are all acceptable outcomes – *Heroes of Rokugan* is not a campaign which requires PCs to always cooperate with each other.

Important Note on Chronology

For those who are interested in where *Proposal of Peace* falls in the *Heroes of Rokugan* timeline, it takes place in the early autumn of the year 1122 IC, about a month after the Chrysanthemum Festival and a month before the Bon Festival (and the adventure *Fist of the Earth*). This is particularly relevant in that it means that Emperor Hantei the 38th is still alive, although the Lion-Crane war is underway and the Akodo family has fallen.

Scene 1: Commencement

The PCs are at Aojiroi Oku Shiro, Pale Oak Castle, located in Kyuukai province at the edge of the Isawa Mori (Isawa Forest). The castle is famous as the grave-site of Hantei the Seventeenth, who disregarded tradition and demanded to be buried – not cremated – in a field near where the woman he loved was born. Below the castle are the Pale Oak Plains, fertile farming lands which lie between Isawa Mori and the mountains which form the western border of Phoenix territories.

All Clan and Imperial PCs (including members of Minor Clans) have been invited here to attend a tournament of “samurai virtues.” Ronin PCs are presumed to have wangled invitations as well (the Phoenix are not quite as hostile to ronin as some of the other Clans are).

The main hall of Aojiroi Oku Shiro, Pale Oak Castle, is decorated with festive banners. The wooden doors which line one wall have been slid open to reveal the central courtyard/garden of the castle, where a huge oak tree grows, supposedly on the very site where Hantei the Seventeenth was buried. Many samurai stroll through the gardens, admiring the mighty tree. Within the hall, other samurai visit the tables laden with rice candy, sushi, and other foods, while quiet servants hurry about with trays of tea and sake. A troupe of Crane artisans are performing on the biwa, taiko drum, and samisen, playing a light and pleasant melody.

The crowd goes silent and gathers together as the host, Asako Shizu, arrives in the hall. “Honored guests, I welcome you to Aojiroi Oku Shiro, and to our humble tournament. In truth, though, this is no contest, but a celebration, a splendid display of samurai virtue. However, this shall not be a contest of dueling or combat.” A few surprised and disappointed looks pass between some of the visitors. “Instead, we are here to remind ourselves that the way of the samurai is also one of culture. A samurai need not fight on the battlefield to prove himself honorable and skilled. In peacetime there are many other ways for samurai to serve their lords with distinction.”

“The Isawa and we, the Asako, have always venerated peace, ever since the founding of the Empire. It has been our honor to serve the Empire and the Emperor as keepers of knowledge and protectors of the lesser folk, and we know all of the clans understand and share our desire for peace, especially now.” He rests his eyes for just a moment on the Dragon and Phoenix bushi in the room.

“The contests shall be in poetry, painting, dance, and the tea ceremony. The famed artisan Doji Yujiro shall be the judge for the first two contests, and the honored courtier Isawa Masahiro will judge the second two contests.”

“Before the contest begins, let us spend some time acquainting ourselves with each other. Let us remember that while we must stand vigilant against the enemies of the Emperor, we are not enemies of

each other. We are brothers, citizens of one Empire, serving one Emperor.” The Asako lifts a cup of sake in a toast. “The Emperor Hantei the 38th – long may he live and reign!”

No honorable samurai will refuse such a toast. After the toast, some time while pass as the various guests circulate around, talking and gossiping, sharing the latest news and scouting out the other contestants.

The following NPCs will definitely be present at Pale Oak Castle. In addition, there will be about twenty lesser courtiers and samurai, mostly Phoenix. The GM should feel free to improvise additional NPCs as fits the need of the story. Stats have been given at the end of the module for the four most important NPCs – the GM may presume that the other NPCs are mostly Rank One or Rank Two characters, with stats as appropriate.

Asako Shizu, daimyo of Aojiroi Oku Shiro. Shizu is a plain-faced but well-spoken man in his thirties, immaculately dressed and with a smooth, cultured voice (Voice advantage). He does suffer from a tendency to be judgmental and a bit overbearing, and will sometimes stress his points about “peace and brotherhood” to the point of becoming irritating. (Not that anyone can do much but suffer through it – Shizu is a daimyo with Glory 6.3, and outranks everyone else at the castle.) Shizu also has a tendency to put all of the blame for the current problems on the Mirumoto family, which will somewhat short-circuit his efforts to bring about peace.

Shizu is a widower – his wife Kaorin died in childbirth. Both of his children (he has a son, Sokuto, and a daughter, named Kaorin after her mother) are away training in the Phoenix schools.

Isawa Masahiro, karo and courtier. Masahiro is Shizu’s *karo* (chancellor), and helps keep the castle running smoothly, as well as serving as a liaison between his daimyo and the Isawa family. He is in his late twenties, good-looking but a bit plump, and wears his hair long and tied back into a loose ponytail, Crane-style. (He is trained as a Doji courtier, rather than a shugenja.) His wife, Isawa Sukimi, is a pretty but small and mousy woman, shugenja-trained, who trails obediently after him and reinforces whatever he is trying to say or do.

Masahiro is a loyal and true servant of both his daimyo and the Isawa family, and will push the Isawa agenda (peace, reconciliation, and honor) relentlessly. Lacking his daimyo’s character flaws, and better-trained in the courtly arts, he will also know when to back off and

change the subject. He is quite adept, in fact, at finding conversational topics which appeal to his audience. Most PCs should find him a pleasant and engaging man.

Asako Keiko, historian and Henshin. Keiko is a pretty, quiet young woman, unmarried, 21 years old. She is the court historian to Asako Hiroshige, a daimyo within the Asako family, and is here to record events on his behalf. She is also one of the *henshin*, the secret elemental masters of the Asako family, although she will never reveal this to anyone outside of her family. Keiko is a calm and enlightened young woman, very honorable and proper. She does have a whiff of scandal about her, however – three years ago she was accused of *maho* (black magic) by a Phoenix Inquisitor. Although she was later cleared of all charges, the damage of gossip and rumor remains – one of the reasons her daimyo has sent her here is to help rebuild her reputation.

Isawa Hitsukawa. The other Isawa here is a quiet, elegant older man, approaching the age of retirement. He is an Air shugenja with a deep interest in the spirits and Fortunes, and is also quite learned in the Tao of Shinsei. Hitsukawa is largely free of emotional problems or attachments – indeed, he is halfway to being a monk already. Highly enlightened or erudite PCs will find him a pleasant and educational conversationalist. He will support the Isawa position, but does so with less vigor and fervor than the others, preferring to employ parables and pungent quotations from the Tao. PCs who have played the adventures *Way of Deception* or *Kuro's Fire* may have met him before.

Shiba Leikun, embittered military officer. Leikun is a cold, hard-faced man in his mid-twenties, muscular and swift, with a white, ridged katana scar on the outside of one arm. He will be polite but distant to most people from outside his Clan, coldly hostile to Dragons (but without stepping over the bounds of etiquette). He will normally not reveal any of his true feelings to PCs, but if some of them seem deeply hostile to the Dragon Clan, he may express a little of the truth – at least about the death of his brother.

Leikun is a *taisa* (captain) in the Phoenix army, and was invited here because he has always been an obedient servant of the Isawa. Now, however, that has changed – his younger brother Tokaro, with whom he had a karmic tie, was killed in a border skirmish with the Dragon this summer. Now Leikun is a man filled with bitterness and cold, festering hatred. It is a hatred turned as much against his own Clan as against the

Dragon – Leikun is furious that the Isawa and Asako are seeking peace when they should be seeking vengeance and victory. If they had suffered losses like his, perhaps they would understand....

