

Jade Petal Tea

This is a mini-adventure which will run once (only) over the course of the evening, assuming Taka manages to accumulate at least four PCs willing to perform the task.

Background

Yasuki Taka holds an interest in a monastery, the House of the Sun's Blessing, which grows and processes the legendary Jade Petal Tea, which has the power to retard the growth of the Shadowlands Taint. All the monks at the monastery are themselves slightly Tainted, and maintain their purity through the combination of drinking the tea and pursuing a rigorous program of exercise, meditation, and prayer.

A few miles from the Sun's Blessing monastery is a small village, Taku no Mura, guarded and administered by a single family of Crab bushi. The village produces food for the monastery, whose residents put all of their own efforts into growing the Jade Petal herbs. Currently, this family consists of two brothers, Hida Shinra and Hida Tsutanai, and their mother, Hida Yuko. The father, Hida Ginya, died on the Wall several years ago.

Unfortunately, before his death, Ginya became mildly Tainted, and passed this Taint on to his wife. Her Taint did not become apparent until over a year after his death. When her sons realized that their beloved mother was showing signs of Fu Leng's touch, they were horrified. They knew that, as good Crabs, they should report her to the Witch-Hunters. But having already lost their father, the two young men (only barely past their gempukku) could not face losing their mother as well. They began stealing small quantities of Jade Petal Tea, hoping the treatment would save Yuko. Sadly, all it did was slow the growth of the Taint through her body. As her condition worsened, the two brothers tried to get more of the precious Tea, but found it difficult to acquire it in greater quantities without drawing suspicion on themselves.

A few days ago, Hida Tsutanai realized that he and his brother had also become Tainted. Terrified and desperate, he decided to attack and rob Yasuki Taka's supply wagon, hoping to get enough of the precious Tea to treat everyone in the family. But Tsutanai did not plan his attack well. One of the merchants on the wagon escaped, fleeing back to the monastery. Tsutanai pursued and, in a blind panic, slaughtered all of the monks before taking the wagon back to his home.

By the time he returned, the Taint had all but consumed his mother and brother. The village of Taku no Mura has become an evil wasteland.

PC's Introduction

The PCs have been recruited by Yasuki Taka to look into the failure of the latest Jade Petal Tea shipment to arrive at the Wall. Taka will give them directions to the Sun's Blessing Village and promises them valuable gifts in return for solving the problem.

In the winter, it takes two and a half days of difficult travel to reach the monastery. It snows during the second night the PCs spend on the road, incidentally covering any tracks which Hida (Foolish) left behind. The PC's first indication of what is wrong comes when they have a chance to discover the scene of (Foolish)'s ambush.

The Ambush Site

Have each PC roll **Hunting/Perception** at TN 20. Success means the PC notices several lumps under the snow to the side of the road. Digging through the snow discovers the frozen corpses of a half-dozen merchants. (If the PCs are not careful, they will touch the bodies, costing them a point of Honor.)

The bodies are clearly those of three commoners, albeit fairly healthy and well-fed commoners in simple but high-quality clothing. A **Commerce/Perception** or **Heraldry/Perception** roll at TN 15 will detect symbols on their garments marking them as vassals of the Yasuki family. The bodies all died from weapon strikes, a mixture of deep cuts and heavy bludgeoning attacks. Any bushi PC, and any other PC rolling **Battle/Intelligence** at TN 10, will recognize the characteristic effects of katana and tetsubo.

It will not be possible to find any tracks under the snow. However, any PC can roll

Commerce/Intelligence at TN 15 to know that wagons of this size usually have four people. The PCs can learn more if they have shugenja who can *Commune* with the elements.

There are Earth spirits, Air spirits, and Water spirits in the area, and all of them saw what happened. It will require two separate *Communes* (and asking the

right questions) to learn what happened: one to find out how the men died, and another to learn what happened to the wagon (the two incidents were far enough apart in time that the spirits do not connect them).

The attack: the spirits can describe/show a sudden attack in which a large bearded man in Crab armor leapt from the nearby underbrush and attacked the wagon. He quickly slew three of the merchants, but the fourth managed to get away and fled back up the road toward the monastery. The Crab pursued, leaving the other three dead beside the road.

The wagon: The same Crab (a large bearded man in grey-colored armor) came up the road. He was tired, limping, and covered in blood. He climbed onto the wagon and drove it off the road, away to the northeast.

