

Spiritual Presence

A One-Round Low Rank Living Rokugan Adventure

by Robert Hobart and Jaime McCoy

You have been invited to the castle of Agasha Hoko to participate in a special end-of-winter ceremony in his famous rock garden. But a shocking incident suggests that all may not be well in Hoko's domain ... For low-rank heroes.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

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

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in adventure format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

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.

In addition to the text of the adventure below, you will need to be familiar with the Legend of the Five Rings rulebook.

GM's Information:

THIS ADVENTURE SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

This adventure is a Low Level adventure. This means that only Rank 1 and Rank 2 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 3 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."

Introduction

The PCs have been invited to attend a small celebration of the end of winter, held in Dragon lands at the residence of the revered shugenja Agasha Hoko. For the past four years, Hoko has been inviting samurai from across the Empire to visit his humble castle, especially his splendid rock garden, where guests watch the melting of the last remnants of winter's snow. This is regarded as an enlightening experience and the PCs should feel honored to be attending. If any of the PCs are Ronin, Hoko has hired them (for 1 koku each) to serve the various non-bushi guests (PCs and otherwise) as temporary bodyguards while they are his guests.

Hoko's end-of-winter ceremony is actually a remembrance of his beloved wife, Akari, who designed the rock gardens and who perished in a mine collapse six years ago. However, what Hoko does not realize is that his wife was actually murdered by their son, Agasha Tetsuo, and his lover Mirumoto Kagome. Tetsuo was over-anxious to inherit his father's position as daimyo and desperate to marry Kagome, a union he knew his parents would never approve. He expected that with Akari dead, Hoko would soon pine away and die. Much to his frustration, the old man survived, comforting himself with the year-end ceremony. Now, however, Tetsuo's wishes are about to come true – his father plans to retire at the end of this year's ceremony and hand the reigns of power over to him.

Unfortunately for Tetsuo, his mother's grieving spirit is not about to go quietly into Jigoku while her murderers remain unpunished. Now the PCs will find themselves caught in the middle of this family quarrel.

Player's Introduction: Welcome to Winter's End

It is a crisp late-winter morning at Shiro Doseki, the Castle of Earth and Stone. The daimyo of this castle, Agasha Hoko, has invited you here to witness the melting of the last of the winter snow from his famed rock garden. Each year Hoko invites a handful of samurai from across the Empire to attend this ceremony, and this year you have been fortunate enough to be among those invited. You are humbled by this honor; although Agasha Hoko is but a minor Dragon Clan daimyo, the beauty of his rock garden is known through much of the Empire, and you count yourselves very lucky to be here.

As you arrive in the castle, servants hurry out to stable your mounts and lead you to the baths, where you can cleanse the mud, slush, and cold of winter travel from your bodies. After you have washed and dressed, you are led to the castle's main audience hall, where Agasha Hoko is waiting for you along with his son, Tetsuo, and the other guests. An aging Mirumoto, evidently Hoko's karo, sits at his right hand. Nearby, a stern young Mirumoto samurai-ko stands guard, watching you all with cold attentiveness, her swords ready to hand if anyone threatens her lord.

"Welcome, all, to Shiro Doseki," Hoko says. He is an aging man, obviously near the age of retirement, with graying hair receding from his forehead. He smiles with gentle good humor as the guests bow in greeting. "I thank you for making the effort to attend my humble winter's-end ceremony, and hope your brief stay will be worth the difficulties you endured in your journeys." There is a round of polite applause,

and Hoko stands and leads you through a pair of large sliding doors to the fabled garden itself.

Residents at Shiro Doseki (Castle of Earth and Stone)

Agasha Hoko: The daimyo of Shiro Doseki, Hoko is a gentle, thoughtful man in his mid-forties, his graying hair receding from his forehead. He is always friendly and polite to all his guests, but anyone making a Simple Awareness roll (TN 15) notices a quiet sorrow lurking behind his eyes. He has no idea of his son's villainy, and believes he has raised a worthy heir to his position. He is also hoping his son will marry soon (preferably to a nice Agasha maiden), so as to produce an heir for the next generation, and quietly pesters Tetsuo about this from time to time.

Agasha Tetsuo: Hoko's son is a handsome, arrogant young man, well dressed and stylish, obsessed with his passion for Mirumoto Kagome. Although his public manners are good, he radiates pride and impatience, and anyone making a Simple Awareness roll at TN 15 while observing him can tell he is frustrated and irritated with his father.

Mirumoto Takaya: Hoko's aging karo (chamberlain) is a man well past the normal age of retirement – he has stayed on to serve his friend and master Hoko through the grief that followed Akari's death. His hair is almost pure white, and worn in a slightly frazzled braid that runs down his back. He is fond of quoting the Tao, particularly portions dealing with friendship and duty. He is aware that Tetsuo is a less-than-loyal son, but does not guess the true depths of the boy's perfidy.

Mirumoto Kagome: The captain of Shiro Doseki's house guards, this strikingly beautiful woman is also hopelessly infatuated with Agasha Tetsuo and will literally do anything to be able to spend her life with him. She went along with his plan to murder Akari; the subsequent failure of Hoko to die has left her feeling shaken and guilty, but her feelings for Tetsuo are still stronger than these regrets. Now that Tetsuo is about to become daimyo, she is hoping that it will all turn out for the best after all. Any PC speaking with her can roll Simple Awareness (TN 20) to see that she is weighed down by some secret emotional burden, although she never allows it to interfere with her duties.