Doji Yujiro, splendid artisan. Yujiro is a slim, almost effeminate man with a beautiful, musical voice. He dresses in kimono of supreme splendor, and the white of his long, carefully-styled hair dazzles the eye. He is known and famed as a Kakita artisan, a poet and painter, master of word and brush. He is here as a willing assistant to the Isawa quest for peace.

Yujiro's every word and gesture is a calculated act of perfection – even more than most samurai, he wears a public mask, and there is nothing natural or spontaneous about him. He is charming, but it is an artificial charm, a painted-on face. He never does or says anything without purpose.

He is also being cuckolded by his wife, Aiko. Yujiro does not know about this – his brilliant skills at reading and manipulating those around him have never been extended to his own life, and he simply assumes that his wife is as honorable and dutiful as he is.

Doji Aiko, dissatisfied wife. Yujiro's wife is a very beautiful and energetic woman, full of fire and sparkle, quite different from her husband's cool self-control. She will flirt casually with any handsome or charming man who comes her way, although she is careful not to say anything that cannot be laughed off as a joke.

Aiko has a passionate heart, and is bored to tears with her elegant, calculating husband. Last year she had a torrid secret affair with Mirumoto Rai, and she will use this gathering as an opportunity to renew it.

Mirumoto Rai, disgruntled Dragon bushi. This young Dragon bushi is a *chui* (lieutenant) in the armies of Mirumoto Sanbe. He is slim and spare-featured, handsome in a clean and precise way. His dark eyes flash often with emotion, and he finds it difficult to endure the talk of courtiers for long – Rai is a man of war, not of the courts. He does, however, have artistic talent – like many Dragon, Rai is a “samurai poet” and often composes haiku in his head while practicing sword kata.

Rai is here unwillingly. The Dragon received invitations to this tournament along with everyone else, and it was Rai who drew the duty of attending. He has been instructed to sabotage any Isawa diplomatic efforts. However, soon after his arrival, the presence of

Doji Aiko will disastrously distract him from his duties.

Ikoma Katsu, Lion bard and historian. The main representative of the Lion is a short, flat-faced man with large, clumsy-looking hands and hair shaved and tied into a strict samurai topknot. He speaks slowly and carefully, with great dignity and weight, and always cites the examples of great samurai and famous battles to back up any assertion he might make.

Katsu will oppose the Isawa peace-making efforts (his Clan Champion has instructed him to protect the Lion-Shiba secret alliance). However, he will do so with much greater subtlety than Mirumoto Rai or Shiba Leikun, treating everyone with the utmost courtesy and respect, and employing careful and subtle tricks of rhetoric to make his points.

Bayushi Ejiro, Scorpion courtier. This small, nondescript man wears a wooden *mempo* (mask) which conceals all of his face except for his mouth and eyes. His mouth is usually smiling, and he always speaks in a friendly and confidential manner, as one friend to another. He will make a point of introducing himself to every guest at the castle, and will ask every PC probing questions about their goals, purposes, and past – but without ever stepping over the bounds of propriety. Anyone who speaks with Ejiro gets the unsettling impression that he knows everything about them.

Ejiro has no role in the scenario and is here merely to represent the Scorpion Clan. If there are Scorpion PCs, Ejiro can be dropped from the guest list.

Hida Fuya, Crab visitor. This man is of normal size, unlike many Crab who are noted for their bulk, but his mannerisms are very much those of the “typical Crab” – loud, crude, and brash. He has a wooden leg, and is missing his right arm at the elbow. Since he is no longer useful for fighting, the Crab Clan uses him as a diplomat instead, shuttling him off to various courtly gatherings which they consider unimportant. Fuya regards this “tournament” as little more than a chance to eat good food and drink lots of sake. Given the chance, he will happily recount the gruesome battle in which he lost his limbs.

Shinjo Agui and Shinjo Shujiri. These two representatives of the Shinjo family are brothers, separated by a year. Agui has trained with the Iuchi as a shugenja, while Shujiri is a bushi. Agui is cheerful and friendly, with no prejudices or enmities, and likes to indulge his skills with the flute. Shujiri seems a similar man, also with musical tastes – he plays taiko

drums, and their musical duets tend to be wild and quick, full of the spirit of the open steppe. However, Shujiri seems more serious and morose than Agui, and tends to be a bit anti-social, especially around Scorpions. (He is being blackmailed by the Scorpion Clan, due to a past personal failing.)

Neither of these men has any particular goal or purpose at the tournament, beyond representing their Clan honorably and well. If there are Unicorn Clan PCs here, these two can be dropped from the guest list.

Kitsune Retsu, Fox shugenja. This young man (15 years old, just past *gempukku*) is on only his second trip away from the Fox lands (the first was in the adventure *Kuro's Fire*). For the first time. He is a handsome youth, although easily startled or embarrassed (especially by pretty women – his bodyguard Sanae can reduce him to flustered stuttering with a single word). His father is Kitsune Iuki, a minor daimyo of the Fox Clan.

Retsu is an earnest and impressionable young man. He will quickly be won over by the appeals of the Phoenix Clan, and speaks out against the evils of war. “Our own Clan lives in close harmony with the animals and spirits of nature – and in nature, there is no war.”

Kitsune Sanae, Fox samurai, bodyguard to Retsu. Sanae is a quiet, gentle woman in her early twenties, whose eyes show flecks of green amid their dark brown. She wears her hair long and carefully bound up in a maiden's foxtail, and always moves and speaks with complete calm and deliberation. Trained as a Mirumoto bushi, she avoids wearing armor or carrying weapons except when necessary, and spends the rest of her time dressed in formal flowing kimono, armed only with a simple tanto tucked under her obi. Indeed, many have mistaken her for a courtier or shugenja on first encounter. She is here as Kitsune Retsu's protector, and will keep herself close to the boy whenever possible.

Gossip and Talk

Most of the conversation here will be about how unusual it is for the Isawa and Asako to be working together, since the families are well-known to be suspicious rivals. The Phoenix themselves will insist that the “rivalry” has always been overplayed, and besides, all Phoenix stand together when faced with a threat to peace.

Other topics for gossip will include:

- The Lion-Crane war. After several years of rising tensions, war erupted between the two Hands of the Emperor last spring, and the city of Toshi Ranbo was captured by the Lion in a bloody and spectacular two-day battle which took place during the final days of the Chrysanthemum Festival .
- The Lion Clan Champion, Akodo Toturi, dishonored himself during the Battle of Toshi Ranbo. (He was discovered lounging with a geisha while his armies battled the Crane.) Toturi has become ronin, and the entire Akodo family has given up its name out of shame at his actions. Nobody knows where he is now – rumors have placed him all over the Empire.
- Border skirmishes between the Phoenix and the Dragon have been intensifying as well, especially this year. Rumors has it that the Shiba have formed a secret military alliance with the Lion, although there has been no public announcement of this.
- Nobody is quite sure what has caused the sudden rise in tensions between Dragon and Phoenix, but many stories put the blame on a Dragon general, Mirumoto Sanbe, and a Phoenix daimyo, Shiba Tsumenitsu. The two have been bitter rivals ever since a duel three years ago, triggered by an insult against swordsmanship (accounts differ as to whether Sanbe insulted Tsumenitsu, or the other way around). Other rumors blame the Mirumoto daimyo, Hitomi, who has vanished from her lands and left the Mirumoto drifting and leaderless.
- The aging Emperor, Hantei the 38th, is past the normal age of retirement, but has made no announcement that he will step down. His fourteen-year-old son and heir, Hantei Sotorii, was kidnapped last spring by the Bloodspeaker Cult. Although he was later rescued, rumors persist that he may have been Tainted or corrupted in some way by the experience. He has been kept in seclusion since then.
- The Isawa have used the renewed threat of the Bloodspeakers to agitate for the restoration of the old office of Jade Champion, an Imperial shugenja charged with searching out and destroying the users of *maho*. The office has been allowed to lapse over the last three centuries.