Tracking?

It will not be possible to track the wagon from here (the snow has completely covered the ground). It is theoretically possible to repeatedly Commune with the spirits to track the wagon, but this will require a total of twenty-three successful castings of Commune.

Logically, the only place for the PCs to go is the monastery.

The Sun's Blessing Monastery

The sun is somewhat past midday when the PCs reach the monastery.

Light gleams on the fresh snow which covers the monastery complex, and lies in drifts against the buildings. At once you can see that something is wrong – no one has made any effort clear the snow or sweep clean the paths and walkways. The doors of the main monastery building stand open, and within all is dark.

Nothing is stirring anywhere in the compound, and inside the buildings all is cold and still. The half-frozen body of the fourth merchant lies a few paces inside the monastery door, sprawled face-down, slashed open with a katana. Scattered out from there are the bodies of the monks, some clearly struck down by surprise, others with signs of having fought before they perished (weapons in hands, etc). Dried blood coats the floor, and footprints in the blood lead

around the monastery to the bodies of other monks – including several young boys.

Clues

If the PCs search the entire monastery complex, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 (or Simple Perception at TN 25) to hear a faint moan coming from the bathhouse. This will lead them to Kyoumon (see “The Survivor” below).

Reviewing the footprints, positions and conditions of the corpses, and so forth, PCs can roll **Battle/Intelligence** or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 20 to deduce that the monks were slain in a panicked rush, the attacker racing from one to the next in panic.

If the PCs examine the bodies with closer attention, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to notice that one of them wrote “Taku no Mura” in his own blood. A **Lore: Crab Clan/Intelligence** roll at TN 20 (or a PC with Way of the Lands for Crab rolling **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25) will identify that as a small Crab village a few miles to the northeast.

Aside from the awful slaughter of the monks, the monastery has been left untouched, and the store-rooms where the Jade Petal Tea is kept have not been disturbed.

If any shugenja PCs *Commune* with the spirits here, they can get vivid descriptions (and visuals, from Water spirits) of a bearded man in gray armor chasing the merchant into the main building, killing him, then looking up to discover several monks staring at him. He raced through the complex slaughtering everyone he met. He was crying and shouting as he killed. Some of the monks fought back, and managed to hurt the Crab, but could not stop him. In the end, with everyone dead, the Crab sat weeping on the front porch for a time, then stood up and walked back down the road.

If the PCs watch any of this in the visions of Water spirits, they can attempt to read Hida Tsutenai's lips. This will require a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 30 (TN 15 if the PC has the Read Lips advantage). They will be able to puzzle out that he is shouting “I'm sorry, I'm sorry,” and “It's for Yuko-okaasan” (Yuka-momma).

The Survivor

PCs who track down the moaning from the bathhouse will discover a survivor curled up around the furnace

beneath the building (which is normally used to heat the water in the bath above). This is Kyoumon, a monk, whose Taint has allowed him to survive his wounds. If the PCs pull him out of his hiding place, they will see the following:

The monk's limbs do not want to unclench, and dried and frozen blood stiffens his simple garments. There is a deep slash in his torso, which looks as though it should be fatal, but he is clearly alive, albeit barely. His skin is pale and gray-tinged, and as you watch, a pale worm crawls out of his sundered flesh and inches across his shoulder.

Kyoumon is very weak, and badly Tainted – without the regimen of training, meditation, and Jade Petal Tea, his Taint has quickly grown out of control. When he speaks (in a weak, rasping voice with a bubbling undertone), the PCs can see that his teeth are sticking up out of blackened, rotting gums. He asks the PCs to kill him, “before the Dark One takes me.” However, if the PCs promise to slay him, he will answer a few questions beforehand.

- The attacker was Hida Tsutenai, a bushi from the nearby village of Taku no Mura, which supplies food to the monastery. He has come here often with the food deliveries.
- Kyoumon is far too weak to guide the PCs to Taku no Mura, but he can point out the path which leads there.
- He does not know why Tsutenai attacked the monastery. “He kept shouting that he was sorry... I think he mentioned something about his mother. I was not listening closely
- He knows Tsutenai had a younger brother, Shinra, and a mother, Yuka. Their father Ginya died on the walls a few years ago.
- The monks had the impression that Yuka was sick, although Tsutenai said it was nothing serious and declined their offer of help.