NPC Guests at Shiro Doseki (Castle of Earth and Stone)

Togashi Shuji: The first of the guests this winter is one of the legendary Ise Zumi, the tattooed men who serve the Dragon Clan Champion. Shuji is an ageless man, smooth of skin but with eyes that have seen many experiences. He enjoys observing the world and the people in it, and watches everything with a delighted wonder undimmed by the years. He speaks seldom, generally only when spoken to, and prefers to be brief and cryptic.

Shiba Osagi: Osagi is a small, delicate young woman with piercing eyes and hair trimmed short. A bushi, but so gentle and delicate in her behavior that she is often mistaken for a harmless courtier, Osagi is also an Emerald Magistrate, serving the governor of this province, and is spending the winter in Shiro Doseki. She gets along well with the governor and often assists in the investigation of local crimes over which she has no official jurisdiction. She recently solved a puzzling murder case, and will be happy to recount this tale to anyone who will listen.

Kitsu Mitaka: A Lion Clan historian and storyteller, trained in the Ikoma school, this 20-something young man is charming, personable, and good-looking, and has a bad habit of subtly flirting with any pretty women in the vicinity (such as Shiba Osagi, or female PCs) despite the presence of his wife, Miyo. He also takes an innocent enjoyment in his own skills at storytelling, and displays them whenever he is given a chance. Mitaka and his wife are possible candidates if the GM needs someone for Ronin PCs to guard.

Kitsu Miyo: Mitaka's wife is a tall, pretty young Lion woman; she is trained as a shugenja but, with a child on the way (she is in her fourth month of pregnancy) has had little time to pursue her studies. Although normally shy and demure, she becomes more energetic when she notices Mitaka's flirting (which, sadly, is often) and can become quite sharp and spirited. She knows he has never actually betrayed her, but can't help being angry at his reflexive playboy instincts.

Iuchi Kageki: a short, physically unimpressive man with a long goatee and drooping moustache. Kageki is eager to learn more about the magic of other clans, and resents the hostility he sometimes encounters from the more refined clans such as the Crane and Phoenix. Agasha Hoko has not shown such prejudices, for which Kageki respects him highly. He will be quite friendly to anyone (especially any shugenja) who treats him as an equal.

Bayushi Hiei: Unremarkable of feature and wearing a simple wooden membo (mask), this personable Scorpion is a good conversationalist and an excellent listener, ready to offer sympathy and advice to any who might want it. He has no ulterior motives here (other than the usual Scorpion habit of information-gathering) and PCs waiting for him to steal something or poison someone will be disappointed.

Agasha Tamori: The daimyo of the Agasha family has left the Emperor's winter court early in order to visit his vassal Hoko's famous gardens. A small, deceptively ordinary looking man, Tamori is actually a powerful shugenja and one of the highest-ranking members of the Agasha family; all the Dragons at Shiro Doseki defer to him, since his Glory is far above theirs. Tamori is a polite guest and never abuses his power or upstages Hoko's status as local daimyo.

A Gathering in the Garden

After the PCs and other guests have been welcomed to Shiro Doseki, Agasha Hoko leads them out to the famed rock gardens. The gardens are a vision of tranquility and subtle order, the patterns of the stones and sand complex and full of hidden depth. Those patterns are only now becoming visible, as the snow melts away from the rocks, order emerging from blank whiteness.

The guests (including the PCs) walk carefully through the garden, admiring the layout and the many types of exotic rock formations on display. Anyone making an Intelligence+Courtier roll at TN 20 will realize that the variety of rocks and stones in this garden is greater than any they have ever seen, and includes many rare types. The PCs should feel free to role-play and introduce themselves.

Agasha Hoko stands at the entrance to the gardens, watching his guests with a bittersweet smile on his face. Finally he speaks. "This garden was my late wife's pride and joy. She spent many hours in our mine, seeking the rarest and most beautiful stones; I suppose it was her destiny that she should also die there." He sighs and falls silent for a time.

PCs making Simple Perception rolls (+Ichi Miru, if they have it) at TN 20 notice Tetsuo watching the scene with an aura of long-suffering patience.

Finally Hoko looks up and meets the gaze of his guests. "For too long I have lingered here, as though I was waiting for her to return. The time has come to put this life behind me, and begin another. Therefore,

I am announcing that I shall retire tomorrow evening, after this humble celebration is complete, and seek enlightenment in the study of the Tao. My lands and holdings shall pass to my son, Tetsuo, who I am sure will fulfill the duties of daimyo with honor and distinction.” There is a round of polite applause for both Hoko and Tetsuo, who bow to the assembled guests. Smiling now, Hoko concludes: “I would not wish my last winter as daimyo to be less than memorable. Therefore, I offer to you a modest competition.” He closes his eyes and recites from memory:

*Purest snow now melts
Revealing what was thought lost
Blackest rock beneath*

“I was inspired by a dream to compose this poem. Can anyone tell me what it means? I will offer this fine embroidered fan to whoever can solve this riddle for me.”

Dinner – the Ghost Appears

Dinner is a sumptuous and elaborate affair, and the PCs will have an opportunity to role-play with each other and with the various guests and residents. Agasha Tetsuo is cheerful and relaxed now, a marked contrast to his behavior earlier in the day. He circulates around the room during the dinner, chatting with different guests, asking how they find the meal, whether there is anything they need, and so forth. He has, in effect, already slid into the role of master of the house, even though he will not officially take that position until the retirement ceremony.