Gift-Giving

After the PCs have had a chance to circulate, meet the various NPCs, and pick up the current gossip, Isawa Masahiro will step forward.

“In honor of today’s celebration, the Isawa have a gift to present to the Clans. Please accept this fine sculpture, which represents the unity and strength of the Emerald Empire.” Masahiro gestures, and servants draw away a silk veil from one of the tables. Beneath is a beautiful sculpture of ivory, jade, and gold. It depicts the mons of the major families from each Clan, worked in gems and precious metals, encircling a large Imperial mon, the chrysanthemum of the Hantei dynasty.

Since there is only one sculpture, the gift must be shared – Masahiro explains that the Isawa will send it on a pilgrimage, spending one winter at the court of each Clan Champion in succession. He then asks seven of the guests to accept the gift on behalf of their Clan.

As many PCs as possible should be selected to accept the gift for their Clan. Clans which are not represented by PCs should be “filled in” with NPCs from the earlier guest list. **Exception:** Mirumoto Rai will always be chosen to accept for the Dragon even if Dragon PCs are present.

Since this is a gift, proper etiquette is to refuse the gift twice, allowing the giver to offer it three times. PCs can roll **Etiquette/Awareness** at TN 5 to remember this, if their players are unaware of it. (Alternatively, make sure one of the NPCs accepts before any PCs have to do so.) Accepting a gift without refusing twice is considered a serious insult to the giver, implying that the gift is worth nothing, and can cost a point or two of Glory.

Isawa Masahiro bows before the Dragon representative. “Mirumoto Rai, on behalf of the Dragon, please accept this fine sculpture, symbolizing the sincere wishes of the Phoenix Clan that peace and unity may prevail throughout the Empire.”

Mirumoto Rai looks uneasily at the sculpture. His eyes scan the crowd for the briefest of instants. “I thank you for this... sculpture.”

The crowd will murmur and whisper softly, reacting to this breach of etiquette. Isawa Masahiro is taken aback for a moment, but then recovers, smiles politely, and moves on to the next Clan representative. A PC who observes Rai after this incident can roll

Courtier/Awareness at TN 10, or **Simple Awareness** at TN 15, to realize that he is uncomfortable with his own deeds... and that when he glanced around before accepting, his eyes lingered for an unhappy moment on Doji Aiko.

Scene 2: The First Contest, Poetry

After the insult in the gift giving ceremony, the Isawa will be eager to move on and start the contest. After only a few minutes, Doji Yujiro will step forward and speak in his musical, perfectly modulated voice.

“Now that we have been blessed with this gift, It is time for our first contest. The creation of a poem is the expression of the soul. It is an art as essential to bushido as the sword or the bow. You are invited now to compose your finest haiku, to share with all who have gathered here..”

The Phoenix do not demand that everyone compete – a PC can bow out without shame if they feel their skill insufficient. Among the NPCs, the younger of the two Unicorns, Shinjo Shujiri, will stay out of the contest (he only knows Unicorn travel poetry, which would not meet the criteria here).

If a player wishes to actually compose their PC’s haiku, the meter is 5-7-5 (number of syllables per line). A “true” haiku will also contain some kind of alliteration or ironic shift between the first two lines and the third. In general, haiku does not rhyme.

PCs may roll **Poetry/Awareness** at TN 5. Unskilled PCs roll a single non-exploding die against a TN of 10. All PCs get two Free Raises for actually composing a poem, one Free Raise for at least describing their topic (as opposed to simply rolling dice).

Everyone who makes the base TN gets 1 point in the competition. For each successful Raise (including Free Raises), they get 1 additional point.

The NPCs will also compose poems (except for Shinjo Shujiri). Most of them will be pedestrian efforts which earn only 1 point each, but the following entries are worthy of note.

- Doji Aiko smiles coquettishly as she recites her poem. A PC who watches the reactions of the NPCs to this poem can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to notice a blush on the face of Mirumoto

Rai, who thereafter seems distracted and lost in thought. (Earns 2 points)

*Laughter and music
Women running through the halls
A house of secrets*

- Ikoma Katsu (earns 3 points):

*Life and death entwine
Accepting purpose and truth
The Celestial wheel*

- Asako Keiko (earns 2 points):

*Light upon shadow
Purity of the Thunders
A child’s simple smile*

- Kitsune Sanae (earns 2 points):

*Winking green eyes see
A path through forest grove
Guidance of the Kami*

- Shiba Leikun recites his poem in clear, ringing tones, his eyes fixed straight ahead. There are shocked murmurs at his work’s grim themes, and disapproving frowns cross the faces of the Isawa and Asako who are present. (Earns 1 point)

*Birds white and fiery
Rising through shining clear skies
Bitter ashes fall*

- Hida Fuya grumbles and mutters for a time before offering his contribution. It does not go over well. (Earns 0 points.)

*Courage strong as steel
Shreds before blackened claws
Duty and death combine*

- Mirumoto Rai will not at first offer a poem. Doji Yujiro will smile and remark, “Mirumoto Rai-san, are not the Dragon revered as samurai poets, as enlightened in thought as they are deadly with a blade? Please, do not deny us the chance to appreciate your skill.” Rai sighs, swallows, and then recites (earning 2 points):

*Blood pulsing crimson
Breath rasping in labored throats
The touch of Benten*

Anyone who can roll **Poetry/Intelligence** or **Seduction/Intelligence** at TN 10 can tell that Rai's work is a love poem. A **Theology/Intelligence** roll at TN 5 identifies Benten as the Fortune of Romantic Love. A **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 20 (TN 10 if a PC is specifically watching) will detect a faint pleased smile on the face of Doji Aiko when Rai recites his poem.

Scene 3: The Second Contest, Painting

Doji Yujiro and his Phoenix hosts claps their hands as the poetry contest concludes. "That was a wondrous demonstration of the spiritual nature of the samurai," Yujiro purrs in his perfect voice. "Let us continue now by exploring the fine art of the brush – a different sort of weapon than some of you are accustomed to wielding, I am sure."

Servants move forward and set up easels, placing them to take advantage of the golden late-afternoon sunlight. Ink, paint, and brushes are placed ready to hand by each piece of blank white silk.

Again, the PCs are not required to compete if they don't wish to do so. This time, all of the NPCs will participate except for Shinjo Agui.

As before, the roll is either skilled (**Painting/Intelligence** at TN 5), or unskilled (one non-exploding die at TN 10). Players who describe what their characters are painting earn 1-3 Free Raises (the more detailed and creative the description, the more Raises). As before, a success earns 1 point, plus 1 additional point per Raise.

Most of the paintings will be "classic" Rokugani artwork, depicting scenes of natural beauty (Rokugani culture considers the spontaneous beauty of nature to be far superior, and far more moving, than anything posed or artificial). Each such painting earns 1 point, except for Doji Aiko and Bayushi Ejiro, who are skilled enough to earn 2 points.

There are four paintings worthy of special mention:

- **Ikoma Katsu** produces a painting, titled "Dawn," which shows an army gathered at dawn for battle. The rising sun is burning away the gray morning mist, gilding the helmets of hundreds of Lion samurai. Their faces are calm and tranquil as they await the day's battle. (2 points.)

