

Legend of the Five Rings™

ROLEPLAYING



BEGINNER GAME

In the Palace of the Emerald Champion



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Welcome to the Palace of the Emerald Champion!

The Story So Far

In the Palace of the Emerald Champion is a bonus adventure for the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Beginner Game*. It is designed to follow the events of *The Topaz Championship*, the adventure included in the *Beginner Game*.

During the events of *The Topaz Championship*, the Player Characters (PCs) underwent their *gempuku*, or coming-of-age ceremony, which consisted of a series of contests concerning athletic skills, martial prowess, and knowledge of Rokugan's history and culture. While there, they encountered a mysterious ghost and uncovered a plot to disrupt the tournament.

Their heroic actions attracted the notice of the Ruby Champion, who recommended them to become Emerald Magistrates. Now it is time for the PCs, who have become full samurai, to go to the palace of the Emerald Champion to begin their training and assume their new duties to the Emperor. The castle is filled with intrigue and danger, however, and their training may be the least of their worries.

If you are planning to act as Game Master, then read on to find out more. You should read through the entire adventure before beginning your first session. However, if you are planning to be a Hero Player in the adventure, please stop reading now in order to avoid spoiling any surprises.

GAME MASTER ONLY!

IF YOU ARE A HERO PLAYER, STOP READING HERE!

Only the GM should read the rest of this book prior to play. It contains secrets and surprises for the course of the adventure, and reading ahead can spoil the fun!



The Real Story So Far

During the last adventure, the PCs engaged in the *Topaz Championship* and hopefully foiled Bayushi Sugai's plot for revenge. These feats proved their worth in the eyes of Agasha Sumiko, the Ruby Champion; impressed by their heroism and commitment to justice, she recommended them to become Emerald Magistrates. They are set to go to the palace of the Emerald Champion, also known as Shiro Yogasha, for training. However, questions surrounding Doji Satsume, their ghostly visitor, still linger. Satsume, the previous Emerald Champion, died there, so this journey promises to reveal new secrets surrounding his shadowy past and mysterious death.

Note that if the PCs didn't successfully resolve the earlier events (such as failing to ensure Hitoshi completed his gempuku or stopping Sugai's plot), the GM should adjust encounters and reactions from characters accordingly.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

This adventure is divided into three Acts, which allows the PCs to further explore their abilities. It begins with several events that continue from the ending of *The Topaz Championship*, such as allowing the PCs to select their new adult names and receive gifts from their families.

Act 1: The Journey (page 10) takes place on the road from Tsuma to the Emerald Champion's castle. The journey takes several days and should be rife with conflict as the PCs travel the several hundred miles along dangerous terrain, proving their newfound skills against the measure of the open road. They once again encounter the ghost of the previous Emerald Champion and begin to unravel what he desires of them.

Act 2: The Castle (page 18) has the PCs immersing themselves in their training as Emerald Magistrates. Alongside their studies, however, Agasha Sumiko also commands the PCs to investigate Doji Satsume's murder. They must interview potential witnesses and suspects while gathering clues in order to piece together the truth. This takes place over four days, consisting of the day they arrive and then three days of training.

Act 3: The Findings (page 35) is when the PCs present their evidence to Sumiko, having debated about which version of the truth to tell. They must learn that the public truth and the private truth are sometimes vastly different—especially since their announcement could have far-reaching consequences concerning the fate of many in Rokugan. This portion of the adventure lasts one day, when the PCs become Emerald Magistrates and present their findings.

USING THE MAP OF THE CASTLE

The Beginner Game includes a map of the Castle of the Emerald Champion, which the GM should allow the players to examine. This should be a useful tool for them to plan out the locations they wish to investigate for clues, or places to arrange rendezvous for meetings. The players may notice the secret room at the lower right side. If they question the GM about it, though, the GM should remind the players it would be dishonorable to act on such information they (as players) have gained. Their Player Characters will need to find the clues that reveal the location on their own!

BEGINNING A NEW SESSION

In general, a roleplaying adventure is played by a group of people who meet several times, days or even weeks apart. Each time the group gathers to play the game for a few hours is called a "session." *The Topaz Championship* probably took your group one or two sessions. *In the Palace of the Emerald Champion*, on the other hand, might take three or more sessions to complete.

You can think of sessions of a roleplaying game as episodes of an ongoing television show. At the beginning of each session, it can be helpful to recap what happened in the previous session, just as many television shows do. Sometimes a new session picks up the events of the adventure at the very moment the previous session left off (especially if it ended on a cliff-hanger!). At other new sessions, hours, days, or even longer can be assumed to have passed in game time. Here are some steps you should take at the beginning of each session:

- ⊗ Make sure everyone has had a chance to spend any experience points (XP) received at the end of the previous session.
- ⊗ Allow everyone to recover strife if they didn't already do so at the end of the previous session (assuming the session ended with the conclusion of a scene).
- ⊗ If a considerable amount of in-game time has passed, allow characters to recover fatigue and make attempts to heal critical strikes.
- ⊗ Recap the important points of the story, so that everyone remembers what is going on and what the group's goals are.
- ⊗ If enough in-game time has passed, it can be fun and help support the narrative to ask each player what their character has been doing during the downtime.

NEW RULES

This adventure includes new rules to expand on those in the Beginner Game. These will be introduced as they come up, just like in *The Topaz Championship*.

COMPLICATIONS

These are introduced on page 12 of the Rulebook, and this adventure includes complications for each PC. Each PC has one complication (and possible events that can introduce them) described as follows, but GMs can create new ones to add as well. Using these is not necessary for the adventure, but it's highly encouraged as they will allow players to add flavor and emotion to their roleplaying experience.

Remember that no matter who introduces a new complication, each character can have only one complication per game session—though a character’s turmoil can always come up whenever the GM and player see fit.

- ✦ **Akodo Masako:** Her brother Akodo Kiruhage is here! And everyone likes him! This complication can occur when Masako learns of Kiruhage’s presence at the castle, likely during breakfast the day after arrival (see page 25).
- ✦ **Bayushi Kyo:** Kyo knows their sensei has sent a secret missive to them, but a fellow PC (or an NPC) has unknowingly intercepted it. This complication can arise when the PCs visit the henney (see page 26) or the cave (see page 26) and search for clues. The missive is unimportant, but Kyo won’t know this until they retrieve it.
- ✦ **Doji Ren:** He overhears Mantis samurai bragging about the ease of “procuring” Crane trade goods. This complication can occur during the Festival of Millet (see page 27), which several Mantis merchants also attend.
- ✦ **Hida Sugi:** Everyone avoids talking to her, afraid she will attempt to recruit them for the Wall. This complication can happen during any of the training sessions as the instructor and other students avoid talking with her.
- ✦ **Isawa Aki:** The unhappy anniversary of Isawa Juriko’s death approaches, requiring some kind of memorial. This complication can occur whenever there is serious talk of death, such as when the PCs talk with Doji Hotaru about Doji Satsume, her late father.

VETERAN PLAYERS

If the GM and players are veterans of *Legend of the Five Rings* gameplay, you may wish to run this adventure in a more open style. As the GM, this means allowing the players to have more control over the investigation and its outcome. This can include other suspects being identified as the murderer, and the GM allowing for the Ruby Champion to arrive at other decisions based on the strength of the PCs’ findings and plans for continuations of the campaign.

You can also include the **Razor-Edged** quality to katana used in the game, as described on page 25 of the Rulebook. Whenever a character inflicts a critical strike with a Razor-Edged weapon, the target suffers the Bleeding condition (see page 38 of the Rulebook) in addition to any other effects.

- ✦ **Shinjo Takuya:** Doji Chikaze has spread rumors about him, and they have reached the ears of everyone in the castle. This complication can come about as other NPCs, such as the Jealous Emerald Magistrates (see page 30), encounter Takuya.
- ✦ **Togashi Yoshi:** He thinks he sees a glimpse of Kaie in the castle’s library. This complication can arise when Yoshi visits the library to study, ideally when he is alone. Yoshi may also be eager to learn more of the Perfect Land Sect from peasants at the castle; should the GM wish to explore this, then Oji (see page 26) can have secret beliefs in the sect.

Other complications the GM or players could devise include:

- ✦ Receiving a letter from a loved one the character has not seen in some time
- ✦ Realizing that a masked enemy is, in fact, the character’s long-lost sibling
- ✦ Encountering the haunting scent of a perfume often worn by the character’s deceased friend
- ✦ Running into a character’s secret lover somewhere the two cannot acknowledge each other
- ✦ Spotting an obvious reminder of one’s unfulfilled oath to bring an enemy of the clan to justice
- ✦ Noticing a chance to pursue one’s desire or duty—at cost to the group’s current goal





WHAT IS AN EMERALD CHAMPION?

The Emerald Champion is the Emperor's chief administrator. The samurai who holds this title enforces Imperial law, appoints Emerald Magistrates, oversees the ministries of the Imperial bureaucracy, and protects the Imperial City and the Emperor himself by leading the Imperial Legions.

The most recent Emerald Champion was Doji Satsume, whose remorseful ghost sought to make right his life's wrongs during the events of the Topaz Championship, with the PCs help. Unfortunately, his reputation is a mixed account. Despite his prowess as a master duelist and his many years of efficacious service to the Emperor, Satsume was largely unpopular among both his administration and his own family. His severity often bordered on cruelty, his justice was ever without mercy, and many believe his heartlessness drove his wife, Doji Teinko,

to an unfortunate end. Satsume's own death was sudden and unexpected, but as no foul play was detected it was ruled to be from natural causes. However, in Rokugan, this could simply suggest the use of undetected poison.