Once the PCs are ready to depart, Kyoumon will again beg them to slay him. The physical effects of his Taint will also grow steadily more horrible and grotesque as the conversation proceeds. If the PCs do not slay Kyoumon, he will vanish before anyone else can reach the monastery to help him.

To the Village

If the PCs follow the path which Kyoumon pointed out, they will reach Taku no Mura within two hours. If they do not get directions from Kyoumon, they will still be able to find the path by searching the area around the monastery.

If the PCs simply attempt to head northeast from the ambush site, they will need to roll

Hunting/Perception at TN 20 to find the village. Otherwise they will wander endlessly through the icy winter landscape.

Taku no Mura

As you approach the small village, you can see that something is very wrong. No smoke rises from the peasant huts, and no people are visible. You cannot even hear any oxen lowing from the barn at edge of the fields. Were it not for the excellent condition of the houses, you would guess that the village was abandoned.

On the far side of the village, you can see the outlines of a samurai dwelling at the edge of a small forest. There is the faintest wisp of woodsmoke rising from the large single-story house.

Any PC with the ability to detect Taint (Witch Hunters, rank two Moto bushi) will feel their skin prickling as they approach the village.

Brains...

As the PCs advance through the eerily silent village, they will see a dog come around the corner of a shack. The beast walks toward the PCs with a staggering, slouching gait. As it draws closer, the PCs see that its eyes are white and blank – it is dead, an animated corpse.

The moment the PCs slay the zombie dog (beheading it, blasting it with a spell, etc), a low inhuman moaning rises up all around them. Villagers come staggering out of the huts on every side. Some are clearly dead, their flesh gray and frozen, their eyes staring blankly. Others are alive, but emaciated and covered in bleeding sores, their eyes blazing with madness. There are more of them than can be counted easily. This is a Fear test (rank 3).

The entire village – more than three hundred people – have been corrupted and reduced to madness and undeath. The PCs do not have the resources to fight this horde. Fortunately, neither the villagers nor the

madmen are particularly quick, and if the PCs fight their way past the first eight opponents they will be able to stay ahead of the rest. Smart PCs will head for the samurai house.

House of Corruption

The house of the Hida family looks normal from a distance, but as you get closer you can see that something is terribly wrong: the snow which covers the ground everywhere else melts away on the ground around the house, leaving a circle of bare earth. The plants and grass on this bare earth have withered and died, leaving dried husks.

The merchant wagon sits in front of the house – the two ponies who pulled it now slump dead in their harness, their flesh rotting with unnatural speed despite the cold weather, fat pale worms boiling out of their eyes and mouths.

You can see pieces of armor scattered around the ground in front of the house.

The armor is from Hida Tsutenai, who tore it off in horror as he approached the house. If the PCs linger outside the house for more than a moment, the dead horses will begin to stir and strain against their harnesses. They will not be able to attack the PCs, who can choose whether to ignore or execute them. If they linger too long outside, the horde of zombies and madmen from the village will catch up with them.

Inside: Crab Hospitality

The PCs can theoretically resolve their mission by taking the wagon and fleeing. However, most samurai worth their salt will want to learn what has happened to Hida Tsutenai and his family.

Inside, the house is dark and uncomfortably warm. A heavy odor of blood and corruption hangs in the air. As the PCs look around, they will hear noises from farther inside – an agonized groan, a soft cooing sound, and a woman's low voice.

The noises, and the heat, comes from the kitchen, where the stove has been stoked to a high heat. Hida Tsutenai lies on the floor, pinned down by blades stuck through his wrists and ankles. His left arm is gone, a crude tourniquet binding off the stump. Blood and froth gurgles from his mouth – his tongue has been cut out. His eyes roll around wildly and grow wide as they see the PCs come in the room.

Behind Tsutenai is a heavy wood table where the servants would prepare meals. Hida Yuka and Hida Shinra stand behind the table. On the tabletop are various pieces of unidentifiable raw meat, along with a cleaver, several knives, and a wakizashi, all being used indiscriminately as butcher's tools.

Shinra is swollen and bloated, his flesh seeming to swell out past his clothing, his facial features sunken into folds of red-painted flesh. His face is set in an inane baby's smile. Yuka has gone in the other direction, her flesh shrinking back against her bones, her skin turning gray and flaky. Only scraps of her once-lustrous hair cling to her peeling scalp. Her eyes are milky white, although this does not seem to interfere with her vision.