- **Kitsune Sanae's** painting is titled "Guardian." It shows a green-eyed fox looking out of a dense thicket of woods. (2 points.)
- **Mirumoto Rai's** painting is titled "Honor." He labors over it at length. It shows two duelists meeting in a clearing, surrounded by trees. Although no Clan colors or mons are visible, one duelist is clearly in the two-blade stance of the Dragon, and from the poses, his opponent is about to suffer a lethal blow. However, there is a hidden detail in the painting, which requires a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 10 to notice: the bushes in the upper right background nearly conceal the outline of a very beautiful woman kneeling to smell a flower. (1 point.)
- **Hida Fuya's** painting is rendered entirely in black ink, with sharp, crude, broad brush strokes. It is titled "Tranquility." It shows a horrific battle at the Kaiu Wall, with desperate samurai battling and dying against terrible monsters and hordes of undead. A **Simple Perception** roll at TN 15 will be needed to notice that, behind the battle, a small bird is in her nest, feeding her chicks – in perfect safety and tranquility, protected by the courage of the Crab. (1 point.)

After the paintings are completed, there is a quite period of reflection as everyone studies them. Both Fuya's and Rai's paintings are clearly met with disapproval by the majority of the Phoenix and Crane present (although Asako Keiko does spot the birds in Fuya's painting, and compliments him). The PCs can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15, **Courtier/Perception** at TN 10, or **Ichi Miru/Awareness** at TN 10 to notice that Doji Aiko smiles and blushes just slightly when viewing Rai's painting.

Scene 4: Words of Peace, Words of Anger, Words of Love

The painting contest consumes all the rest of the afternoon – by the time everyone is viewing the completed works, servants are bringing out covered lanterns. When everyone has viewed the paintings, Isawa Masahiro claps his hands and invites everyone to share the evening meal. "We will conclude our tournament tomorrow, under the splendid light of Lady Sun."

Dinner is a glorious affair, held on long tables which are set up in the main hall. The doors to the courtyard are kept open so that the guests may view the legendary Pale Oak while they eat. The Phoenix spare no expense on the meal, which features the finest on Rokugani cuisine.

Dinner Conversation

During the dinner, the PCs are free to interact with any of the NPCs. They will note subtle tension between Ikoma Katsu and the Crane who are present – their Clans are at war, and while they would never insult their hosts by bringing open conflict to this castle, they will make a point of delivering small verbal barbs against each other. Any Lion or Crane PCs will also be caught in this game. The Crane will also probe Katsu about the rumors of a secret Shiba-Lion alliance, although he will deflect such questions.

Mirumoto Rai will of course attempt to offer comments and conversational gambits designed to put the Phoenix in a bad light. However, anyone who rolls **Courtier/Awareness** or **Manipulation/Awareness** at TN 10 can tell that Rai's heart is not really in this – something is distracting him.

Asako Shizu, Isawa Masahiro, and the lower-ranking members of their families will repeatedly seek to steer the conversation toward peace. They will ask leading questions such as “Is not a diplomatic solution just as honorable as one earned with bloodshed?” or “Is pride worth the sacrifice of lives of those not even involved in this disagreement?” Isawa Hitsukawa will also make able use of quotations from the Tao of Shinsei to bolster his position. (For example, “At times, the voice of peace must ring like Thunder.” Or, “Has not Shinsei said of war: See a man murdering a child. The child is you. Know what you would do next.”)

The Phoenix goal is to convince everyone to eschew the path of war at this critical time in the history of the Empire. For the most part, they will not be overly aggressive in their arguments, seeking to persuade rather than browbeat or “score points.” Asako Shizu will be a partial exception to this, due to his personal character flaws – unlike the others, he will make periodic attacks and complaints about the “warlike Mirumoto” throughout the evening.

Evening Socializing

After the dinner, socializing and conversation will continue in the courtyard, as the guests stroll about, chat, gossip, and enjoy the cool evening air.

Soon after dinner, Isawa Shizu will excuse himself, explaining that he has matters to attend to in preparation for tomorrow. Isawa Masahiro will remain and continue hosting the evening, circulating around the room and injecting himself into any question that becomes too “warlike.”

A bit later, Mirumoto Rai will quietly slip away with Doji Aiko for a quick tryst in a servant's room. PCs will not notice this unless they are specifically watching one or the other of these individuals and make a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 20. Doji Yujiro will be oblivious to this incident – he is deep in conversation with the Phoenix and Fox guests on the finer points of the art of painting.

Aside from any possible PCs, the only person to notice the departure of Rai and Aiko is Shiba Leikun. The mad Phoenix is seized with a sudden inspiration, and departs as well. Again, PCs will not notice him leaving unless they are specifically looking for him and roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20.

The Murder

Shiba Leikun goes to Mirumoto Rai's room and quickly dons the Mirumoto's spare kimono over his own. He also covers his face with a green obi belt, wrapping it around his head so that only his eyes are visible. Thus attired, he sneaks to Asako Shizu's room. PCs will only notice him if they are actively looking around the castle (perhaps trying to find Rai and Aiko?) and make a **Contested roll** of **Investigation/Perception** or **Hunting/Perception** against Leikun's **Stealth/Agility** roll of 27.

It may be noted that there are no guards within the castle, and only a few posted on the outer walls – Asako Shizu is trying to make his castle seem like an oasis of peace, not a fortress. There are not even guards on his personal quarters. Shizu's intentions are noble – and cost him his life.

Assuming Leikun is not intercepted, he will sneak into Shizu's unguarded room. The daimyo is seated on the floor, writing instructions for the servants tomorrow. Leikun stabs the daimyo through the back with his wakizashi, killing him instantly. Leikun then rips a piece off the Dragon kimono he is wearing and places it in the Asako's right hand.

His murderous work completed, Leikun departs. He makes sure that at least two guests (Ikoma Katsu and Hida Fuya) see him from a distance as he hurries away from Shizu's quarters. If any PCs are snooping around

for any reason, they can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 to catch a glimpse of Leikun as well. Of course, since he is dressed in a Dragon kimono and seen only from behind, hurrying away, the other witnesses will assume they have seen Rai.

Leikun returns to his own room via a circuitous route, checking to make sure that he is not followed. Other than the Ikoma and Hida (and any PCs), no other samurai will see him. (Several castle servants do see him, however.) Once in his own room, Leikun removes the Mirumoto's bloodstained kimono, along with his own clothes underneath (which are also bloodstained) and hides then under his futon.

After this deed, Shiba Leikun returns to the courtyard and makes a point of mingling and establishing his presence. PCs who roll **Courtier/Perception** at TN 10 or **Simple Perception** at TN 20 will notice that Leikun is wearing a different kimono than before. They can also roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20 to realize that Leikun was gone for a while. If he is asked about this, he will claim to have taken a bath.

Mirumoto Rai will return to the courtyard shortly thereafter. He has a pleased glow about him, which can be noticed with a **Courtier/Awareness** or **Ichi Miru/Awareness** roll at TN 10 or Simple Awareness at TN 20. Again, PCs can also roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20 to realize that Rai was gone for a while. If asked about this, he will verbally stumble for a moment, then claim he was conducting "private negotiations" on behalf of his Clan.

Doji Aiko will head for the baths after her tryst with Mirumoto Rai, and is not seen again until after the murder is discovered.

Interrupting?

It is possible that the PCs may interrupt this sequence of events, most likely by following Rai, Shizu, or Leikun. Any PC who lurks around Shizu's quarters will encounter Shiba Leikun dressed in the Mirumoto's kimono. An **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 15 will realize that the man concealed beneath the obi is not Mirumoto Rai. The maddened Leikun may well try to kill any lone PC who sees him, hoping to quickly dispose of the body and complete his plan. If not, he will back off and retreat to his room.