Agasha Sumiko, whom the PCs met at the Topaz Championship, is filling in as acting Emerald Champion. She has served as the Ruby Champion for several years, and she appears to regret taking over Satsume's position, even temporarily, as she respected him and his dedication to the Empire. Though not nearly as harsh as her predecessor, Sumiko carries on Satsume's legacy as a strict and objective administrator.

The new Emerald Champion has yet to be determined, and the Emerald Championship tournament is currently being planned in Otosan Uchi.

OFFICIAL ADULTHOOD

Having passed their gempuku, the PCs are now officially recognized as adult samurai. As such, each adopts an adult name and receives valuable gifts from their family.

ADULT NAMES

Each player can select an adult given name from the six provided below for their character, or they can create their own. Alternatively, if desired, the GM can skip this section, and each player can keep the name used in their character folio.

- ✿ **Akodo Masako:** Chise, Chiyo, Runa, Setsuko, Tomoka, Yumako
- ✿ **Bayushi Kyo:** Ietsuna, Inoue, Kimiko, Shōzō, Shusui, Yūgao
- ✿ **Doji Ren:** Kenza, Nobuhito, Seiku, Shuzaku, Sukeyasu, Tadamasu
- ✿ **Hida Sugi:** Isami, Kogimi, Mikka, Mushanokōji, Sawako, Terao
- ✿ **Isawa Aki:** Kurumi, Madoka, Nokiba, Tarō, Taya, Yaeko
- ✿ **Shinjo Takuya:** Ichizō, Iyonosuke, Kazashi, Oyuun, Shun'ichi, Tameyoshi
- ✿ **Togashi Yoshi:** Akashi, Jūrōbei, Keishi, Kofuyu, Nakamaru, Toyoharu

GIFTS

The PCs are presented with their *daishō* and other new weapons as part of their gempuku. A *daishō* consists of a *wakizashi*, or short sword, and one other weapon, usually a katana. See **Chapter 3: Equipment** on page 22 of the Rulebook for the profiles for these weapons, and have the players record this information in their character folios.

If a player desires, some PCs can choose another weapon instead of a katana; these weapons are in the Rulebook as well. Note that no matter what, each PC always has a *wakizashi* as this is their formal indication of being a samurai.

- ✿ Hida Sugi can choose a *tetsubō*, a large, two-handed club (Damage 7, Range 1).
- ✿ Shinjo Takuya can choose a Unicorn scimitar (Damage 4, Range 1) and *yumi* (bow) (Damage 5, Range 2–5) with a quiver of arrows.

If the GM permits, players can select any one weapon that costs 20 koku or less instead of their katana. (Privately tell Bayushi Kyo's player that the heavy linen wrapped around their katana contains two hidden vials of poison; if they select another weapon, then the poison is included with that weapon.)

Each PC also gains a suit of armor with the Resistance (2) quality. This reduces the damage the character would suffer from an attack or other effects by 2 (see page 25 of the Rulebook).

In addition, each clan presents the PC from that clan with a ceremonial gift celebrating their advancement into adulthood. Read the information on their gift aloud to each player.

- ✿ Akodo Masako (Lion): A pole banner with the Lion *mon* (emblem)

The fury of battle can discourage even the bravest of fighters. This banner serves as a reminder not only of the clan you fight for, but of those who fought before you. With their ancestors behind them, a samurai never stands alone.

- ✿ Bayushi Kyo (Scorpion): A small packet of chrysanthemum seeds

As seeds, these have no purpose, only potential. It is duty that drives one to plant them properly so that they flourish and grow. Let them be a reminder to keep duty to the Throne in your heart at all times.

- ✿ Doji Ren (Crane): A tiny golden mirror

Mirrors are necessary to ensure one's appearance to others is as perfect as one's manners and actions. A Crane must at all times embody perfection, after all.

ACCEPTING GIFTS

Gift-giving and receiving etiquette is an essential part of Rokugani culture, as gifts imply special relational responsibilities. Accepting one often creates a sense of unfulfilled obligation.

Gifts are initially refused twice out of politeness to the giver. If the giver insists, then the receiver will accept the gift, acknowledging their new obligation to their generous benefactor. If appropriate, gifts can be repaid with reciprocal gifts. In the case of a gempuku gift, this obligation should create a deeper sense of responsibility and loyalty to the new samurai's family and clan.

- ☼ Hida Suki (Crab): A small jade talisman

Carved to a point, the stone is meant to serve as protection both spiritual and physical. The sharp end can be used in a pinch to end the life of some horrid creature from the Shadowlands; however, when worn around the neck, the talisman serves as a constant reminder that danger and duty are always nearby.

- ☼ Isawa Aki (Phoenix): Six small nashi pears

Six fruits serve to remind a samurai how the elements are responsible for all life. No matter how beautiful or delicious, all life is fleeting. The pears are tasty but temporary.

- ☼ Shinjo Takuya (Unicorn): A satchel of dried meat and a goatskin for water (or sake!)

The mark of a Unicorn is freedom, but there are two chains they can never be free from: food and water. These are all one needs to choose one's own course, and with ample supply, all the world is one's pasture.

- ☼ Togashi Yoshi (Dragon): Agarwood incense sticks

Smoke and meditation are two keys in finding wisdom. Gempuku is when the body comes to life for the first time, and incense awakens the soul. As a dragon breathes smoke and is enlightened, so it should be with all in the Dragon Clan.

Each family also provides their PC with a small gift to present to the Ruby Champion when the PCs arrive at the castle. These gifts are sealed, and the PCs are warned to leave them so until they are presented.

At some point before their journey to the castle, the Player Character also restock their traveling packs so that each contains a small tent, a blanket, a bowl, flint and tinder for starting fires, chopsticks, and plenty of travel rations.

EMERALD TENSIONS

Doji Satsume's death left an intense power vacuum, and every Great Clan awaits the upcoming Emerald Championship tournament to decide his successor. This has heightened clan tensions throughout the Emerald Empire as samurai attempt to outdo or humiliate their rivals in hopes of gaining an advantage over potential competitors.

Despite these conflicts, almost no one wants to see another Crane as Emerald Champion. Doji Satsume was infamously strict, even cruel, in his position of power, and many parties had strong motives for wanting him removed. Such universal dislike fuels the gossip regarding Satsume's death, suggesting that even though no foul play was discovered, the Grinning Crane (so named for his distinctive scar) surely had enough enemies to become a target of some kind of plot. The Great Clans would love to see Satsume's legacy diminished or even destroyed, and in turn, they would love to blame each other for the deed. In the meantime, the Ruby Champion—Agasha Sumiko of the Dragon Clan—is currently also acting as the Emerald Champion, and many of her rivals are likewise eager to watch her fail.

Many people are content with publicly claiming that Satsume died of natural causes, even if they believe the real cause was murder, in order to keep the peace. The introduction of scandal, heresy, dishonor, and crime into the story behind the sudden death of the second most powerful person in Rokugan could certainly send the Empire into chaos.

The PCs might choose to follow their own clan's rivalries with the Crane or the Dragon, but they might instead adopt a more loyal attitude toward their Emperor and his servants. Either way, their opinions are sure to cause strain in their relationships with samurai from the other Great Clans.

Clan Rivalries

The GM can also include some of the current rivalries between clans through their families. This can also be learned through their clan representatives when they arrive at the castle or at other points during the adventure if desired.

- ☼ The Lion and the Crane are in conflict due to the dispute over which clan should possess the city of Toshi Ranbo.
- ☼ A Crane family defected to the Crab Clan long ago, but the Crane still haven't forgiven this insult.
- ☼ The Crab and the Dragon argue over the level of support the latter clan offers against the threats of the Shadowlands, which the Crab wage an endless war against.
- ☼ The Unicorn and the Phoenix have disputes over their rival methods of invoking the spirits; the former uses means they learned while they were outside of Rokugan called *meishōdō* which the Phoenix say is heretical and dangerous.
- ☼ The Lion and the Unicorn are threatening each other because Shinjo Altansarnai of the Unicorn recently rejected Ikoma Anakazu of the Lion in an arranged marriage, thus angering the Lion.
- ☼ And, of course, no one trusts the Scorpion Clan.

SPENDING XP

If they haven't already, the players can now spend the 4 XP they each gained at the end of the Beginner Game adventure. Note they do not have to spend that XP immediately; they can accumulate it if they wish so that they can afford more expensive character upgrades later.

Gazetteer: The Castle of the Emerald Champion

The castle of the Emerald Champion, formally known as Shiro Yogasha, is a magnificent edifice. Even amid the other castles in Crane lands, it stands out. This section covers the castle and many of the locations within it, along with the area surrounding it. GMs should feel free to modify this information as desired should they wish to use some locations for other purposes, or to add information to locations as part of their own plot ideas.

The castle is the headquarters for two vital offices: the Emerald Champion and the Ruby Champion.

Office of the Emerald Champion

The Emperor's chief administrator, the Emerald Champion oversees the enforcement of Imperial laws throughout Rokugan through their Emerald Magistrates. Emerald Magistrates investigate crimes concerning Imperial Law (and can also mete out punishments), and answer only to the Emerald Champion and the Emperor himself. The Emerald Champion also commands the Imperial Legions, the Emperor's standing army.

Office of the Ruby Champion

Known for having excellent knowledge of Rokugani society, history, and tradition, as well as for having considerable martial skill, the Ruby Champion supervises the training of new Emerald Magistrates and maintains the scrolls codifying Imperial law. Acting as second-in-command to the Emerald Champion, the Ruby Champion is usually chosen from among the Emerald Magistrates through a tournament and maintains their own estate at Shiro Yogasha.

THE CASTLE

Shiro Yogasha, the castle of the Emerald Champion, has been the primary home of the Emerald Champion for centuries. The stronghold is located on a hill bordered by wide, empty plains, making the approach of visitors or enemies visible far in advance. Inside the castle walls are numerous courtyards and spacious halls, and the buildings' sloped roofs are topped with glistening, emerald-colored tiles. The luxurious grandeur of the main keep suits the prestigious office that commands it.