- Any PC making a Simple Awareness roll at TN 15 may also notice that Mirumoto Kagome also seems to be in a good mood tonight, joking and telling stories, and takes more than her share of sake. Of course, if any guest should suggest that she is drinking too much, she will be insulted and will demand a non-lethal duel to defend her honor (***“I would never betray Tetsuo-sama and Hoko-sama by being drunk on duty!”***).
- If the PCs approach her more subtly (perhaps commenting that the atmosphere at dinner seems lighter than it was earlier in the day) she smiles and agrees. ***“Since Hoko-sama’s wife died, this has been a house of sorrow,” she explains. “Now that Tetsuo-sama will finally be taking his place, it will become a happier place.”***
- If asked about the young heir, Kagome’s eyes light up: ***“Tetsuo-sama will make a fine daimyo,”*** she says emphatically. Any PC rolling Simple Awareness at TN 20 can realize that Kagome is

unusually vehement and intense whenever the subject of Tetsuo comes up.

Hoko and his aging karo, Takaya, are quieter and more reserved. Hoko seems placid, evidently at peace with himself and his decision. Takaya is relieved that his grieving lord has finally decided to move on to the next phase of his life, and remarks to the PCs (if they speak with him) that Hoko has seldom been himself since his wife died.

At some point toward the end of the dinner, when everyone is chatting and relaxing, the ghost appears. Read the following text:

Suddenly a cold wind whistles through the room, and the lamps flicker alarmingly. As the guests look about and murmur in surprise, the main door to the dining hall suddenly slides open with a bang. Standing in the opening is the wrinkled, disheveled form of an elderly woman, her Dragon-green kimono stained with mud and her wispy white hair swirling around her head in a terrible cloud. Her eyes gleam with malice as she advances toward the head dais where the daimyo and his family sit. “You shall not have it!” she shrieks. Then all the lights in the room go out at once, plunging the place into darkness; for a moment, a stench of putrefaction fills the air. Servants and samurai rush in from outside the room, bearing lamps, and in their flickering light you can see that the strange apparition is gone. You can also see that both Hoko and his son Tetsuo are visibly shaken as they look around, making sure everyone is unhurt.

Any PC who made a Simple Perception roll at TN 15 saw that the woman had no feet, the classic evidence of a ghost. She can also be identified as a ghost with an Intelligence+Yorei (Ghost) Lore roll at TN 15, or an Intelligence+Shadowlands Lore roll at TN 25. In the wake of the incident, Hoko hurries around the room making sure all his guests are unharmed (unsurprisingly, the first guest he checks on is Agasha Tamori). He has no idea why a ghost would disturb his court, and is deeply embarrassed (not to mention a little frightened) by the incident. If the PCs ask, no-one in the court admits recognizing the ghost, but anyone making an Awareness+Acting roll at TN 25 (or Awareness+Ichi Miru at TN 20) can tell that Hoko is lying when he says this – he does recognize the ghost as a distorted, aged reflection of his lost wife. Hoko fears that he has somehow angered his wife’s spirit, perhaps by retiring, perhaps with his excessive veneration of her rock garden, and that thought preys on his mind.

Tetsuo and Kagome also recognize the ghost, but are better at concealing this fact (they’ve been successfully

lying about murdering her for the last five years, after all) – the PCs will have to roll Awareness+Acting at TN 40 or Awareness+Ichi Miru at TN 35 to see through their charade. However, any PC making a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 30 notices them in a quick, worried conversation immediately after the incident. The talk does not last long enough for the PCs to have a chance at eavesdropping (magically or otherwise), and if the PCs inquire afterward they both claim they were discussing the “mysterious” ghost.

Ghosts? What Are They?

Any PC with the skill Lore: Yorei (Ghosts) can recall that ghosts are usually formed when someone dies with some important task or duty unfulfilled. They can also be created when someone dies without proper burial rites, or with some terrible burden of sorrow or rage, since this sometimes prevents the spirit from traveling on to Jigoku. If the PCs don't have Lore: Yorei, they can recollect this information by rolling Intelligence+Shadowlands Lore at TN 20.

Investigations at Shiro Doseki

Presumably the PCs are not going to let such a strange event go unquestioned. Since it is late in the evening when the event takes place, there will be little the PCs can do at the time; however, the next day the PCs will be free to do as they wish while waiting for Hoko's retirement ceremony that evening.

There are several possible avenues the PCs can follow to ask about the ghost and the lost Lady Akari.

- **Mysterious Deaths:** there have been no unexplained deaths or disappearances from the castle or the adjacent village in recent years, though there have of course been many natural deaths among the local peasants. The only people to die without proper funeral rites in recent years were of course Agasha Akari, the late wife of the daimyo, and the various peasant workers who were all lost when the local mine collapsed.
- **The Mine Collapse:** Anyone in the castle can tell the PCs the story of the mine collapse. Lady Akari used to visit the mine frequently, seeking unusual rocks for her gardens. On that particular day, she was there with her son Tetsuo and their bodyguard, Mirumoto Kagome, when the mine supports gave way and the ceiling began to collapse. Akari was pinned beneath a fallen beam, and Tetsuo was struck on the head by falling rubble. Kagome managed to carry Tetsuo out on her back, but before she could return for Akari, the

mine collapsed completely. Several peasant workers were also killed in the collapse. Hoko was so heartbroken by the disaster that he never tried to reopen the mine, and it has been left abandoned ever since.