If the PCs prevent the murder, the rest of the tournament (and the adventure) will play out without further incident.

PCs who follow Mirumoto Rai or Doji Aiko may be able to catch them *in flagrante*. Rai will implore any PC who catches him to stay silent, "not for me, but for the lady's honor." If the PCs agree, they can take the advantage **Blackmail: Mirumoto Rai and Doji Aiko**. (Using this information to coerce Rai or Aiko will cost the PCs at least 1 point of Honor, and gains Doji Aiko and Mirumoto Rai as Sworn Enemies.)

See "Scene 9: Honor and Life" for details of what happens if the PCs expose Rai and Aiko's affair.

Scene 5: Harmony Shattered

As the evening is winding down and guests are starting to head off to bed, a servant hurriedly enters the courtyard and whispers to Isawa Masahiro. A stricken look crosses the karo's face and he leaves immediately, without explanation. On his way to Shizu's quarters, he is joined by four Shiba bushi, summoned by the servants from the walls of the castle.

PCs may follow Shizu if they wish, but the bushi escort will not allow them into the murder scene unless they are members of the Phoenix Clan.

Regardless, after a few minutes Masahiro will return to the courtyard, accompanied by the bushi, and orders all the guests assembled. There are murmurs of confusion and concern as everyone gathers. Doji Aiko will reappear at this time, dressed in a fresh kimono and with her hair still damp from the bath.

Isawa Masahiro's face is tight with carefully controlled emotion. His voice shakes, just slightly, as he speaks. "There has been a... a terrible tragedy. Even as we pursue peace and beauty, the evil in men's hearts has murdered our daimyo Asako Shizu in his own quarters." There are shocked gasps on many sides. "I regret to say that we cannot allow anyone to leave the castle until we can properly investigate this foul crime. We do not have a magistrate here at Aojiroi Oku Shiro, but we shall do our best to see that justice is done. Does anyone know anything about this crime? Anything you saw which might shed light upon it?"

After the briefest of pauses, Ikoma Katsu steps forward and bows low. "Isawa Masahiro-sama, I regret to say that I may have such information. I saw a Dragon, I believe from the mons it was Mirumoto Rai, leaving the area of Isawa Shizu's quarters just a

short while ago. Hida Fuya was with me and will be able to verify my words."

The Hida looks around the room. His usual boisterous manner has changed to one of sadness, and he looks directly at Mirumoto Rai as he speaks. "Hai. I must concur with Ikoma Katsu-san. I saw the Mirumoto walking away from Isawa Shizu's quarters. Though his face was wrapped with a green cloth, I do not doubt it was him."

Mirumoto Rai's face is fluid with shock, his public face momentarily shaken. "This cannot be. I was nowhere near Isawa Shizu-sama's room."

Shiba Leikun steps to the side of Isawa Masahiro, hand on sword-hilt. "Then where were you? You were not here."

"I was..." For the briefest moment an expression like a trapped animal crosses Mirumoto Rai's face. "I was... wandering the castle hallways."

Isawa Masahiro looks around the room. "Can anyone corroborate your testimony?"

Unless one of the PCs steps forward to lie on Rai's behalf, Isawa Masahiro will immediately have him arrested and confined to his quarters, pending a trial.

If a PC does testify on behalf of Rai, s/he will have to roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 15 to tell a convincing lie. Masahiro will be even more troubled, and will finally ask Mirumoto Rai to voluntarily remain in his quarters while the matter is investigated.

The crowd will slowly break up and head for bed, still murmuring about the shocking incident. (Everyone will assume that Rai is guilty. Doji Aiko will do her best to play along, but anyone rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell she is very distressed about Rai's arrest.)

Masahiro Approaches the PCs

Shortly after Rai is confined/arrested, Isawa Masahiro will approach the PCs. *"Mirumoto Rai continues to protest his innocence, and has asked for honorable samurai to investigate on his behalf. Although his guilt seems clear, in these delicate and dangerous times, we must be sure that we have found the truth... especially since Rai-san is a Dragon here in Phoenix lands. If we punish Rai for this crime, we must be absolutely sure of his guilt, or we will only be fanning the flames of the war we seek to prevent."*

Masahiro will ask the PCs if they are willing to investigate on behalf of Mirumoto Rai. He explains that the tournament will continue regardless, so PCs who join the investigation may have to miss one or both of the remaining contests (unless they can complete the investigation that night).

Masahiro is asking this as a favor, and will understand if the PCs are unable or unwilling to help. If none of the PCs assist in the investigation, Masahiro and his bushi will conduct the investigation themselves to the best of their ability. They will reluctantly find Rai guilty.

Shiba Leikun Interferes

If the PCs do participate in the investigation, Shiba Leikun will try to interfere with them. He will do this in two ways:

- If any of the PC are Shiba family, he will try to personally convince them not to interfere. "Do you not see? The Mirumoto's vile crime has proven the nature of the Dragon Clan to all. Even the peaceful Isawa cannot ignore this. All our Clan will stand united against the Dragon aggression." Any PC who makes a successful **Contested Awareness** roll against Leikun will be able to tell that he has a very intense emotional investment in this matter, and may know more about the murder than he is saying.
- If Leikun has found any of the PCs to be reasonably friendly and sympathetic, he will attempt to dispatch them on a false mission. He will approach them in a secretive manner and says he has an important message which must be delivered to Shiba Tsumenitsu, a daimyo on the southern border. "It concerns our northern flank, the mountain passes where war may erupt at any time. After this incident, it is vital that Tsumenitsu-sama receive this message as soon as possible, but I cannot leave this place myself until the tournament is concluded. Can you carry it for me?"
- If any of the PCs agree, Leikun gives them a scroll and asks them to depart immediately. The scroll is sealed with wax, impressed with the mon of the Shiba family. If a PC breaks the seal and reads the scroll (or figures out some way of reading it with magic), it proves to be merely a letter to Shiba Tsumenitsu, telling him to "praise these samurai,

for by delivering this letter rather than performing other duties, they have aided our cause.”

- Any PC who delivers the false letter will be out of the scenario (it takes 6-8 days to reach the southern Phoenix border where Shiba Tsumenitsu’s castle is located). Shiba Tsumenitsu will praise and reward the PCs for their “service” – see the end of the module for details.

Scene 6: The Investigation

Assuming at least some of the PCs do participate in the investigation, there are several avenues for them to explore in seeking the truth.

Investigating Asako Shizu’s Room

This is the obvious place to begin, and Isawa Masahiro will expect the PCs to start here. He will hold the room untouched until he and the PCs have examined it. He will also summon an *eta* to examine the body for the PCs and to remove it once they have finished their investigation. (This is a good opportunity to explain to the players the Rokugani taboo against touching dead flesh. Without an *eta* to handle and move the body, they will not be able to conduct an effective investigation. Anyone of the samurai caste who so much as touches a dead body loses a point of Honor, more if they do so repeatedly or callously.)

The scene in the daimyo’s room is a horrifying one, made all the more chilling by the soft yellow candlelight which illuminates it. Asako Shizu lies dead, face-down, in a pool of blood. A stab wound is visible in his back, piercing his yukata (Rokugani bathrobe). His writing desk lies overturned beside him, papers scattered across the floor, ink spilled in a black pool. A teapot lies broken on the floor as well, the tatami mat beneath it soaked through.