Yuka is doing the butchering, and her arms are red to the elbows. She is feeding bits of raw flesh to Shinra with chopsticks. He gurgles and coos in an infantile manner as he eats, smacking his lips and gurgling. Yuka smiles benignly and says things like "that's a good boy, eat your dinner," and "we'll wash that down with some nice tea," as she feeds him.

The room is stiflingly hot, and the iron stove glows a soft red with heat. A copper teapot on the top lets off a steady cloud of steam. The floor of the room is coated in blood, and the heavily-butchered remains of the house servants are strung around the corners and hanging from the ceiling.

This scene requires a Fear 4 check. PCs who roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 20 will realize that Yuka and Shinra have become akutsukai (servants of evil).

Confrontation

Yuka will notice the PCs and smiles, bowing politely. "Look, Shinra-chan, we have guests. Isn't that nice?" The bloated, infantile monster coos happily, nodding in agreement.

If the PCs do not attack immediately, Yuka will engage in a grotesque parody of samurai hospitality, offering "tea" (boiling blood) from the pot on the stove-top. If the PCs ask what is going on, try to make her see what she is doing, and so forth, she will be confused and puzzled. "I've been ill lately, but now I'm feeling much better," she explains. "My boys have been trying to get medicine for me. They always taken good care of me, ever since their father left. Don't you, Shinra-chan?" She pats Shinra on the head.

Yuka does not recognize the writhing body on the floor as her son Tsutenai. “That? Oh, that’s some wild beast,” she says. “It tried to attack me. Luckily my Shinra-chan was able to capture it.”

Yuka will continue on in this horrible vein until the PCs finally lose patience and attack her (or flee). She is constantly radiating Taint, corrupting the land and people around her. Each round that the PCs are here, they must **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain 1 point of Shadowlands Taint.

Once a fight begins, Yuka will cry out in fury. “How could you! And after I welcomed you into my home! Shinra-chan, chastise them!” Shinra will obediently wade into the fight, clobbering the PCs with his huge blubbery fists. Yuka will attempt to hang back and “cheer him on” (using her Voice of Blood power), but if she is attacked or is Shinra becomes seriously hurt, she will extend black six-inch claws from her fingers and attack as well.

If the fight lasts longer than five rounds, the zombies and madmen from outside will begin breaking into the house.

If the PCs decide to flee, Yuka will not pursue, although she calls after the PCs that they are not welcome in her house again.

Hida Tsutenai is too badly wounded to join the fight if the PCs free him.

Aftermath

If the PCs kill Shinra, Yuka will scream “No, not my boys, my precious boys” and ferociously attacks whichever PC delivered the killing blow. If the PCs slay Yuka, she falls with a shriek; if Shinra is still alive, he begins howling, in an awful parody of a crying baby, and falls to his knees, holding her body and wailing, “Mama, mama.” He will not offer the PCs any further resistance.

Once the PCs slay Yuka, the Taint in the area will stop increasing, and the zombies and madman will lose direction and begin to wander around aimlessly. The PCs will be free to take the wagon and return to Shiro no Kaiu.

If the PCs rescue Hida Tsutenai, he will be half-insane with pain and grief, and will seek only to commit seppuku so he can die honorably and cleanse his awful error. If the PCs can heal his injuries and provide him with writing materials, he will explain what has happened to the best of his ability.

Regardless, once the Crab Clan is informed of what has happened, they will dispatch troops, shugenja, and witch-hunters to dispose of the blight which has overtaken Taku no Mura. If the PCs did not slay Hida Yuka, she vanishes by the time the Crab troops arrive.

NPCs and Monsters

Zombies

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

TN to be Hit: 5

Attacks: 1k1

Damage: 4k1 (club) or 3k1 (bare hands)

Carapace Armor: 7

Wounds: 60: Dead

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

Shadowlands Madmen

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

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 1.7

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0.3/0

Skills: Athletics 1, Craft: Firefighting 2, Intimidation 3, Tonfajutsu 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (commoner)

Equipment: Tonfa (1k2)

Hida Yuka, akutenshi

FIRE 3 Intelligence 4	AIR 4
EARTH 4	WATER 3

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Shadowlands Taint Rank: 5.6

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Shadowlands Rank 3

Wounds: 72: Dead.

Skills: Cooking 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Hand-to-Hand 5, Knife 6, Sincerity 2.