Castle Locations

The map of the castle includes a great many locations for the adventure. Some have specific plot tie-ins, serving as the locations for clues or scenes, while others are there for the GM to use in other events of their devising.

- ✦ **Emerald Champion's Rooms:** Located in the topmost tower, these rooms house the Emerald Champion and their immediate family members. A new champion is expected to leave their family home behind and move with their spouse, young children, and other dependents into these apartments and the family quarters.

- ✦ **The Emerald Archives:** These archives store the Emerald Champion's records and personal references. They provide a detailed history of past and current Emerald Champions' projects and achievements.
- ✦ **Private Dining Hall:** The dining room for the Emerald Champion, their family members, and occasional guests.
- ✦ **Audience Room:** A small chamber for the Emerald Champion's private meetings and other functions.
- ✦ **Family Quarters:** A larger living space for the Emerald Champion's family members, often housing the champion's children and other dependents.
- ✦ **Servants' Quarters:** For convenience, these are located on the same floor as the kitchen and directly beneath the family quarters.
- ✦ **Holding Cells:** Furnished with dozens of thick wooden cages, the holding cells are outfitted for both criminals and prisoners of war. Since Shiro Yogasha is the seat of Imperial law, these have housed some of Rokugan's most infamous prisoners before their trials in the Court of Judgment.
- ✦ **Granary and Storage:** There are two of these rooms, one located beneath the dining hall and the other below the holding cells. Both have several entrances and hold enormous quantities of food and provisions for everyday use and in case of siege. Their dark, cool recesses contain thousands of wood and straw barrels, stoneware pots and jars, ceramic bottles, and sacks filled with rice, wheat, pickled and fermented vegetables, salted and dried fish and squid, cooking oil, wines, animal feed, and more.
- ✦ **Secret Room:** The granary and storage room below the holding cells is connected to a secret room below via a trapdoor hidden underneath a heavy barrel near a sack of feed grain. This location is used for clandestine meetings and storing illicit items. Doji Satsume (and his Emerald Champion predecessors) knew of it, but they never told Agasha Sumiko, so she remains unaware.
- ✦ **Hennery:** The hennery is a tiny, innocuous shed where hens and chicks are raised. A wizened peasant named Oji tends to it twice a day to feed the birds and gather eggs. No one would ever think it was also being used as a dead drop location for secret messages.
- ✦ **Kitchen:** This sizable chamber is fully stocked to meet the Emerald Champion's diplomatic and daily needs for food and to feed the castle's soldiers.
- ✦ **Conference Halls:** The conference halls are spaces for larger, private meetings that do not require public audiences, such as when the Emerald Champion confers with the Emerald Magistrates or with the commanders of the Imperial Legion.
- ✦ **Training Dōjō:** Often called the Emerald Dōjō, this is a practice space reserved for the Emerald Champion, their *yōjimbō* (bodyguard), and senior Imperial Legion members who are stationed at Shiro Yogasha.

- ✧ **Cave:** This small and unassuming cavern, which seems to wind to an end after a few dozen yards, is a popular location for students seeking quiet isolation. Characters can move aside a large stone in the rear, to reveal a cramped tunnel that leads to the other side of the castle complex. This allows people to exit and enter the grounds unseen.
- ✧ **Stables (on other side of main gate):** A large shelter for housing horses and oxen.
- ✧ **Library:** This room houses Rokugan's largest collection of historical and reference documents regarding Imperial law. Its thousands of scrolls and books, some over a thousand years old, are meticulously maintained by librarians under the command of the Ruby Champion.
- ✧ **Dining Hall:** The main dining room for most of the castle's inhabitants.
- ✧ **Court of Judgment:** An outdoor courtroom located in a thickly walled, austere stone courtyard, the Court of Judgment is where justice is meted out. There, the Emerald Champion presides over only the most important trials: those involving the most flagrant and disgraceful abuses of Imperial law, which makes this court the primary wellspring of Rokugan's most scandalous gossip.
- ✧ **Armory:** A long, narrow room that runs along the Court of Judgment, the armory is where weapons are made, stored, maintained, and repaired. It is fully stocked with a vast variety of arms, which are mostly for display and training, as the castle has never been attacked in recorded history. Indeed, the castle has little in the way of defenses, as an attack by one clan would surely trigger the others to strike at that clan in retribution.
- ✧ **Ruby Champion's Estate:** These rooms are similar to the Emerald Champion's rooms, though they are smaller and have less room for dependents and retainers.
- ✧ **Audience Hall:** This is the main hall reserved for public audiences. It is luxurious enough to hold court, should the Emperor visit the castle.



- ✧ **Room of Law:** The private office space of the Emerald and Ruby Champions, the Room of Law is where Imperial law is written, updated, and revised.
- ✧ **Barracks:** Sleeping quarters for the soldiers of the Imperial Legion stationed at the castle.
- ✧ **Gardens of Verdant Serenity:** Occupying the main decorative courtyard, the Gardens of Verdant Serenity come complete with a koi pond and a stream that flows from a spring deep within the hill. The gardens feature trees, shrubs, and flowers representative of the various regions of Rokugan.
- ✧ **Courtyard of Punishment:** This courtyard is a private space reserved for executions and ceremonial suicides. The castle retains an executioner from the lowly *hinin* class for such occasions.
- ✧ **Visiting Magistrates' Quarters:** These are guest rooms for Emerald Magistrates when they visit the castle. New Emerald Magistrates stay here during their training.
- ✧ **Ruby Dōjō:** The primary dōjō for Emerald Magistrates, here special weapons and dueling techniques devised by past Emerald Champions are passed down by numerous sensei.
- ✧ **Dignitaries' Quarters:** These rooms are reserved for higher-caste visitors, including messengers and vassals.
- ✧ **Training Yard:** An immaculately maintained courtyard used for outdoor martial practice.
- ✧ **Entrance Hall:** The main foyer and designated place to receive expected visitors. Stewards usually greet guests here before taking them to the appropriate location in the keep.
- ✧ **Main Gate:** The enormous entryway into the palace complex, the main gate includes gatehouse quarters for guards in its upper floors. Its front gate proudly bears the Imperial Chrysanthemum, signifying the castle's dedication to the Empire, an association that transcends any clan affiliation.
- ✧ **Room of Questioning:** The Room of Questioning is where strangers and unexpected visitors are properly identified and then questioned upon arrival. Occasionally, such visitors are denied entrance to the castle, sometimes violently.

Outside the Castle

Not far from Shiro Yogasha sits Takahara Village. Its residents enjoy the protection of the Emerald Champion; in return, they care for the fertile farmland that feeds the castle. Beyond the village lie the Plains of the Emerald Champion, the empty grass fields that give the castle's lookout towers their panoramic view. Any force that might threaten the castle can be easily spotted long before they would arrive, yet another reason why the castle has never been attacked.

Act 1: The Journey

The adventure begins as the PCs prepare for their journey to Shiro Yogasha. The castle is roughly six hundred *li* (about two hundred miles) to the north of Tsuma (the location of the Topaz Championship), or around eight days of travel on foot. The main road leading to the castle is under repair, so the PCs must use a rougher path. This route is shorter in distance, so they still reach their destination on time. The roughness means that a faster pace on horseback won't be possible, though they can still ride at a walking pace if they have steeds. It is unlikely that any of the PCs except the Unicorn has a horse or pony, however. Note that if any PCs were injured earlier in Tsuma, it is assumed enough time has passed for full recoveries.

The PCs might want to stop at Otosan Uchi or Loyalty Castle along the way, as the map shows those locations as possible resting places. However, the GM should make it clear that they are expected to reach Shiro Yogasha promptly, and such detours would make them late.

SCENES ALONG THE JOURNEY

The journey should include several encounters unless the players wish to finish the adventure quickly (they might want to complete it in a single evening, for example). Ideally, the GM should present at least one scene, to show not only that travel in Rokugan can be dangerous but also that the PCs are capable samurai now and can deal with such hazards. Some may lead the PCs to suspect that someone is setting these threats against them, either to eliminate them or to slow them down. The following sections detail encounters the GM should include as the characters travel to Shiro Yogasha, along with optional ones should the players desire additional scenes or that the GM can use in other adventures.

These encounters, as well as all the others in this adventure, use the rules on page 28 of the Rulebook for determining initiative. Each will instruct the GM which checks to use, as well as if characters add their focus or vigilance to the result.

A FAMILIAR FACE

After a few hours on the road, the PCs encounter Ryu, the same peasant they met at the beginning of the previous adventure. He is also on the road to the castle, returning to his duties there. He is transporting some goods he picked up in Tsuma. Ryu still has his cart, but it is not as full as when they met him last. If the PCs treated him well earlier, he offers to add their packs to the cart and provides useful information about the path (he used it to travel from the castle to Tsuma). If they didn't, the PCs can still order him to carry their packs and question him for information, but he won't volunteer anything.

Encounter Complication: The PCs may notice that Ryu's cart still has a few of Doji Satsume's belongings in it, which they recognize from their previous interaction with his ghost. Ryu can also be a complication during combats, where the PCs may feel obligated to protect him as part of the Bushidō tenet of Courtesy.

RYU, PEASANT SERVANT

Ryu has grown up in Tsuma, but has lived most of his adult life at Shiro Yogasha in service to the Emerald Champion. He has been spending most of his time recently transporting items belonging to his late master from the castle, often to Tsuma where he met the PCs outside of the town. He remembers them well, either fondly or with apprehension depending on how things went.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
20 HONOR		ENDURANCE	4
25 GLORY		COMPOSURE	4
15 STATUS		FOCUS	3
		VIGILANCE	2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 0	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 2
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WEAPONS AND GEAR

Walking Stick: Damage 2; Range 1–2.