If the PCs look at the body, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10 to notice the scrap of green cloth in the late daimyo’s right hand. (Isawa Masahiro will see it if none of the PCs do.) It is definitely from the garb of a Dragon samurai.

Anyone who examines the wound and Shizu’s posture and rolls **Battle/Intelligence**, **Medicine/Intelligence**, or **Kenjutsu/Intelligence** at TN 10 can tell that the blow which killed him was from a sword (a blade at least as long as a wakizashi), and was delivered from behind with both accuracy and power, implying a

skilled attacker. A PC who makes TN 20 or better on one of these rolls comes to the conclusion that Shizu died almost instantly, pitching forward and spasming briefly, knocking over the writing desk and teapot. (This will imply that there is something fishy about the cloth in his hand.)

Questioning the Kami

The PCs can learn more having a shugenja (one of their own, or an Isawa NPC) cast *Commune* to speak with the local elemental spirits. If none of the PCs are aware that this is possible, they can roll **Law/Intelligence** or **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 10 to remember that, although spirits are not legal evidence, shugenja frequently use information from spirits to tell them where to pursue their investigations.

Asako Shizu’s room contains plenty of Earth and Air spirits, plus Fire spirits in the candles and Water spirits in the spilled ink and tea. (By morning, the candles will be out and the spills dried out – a shugenja will have to make two Raises in order to recover those spirits at that point.)

The Earth, Air, and Fire spirits can all describe a man entering the room and stabbing Asako Shizu in the back. All three types of spirits will be able to describe the man as wearing clothing “the color of fresh leaves” and covering his face with a wrapped cloth. The spirits will not mention the planting of the obi cloth unless the *Communing* shugenja asks about it specifically.

Water spirits will show a silent image of the murder. The PCs can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 to determine that the man in the green kimono, while clearly a skilled swordsman, does not move like Mirumoto Rai, and his clothing seems oddly bulky. Again, if the PCs ask what happened next, the Water spirits can show the killer planting the scrap of cloth.

Mirumoto Rai’s room contains Air, Earth, and Fire spirits, but no Water spirits. (Again, the Fire spirits will be nearly gone by the next day.) Any of these spirits, if asked the right questions, can describe a man in orange clothing entering the room, putting on one of the Mirumoto’s kimonos over his own, and then leaving.

See “Shiba Leikun’s Room” below for details of what the spirits there can say.

Questioning Mirumoto Rai

Rai will insist that he is innocent. He will also claim (truthfully) that one of his kimonos has been stolen. However, under no circumstances will he admit the

affair with Doji Aiko, and he cannot provide any alibi other than his earlier claim to have been “walking around the castle.” If the PCs press him closely about his whereabouts, he will scowl and proclaim that he must remain silent as a matter of Honor. If PCs ask the right questions, they may be able to make him admit that he is trying to protect another, although he will never say who.

Rai makes it clear that he does not want this incident to besmirch the name of the Mirumoto family. “It would be a terrible thing indeed if this foul crime convinced the Isawa of our family’s dishonor. Our quarrel is with the Shiba, not the Isawa. If need be, I shall commit seppuku to expunge this shame.”

If the PCs confront Rai with accusations about his affair with Doji Aiko, he will clearly be crushed, and asks the PCs to keep her involvement quiet in order to preserve her honor. “Any blame here should be mine.” Again, he will make plans to commit seppuku.

Questioning Doji Aiko

Aiko will normally stick to her story that she was in the baths when the crime occurred. However, if the PCs confront her with even the slightest evidence of the connection between her and Mirumoto Rai, she will quickly break down and confess. “Mirumoto Rai is guilty, as I am guilty, of great dishonor. But he is not a murderer.” She will plead with the PCs, in the name of the Fortune Benten, to keep the affair secret and find some other way of clearing Rai’s name.

See Part 9, “Honor and Life,” for details of what happens if Aiko and Rai’s affair is exposed.

Questioning the Servants

It may not occur to the PCs to question the servants, who are for the most part silently ubiquitous throughout the castle. (It did not occur to Shiba Leikun to hide from the servants, since like most samurai he considers them to be only *heimin*, “half-people,” not worth bothering over.)

By asking the right questions, the PCs can elicit the following information from the servants:

- Two servants saw Shiba Leikun near Mirumoto Uso’s quarters, shortly before the murder.
- Four servants saw Shiba Leikun in the blood-soaked Dragon kimono after the murder. They saw him not only leaving the area of the daimyo’s quarters, but also approaching his own room.

- Three servants saw Mirumoto Rai and Doji Aiko sneak into a room together. They remained there together for at least half an hour, during the time that the murder took place.
- Several servants can confirm that Shiba Leikun was not in the baths at the time of the murder.
- After the start of the Tea Ceremony contest, five servants will report seeing Shiba Leikun take a bundle outside the castle and burning it there.

Unfortunately, the word of *heimin* has little value under Rokugani law – one samurai’s word overturns the testimony of any number of commoners, as the PCs will know with a **Law/Intelligence** roll at TN 5. The PCs will need something else – either samurai testimony, or direct physical evidence – to bolster what they learn from the servants.

Questioning the Witnesses

The PCs will probably want to question Ikoma Katsu and Hida Fuya about their claim to have seen Mirumoto Rai leaving the area of the daimyo’s quarters. The two men will explain (separately or together) that they were taking a private stroll while they discussed the Lion Clan’s war with the Crane. They saw a man in a green kimono, his head wrapped in green cloth, walking quickly away from them.

Ikoma Katsu will assume the man he saw was Mirumoto Rai. (“Who else could it have been?”) If the PCs question him closely about anything odd or suspicious about the man, he will admit that the man’s kimono looked oddly bulky. If the PCs press him hard, he will be forced to admit that he never saw the man’s face and that, therefore, it could have been someone else wearing the Mirumoto’s clothing. (He will declare this “quite improbable,” however.)

Hida Fuya will not remember what he saw clearly enough to make such fine judgments. If the PCs press him, he will admit that he drank quite a bit of sake. However, he will declare that “I saw what I saw,” and if the PCs try too hard to convince him otherwise, he may become angry and name them “Scorpion-tongued tricksters” or similar. If the PCs respond with belligerence of their own, Fuya may even demand a duel (to “Down,” not death, since death-duels require the permission of a daimyo). Since he cannot fight for himself, Fuya will name a champion – either a Crab PC, if one is available, or else an NPC “Hida Kogatsumen” who will arrive at the castle the next day.

Questioning Shiba Leikun

PCs who noted Shiba Leikun's absence from the after-dinner conversation, or who decipher the evidence presented by the Kami or the servants, may decide to confront him. He will claim that he was in the baths at the time of the murder. Persistent questioning will make him nervous and angry, as his underlying emotional disturbance begins to show through. However, he will never voluntarily confess his deeds. Even if the PCs find incontrovertible physical evidence (such as the bloody clothing in his room), he will insist to the bitter end that he is innocent, and demand a duel to prove it. See Part 9, "Honor and Life," for details on how to resolve that.

Shiba Leikun's Room

The PCs will need some sort of justification (from Communing with spirits, interviewing servants, or realizing that Leikun has no alibi) to search Shiba Leikun's room. Simply barging in on suspicion alone is a breach of etiquette, costing 1 point of Honor to anyone but a Scorpion (and 2 points of Glory to *any* PC if others witness the deed).

The key evidence in Leikun's room is the bloody clothing hidden under his futon. If the PCs wait too long, the clothing will be gone – in between the Dance and Tea Ceremony contests, Leikun will wrap up the cloths in a satchel, take it outside the castle, and burn it. However, there will still be bloodstains on the futon itself.