This story is of course a lie, perpetuated by Kagome and Tetsuo, but they have gotten so good at telling it over the years that it is impossible to tell whether they are lying (unless the PCs have supernatural assistance such as the ancestor Ikoma). By all accounts, Kagome offered to commit seppuku for her failure to protect Akari, but Hoko refused – she had saved his son, after all, from an accident that no one could have expected. (This was of course a calculated risk on Kagome's part.) She was made captain of Shiro Doseki's house guards two years later.

- **Ghosts and Lost Miners:** if the PCs ask around the local village about the mine collapse, most of the peasants react with superstitious fear. They believe that the mine was cursed, and that it is now haunted by the spirits of all who perished in the collapse. Getting them to say anything will require overcoming their intense fear of both the mine and of offending their lord. Intimidation can be a useful skill here, since peasants can be easily terrified, but a gentle approach can also work – especially if helped along with a few zeni. Once persuaded to talk, the villagers confess that they had feared for some time that the mine had been cursed in some way – the miners kept returning to the village with tales of strange sounds, meals and candles vanishing, and so forth. Lord Agasha said this was all superstitious nonsense, of course. (“And we don't question Lord Agasha's judgment, no, we are poor ignorant peasants who do not know the spirits as he did!”)

Since the mine collapsed, the villagers have sometimes heard strange noises from the blocked tunnel, such as howls and chants. “Surely the sounds of demons from Jigoku,” the peasants quaver. None of them have dared to enter the mine since the disaster, and they fear the souls of those who perished within have been damned forever, denied their rebirth on the celestial wheel. The peasants will show the PCs the location of the mine (if they are threatened or intimidated into doing so) but will never venture inside themselves.

- **Tetsuo and Kagome:** the servants of Shiro Doseki are well aware that there is an illicit affair going on between the daimyo's son and the chief of the castle guard. They will never admit such things to the PCs, of course, since doing so would be an unforgivable betrayal of their masters, but they are

also not good at concealing the truth. If the PCs ask any of the castle servants about Tetsuo or Kagome, the servants will attempt to say only good things about their superiors, such as “Tetsuo-sama is a fine man who will make a great daimyo when he inherits,” or, “Kagome-sama is a very honorable samurai-ko, no one doubts that.” However, any PC making a Perception+ Investigation roll at TN 20 will be able to tell that the servants are hiding something about these two nobles. If asked about the older generation of castle residents (Hoko and his karo, Takaya), the servants are sincere in their admiration, and express their sorrow for the loss that Hoko suffered six years ago.

If the PCs question any of the castle samurai about their superiors, they get nothing but standard polite remarks on what an honor it is to serve such fine lords. The samurai are aware that Tetsuo does not love his father (and didn’t love his late mother either) but they do not realize that he killed her. They are unaware of the affair between Tetsuo and Kagome (it is easier to hide such things from fellow samurai than from servants) but they all know that Kagome is intensely loyal to Tetsuo and does not allow any criticism of him. In any case, it will be impossible for the PCs to learn anything useful from these bushi, who are completely loyal.

Going to the Mine

The PCs can learn the location of the abandoned mine from the local peasants, or from any of the castle residents (although Hoko, Takaya, Tetsuo, and Kagome will all profess to be furiously insulted – Hoko and Takaya truthfully – by such morbid curiosity). It is set in the side of a tall hill about three miles from the castle, reached via a now-abandoned path through a belt of dense, scrubby woodlands. The entrance to the path is clearly visible from the upper floors of the castle, and can be pointed out by anyone there.

The ground is still covered in melting snow, of course, and muddy beneath that; the trip is cold, wet, and unpleasant. If the PCs use horses for the trip, they will need to make Agility+Horsemanship rolls at TN 10 to avoid a slip and fall for 2k1 damage, which will also leave the horse hobbled and unable to continue the trip.

Any PC making the trip to the mine should roll Simple Awareness at TN 30 to detect the sense of being watched. If any of the PCs have Elemental Attunement, they can apply +5 to this roll. The PCs may suspect this is the result of the ghost, but it is actually caused by Agasha Tetsuo, who is using *Reflecting Pool* to spy on the PCs. He has learned (either from villagers or from

someone in the castle, whatever seems most probable) that the PCs have been asking inconvenient questions, and will shortly dispatch Kagome and her bushi to deal with these troublesome guests.

The GM should try to make sure all the PCs are together when they visit the mine, since otherwise some of the party will be left twiddling their thumbs in Shiro Doseki while the rest are exploring the mine.

The Abandoned Mine

The mine entrance gapes at you from the steep, bare side of the hill like an empty tooth socket. The white, untouched snow, which covers the ground in front of the mine, fills your minds with the thought of death. This is a place of tragedy and loss, and as you approach the mine entrance, you feel a sudden sense that you are intruding on a place forbidden.

The mine seems normal from the outside, but within, the PCs advance less than thirty yards before they come to the collapse. Heaped rock and earth fills the tunnel nearly to the ceiling. The PCs can make Perception+Investigation rolls at TN 25 (TN 15 if they brought light sources, such as candles or lanterns, to supplement the thin light which finds its way in from the entrance) to notice that the tunnel is not completely blocked. There appears to be room at the top for a man to crawl through, although there is no disturbance of the earth to suggest that anyone has done so recently.

If the PCs use the *Commune* spell to speak with the spirits here, only the Earth spirits are helpful. (The air spirits have long since forgotten what happened here, and there are not enough water or fire spirits to speak with.) However, it will require three Raises for the Earth spirits to remember what happened so many years ago. If they do remember, the Earth spirits say that someone (“a man and a woman”) cut through the mine supports to collapse the tunnel. If the PCs actually dig through the rubble for a half-hour or so (assuming these noble samurai PCs will lower themselves to doing physical labor) they find the rotted, splintered remains of one of the support beams – sure enough, with a clean cut halfway through where it broke. Digging in this way causes the tunnel roof to groan ominously, but it will not immediately collapse.