Gear: Peasant garb, cart and pony, meager handful of zeni.

NPC ABILITY: KNOWS THE ROAD

Ryu has made the trek between the Emerald Champion's castle and Tsuma many times over his life. Should the PCs treat him well, he can offer the best spots to rest at the end while on the road. This allows each PC to remove one additional strife when removing strife at the end of each scene.



TERRAIN

The journey to the castle provides an excellent opportunity to introduce terrain features into games. These can help bring Rokugan to life as a land of both wonders and dangers. GMs can add these to encounters as desired, or even make travel through such terrain an encounter on its own.

Each terrain feature occupies a number of range bands around a particular position, as determined by the GM. A terrain feature can be as small as extending to range 0 (arm's length) in all directions from that point, or it can be much larger; it can even stretch unevenly in different directions.

While characters are within the boundaries of a terrain feature, they are subject to the effects of its terrain quality or qualities. Qualities a terrain feature might have are as follows:

DANGEROUS

Dangerous terrain is physically hazardous to enter or even linger in.

Effects: Whenever a character performs a check while within Dangerous terrain, the character suffers damage equal to the number of ☉ symbols on their kept dice.

Examples: Fire, intense cold, thawing ice, steep inclines, jagged rocks, an uncovered foundation, rubble.

ENTANGLING

Entangling terrain is ground that seriously hampers the mobility of anyone within it.

Effects: While within Entangling terrain, a character increases the TN of all their checks to move and for Movement actions by 2.

Examples: Sucking mud, briar patches, deep snow, icy ground, moving water.

IMBALANCED

(ONE OR MORE ELEMENTS)

Imbalanced terrain is marked by a distinct absence or disquiet of the *kami* (spirits) of a certain element, and thus some abilities are harder to use in such a location. This is supernatural terrain (terrain that is a result of supernatural abilities or from unnatural occurrences) and is found in regions affected by an elemental imbalance.

Effects: While within Imbalanced terrain, a character increases the TN of their Meditation and Theology checks using the terrain's specified ring by 1. The lack of *kami* also means that Otherworldly beings increase the TN of their checks to resist supernatural abilities that target them by 1, or 2 if they are using the specified ring.

Examples: A forest mysteriously missing its leaves, a barren farm field, an out-of-control river.

OBSCURING

Obscuring terrain limits the visibility of (and to) anyone within, making it very difficult to land strikes.

Effects: Increase the TN of all Attack checks targeting characters within Obscuring terrain by 1. A character within Obscuring terrain generally cannot see beyond range 2 of their current position into the Obscuring terrain (though they can generally see out of it if they are within range 2 of an edge). A character outside of Obscuring terrain cannot see into it beyond range 2 of the edge.

Examples: Dense foliage, darkness, cramped indoor quarters, heavy rain or snow, choking smoke.

BANDITS!

In this encounter, a group of bandits ambushes the PCs shortly after they leave Tsuma, perhaps on the second day of their travel. This gives the PCs their first real chance to test their martial skills against a band of deadly enemies as well as their ability to adhere to Bushidō despite fighting those who do not.

As the PCs approach the ambush point, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

Several farmers in patched clothing slouch along the side of the road in the shade of a tree. Few meet your eyes, but those who do show deep resentment. The low hum and whispered heckling of their conversation concerns you, since they do not appear to show you the respect your station deserves. According to the social rules of your class, you have a right to teach them some respect. However, to do so might offend their lord, which would delay your journey.

If the PCs take any time to debate whether to discipline the farmers, the "peasants" should spring to their feet and attack them, revealing that they are actually bandits. Several more climb from a nearby irrigation ditch to join the fray. There should

be one for each PC, plus their leader Goro. If the PCs strongly combat-oriented, add one additional bandit to the group.

Determine initiative order by having the PCs make a **TN 1 Tactics check**, then adding their vigilance to the number of bonus successes on the check. Roll the same check for Goro, but add his focus (instead of vigilance) as he was ready for the attack. Half of his bandits have an initiative of 2, and the other half have 3. The area is clear, but the area outside of the road is filled with unstable rocks and ditches, and so is Dangerous (see the **Terrain** sidebar). The road is quite wide here, about 15 feet (range 3).

The encounter shouldn't take long, as the bandits weren't expecting samurai who could put up a fight. As the PCs gain the upper hand (such as by felling more than half of the bandits), Goro (or another bandit if Goro has already fallen) calls for retreat, and the bandits flee in separate directions. If any bandits are captured, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The bandits—obvious cowards, each of them—claim that they were hired to attack you. They do not know the identity of their employer, having only conversed with a cloaked messenger whose face was covered. The messenger gave no reason for the ambush, merely offering them silver in exchange for the deed.

The PCs can turn any captured bandits over to a patrol of samurai from a nearby town, who show up shortly. The patrol was tracking the bandits earlier and had learned they were set to attack someone today. They gladly take the bandits, thanking the PCs for their aid (award the PCs 4 glory each in this case). Alternatively, as full samurai the PCs are entirely within their rights to simply execute the bandits.

Encounter Complication: The PCs may be tempted to beat the truth out of the ruffians. However, to do so would be strictly against Bushidō tenets of Compassion and Courtesy. Even under duress, though, they still don't reveal anything as they simply do not know who hired them.

GORO THE BANDIT LEADER

Goro became leader of this bandit group through cunning and guile. He specializes in targeting travelers on isolated roads, his scouts identifying easy targets in advance. Sometimes, though, he accepts tougher assignments if there is enough koku involved.

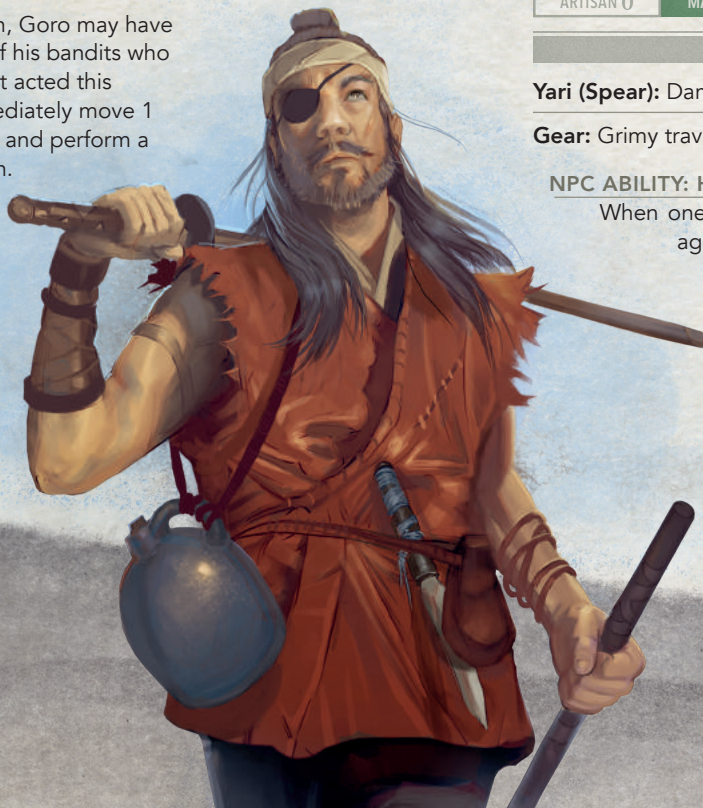
SOCIETAL		PERSONAL		
10 HONOR		ENDURANCE 9		
15 GLORY		COMPOSURE 8		
3 STATUS		FOCUS 6		
+2, -2 DEMEANOR - AMBITIOUS		VIGILANCE 3		
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1
WEAPONS AND GEAR				

Rusted Katana: Damage 4; Range 1.

Gear: Thick traveling clothes, sake jug (full), knife, handful of bu.

NPC ABILITY: ...GET THEM, FOOLS!

As an action, Goro may have up to two of his bandits who have not yet acted this round immediately move 1 range band and perform a Strike action.



WHO HIRED THE BANDITS?

The PCs may want to immediately investigate who hired the bandits who attacked them on the road. Should they report the attack to Kāgi or Sumiko, they are told that other magistrates are being dispatched to look into it. Sumiko later reports that they uncovered no leads but that the PCs can take up the matter after their training is complete (this can be a follow-on adventure, as noted on page 38).

While in training, the PCs can learn, though, that their arrival was expected, and that it would be quite easy for someone who knew this to arrange for the attack. Even worse, Bayushi Sugai (or another Scorpion from his family, if Sugai didn't survive the events of the Topaz Championship) passed through the area only a day or so earlier.

BANDITS

Bandits like these are outlaws who thrive in the rural and remote regions of Rokugan. Goro was once one of them before eliminating the previous leader and taking her place.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL		
15 HONOR		ENDURANCE 5		
20 GLORY		COMPOSURE 6		
1 STATUS		FOCUS 4		
+1, -1 DEMEANOR - INTIMIDATING		VIGILANCE 2		
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 0
WEAPONS AND GEAR				

Yari (Spear): Damage 5; Range 2.

Gear: Grimy traveling clothes, sake jug (empty).

NPC ABILITY: HIT THEM WHILE THEY'RE DOWN

When one of Goro's bandits performs an Attack action against a target suffering from one or more critical strikes, increase any damage dealt by 2.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

Should the PCs rise with the dawn one morning, they see an elderly woman practicing with a katana in the early sun on a small hill near the road. If the players approach, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The aging woman has wispy white hair and a long, curved nose that nearly droops over her lips. Despite her age, she deftly spins her katana with exceptional grace and speed, practicing a complex, mesmerizing display of kata, or blade maneuvers, you do not recognize. To add to the mystery, she wears only plain, grey clothing, so you cannot determine her clan. Surely, she cannot be a clanless rōnin with such skills!