Either way, finding this clue will require searching the room and rolling **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 (or casting the spell *By the Light of Lord Moon*).

If a shugenja *Communes* with the spirits in Leikun's room, they can get descriptions of him coming back in the Mirumoto's bloodstained clothing, stripping off all the garments and hiding them under the futon. After he disposes of the clothing, they can get a description of that as well.

Scene 7: The Contest of Dancing

Regardless of whether the PCs have concluded their investigation or not, the Phoenix will resume the tournament the next morning after breakfast. The mood is subdued and anxious, but Isawa Masahiyo will do his best to carry on in the same manner as yesterday.

"Today, we shall see that skill and grace are not just for the battlefield. A learned samurai may put those skills to use on the floor of the court as well. We shall have a contest of dance, giving each of you the opportunity to display your skills. We are honored to have a fine troupe of Kakita musicians to accompany your performances." The musicians from yesterday's welcoming ceremony step forward and bow before preparing their instruments.

The dances presented here are solo artistic performances, in which the contestants tell a story or evoke an emotion through their movements. Popular themes of Rokugani dance include the lives of animals (birds, foxes, fish, etc), the deeds of spirits and legendary creatures, the cycle of life, the changing seasons, and the power and blessing of the Fortunes.

Similarly to the other contests, each competitor rolls either **Dance/Agility** at TN 5 or a non-exploding die at TN 10. Players who describe creative or artistic concepts for their dance gain 1-3 Free Raises at the discretion of the GM.

Hida Fuya will sit out this competition with a snort, and Isawa Hitsukawa will plead the weariness of aged bones. For obvious reasons, Mirumoto Rai will also be a non-competitor.

- Shiba Leikun will offer a brief, unimpressive dance, actually more of a fancy sword kata, designed to evoke the power and might of the legendary Phoenix. It is clear to anyone who rolls **Dance/Awareness** at TN 10 (or **Simple Awareness** at TN 20) that Leikun is badly off his center, consumed with dark emotion. (0 points.)
- Asako Keiko offers a delicate and beautiful abstract dance which depicts the fall of innocence to falsehood, corruption and ultimately, death. It is a profoundly moving experience, and at least some of the samurai are unable to hide their tears. Any PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell that Keiko is inspired by events in her own past (the adventure *Legacy of the Dark One*). (3 points.)
- Doji Aiko will offer a dance about birds welcoming the arrival of spring. Although she is clearly a very talented dancer, her performance is oddly off-key, and fails to impress. Any PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 can tell that Aiko is still deeply concerned and distracted by the events of last night. (1 point.)

- Ikoma Katsu offers a dance portraying the cycle of life, from infant to old man. The dance is both humorous and poignant, mingling the joy and sorrow of life, and the Phoenix are clearly unexpectedly impressed to get a work of such depth from the Lion. (2 points.)
- Kitsune Sanae performs a dance depicting a fox *hengayokai* (shape-shifter) playing tricks on hapless humans, peasants and samurai alike. The dance is quite humorous and is greeted with many appreciative chuckles. (2 points.)
- Bayushi Ejiro offers a dance depicting a wolf stalking and killing his prey. Although it is technically competent, Ejiro evokes the bloodlust of the wolf a little too well for comfort. (1 point.)
- Kitsune Retsu tries to offer a dance about hunting in the forests of the Fox lands. Unfortunately, halfway through he stumbles and almost falls. Retsu stumbles to a halt, his young face flushing with embarrassment. After a strained moment of silence, Isawa Masahiro rescues the situation by apologizing. “The floor must not have been properly polished, Kitsune-san.” Retsu nods and retires gratefully, while servants buff the (perfect) floor before the next performance. (0 points.)
- The two Shinjo brothers will use their musical instruments to supplement the Crane musicians, each brother providing musical support to the other’s performance. Both offer dances which evoke the wild gallop of horses across the open plains. (2 points each.)

Scene 8: The Tea Ceremony

After the contest of dance concludes, there is a pause while the musicians depart and servants bring in several low tables, each laid out with the cups, pots, whisks, and other equipment needed for performing a tea ceremony. As the servants finish setting up, Isawa Masahiro again stands before the guests.

“We have seen painting, poetry and dancing. All are skills that the Emperor finds laudable among his loyal samurai. However, even more important than these artistic endeavors is the simple, pure harmony of soul which all samurai must have. It is our highest goal to achieve enlightenment and purity, lifting ourselves above the distractions of the world. In our last

contest, we ask that you seek this harmony through the performance of the tea ceremony.”

All of the guests (except Rai) will participate in this “competition,” in which they are judged on the purity and harmony of their performance. The roll is **Tea Ceremony/Void** at TN 10. Success earns 2 points. Every raise is an additional point. A PC who makes at least two Raises (TN 20) also regains one Void point.

Some of the contestants are obvious, abject failures – Hida Fuya breaks one of his teacups, Shiba Leikun (if still here) stirs too vigorously and spills tea on the table, and the Shinjo brothers have clearly never performed a tea ceremony in their lives.

Most of the remaining contestants manage to at least perform the Tea Ceremony properly, earning 2 points. Asako Keiko, Isawa Hitsukawa, Ikoma Katsu, and Kitsune Sanae all perform with exceptional purity and tranquility.

Scene 9: Honor and Life

Ending the Investigation

The PCs may approach Isawa Masahiro at any time if they think they have completed their investigation. He will listen carefully to their accounts and question them about any uncertain or incomplete aspects of their investigation.

If the PCs conclude that Mirumoto Rai is guilty, Masahiro will agree with a sad nod (this is the conclusion he will reach if none of the PCs help him). He proposes to delay any announcement until after the conclusion of the tournament, in order to minimize further disruptions.

If the PCs accuse Shiba Leikun, Masahiro will question them even more carefully, pointing out any flaws in their case.

- If the only evidence the PCs have is the testimony of spirits, Masahiro will sadly point out that “it is the wisdom of the Hantei that no man can be condemned solely on the word of spirits, since such word can be manipulated by the shugenja who summons them.”
- If the PCs rely on the testimony of servants, Masahiro will frown. “No samurai may be accused solely on the word of heimin.”

- If Doji Aiko has confessed to her affair with Rai, Masahiro will be deeply troubled. “This does seem to prove that Rai is innocent, but it also brings great dishonor upon both these people and their families.” He will ask the PCs to wait until after the tournament concludes before troubling the guests with such a shocking announcement.
- The bloody clothing will be the key clue to actually pinning the crime on Leikun. If the PCs have found this, Masahiro will agree that, shocking as it seems, Leikun is probably guilty. Again, he asks that the PCs wait until after the tournament concludes before making their accusations.

Announcing the Winner

After the Tea Ceremony concludes, the guests will enjoy a light midday meal. Afterward, they gather once more in the main hall of the castle, before the watching Pale Oak, while Isawa Masahiro announces the winner of the contest.

“As we have seen, there are many more facets to a samurai than merely skill in battle. We may lift our calligraphy brush instead of our sword. We may launch poems instead of arrows. Let us hope that even with the shadow cast upon these proceedings, the Fortunes’ wisdom can show us the path to peace and harmony.”

Compare the total points earned by each PC to the totals listed below for the various NPC contestants. The winner will be recognized with the gift with an enchanted fan (certed item). Polite winners remember to refuse three times...