Special Abilities: Beyond the Elements (all non-maho spells targeting her are at +10 TN), Blackened Claws (claws from fingers do 3k3 damage, and get +5 initiative on the first round they are used), Invulnerable (jade or magic to harm her), Undead Strength (no wound penalties), Unearthly Regeneration (heals Taint Rank in wounds every minute), Voice of Blood (her words strike at the soul of the victim, requiring a Contested Willpower roll to avoid taking 1k1 damage and losing 1 Void point).

Equipment: Kimono, knife (2k1)

Hida Shinra, akutenshi

FIRE 1	AIR 2
Agility 4	Reflexes 3
EARTH 6	WATER 2
	Strength 4

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 6.7

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Shadowlands Rank 2

Wounds: 26: +3; 39: +6; 52: +10; 65: +15; 78: +20; 91: Down; 117: Dead.

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 6, Wrestling 7

Special Abilities: Blessing of the Dark One (+1 Wounds per rank), Uncanny Speed (roll and keep Taint rank in extra initiative dice every round), Unholy Strength (add Taint rank in dice to all Strength rolls, including damage rolls).

The Fall of the 5th Tower

This is a mini-adventure which will run once (only) over the course of the Interactive. All Crab PCs must participate in this adventure, as must any ronin PCs who have hired on with the Crab. Other Clan PCs may participate if they choose to do so.

Alarm!

The adventure begins when a messenger arrives for Hida Sukune, informing him that the 5th Tower of the Wall is under attack.

- If Sukune does not know about Kuni Yori's plots, he will order reinforcements sent to the 5th tower, but will not take any action himself. A second message will arrive, announcing that the tower is about to fall. At that point Sukune will prepare to go himself, and orders all Crab PCs and ronin working for the Crab to accompany him.
- If Sukune has been warned of Kuni Yori's plans, he will immediately set out for the 5th tower with all the strength he can muster. Again, he orders all Crab PCs and ronin working for the Crab to accompany him.
- In either case, Sukune will not ask any other non-Crab PCs to help him. Individual non-Crab PCs can volunteer to join the fight, subject to Sukune's approval. In general, there should not be more than 12 or so PCs participating in this fight, to keep it manageable.

A March into Darkness

Sukune leads the PCs on a fourteen-hour forced march south along the wall. It is a grueling, brutal march, carried out in the depths of winter, along a high fortification scoured by wind and coated with ice and snow. Other Crab join the march as it proceeds, and by the time Sukune reaches the 5th Tower, over a thousand troops accompany him.

All PCs (except for Crab Hida-school and Hiruma-school bushi) who march with Sukune must roll **Simple Stamina** at TN 15. Failure means they are unable to sustain the pace and arrive too late to participate in the battle.

The Battle of the Fifth Tower

As your march drives on into the dim hours past midnight and on into pre-dawn twilight, you begin to see light ahead – torches, the arcing paths of flaming arrows, explosions, and the glow of magic. The sounds of battle reach you as well, carried on the wind – a vast clamour, shouting bushi, screaming wounded, and the howls of things inhuman.

Sukune calls a halt and orders everyone to prepare their weapons and gear. "Ahead of us are the legions of Fu Leng, assaulting our brothers and sisters of the Fifth Tower! We come to their aid, and we will not fail!" A short, harsh cheer bursts from Crab throats. A moment later and you all are charging up the wall toward the beleaguered tower.

The Fifth Tower is surrounded and cut off by Shadowlands forces which have scaled the Wall. Thousands of goblins and zombies assault the tower from all sides, driven on by hulking ogres and horrific oni. Commanding the battle are Kyoso no Oni and several Dark Moto, although these fearsome individuals are for the most part remaining on the Shadowlands side of the Wall until the fight is finished.

The number of Crab troops trying to fight their way in and relieve the tower is surprisingly low. If anyone speaks with the local commanders, they learn that orders arrived a couple of weeks ago to reduce the garrison in this sector. The orders were not questioned – they came from Hida Kisada himself. "The Great Bear must have had a good reason, perhaps we are harder pressed elsewhere."

The Course of the Battle

How the battle proceeds will vary depending on whether Sukune came immediately or waited until the second report.

- If Sukune waited, the Crab are automatically Losing the battle on the first round, and the Shadowlands commander will get a +5 bonus to all Tides of Battle rolls for the entire battle. The battle will last four rounds – if the Crab have not won in that time, the tower falls. Go to “Defeat.”
- If Sukune came immediately, the battle is Even on the first round. The battle will last seven rounds, or until one side or the other wins, whichever occurs first. If the Crab lose, go to “Defeat.” If they win, or if the battle goes the full seven rounds, go to “Victory?”