She smiles whimsically as you approach, and pauses her motions. "The morning sun rises every day to reveal true swords or the fools that merely wield them," she says in a wheezy, mirthful voice. "Might you be those fools?"

If any PC approaches, the woman either asks them to display their form (a **TN 5 Martial Arts [Any]** or **Theology check**) or challenges them to a duel to first strike (see the **Duels** sidebar on page 23). This is a display of prowess, not a brawl: she wants the PC to show what they can do. Players should be encouraged to narratively describe their action and can spend **✪✪** from their check to make their display especially showy. No PC is expected to pass or beat her, but any who show good form and proper courtesy catch the mysterious person's attention.

After these tests of skill, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

"You show promise!" The old woman laughs, her voice deepening into a crowing croon. "I am sure to meet you again, when you are ready to learn from my wisdom and skill." Her eyes grow large, her face darkens and elongates into a sharp beak, black and grey feathers bristle over her skin and clothes, and enormous iridescent wings burst from her shoulders, revealing her true form: a tengu! She winks and nods at you before leaping into the air and flying into the clouds, her cawing laughter echoing behind her.

A **TN 1 Theology (Water) check** to identify or **TN 2 Culture (Earth) check** to recall folklore reveals information about this mystical and ancient being (see the Rulebook, page 46). This encounter could happen while the PCs are on the road to Shiro Yogasha, when they are staying at the castle if they venture outside, or in a later adventure when they are on the road or in a wilderness area.

Encounter Complication: Characters may be tempted to attack the unknown stranger, but her age and skill demand respect, even if her somewhat rude taunts do not.

AIRI THE TENGU

Like all tengu, Airi is an avian humanoid with large wings, part of an ancient race that predates the Empire. Her endless years means she has had centuries to practice the sword and learn many of the hidden secrets of Rokugan. For the last several centuries, Airi has roamed the countryside seeking those she finds worthy of her wisdom and training.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
80 HONOR	2	ENDURANCE	8
64 GLORY	4	COMPOSURE	16
30 STATUS	3	FOCUS	3
 +1, -1 DEMEANOR · DETACHED		VIGILANCE	2
ARTISAN 0		MARTIAL 3	
SCHOLAR 2		SOCIAL 2	
TRADE 1			
WEAPONS AND GEAR			

Ancient Katana: Damage 5; Range 1.

Gear: Impressive robes (Resistance [2]).

NPC ABILITY: MASTER OF ILLUSION

Once per scene as a Support action, Airi can use her illusion powers to appear human or become invisible until the end of the scene. A character must make a **TN 4 Theology (Void)** or **Survival (Void) check** to detect her while she is invisible.

NPC ABILITY: FLIGHT

While in her winged form, Airi may also move via flight vertically and ignore the negative effects of terrain.

NPC ABILITY: VOID POINTS

Airi has 2 Void points which can be used per the normal rules for spending Void points.



MERCHANTS AND MONSTERS

In this encounter, the PCs come across a band of goblins who have ambushed a group of peasant merchants traveling to Otosan Uchi, the capital of the Emerald Empire. If the group includes veteran players (and at least three PCs), the GM may wish to include a wounded ogre among the goblins to provide a greater challenge. The ogre was wounded while fighting the merchants' bodyguards, who have all been killed. If an ogre is included, paraphrase the text below appropriately.

If the PCs approach the goblins, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

As you pass a bend in the road, you see carnage. Several merchants lie bleeding and crying in the dirt, their two large carts overturned. The corpses of what appear to be their bodyguards are covered in blood. A pack of vile goblins are messily devouring one of the horses amid the grisly scene, laughing and throwing bones at the cringing peasants.

So focused are they on filling their bellies with horseflesh that the goblins ignore your proximity. You have the element of surprise, but you have never actually laid eyes on this type of vile creature before and cannot be certain what they are capable of. Risking attacking them may be unwise; the wiser option may be simply to ride on. Several merchants see you and silently plead for help.

If the PCs choose to rescue the merchants, they must delay their journey slightly, but they would also be providing a valuable service to the Empire. If they choose to ride on, they can report the incident to Agasha Sumiko at Shiro Yogasha.

It is probable that the PCs want to attack the goblins. If they do, there is a group of three goblins for each PC (along with the wounded ogre, if desired). As before, each PC makes a **TN 1 Tactics check**, but now adds their focus as they caught the monsters unprepared. Make one check for each group of goblins; as they weren't ready they add their vigilance to their bonus successes. Each group of goblins attacks a PC together as a squad (see the rules for assistance on page 6 of the Rulebook). The ogre, if present, also makes the same check and adds its vigilance.

The area around the road has tall bushes on the right and is considered Obscuring. On the left are dense weeds, and thus this area is Entangling. The road itself is a width of range 2, around 10 feet. If desired, the entire area (out to range 4) can have the Imbalanced (Void) terrain quality to represent the vile rituals that were used to attract the creatures to this site.

The goblins and ogre probably fight to the death, though if the ogre is killed and three or fewer goblins are left, any remaining goblins try to flee. The PCs can easily run them down; use the chase rules on page 30 of *The Topaz Championship* adventure if desired, or the GM can narratively have it occur.



If the PCs manage to save any of the merchants, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The remaining merchants thank you profusely, still in shock about the attack. None of them had ever seen a goblin before today; they used to think goblins were simply from stories used to frighten children. The road had been perfectly clear as the merchants traveled along it. However, as they passed a bend, the creatures seemed to spring out of the ground, appearing suddenly and without warning.

The merchants attempt to pay you for your efforts. They are carrying a variety of items; none are very practical, but some are of high quality. These might make for good gifts when you reach the castle, but one merchant admits that many of their goods may have been spoiled by the goblins' attentions.

The PCs can help right the two carts (a **TN 4 Fitness check**). If they use the Water approach, the TN drops to 3, but if they use the Fire approach, it grows to 5. Thus the check can be written as a "**TN 4 Fitness check (Water 3, Fire 5)**" and this format will be seen on other checks as appropriate.

Other PCs can help the PC making the check by using the Assistance rules from page 6 of the Rulebook. They can also hitch the surviving horses back to the carts (no check is required for this, but if the PC Shinjo Takuya is present, he can help calm the horses and treat any wounds they might have).

The PCs should be worried and mystified about why the goblins are there, so far north of the Wall and not even in a mountainous region (a successful **TN 1 Culture (Fire) check** lets them know that this is unusual). With a successful **TN 1 Theology (Void) check**, shugenja and monk characters can detect that the kami are disturbed, which indicates that some vile magic may have been done in that area, perhaps to lure the creatures to the spot.

Encounter Complication: PCs may want to pause their journey to investigate the appearance of goblins so far from the Wall. This would absolutely delay their journey and cause things to go poorly for them with the Ruby Champion.

GOBLINS

Goblins infest much of Rokugan's mountains and wilderness areas. They are much more common in the Shadowlands, however, and seeing any along a well-traveled road may be cause for alarm.

SOCIETAL	PERSONAL
0 HONOR	ENDURANCE 5
9 GLORY	COMPOSURE 6
0 STATUS	FOCUS 4
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · SHWRED	VIGILANCE 2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 0
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WEAPONS AND GEAR

Goblin-sized Scavenged Yari (Spear): Damage 4; Range 1.

Goblin-sized Scavenged Yumi (Bow): Damage 4; Range 1–4

Gear: Salvaged armor (Resistance [1]).

NPC ABILITY: SMALL

Goblins are Silhouette (1).

NPC ABILITY: SUREFOOTED

Goblins ignore the negative effects of terrain.

TERU THE OGRE

Ogres are huge, violent creatures, and Teru is no exception. It dimly remembers its home in the Shadowlands, but is now in these greener regions with no memory of how it got here. Along with a small horde of goblins, Teru has been thriving in mountain passes and remote trails, where it can prey on passersby but also raid small villages when their hunger grows too strong.

SOCIETAL	PERSONAL
0 HONOR	ENDURANCE 16
5 GLORY	COMPOSURE 8
0 STATUS	FOCUS 4
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · GRUFF	VIGILANCE 2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 1
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WEAPONS AND GEAR

Giant club or Tree Branch: Damage 7; Range 2.

Gear: Tattered hides (Resistance [1]).

NPC ABILITY: CRUSHING BLOW

Whenever Teru inflicts a critical strike, the target suffers the **Prone** condition as well as any other conditions from the critical strike. While prone, a character cannot move more than one range band during their turn (probably by crawling). At the end of their turn, if the character did not perform a Movement action, they may choose to remove the Prone condition (by standing up).

NPC ABILITY: RAGE OF THE BEAST

Once per scene, after Teru suffers a critical strike, it becomes **Enraged** (increasing the damage it both inflicts and suffers by 2) until its critical strikes are removed.

NPC ABILITY: HUGE

Ogres are Silhouette (4).

NPC STATUS: WOUNDED

Teru is currently suffering from 8 fatigue.

THE SHADOWLANDS

The Shadowlands is the nightmarish wasteland south of the Empire. Created by Fu Leng, the wicked Dark Kami, it is populated with all manner of vile creatures, such as goblins, ogres, *oni* (monstrous demons), and evil spirits. These Shadowlands denizens, which thrive on carnage and decay, continually attempt to consume the Empire and lay waste to its inhabitants. The Crab Clan built the great Kaiu Wall on the Empire's southern border, and for centuries have guarded the thirty-foot-thick, hundred-foot-high defense to keep Fu Leng's evil influence, commonly called the Taint, safely behind the Wall. Despite their vigilance, saboteurs influenced by the Taint occasionally experiment with Fu Leng's power. Humans who dare to conjure and command the Shadowlands creatures do so using *mahō*, a forbidden blood magic that links them forever to Fu Leng and the underworld realm of Jigoku.