If the PCs did not detect Tetsuo’s scrying on the way here, they can again roll Simple Awareness (this time at TN 25) to again receive the sense that they are being watched, although no one is around.

If the PCs attempt to crawl past the collapse, they find that there is indeed room to worm their way through

between the rubble and the ceiling, though at times just barely enough room. The PCs are bruised, scratched, and covered in mud by their passage through this crawlspace. Beyond, the mine continues, the air cold and musty, the support beams showing some rot but not yet broken.

Discovery

As soon as all or most of the PCs have crawled past the collapse, have them roll Simple Perception at TN 15 to hear the whinny of horses outside the mine entrance. A moment later Mirumoto Kagome and fifteen samurai from Shiro Doseki march into the tunnel with weapons at ready. Kagome glares at any PCs who are still on her side of the blockage. “My lord does not take kindly to those who meddle in affairs which are long closed,” she snarls, drawing her katana with a hiss of metal on saya. She will not speak further or negotiate, and attacks any PCs who do not flee past the collapse immediately. The bushi with her are less comfortable with the situation (not to mention the possible presence of ghosts), and look visibly shaken if any of the PCs question their commander’s motives and actions; however, they are all sworn to obey and will, however reluctantly, join Kagome’s attack.

This is designed (deliberately) to be a no-win situation for the PCs – the only escape is to retreat behind the collapsed portion of the tunnel. Once the PCs have done that, Kagome laughs. “A fitting end for such curious vermin,” she snarls. Her troops knock out more of the support beams, and with a rumble the outer thirty yards of the tunnel collapse, spewing choking dust back down the narrow crawlspace to the PCs. This time the tunnel is well and truly blocked.

If (against all odds) Kagome’s troops are actually losing the fight, they will retreat toward the entrance while knocking the support beams out as they go. Any PCs who get caught in the collapse must roll Agility+Athletics at TN 20 to avoid being crushed to death – otherwise they only take 3k3 damage. In any case, they will still be trapped unless they pursue Kagome’s troops closely outside the tunnel – in which case they must complete the battle as best they can.

Trapped!

The odds are that the PCs retreat from the fight with Kagome’s troops and find themselves trapped within the mine. At first, the only light comes from whatever sources the PCs brought with them – if they brought none, they are in pitch-blackness. The mine tunnel

continues for some distance, littered with fallen rocks and the remains of old mining carts and tools (far too rusted and rotted to be of any use digging out of the collapse). As the PCs look around, they become aware of another light source, wavering toward them from farther down the tunnel. The mine’s new residents are approaching.

The Pale Face Tribe

In the pallid greenish light of some kind of phosphorescent moss, you see a pack of short, lumpish, spindly-limbed creatures with brown skins. Their faces have been smeared with some whitish clay or pigment. Some of them wear ragged garments, while others go naked, but all have some sort of weapon, even if it is nothing more than a sharp piece of rock. They draw up in a crowd at the sight of you, jabbering and muttering to each other in their own tongue.

The Pale Faces are a small tribe of mountain goblins. Any PC rolling Intelligence+Shadowlands Lore at TN 20 will recognize these brown-skinned, lumpish little creatures for what they are. Mountain goblins are often mistaken for normal goblins, since they are physically somewhat similar, but in fact they are a separate species of somewhat greater toughness and intelligence than normal goblins. This particular pack has wandered far indeed from their ancestral home in the Shadowlands, and has settled in a small tunnel complex which intersects with the old mine. The goblins are responsible for most of the “haunting” activities the villagers have reported, as well as for the odd incidents that took place before the mine collapse (they first arrived in this area a few months before the collapse).

Unlike their Shadowlands cousins, these creatures are not automatically hostile to the PCs – they worship the ghost-haunted corpse of Agasha Akari (the “Pale Face” of their name), and their initial assumption on seeing the PCs is that they are similar “gods” come to visit her. If the PCs do react with hostility, the goblins are terrified and flee before them hooting and screeching in terror, allowing the PCs to follow them (with a successful Perception+Hunting roll at TN 15) to their central lair. If the PCs do not immediately attack, the goblins jabber among themselves, then inch forward and prostrate themselves before the PCs. They then attempt to convince the PCs (with gestures and incoherent gabbling in their own tongue) to follow them to their lair.

The goblins have dug a huge complex of tunnels that wind through and around the original mine. These

passages are often quite narrow, and the PCs will have to crawl on hands and knees to get through many of them. There is no evidence of what befell the human inhabitants of the mine. The only light comes from the PCs and patches of phosphorescent moss, which the goblins often scrape off the walls to smear on sticks or even, to eat (leaving glowing patches stuck between their teeth).

Eventually the PCs emerge, coughing and blinking, into a large cavern (apparently natural originally, but enlarged and modified by the goblins) ringed by numerous ledges and tunnels. There are literally scores of goblins in this cave, ranging from screeching pups to bloated, decrepit old specimens sprawled in their own filth. The stench here is intense and hideous, and PCs must roll Simple Willpower at TN 15 to keep from being sick. The goblins all orient themselves toward one wall of the chamber, and looking there the PCs behold a startling sight:

Propped against the wall is the shriveled, desiccated corpse of a human woman, her pale skin stretched tight across her skull, her body still dressed in the rotting cloth of a fine Dragon kimono. The goblins bow toward her, making soft noises of veneration and respect. Then, a stout, deeply wrinkled goblin, dressed in a tattered garment that is smeared in greenish fungus, hobbles out of a side tunnel and steps onto a small dais in front of the corpse. He bows to the corpse and then turns to you, squinting his deep-set reddish eyes. "Great ones," he gibbers, in a horribly distorted parody of the Rokugani tongue, "welcomes you to our shrine, we does. We's keeps the Pale Face good-good for youse, yes? We's good peoples."