Asako Keiko: 9 points
 Isawa Hitsukawa: 6 points
 Shiba Leikun: 2 points
 Doji Aiko: 7 points
 Ikoma Katsu: 10 points
 Bayushi Ejiro: 6 points
 Hida Fuya: 1 point.
 Shinjo Agui: 3 points
 Shinjo Shujiri: 3 points
 Kitsune Retsu: 4 points
 Kitsune Sanae: 9 points

Arresting Shiba Leikun

If the PCs convinced Isawa Masahiro of Shiba Leikun’s guilt, he will call everyone to witness while the PCs deliver the evidence. Leikun will gradually become more pale (with anger, not fear) as the PCs lay out the case. Finally he will shout out that his honor has been

compromised, and demands a duel to prove his innocence.

Assuming the PCs found the bloody clothing in Leikun’s room, Isawa Masahiro will not permit a duel. He orders Leikun arrested and questioned. The Shiba makes confession and is executed a few days later.

If the PCs did not find the bloody clothing (but still made a fairly convincing case, such as by finding the bloodstain on Leikun’s futon), Masahiro will have no choice but to permit a duel. One of the accusing PCs will have to face Leikun in a duel – if none of them carry a katana, they must elect a champion (some other PC, or possibly Mirumoto Rai).

Shiba Leikun will demand a duel to the death. Isawa Masahiro will refuse, suggesting instead a duel until one combatant can no longer stand (thereby allowing the possibility of an “accidental” death).

If Leikun wins the duel, he has been proven innocent and matters will proceed to the condemnation of Mirumoto Rai (see below). The PCs will lose Glory for making a “false accusation” and losing the duel.

If Leikun loses (but is still alive), he stands condemned before all. (Mirumoto Rai will manage to barely defeat Leikun, if a PC elects him as a champion.) Isawa Masahiro will order Leikun arrested and questioned (tortured). Leikun will eventually confess and be executed for his crime.

A Back-Up Plan: Accusing Shiba Leikun

If the PCs could not convince Isawa Masahiro of Leikun’s guilt, they can still choose to publicly accuse him and present their evidence anyway. This will upset Isawa Masahiro, since it creates a spectacular disruption to the orderly proceedings he had planned.

Shiba Leikun will turn white with rage, cords standing out of his neck. He grips his sword as he demands to face his accusers in a duel and “cut them down like the lying, Dragon-serving dogs they are.” Isawa Masahiro, clearly angry that the PCs went ahead with their accusation, accepts a duel as the only honorable way of ending the matter. Again, one of the accusing PCs (or their champion) will have to face Leikun in a duel.

In this instance, Isawa Masahiro will be more inclined to grant a duel to the death, but finally decides not to since it would take months to arrange it with the PCs’

daimyo. He again orders a duel until one combatant can no longer stand.

Again, if Leikun wins the duel, he has been proven innocent and matters will proceed to the condemnation of Mirumoto Rai (see below). The PCs will lose even more Glory in this situation, because they have also displeased Isawa Masahiro.

As before, the results are as listed above (arrest and eventual conviction), but the PCs earn less Glory due to their questionable methods.

Exposing the Affair

If, for whatever reason, the PCs choose to publicly expose the affair between Mirumoto Rai and Doji Aiko, they create a horrible scandal. Although Rai is proven innocent of the murder of Asako Shizu, both lovers stand condemned for succumbing to the sin of Desire and violating bushido.

Mirumoto Rai will commit seppuku forthwith in order to cleanse his shame from his family line. Doji Aiko does not get off so lightly – her husband orders her hair shaved, and sells her to a geisha house.

Mirumoto Rai is Condemned

If Mirumoto Rai has not been cleared, Isawa Masahiro will call him forth and ask him to submit to arrest. The Dragon samurai stands straight and tall, and speaks in a clear voice.

“Isawa Masahiro-sama, you have my deepest sympathies for the loss of your daimyo. I grieve with you at the death of a man of honor and culture. I am innocent of this crime, but I cannot prove it, and the Phoenix Clan seeks justice for the loss of one of its own. I gladly give my own life to satisfy them.” With that he strides into the courtyard and kneels before the Pale Oak, the tree which grows on the grave of the Hantei. Sunlight shines brightly upon him as he slowly and deliberately pulls his wakizashi from its scabbard. His voice is clear and even as he asks, “Would someone do me the favor of serving as my second?”

A PC may choose to serve as the second if they wish – otherwise one of the Phoenix castle guards (not Shiba Leikun) will volunteer for that duty.

Rai will smile, nod thanks, and then recite a final haiku:

*Flesh is illusion
A fitful and fleeting dream*

The soul, eternal

His poem completed, Rai unhesitatingly plunges the wakizashi into his belly, cutting across and up before bowing his head for the second’s blow.

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 solved the murder (limited to those PCs who investigated):	+1 XP
OR	
PC won the tournament (that PC only):	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor

PCs who investigate gain +1 Honor for solving the murder.

PCs who knowingly help Shiba Leikun conceal the truth about the murder lose 3 points of Honor.

PCs who use blackmail to compel Mirumoto Rai or Doji Aiko lose at least 1 point of Honor.

Glory

If the PCs solve the murder to Isawa Masahiro’s satisfaction, any PCs who participated in the investigation get 1 point of Glory. A PC who defeats Shiba Leikun in a duel earns an additional 2 points of Glory.

If the duel was fought without Masahiro’s permission, a victorious PC earns only 1 point of Glory, and none of the other PCs get any Glory.

A PC who wins the tournament gains 2 points of Glory.

A PC who loses a duel against Shiba Leikun (but survives) is penalized 3 points of Glory. If the duel happened against the wishes of Isawa Masahiro (the PCs didn’t prove Leikun’s guilt to him), all other PCs also lose 1 point of Glory.

If PCs carry Shiba Leikun’s false message to Shiba Tsunenitsu, they gain +2 Glory as he publicly praises their deeds.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who learn about Mirumoto Rai and Doji Aiko's affair may, if they wish, gain **Blackmail** on those two NPCs. If they use that blackmail against them, they also gain **Sworn Enemy** with both those NPCs.

A PC who duels Shiba Leikun, but loses the duel, gains Shiba Leikun as a **Sworn Enemy**.

If any PCs deliver Shiba Leikun's false message to Shiba Tsumenitsu, they will each be given a fine-quality weapon of their choice (but cannot be a katana or wakizashi). They can choose 20 arrows in place of a weapon.

If a PC wins the tournament, the Phoenix present that PC with an enchanted fan (certed item).

GM's Aid: NPC Stats

Shiba Leikun, embittered Phoenix bushi

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

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

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 0.9/2.6

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Courtier 2, Dance 2, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 4, Jiujutsu 3, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Meditation 2, Poetry 3, Shintao 1, Sincerity 3, Stealth 3, Tea Ceremony 2, Theology 2, Yarijutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Heart of Vengeance (Dragon Clan), Social Position (officer), Tactician/Compulsion (destroy the Dragon Clan), Driven (to vengeance against the Dragon Clan).

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set. (Has light armor, a naginata, and a bow with 20 arrows in storage.)

EARTH 4	WATER 3 Strength 4
VOID 3	

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

School/Rank: Hida bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.3/2.1

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Tsubojutsu 5, Wrestling 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large, Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Bad Reputation (Crude), Brash

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo.

Mirumoto Rai, foolish Dragon bushi

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 2 Stamina 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 22 (27 in light armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.8/3.2

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 1, Defense 4, Iaijutsu 4, Heraldry 3, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Shugenja 3, Meditation 4, Mountaineering 2, Poetry 4, Seduction 2, Shintao 3, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 1, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Magic Resistance (rank one), Social Position (officer)/Lechery.

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set. (Has light armor and a bow with 20 arrows in storage.)

Hida Kogatsumen, Crab bushi, champion for Hida Fuya

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3
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