TERRIFIED MERCHANTS

While still at the lower end of the Celestial Order as peasants, these merchants are relatively rich individuals and usually travel well (and well protected) between villages with their goods. Their bodyguards were quite unprepared for the ferocity of this attack, however, and now the merchants await a horrible fate.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
20 HONOR		ENDURANCE 5	
28 GLORY		COMPOSURE 6	
16 STATUS		FOCUS 2	
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · SHREWD		VIGILANCE 2	
ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 0 SCHOLAR 1 SOCIAL 2 TRADE 2			
WEAPONS AND GEAR			

Improvised Weapon: Damage 2; Range 1.

Gear: Well-made kimonos and traveling clothes, pouches of zeni and koku, assorted trade goods.

NPC ABILITY: SHADY CONNECTIONS

These merchants have operations throughout this area, and not all of them are legitimate. They can make a **TN 2 Skulduggery (Water) check** as a downtime activity to have a number of bandits equal to their bonus successes rough up competitors or even suspicious magistrates, and may make this check once per target character. Use the Bandit profile on page 42 of the Rulebook to represent these individuals. They can spend to upgrade one Bandit per check to an Experienced Bandit (page 42).



THE GHOST RETURNS

One evening during the party's travels, the ghost of Doji Satsume visits them during their meal. The PCs must once again appease the ghost if they are to move forward effectively on their journey. A good time to hold this encounter is the night before the PCs arrive at the castle. As noted earlier, the GM should adjust this encounter if the PCs were not successful in carrying out the ghost's wishes earlier at Tsuma.

As the PCs sit down for their dinner, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

As you all settle around the fire to eat your evening meal, you slowly realize that your number has increased by one. The ghostly visage of Doji Satsume sits among you, staring into the fire as unperturbed as your companions before they noticed his presence. Once again, his stern face suggests that he intends to assign you a task. His visage is even clearer now than it was in Tsuma, as though he is slowly nearing completion of his mission here in the Realm of Mortals.

Satsume thanks you for protecting Hitoshi in Tsuma and ensuring he completed the tournament. He then charges you with his final request: "Ensure that the matter of my death is resolved in a way that brings no shame upon or retribution against my family," he commands, with all the air and dignity of an Emerald Champion.

If the PCs ask what happened to Satsume, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The dead Emerald Champion does not know the circumstances surrounding his demise, and he cares little about whether he was murdered or who (if anyone) was responsible for his death. He only insists that his family suffer no shame for it and, to a lesser extent, the same for the Office of the Emerald Champion—tenets he insists he always followed while acting as Emerald Champion, and all for the continued survival of Rokugan and its peoples.

Satsume, his stern face flickering in the fire, turns to each of you and nods, entrusting you with his mission. The firelight illuminates the grotesque scar running down the side of his face, down into his mouth, revealing why in life people called him the Grinning Crane. Slowly, he fades into the darkness.

Encounter Complication: Doing what Satsume asks may require the PCs to later dishonor themselves by lying about the real events concerning the murder of an Emerald Champion. This is a grave choice, one that must not be made lightly.

CHECKS AND APPROACHES

Some checks have an associated approach, meaning the check must be made using the approach (and Ring value) in parentheses. A "**TN 2 Theology (Void) check**," for example, would mean making a Theology check using the approach of the Void Ring.

OTHER ENCOUNTERS

The GM may include other encounters during this act, so that the PCs' travel can be lengthened as desired. One or two extra encounters is probably enough, but if the GM wants the act to last longer, they can add more or even plan for an encounter each day. The PCs should be reminded that lingering too long could delay their arrival, however, resulting in consequences that affect their training and reputations as Emerald Magistrates. Ideally, the GM should include in each encounter a complication that the PCs must resolve.

Here are a few suggestions for more encounters along the road to the castle:

- ⊗ A bridge across a deep chasm has been damaged, apparently on purpose. The PCs could make a **TN 2 Labor (Water) check** to find suitable materials to repair the bridge or a **TN 2 Survival (Earth)** or **TN 1 Government (Earth) check** to remember another (longer) route.
- ⊗ One day, the PCs pass a young courtier dressed in fine clothing traveling alone on a horse. The next day, they run into some *yōjimbō* (samurai bodyguards) from a nearby magistrate's mansion, who ask if they have seen a young thief. The PCs could join the samurai or at least offer information, including a description of the courtier's garb, by making a **TN 2 Design (Air)** or **Culture (Air) check**. If they talked with her, they can also make a **TN 2 Sentiment (Fire) check** to provide the *yōjimbō* with possible motivations for the thief's actions or information on where the thief might strike next.
- ⊗ A roadside shrine to Ebisu, the Fortune of Honest Work, has caught fire, and its priests beg for help to combat the blaze lest it spread to a nearby village. A successful **TN 2 Fitness (Water 1, Air 4) check** means a PCs has put out a portion of the fire; a total of six successes from the group is required to completely quench the blaze. The PCs may even wish to aid in making repairs to the shrine, or to offer prayers when their work is done. The GM should award the PCs 1 honor and 1 glory each if they do so, and let them know the Fortune surely smiles upon them.
- ⊗ While the PCs are gathering firewood one night, their camp is ransacked by a herd of wild boars, which scatter their gear into the woods. The PCs must search the heavily forested area to find their possessions with a **TN 3 Survival (Fire 2, Earth 5) check**. The PCs might even encounter the boars again during the night and have to fight them off!

RAMPAGING BOAR

Boars are aggressive and territorial wild pigs. Even an armored bushi can be slain by their sharp, jagged tusks.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL		
0 HONOR		ENDURANCE	9	
0 GLORY		COMPOSURE	4	
0 STATUS		FOCUS	6	
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · TERRITORIAL		VIGILANCE	2	
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 0
WEAPONS AND GEAR				

Tusks: Damage 4; Range 0.

Gear: Thick hide (Resistance [2]).

NPC ABILITY: CHARGING ATTACK

A rampaging boar that moves at least 2 range bands before making an Attack action adds 2 to the damage it inflicts.

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

This act ends with the PCs finally seeing the looming towers and green-tiled roofs of the distant Palace of the Emerald Champion on a hill in the middle of a wide field.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE REWARDS

This ends the first act of the adventure, and the GM should award the PCs for making it to the castle and dealing with the threats along the way:

- ⊗ Reaching the palace of the Emerald Champion: 1 XP
- ⊗ Defeating the bandits: 1 XP
- ⊗ Rescuing the merchants: 1 XP
- ⊗ Impressing Airi the *tengu*: 1 XP
- ⊗ Accepting the ghost's request: 1 XP

The GM can also award additional XP should the PCs complete any of the optional encounters, as well as for exceptional roleplaying in general during the journey.



Act 2: The Castle

In this act the PCs arrive at Shiro Yogasha, the castle of the Emerald Champion, to begin their training as Emerald Magistrates. They also are tasked with investigating Satsume's death, which they must conduct in secret while undergoing their training.

After arriving, and receiving their mission concerning Satsume's death, the PCs' days consist of training in the morning, then free time for study in the afternoon. The PCs should use the latter for conducting their investigations (if they are unsure about this, Sumiko can offer it as a suggestion when she briefs them). Their training lasts three days.

Areas important to the investigation get more information in the pages that follow, linked to when it is likely the PCs will visit them. Should the PCs go to other areas, the Gazetteer information starting on page 8 can be used.

Each day at the castle has a list of expected events, but the PCs may decide to do things in a different order. If so, the GM should adapt encounters described from other days and use them as needed, taking notes as to which areas the PCs have investigated and what clues they have uncovered.

DAY 1: ARRIVAL

It's been several weeks since Satsume's death, and the castle is still a bit chaotic and busy when the PCs arrive. Ryu departs before the PCs reach the walkway up to the main gate, and heads to the rear of the castle to deposit his cart while other peasants take away the goods. Many peasants greet him; it seems he's well liked here. Other Emerald Magistrates, some with baggage carts filled with scrolls concerning the law, push their way in and out of the castle, eager to attend to their duties.

Once the PCs are through the main gate and are in the entrance hall of the castle, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The castle is bustling with chaos as servants, soldiers, bureaucrats, and magistrates march past in all directions on urgent business. You overhear a passing courtier muttering "I heard that Doji Satsume left the castle quite in disarray."

It is obvious that in the wake of Satsume's death, Agasha Sumiko, the acting Emerald Champion, is trying to fulfill her new duties while also continuing her duties as Ruby Champion, keeping her and the rest of the inhabitants of the castle extremely busy.

Sumiko is so busy that she has no time for the PCs at the moment. Instead, she has delegated the task of registering the new magistrates to her assistant, Kitsuki Kāgi, who will get them settled.

If the party is later than expected due to any delay on the journey, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

After you have waited for what feels like hours, finally a Dragon bushi passes the entrance hall and notices you. He gives his name as Kitsuki Kāgi, Sumiko's personal assistant, and asks if you are the new trainees Sumiko is expecting. Unfortunately, your lack of punctuality starts your relationship with him on seriously strained terms. Kāgi blames you for placing more burdens on Sumiko's shoulders, not to mention his own, with your lack of foresight and responsibility. He begrudgingly leads you to your rooms in the visiting magistrates' quarters, obviously giving you the least comfortable of the accommodations. Kāgi hurries you through a tour of the rooms, tersely explaining your training schedule in vague terms. He fails to mention when and where the training will take place before vanishing.



DAILY EVENTS

The next three days follow a basic structure of events:

Breakfast: An early meal in the dining hall, consisting of rice, tea (which is served with each meal as well as other gatherings), miso soup, and dried fish. Many samurai are gathered here, and the PCs can learn important clues via overheard talk.