This is Gub'bik, the shaman of the Pale Face tribe. He is the only goblin here who can speak Rokugani, and the only one old enough to remember the trip that brought them to this place. Any story he tells will be punctured by dramatic gesticulations and jabbering in goblin-speak, to which the rest of the tribe responds with enthusiastic crowd support. The goblins are afraid of the PCs, believing them to be servants or fellow deities of the "Pale Face," and will be subservient so long as the PCs play their role properly. Only if the PCs both insult their religion and behave aggressively toward them will the goblins' fear turn to aggression. Given the number of goblins present, they would be wise to avoid such a result.

Gub'bik the Shaman can provide the following information:

- **How the tribe got here:** "We's wander long time, looking, but always big mens chase us, shoot arrows at us, throw magic at us. Hurts us lots! Then we find caves, no-one sees us, we safe! Safe-safe!"

- **Why they worship the human corpse:** "We has dreams, says great one come to show us true path! Then ground shake-shake, and we find Pale Face lying in tunnel! She talks to us, yes!"
- **Did they find anyone else:** "Yes, other bodies. Food she brings us, we eat!" He looks concerned. "We does rights?"
- **What does she say to them:** "Words, words. Not understand. Names of peoples. Maybe she say your names, call you? We do good?"
- **Is there another way outside:** "Yes yes, we digs lots! You wants go outside?" Sudden fear crosses the old goblin's face. "Don't makes us goes outside? It bright out there, many things hurts us! Please not makes us go!"

The Body of Agasha Akari

If the PCs examine the shriveled corpse closely (without touching it, of course, unless they wish to become eta) the PCs can easily determine the cause of death with a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 10: there are several stab wounds in the body, of the sort caused by a dagger or sword.

As soon as the PCs notice this, or else when they are about to leave the cavern, there is a sudden glow of pale whitish light around the body. The goblins fall dead silent and collectively prostrate themselves. The PCs can dimly perceive the outlines of the ghost they saw last night, looking at them mournfully out of the corpse's empty eye sockets. The yorei does not take any hostile actions against the PCs unless they try to destroy it; in any case, it is bound to the corpse and cannot leave the body for more than a few moments.

- The ghost moans softly and incoherently, its voice drifting through the cavern like a strange wind.
- If the PCs try to communicate with it, it responds only to questions about who it is and how it was killed.
- It cannot actually name itself, but moans "Yes," if the PCs ask whether it is the spirit of Agasha Akari.
- If they ask who killed it, the ghost's face contorts horribly. "My son," it moans, as ghostly tears run down its face, "what did I do for you to hate me so?" Then its face contorts in hatred. "You shall not have it! It is not for you!"
- If the PCs ask how to release the ghost from this world, it can only answer, "Give me peace. Please, give me peace." It is up to the PCs how they accomplish this, although two possibilities are obvious: a proper burial and exposing her murderer.

- If the PCs want to leave the tunnels, the goblins will show them the way so long as the PCs have not antagonized them; otherwise, the PCs must look for themselves, requiring a Perception+Hunting roll at TN 25 to find the exit. If they want to take Agasha Akari's body with them now, the only way to do so without touching dead flesh and rendering themselves eta is to convince the goblins to do it (perhaps explaining that they are "taking the Pale Face away to Heaven" or something similar). The goblins will carry the body as far as the exit from their caves, but no farther ("lights hurts us, they does," Gub'bik explains). Waiting to return with proper eta might be a better choice.

Return to Shiro Doseki

The goblins' other exit is a narrow chute that emerges from a clump of brush halfway up the hill. The late-afternoon sun is peeking through intermittent cloud cover, reminding the PCs that they have only a short time until Agasha Hoko is due to retire and hand his lands over to his murderous son. If they return to the mine entrance, they find any horses they left behind are gone – Kagome's troops took them. They must return to the castle by foot.

Unfortunately, Agasha Tetsuo knows the PCs found an escape from the tunnels (he checked on them again with Reflecting Pool, just to be sure) and Kagome is now hurrying to intercept them. Rushed and frantic, she snatches the troops readily to hand and races into the woods to catch the PCs before they become visible from the castle. The PCs will hear her approach a few moments before she emerges from the trees, flanked by the samurai who have accompanied her (the number of accompanying samurai will be equal to one fewer than the total number of PCs). "You meddling samurai will not stop my lord Tetsuo-sama!" she shouts as she charges to the attack. She will attack whichever PC looks to be the strongest bushi, while her troops will each attack one of the PCs, switching targets if their own opponents are defeated.

Kagome will fight as long as she can stay on her feet; if reduced to "Down," she will try to fall on her sword rather than live to confess her crimes. The bushi, however, are less fanatical (they know something isn't quite right about this whole affair) and if the fight is clearly going against them (Kagome down and half or more of their own number as well), they will attempt to halt the fight. "We do not know why Kagome-sama ordered your deaths. Perhaps this matter would be better resolved by our lord."