To determine who is winning each round of battle after the first, roll the Tides of Battle. Sukune rolls 4k3, and has two Void points available to spend. Kyoso no Oni rolls 4k4. The Crab get +5 to the immediately subsequent roll for each successful Heroic Opportunity which the PCs perform, and for each Shadowlands Champion they slay as a result of Death Touches You results. The Shadowlands gets +5 to the immediately subsequent roll for each PC who is killed.

If the results are within 5 of each other, the battle is Even. If one side is beating the other by 5 or more, that side is Winning and the other side is Losing.

Heroic Opportunities

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

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

-1: Aid of the Spirits. You realize that the spirits of the Fifth Tower are being attacked by the Taint even as the Crab soldiers are attacked by the monsters of the Horde. Try to cast a *Commune* spell (Earth) with three Raises. If you are successful, the castle spirits are fortified and are able to repel the Taint (for now).

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

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

2: Evacuate the Wounded. Scores of wounded are trapped inside the Fifth Tower. Your assault has opened a path for them to withdraw, but the only ones available to help are a crowd of terrified commoners and eta. (The PCs must roll **Battle/Awareness, Oratory/Awareness, or Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15 to rally the commoners and evacuate the wounded.)

3. Burn Them All! You see a pair of Crab bushi preparing to dump a cauldron of burning pitch onto the hordes of goblins swarming up siege ladders to reinforce the assault on the Fifth Tower. Before the Crab can push over the vat, however, a massive sleet of goblin arrows rains down on them, skewering them in a hundred places. (The PC must roll **Simple Strength** at TN 15 to dump over the cauldron of pitch – the levers are broken. The PC will take 1k1 damage from touching the searing-hot cauldron. The goblins shriek horribly as they are roasted.)

4: What in the Fortunes' Name is That?! Roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Perception** at TN 15. With a success, you recognize an obscure Shadowlands monster and warn the Crab how to fight it. With your advice, they swiftly bring the creature down. Add +1 to your Battle Chart rolls for the rest of the combat.

5: They're Behind Us! As you pause and gasp for breath, you notice that a fresh huge crowd of goblins and ogres have burst out of a tunnel behind you and are about to cut you off. (The PC must roll **Battle/Willpower, Oratory/Willpower, or Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15 to point out the flankers to enough Crab troops to make a difference.)

6: Dark Kansen. Roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20. With a success, you notice a dark, twisted spirit clawing its way through the air toward Hida Sukune. (The PC must either warn Sukune, or strike down the spirit with a jade or crystal weapon or a spell. Thwarted, the dark spirit flees hissing, and Sukune nods grim thanks. If the PC fails to notice the danger or fails to act, Sukune will lose a Void point.)

7: This'll Stop Them. You are momentarily alone, surrounded by dead and dying Crab. A large ballista stands beside you. Ahead, a crowd of monstrous ogres stride toward you, chuckling and licking blood and matter from their clubs. (The PC must roll **Siege/Intelligence** or **Engineering/Intelligence** at TN 10, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20, to fire the Kaiu ballista. With a success, three of the ogres are impaled and the others retreat. Failure means the PC suffers a -3 on his next Battle Table roll.)

8: Cleanse the Cellars! The enemy has made it into the lower levels of the Fifth Tower, and Hida Sukune orders a counterattack to clear them out. The Crab around you nerve themselves, clutching their weapons, and then storm down the staircases, into a darkness which is alive with sharp teeth and claws. (The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 15 to force him/herself to make this desperate attack. Failure means the PC loses a point of Honor for cowardice.)

9: Fend off the Horde. You are cut off on an upper battlement of the Fifth Tower as siege ladders rise toward you one after the other. Goblins innumerable swarm up the ladders toward you. Resigning your soul to your ancestors, you keep hacking... and hacking... and hacking. (The PC must roll **[Weapon Skill]/Stamina** at TN 15 to slay all the attackers. Failure means the PC takes an additional two dice of Wounds over and above their normal Battle Table damage.)