Training: The PCs attend a morning training session each day, each on a different topic and in a different location. Should they forget where to go, Kāgi can aid them.

Lunch: This is taken at midday, the Hour of the Horse. It is a brief meal of rice or noodles with vegetables and some fish or bean curd, and tea. Due to its brevity, nothing of note happens during lunch (unless the GM wishes to include some events).

Afternoon Activities: The PCs have their afternoons mostly free, making this the ideal time for conducting investigations and interviews.

Dinner: The largest meal of the day, dinner usually occurs in the dining hall unless there is a special event. It can often feature rare ingredients and spices imported by Unicorn or Mantis traders.

If the PCs were not delayed during the journey at all, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

An official-looking Dragon bushi approaches you shortly and introduces himself as Kitsuki Kāgi, Sumiko's personal assistant. He thanks you for your punctuality. He also apologizes for the disorder of the castle, pointing out that Sumiko is quite busy with shouldering all the duties of both Emerald Champion and Ruby Champion in the wake of Satsume's demise. Kāgi explains that the death was so sudden that the entire castle is still recovering. Several new, obviously responsible Emerald Magistrates will be a welcome addition to their efforts, he says. He leads you to the visiting magistrates' quarters, showing you to the quite comfortable-looking accommodations.

"Please let me know if you have any questions," Kāgi adds before leaving to join a small cluster of ten samurai. "Your training will begin tomorrow morning in the Court of Judgment. I will return in an hour, after you have had time to settle, to escort you to the Ruby Champion." He then barks out commands to the samurai—it seems in this palace, even the assistants have assistants.

If the PCs desire, Kāgi can discuss their training program (see the **Training!** section, on page 20). Otherwise, they learn more about it when they talk with Sumiko later tonight or at breakfast the next morning.

KITSUKI KĀGI, CHIEF YORIKI TO THE EMERALD MAGISTRATE

Kāgi is honored to be the Emerald Champion's senior *yoriki*, or assistant. Formerly of the Lion Matsu family, he married into the Dragon Clan and took his new family's name of Kitsuki. Kāgi has been stationed at the castle for several years and seems like he could be a good role model for the PCs. Kāgi appears content to spend his time aiding officials and helping to run the castle, though one day it is assumed he will become an Emerald Magistrate himself. He is often overly curious, as if possibly gathering information—perhaps for the Lion Clan. He grudgingly respected Satsume despite their clan feud (the Crane and the Lion have always been at each other's throats), but he has never gotten along well with Sumiko, especially now that she's the acting Emerald Champion. He does not believe in her ability to lead, though he has a sense of responsibility to help her avoid failure.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
60 HONOR	2	ENDURANCE 12	1
58 GLORY	2	COMPOSURE 8	2
38 STATUS	1	FOCUS 5	2
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · INQUISITIVE	1	VIGILANCE 3	
ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 0			
WEAPONS AND GEAR			

Katana: Damage 4; Range 1.

Gear: Wakizashi, family armor (Resistance [3]), handful of scrolls.

NPC ABILITY: KNOWS EVERYBODY

While Kāgi is present in the scene, any character making a Scholar skill check (such as Culture, Government, or Theology) to ascertain or remember a detail about someone in the castle may spend ☼☼. If they fail the check, Kāgi approaches and supplies the information in question.

CLAN REPRESENTATIVES

Each clan has a representative at the castle to act in the clan's name and liaise with the Emerald and Ruby Champions. As they have spent much time here, they can offer background information about Satsume and recent events at the castle. The table on this page contains a list of the clan representatives, along with where each PC is to meet with their representative and what information each can convey (any of these can also occur in the conference halls instead if desired). No check is needed for a PC from the corresponding clan to gain the information from their representative. Getting information from another clan's representative requires a **TN 2 Courtesy** or **Sentiment check**, modified by ring based on the character's in question's demeanor. If needed, Kāgi or Sumiko can ask if the PCs have talked to their representatives yet, and these conversations can occur whenever the PCs desire during their time here. The earlier they learn this information, though, the more useful it will be for them.

The GM can modify the information or create new clues as desired. If there is no PC present from the clan of a representative who has important information, the GM can have a different clan representative convey that information. For example, if there is no Lion PC in a game, Kitsu Tsuguri's information might come from Hida Mikoro instead, along with Mikoro's original information.

The clan representatives all agree that Satsume was not well-liked and was becoming increasingly cruel and violent toward others. Though he was generally an effective Emerald Champion, his frequent disappearances and his contempt for some of the Emperor's commands were hindering him in his duty.

RUMORS AND INFORMATION FROM THE CLAN REPRESENTATIVES

CLAN AND NAME	MEETING LOCATION	INFORMATION PROVIDED
Crab: Hida Mikoro	Armory	Satsume was a strict father. He hardly spoke to his eldest daughter, Hotaru, after his wife's death. Not that he spoke with her much before it, either.
Crane: Asahina Tadane	Private Dining Hall	Since the death of his wife, Satsume was not very well liked, even among his own clan. Everyone secretly blamed him for her untimely end, his daughter Hotaru most of all.
Dragon: Mirumoto Tanetsu	Room of Law	Sumiko would often grumble about Satsume's secrets, frustrated with how he felt no obligation to keep her informed of his efforts and whereabouts. She absolutely did not trust him.
Lion: Kitsu Tsuguri	Training Dōjō	Satsume was an aggressive sparring partner, at times needlessly injuring his soldiers during martial practices in the training yard. He was often very harsh in his criticisms, and demanded more from everyone around him.
Phoenix: Shiba Sono	Garden of Verdant Serenity	During the last several months, Satsume spent more and more time in the library, where he used to spend hours referencing the Rokugani law books. It seems that he had become interested in precedent and ways to justify novel interpretations of Imperial law.
Scorpion: Bayushi Negi	Courtyard of Punishment	Satsume disappeared often, but no one could figure out how he left the castle or by what entrance he returned. This would suggest some secret in the castle's architecture.
Unicorn: Shinjo Akiba	Stables	Satsume was a great compromiser, ensuring that no one was happy with his decisions but also that no one was too angry with them. He didn't get along with most here, though. One time, Akiba says, she overheard Sumiko and Satsume arguing about their duties to the Emperor, but the disagreement went unresolved.

TRAINING!

Training is the main reason the PCs are here, and each of the next three days features a different Emerald Magistrate training session that takes up the first half of the day. The PCs have most afternoons and evenings free for additional study, though they will soon learn that other events are going to infringe on all of this free time!

Each day's training occurs in a different location: the first day's session (Investigation) is in the Court of Judgment, the next day's (Weapons) is in the Ruby Dōjō, and the last day's training (Law) is in the Room of Law.

THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

Despite public shows of respect and mourning for the late Emerald Champion, Satsume's death is still a hot topic of (whispered) discussion. Speculation abounds that it was actually a murder, given how many people had motives. Very few people genuinely liked him, no one is sincerely mourning him, and no one is terribly sorry he's gone—not even the Crane Champion, his eldest daughter Doji Hotaru, it seems. However, no one would openly admit to harboring these sentiments, and everyone still behaves "properly" when pressed for honest opinions.

There has been an internal investigation as to the death, which concluded he died of natural causes. Not everyone believes these findings, however, and it has done nothing to quell the whispers.

PRIVATE COMMUNICATIONS

It is assumed that the PCs share their information with each other, but if a PC wishes to learn something secretly and then decide what to tell their compatriots, that's perfectly fine! If a player wants their PC to talk to a clan representative in confidence, the GM should simply take that player aside to relate the information privately (or use private notes). Alternatively, the GM could write out the information and pass it as a note to the player. Methods like these are common in role-playing games when the GM or players need to communicate privately, and they can add exciting tension to a game.

MEETING THE RUBY CHAMPION (AGAIN)

An hour or so after Kitsuki Kāgi shows the PCs to their quarters, he returns and leads them up to Agasha Sumiko's office in the Ruby Champion's Estate, as she is still working from there.

As they walk to her estate, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

Oddly, Agasha Sumiko does not want to meet with you officially in the Audience Hall, as is the usual protocol when new magistrates begin their orientation and training. Instead, Kāgi merely walks you through the Audience Hall, pointing out the strangeness in the change. Although he does not question or criticize her blatantly, Kāgi does appear puzzled that Sumiko would hold this meeting in her private quarters.

Sumiko welcomes them as they enter, and dismisses Kāgi—who doesn't look pleased at not being invited to stay. She reminds the PCs that she met them at Tsuma (if the PCs don't bring this up themselves) and asks of their journey. The PCs should present their family gifts to her now, which she accepts after properly declining twice. They are all quite impressive and include rare spices from foreign lands, colorful origami paper (Sumiko is quite skilled in the art), a crimson *obi* sash, and even a tiny dragon carved from jade.

Should the PCs bring up either the bandits or the goblins, Sumiko gathers their information and says she will assign magistrates to look into the matters. She has something more pressing for them, however.

Your Mission (...and you must accept it)

After these initial matters are settled, Sumiko relates the second reason why she invited them to come to the palace. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The Ruby Champion glances about the room as if checking one last time that no one else is here. "Your displays of honor and courage at the Topaz Championship, I believe, will make you fine Emerald Magistrates. I now call upon your abilities for another matter, one of vital importance to both myself and the Empire. It concerns the death of Doji Satsume, the Emerald Champion. There has already been one investigation, which concluded he died of natural causes. This has not set the matter to rest, however, and so I task you with conducting a secret investigation to settle this to my satisfaction.