If Kagome is captured alive (difficult, but not impossible) the PCs can interrogate her and try to make her talk. If they succeed on a contested roll of their own Awareness (+Intimidation or similar skills, if they have them) against her Willpower, she breaks down and confesses her and Tetsuo's crimes. Otherwise, she remains defiant, snarling that the PCs will soon pay the price for meddling in matters that are not their concern.

Getting into the Castle

The PCs reach Shiro Doseki as sunset splashes across the sky, staining it red and orange and purple. The bushi standing guard at the gates recognize the PCs as guests of the castle, and step aside while eyeing their wounds and torn and muddy garments with uncertainty. If the PCs are accompanied by wounded Mirumoto bushi (or a captured Kagome) the guards are more cautious, and demand that the PCs wait outside while they consult with Lord Hoko-sama. The PCs can berate the guards into letting them in by rolling Willpower+Intimidation at TN 20. Alternatively, by speaking softly and proposing that Hoko-sama will be able to solve everything, the PCs can try Awareness+Etiquette at TN 15. If everything fails, the PCs are kept outside the castle until late that evening, when the new-made daimyo Tetsuo comes to the gate and throws them off his lands for attacking his bushi.

Confronting Tetsuo

Assuming the PCs make it into the castle before it is too late, they find the following scene:

The guests and residents of Shiro Doseki are gathered once again in the famed rock garden, where several guests are in the middle of proposing possible answers to the haiku challenge that Agasha Hoko presented the previous evening. Agasha Tetsuo stands by his father, looking obviously nervous and barely containing his impatience for the ceremony of retirement to begin. An expression of alarm crosses his face as you enter the gardens, and soft murmurs run through the small crowd. Agasha Hoko steps forward, his gaze taking in your mud-stained garments and bloody wounds. "What is the meaning of this?" he demands.

How the PCs handle this situation is up to them. Agasha Tetsuo is almost certainly of higher Glory rank than any of the PCs, and accusing someone of such stature is a difficult proposition. On the other hand, the PCs have their combined testimony, which carries

much more weight than one person's word alone. They also have the assistance of any house bushi who broke off the fight earlier, who are willing to confess to Kagome's strange behavior. If Kagome herself broke under questioning, they have her testimony as well, which will clinch the issue. Without her testimony, the accusation is somewhat harder to prove – Tetsuo will argue at some length that his father should take his word over that of strangers. Tetsuo also denies any involvement in Kagome's behavior, claiming she acted entirely on her own. Kagome is visibly shaken by this, and if she did not break already, the PCs can try to convince her to talk now.

The ultimate clincher, of course, is to dispatch some eta to bring back Agasha Akari's body. Her ghost will then accuse Tetsuo in front of all witnesses, sealing his fate. However, the PCs will have to argue carefully and convincingly to have this done – this situation should not be handed to them on a plate. Skills such as Etiquette, Law, or Courtier can be useful in this situation, but ultimately, this is a role-playing encounter, and should be resolved accordingly. Clever PCs may come up with other ways of handling the situation – a *sodan-senzo* PC might be able to invoke Akari's spirit, for example.

The visiting guests listen silently but attentively to the proceedings. Agasha Tamori, the daimyo of the Agasha family, will not interfere directly in this matter, considering it Hoko's business; however, he pays close attention to everything that happens.

Agasha Hoko is horrified by the PCs' accusations, and initially refuses to credit them; his karo Takaya, on the other hand, has long suspected that something isn't quite right about Tetsuo, and will support any actions the PCs take in support of their case (such as sending for Akari's body).

- If the PCs challenge Agasha Tetsuo to a duel to prove the truth of their words, he will reject the challenge out of hand unless their Glory rank is equal to his. In that case, he requests permission from his father and Agasha Tamori to defend his honor. They approve the decision.
- If the challenger is a shugenja, Tetsuo will fight personally (use the rules for shugenja dueling from *Way of the Phoenix*).
- If the challenger is a bushi, Tetsuo will choose Mirumoto Kagome as his champion (having her magically healed if need be); if Kagome is dead, Tetsuo asks Mirumoto Takaya to be his champion.
- If the PCs produce the corpse/ghost of Akari, or Kagome confesses, a look of stunned, horrified realization crosses Hoko's face. He whirls on Tetsuo, eyes blazing. "You are no longer my son!"

he roars, and the castle bushi immediately move to seize Tetsuo. As the guards lead his son away, Hoko sags, all the energy seeming to drain out of his body, and walks quietly back into his castle. Takaya watches him go sadly. "The truth is often far crueler than a lie," he observes.

If the PCs do not succeed in proving their accusation (they don't break Kagome, and don't manage to produce the corpse/ghost of Akari), Hoko's face darkens with fury. "You have abused my hospitality!" he bellows, and orders these uncouth people expelled from his court. The PCs each lose a rank of Glory for such a disastrous public incident. The affair is not completely closed, however; the PCs later learn that the provincial governor, acting on a report from Shiba Osagi, has ordered an official investigation of Agasha Tetsuo.

Resolution

Assuming the PCs succeeded in proving their accusation, Tetsuo is handed over to the castle torturer and makes a full confession by morning. He is hung from the castle gates. Mirumoto Kagome, on the other hand, asks (and is granted) permission to commit seppuku and cleanse her family name. She performs the ceremony at dawn, before the execution. The PCs may witness it if they wish.

Agasha Hoko is broken by this revelation, as well as by the knowledge that with the death of his son, his family line ends with him. He spends the night speaking with his daimyo Agasha Tamori; in the morning, Hoko shaves his head and departs for a monastery, his back bowed with sorrow. Mirumoto Takaya chooses to retire as well, and accompanies his old friend away from Shiro Doseki.