10: Death Ride. As a monstrous Oni crests the battlements of the Fifth Tower, you leap forward and impale it. The creature topples off the tower and plummets down... carrying you with it. (To survive his/her ride, the PC must roll **Simple Agility** at TN 15. Failure means the PC takes 4k3 Wounds. Success means the PC stays atop the corpse as it lands, splattering scores of goblins and zombies. The PC gains +2 on all subsequent Battle Table rolls.)

Duel/Death Touches You

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

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

2: Left Behind. The PC is momentarily cut off in a corridor inside the tower, and the traps are activating. The PC must make four successful Simple Reflexes rolls at TN 15 to run out ahead of the traps. Each failed roll costs 3k2 wounds.

3: A Snack! An Oni no Tsuburu teleports in next to the PC and attempts to grab and eat him/her.

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

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

6: Shadowlands Champion: Goblin Warmonger (or possessed PC). A goblin warmonger conceives a personal hatred for the PC and challenges him/her to single combat. Use the stats from the end of the adventure. Alternatively, this can be a challenge from a PC possessed as a result of #5 above.

7: The Horror, the Horror. A Crab bushi ahead is striking down the enemy left and right, shouting courageous battle cries. Suddenly he shrieks in agony and convulses. A moment later his body erupts like some massive pustule, spraying everyone with blood and foul black ichor. The PC must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 15 (TN 10 for those with Death Trance) or

scream in horror, losing a number of Honor Points equal to his/her Honor Rank. The PC must also roll Simple Earth at TN 10 or gain 1 point of Taint.

8: Shadowlands Champion: Oni. An Oni no Shikibu singles out this PC for single combat. Use the stats from the end of the adventure.

9: Black Fire. Kyoso no Oni begins hurling blasts of dark fire at the Wall. The PC is targeted with a 7k5 attack which ignores armor. If it hits, the PC takes 3k2 damage and must roll Simple Void at TN 15 or lose a Void point. If this is the PC's last Void point, the PC falls unconscious.

10: Collapse. A portion of the Kaiu Wall has been weakened by tunneling Oni, and collapses beneath the PC. The PC tumbles off into the midst of the enemy, suffering 3k2 Wounds. On the next round of battle the PC is automatically Heavily Engaged.

Defeat

If the Crab lose the battle, the scene is as follows:

Hida Sukune stands exhausted and soaked in blood and filth, his face twisted in rage and grief. "The Fifth Tower is lost," he says in a choked voice. "Retreat, and form a defensive line. We cannot allow the creatures to get any farther into the Empire."

The battered Crab withdraw, leaving hundreds of their comrades dead or dying. However, the Shadowlands forces do not pursue. Instead they clamber over the Fifth Tower, capering and shrieking in victory. You can see several figures, including the Kyoso no Oni, on the roof lifting their arms in triumph. The very stones of the Tower seem to blacked and twist as the foul Taint of Fu Leng claims them.

Victory?

If the Crab win the battle, or outlast the seven-round battle, the scene is slightly different:

The battle at last seems to be dying down. Hida Sukune leans heavily on his battle standard, exhausted and soaked in blood and filth. "It seems we were in time—"

Suddenly you hear voices from the Shadowlands, raised in a strange and terrible chant. The ground heaves beneath your feet – and then a dark, twisted corruption begins to spread across the surface of the Fifth Tower. Jade powder hisses and smokes where it touches the rapidly corrupting stone.

Sukune's face twists in fury and grief, but his voice is steady. "Retreat now. This place has been Tainted. Our enemies have prepared for this well."

As the Crab forces sullenly withdraw from the Fifth Tower, its very shape seems to distort and corrupt from the massive Taint infesting the stones. You can see several figures, including the Kyoso no Oni, on the roof lifting their arms in triumph.

The PCs may take some comfort in the knowledge that the Crab casualties would have been much worse if they had lost the battle.

Monster Stats

Goblin Berserker

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

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 5k2 (sword)

Wounds: 30: Dead

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

Goblin Warmonger

FIRE 3	AIR 2
	Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2

TN to be Hit: 20 (15 without armor)

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 5k2 (sword)

Wounds: 15: +10; 30: Dead.

Ogre

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

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 8k2 (big club)

Carapace Armor: 7

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

Oni no Shikibu

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

TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 2k2

Damage: 2k1

Carapace Armor: 7

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

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

Oni no Tsuburu

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

TN to be Hit: 5

Attacks: 1k1 or Grapple (Contested Strength)

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

Carapace Armor: 20 (!!)

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

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