Agasha Tamori publicly thanks the PCs for uncovering such a dark and dishonorable crime, a crime which – left undiscovered – might have stained the honor of the Agasha family forever. All PCs gain 1 point of Glory for this recognition. Tamori declares that, with Hoko's line ended, he will find a new daimyo for Shiro Doseki. In the meantime, he leaves it in the hands of Togashi Shuji. He also orders that the goblin infestation in the nearby mine be exterminated (assuming the PCs told him about it). "We cannot allow such vermin to blight Agasha lands," he proclaims. He is right, of course, and everyone will be deeply shocked if any PCs suggest otherwise.

Finally, after the crime has been solved, any PC who makes an Intelligence+Shintao roll at TN 30, or

Intelligence+Nazodo at TN 20, realizes the answer to Hoko's haiku riddle: the "blackest rock beneath" was Tetsuo's heart, exposed when the PCs discovered his mother's lost corpse. However, they don't get the embroidered fan – Hoko is far too grief-stricken to "reward" the PCs for their answer.

Rewards and Consequences

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

For completing the adventure:	2 XP
Successfully accusing Tetsuo:	1 XP
Good role-playing	1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor:

For solving the mystery: 1 point of Honor to any PCs who are Emerald Magistrates, or who belong to the Dragon Clan.

Glory:

For successfully accusing Tetsuo: 1 point of Glory.
If the PCs fail to prove their accusations against Tetsuo:
-1 full rank of Glory.

Other Consequences:

If the PCs accused Tetsuo, but were unable to prove it – either because they couldn't get into the castle in time, or because they did not have sufficient evidence – they must write down **Sworn Enemy: Agasha Tetsuo** on their character sheets.

Stats for relevant NPCs and Creatures

Agasha Tetsuo

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Agasha Shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 1.1/5.3

Skills: Acting 2, Calligraphy 2, Etiquette 2, History 1, Meditation 2, Shintao 1, Sincerity 2, Tanto 1

Spells: *(Fire) Amaterasu's Anger, Evil Ward, Fire From Within, Fury of Osano-Wo, (Earth) Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Earth's Stagnation, (Air) Benten's Touch, By the Light of Lord Moon, Know the Mind, Wind-Borne Slumbers, (Water) Castle of Water, Reflective Pool*

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Advantage (daimyo's son), Gentry/Dark Secrets (murdered his mother, affair with Kagome)

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel, dagger

Mirumoto Takaya

karo of Shiro Doseki

FIRE 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 5
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 35 (30 without Light Armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 3.3/4.5

Skills: Archery 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 1, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Law 1, Lore: Shugenja 2, Meditation 2, Poetry 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 2, Tea Ceremony 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Strength of the Earth (rank 1)

Equipment: Light armor, fine daisho set

Mirumoto Kagome

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

TN to be Hit: 30 (25 without Light Armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 1.3/3.7

Skills: Acting 2, Archery 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Shugenja 1, Meditation 2, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick, Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Dark Secret (murdered Agasha Akari), True Love (Agasha Tetsuo)

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set

Mirumoto Bushi

(Shiro Doseki garrison)

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

TN to be Hit: 25 (20 without Light Armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 2.5/1.0

Skills: Archery 1, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Shugenja 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: Light armor, daisho

Mountain Goblins (Pale Face Tribe)

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 1
VOID 0	

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 5k2

TN to be Hit: 15

Wounds: 10: -1; 20: Dead

Special Abilities: Regenerates 2 wounds per combat round, and can reattach lost limbs in 2 rounds so long as constant pressure is maintained between the limb and stump.

Gub'bik, Aged Pale Face Shaman

FIRE 1 Intelligence 3	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 1 Perception 2
VOID 0	

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 3k1

TN to be Hit: 15

Wounds: 8: -1; 16: Dead

Spells: Gub'bik knows one spell, *Commune*, which he casts as a Rank 1 shugenja.

Special Abilities: Regenerates 2 wounds per combat round, and can reattach lost limbs in 2 rounds so long as constant pressure is maintained between the limb and stump.

Scenario Results Questionnaire for *Spiritual Presence*

For all playings of this event between September 2000 and December 2001, inclusive.
Send in with the Who's-Who sheet.

Did Kagome die?

Did the PCs accuse Tetsuo?

If so, did they prove their case?

If not, list the names of all PCs who gained Agasha Tetsuo as a Sworn Enemy:

Champions of the Emerald Empire

A Champion's Who's Who for Rokugan

Revised Version, October 1st, 2000

Player Name: _____
 RPGA #: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Champion's Name: _____
 Clan: _____ School: _____
 Starting School Rank: _____ Ending School Rank: _____
 Shadowlands Taint Rank: _____
 Ronin?: _____ Servant of Fu Leng?: _____ Dead?: _____
 Notes: _____

Player Name: _____
 RPGA #: _____
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 Starting School Rank: _____ Ending School Rank: _____
 Shadowlands Taint Rank: _____
 Ronin?: _____ Servant of Fu Leng?: _____ Dead?: _____
 Notes: _____

Instructions:
 Fill out this sheet and send to:
 Robert Hobart
 300 Foxcreek Rd
 Rolla, MO 65401
 Adventure Aftermath:
 How much Experience was handed out in this adventure? _____
 List any person who was executed or became Ronin, and why:

Please include character sheet for any characters who were consumed by Shadow or became Servants of Fu Leng.