Sumiko relates that Satsume was found dead at the foot of the stairs leading up to his private rooms at the top of the palace's main tower. Healers were called in to attend to him, but his body was already cold. They were unable to detect any wound or poison and thus determined the death was due to natural causes. The PCs might consider that if poison was used, it was undetectable and therefore rare, which suggests that someone of high rank was involved. It is also possible that Satsume simply died of an untimely heart attack. Regardless, Satsume's body was ceremonially cremated soon after his death, so the PCs are unable to examine it. Mentions of encountering his ghost bring a curious look from Sumiko, but she refuses to say more.

The PCs may wonder why she has chosen youthful novices such as themselves for this important assignment. Agasha Sumiko claims she chose them for this mission because they have no connections to anyone in the castle and thus can approach the task without prejudice. Secretly, she thinks their inexperience serves as a boon for her; if they uncover something she doesn't want them to find, then whatever the PCs report can be easily dismissed or totally embraced, depending on its suitability for her purposes.



WHAT IF PCS WANT TO SPLIT UP?

The PCs may wish to split up and cover multiple locations and people at the same time. If so, allow each group to do a small portion of actions, then pause them and discuss what the other group is doing. Don't let one group dominate the game play while the other idly waits—the goal is to keep the action moving between groups, so everyone feels engaged. Some tasks may be much more difficult or even impossible without all the PCs involved, such as moving the boulder inside the cave (see page 26) and the PCs may need to regroup to resolve them.

Sumiko orders them to keep their investigation a secret as they conduct their scheduled training, since the official story is that the case is closed and no foul play was involved (though she herself has not made a statement concerning the matter). At this time, Sumiko refuses to share any of her own thoughts so as not to bias the PCs. This could be a true statement, or it could mean that she is hiding incriminating information. She says she will announce her findings four days from now, which is the day after their training is complete. *Normally the training to become an Emerald Magistrate takes quite longer, she says. But I desire it to be completed, along with your investigation, much sooner.* Anything the PCs discover, she mentions, will help settle the matter and put the issue of Satsume's death to rest. It will also let her know the full mettle of the PCs for future assignments.

The PCs may feel they are being manipulated as part of something quite beyond investigating a possible murder (or arrive at this belief during the next several days), and they are quite correct. They should, however, learn that their actions are necessary for reasons important to the Empire itself.

Starting the Investigation

Sumiko suggests the PCs begin their investigation by questioning the person who discovered the body, a middle-aged peasant named Sō. Sumiko says they can find him in Satsume's private room, which she suggests they visit along with Satsume's offices (next to his audience room) and the Emerald Archives to see if anything was missed earlier.

Hiding the Investigation

The PCs will need excuses for asking questions of witnesses and possible suspects. Note this doesn't apply if peasants are involved—as samurai, the PCs don't need to explain themselves or their actions any peasants they question. The following are some examples they might use; Sumiko can offer these as well if needed:

- ✦ The PCs have followed Satsume's career for a long time, and seek to learn more of how it ended.
- ✦ The PCs want to learn more of how Emerald Champions operate, as they aspire to that office later in life.

- ✦ The PCs are conducting questioning as part of practicing to become Emerald Magistrates.
- ✦ The PCs are asking questions as they are simply curious.
- ✦ A Crane from Satsume's family asked them to gather information for the family's benefit.

The players and GM may arrive at other excuses, and the GM should award 1 XP for particularly clever ideas or ones that tie in well to a PC's backstory or complication. The PCs can reveal they are investigating under the orders of the Ruby Champion, but warn the PCs that they must forfeit 10 honor to do so. If so, Sumiko learns they disobeyed her instructions (she reveals her knowledge to them after they present their findings in Act 3).

AGASHA SUMIKO, RUBY CHAMPION AND ACTING EMERALD CHAMPION

Agasha Sumiko is a pale, powerful Dragon bushi who has been the Ruby Champion for several years and is now also acting as Emerald Champion until a new one can be chosen. She is extremely busy, hardly sleeping or eating for the sake of her duties. Despite her sharp focus on her tasks, she claims she wants to learn the truth of Satsume's death. Perhaps she is being honest about it, or perhaps she simply views "truth" as "what is best for the Empire." The PCs will learn which is the case during the course of the adventure.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL		
70 HONOR		ENDURANCE 12		
66 GLORY		COMPOSURE 14		
80 STATUS		FOCUS 6		
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · SHREWD		VIGILANCE 4		
ARTISAN 2	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 3	SOCIAL 3	TRADE 1
WEAPONS AND GEAR				

Ruby Champion's Katana: Damage 6; Range 1.

Gear: Daishō, Ruby Champion's Armor (Resistance [4]), scrolls.

NPC ABILITY: EXPERT IN THE DŌJŌ

Though she rarely displays it now, Sumiko is an expert at both employing and teaching Martial Arts. After sparring with her, a character may purchase Rank 1 of a single Martial skill in which they have 0 ranks for 1 XP instead of 2.

NPC ABILITY: FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE

Sumiko is a firm believer in the Emperor's divine right to rule, and thinks foremost of the Empire's well-being in each decision she makes. Increase the TN of Command or Courtesy skill checks to convince her to act against the wishes of the Emperor, even for the best of reasons, by 2.

DUELS

It is very possible that one or more of the PCs might either challenge someone or be challenged to a duel (see page 33 of the Rulebook). Duels are often only to first strike when PCs are involved, but they can be to first blood if the dispute is grievous enough.

A PC may instigate a duel during the investigation, but dueling recklessly can have consequences. Sumiko herself may chastise such a PC if duels are issued without serious cause. A PC may feel obligated to do so if the GM has an NPC deliberately insult a PC or treat them dismissively, though. This should generally be reserved for games with veteran players, however, or if everyone agreed this is an option during the game.

Strife is an excellent metric for when an NPC's patience is exhausted. If a PC causes an NPC's strife to exceed the NPC's composure, the GM might choose to have the NPC unmask by challenging the PC to satisfaction by way of steel.

Any of the following offenses might cause an NPC to gain strife:

- ⊗ An instructor praises one of the PCs for significant success during a sparring match (2 strife).

- ⊗ A PC insults a Great Clan by speaking ill of one of its members (6 strife to members of that clan).
- ⊗ A PC asks an NPC too many personal questions, slipping into insinuation that they are hiding something (2 strife, plus 2 strife per additional question beyond this point).
- ⊗ A PC is rude to an NPC personally (3 strife, or more at the GM's discretion).
- ⊗ A PC breaks or ruins an item belonging to an NPC (3 strife, or 6 strife if the PC fails to apologize).
- ⊗ A PC uses the Command skill on an NPC of equal or higher status.

If PCs want to avoid a duel without losing face, they could reveal that they are acting under Sumiko's orders. However, this is supposed to be secret information, so the PCs should not voluntarily provide it unless truly pressed to do so. Revealing their mission requires them to forfeit 10 honor (they must reduce their honor value by 10 to undertake the dishonorable action) as noted on page 37.

Investigation Complications

This new assignment introduces new complications for the PCs to explore. If the PCs don't discuss them during their time investigating, the GM can offer them up as desired to provoke their thinking on the matter.

- ⊗ The Bushidō tenet of Righteousness is being challenged in this adventure. Was Doji Satsume's murder (if it was murder) just? Is Righteousness served with a finding for this possible crime that would also weaken the Empire?
- ⊗ Satsume's death is possibly a good thing for the Empire, so do the PCs really want to bring the killer to justice? Or would it be better to just ensure Satsume's daughter is declared innocent and his ghost is allowed to rest?
- ⊗ The PCs may feel they are the only people who are actually interested in solving the murder (as opposed to placing blame), and they may be right.
- ⊗ The PCs may determine that one particular character is the culprit, but they might be wrong and might not learn this until after their investigation concludes. They also might never find out whether their determination is correct. Further, they might realize that "correct" isn't actually important in this case.

INQUIRIES AND INSPECTIONS

To gather information, the PCs need to conduct interviews with possible suspects. Most of these must be done in the afternoon and evening hours when they are not in training. Some servants are very cautious and reluctant to give up information (though they cannot refuse a demand from a samurai), but samurai-caste individuals, such as bureaucrats, instructors, and soldiers of the Imperial Legions, are willing to provide information upon request.

INITIAL QUERIES

The PCs may want to start their questioning, perhaps in the evening shortly after they take on their mission. At this stage, none of these NPCs are necessarily suspects, only sources of information. The questioning can be done narratively for the most part, with no checks required. Alternatively, the GM could have the PCs make Social skill checks such as Command or Courtesy checks as part of the questioning, usually with at TN 1. The GM can award bonus successes with additional information as desired, as well as establishing a good relationship between the NPC being interviewed and the PCs.

Sō

This middle-aged man saw to Satsume's morning toiletries and maintained his room for many years. He was the person who found Satsume's body at the bottom of the steps leading to the Emerald Archives; it was already cold and stiff when discovered. Sō relates that it looked like Satsume fell down the steps, but he cannot remember if he saw any fall-related injuries on the body. He knows that Satsume did try to hide some physical deterioration during the last few weeks of his life, such as difficulty going up the stairs of the castle. However, Sō continues, in his pride, Satsume never admitted to such a weakness. The peasant is still very sad about the death, especially since it looked like it was caused by an accident. He had helped his good friend Ryu in packing up his master's things for shipping to Tsuma.

Room Inspections

When the PCs search the Emerald Champion's rooms, they find few of his possessions, as most of his personal effects were sent to Tsuma with Ryu during the beginning of the previous adventure. Several papers and notes are still lying about, though, all in a rich blue ink and an elegant, graceful writing style along with Satsume's personal mon as well as the mon of the Emerald Champion. These will be useful when the PCs discover other papers later on in the adventure, as part of establishing who wrote them.

The fact that the living quarters are quite barren helps the PCs notice a hidden panel in the wall. Those with a vigilance of 2 or more, or those who make a **TN 1 Aesthetics (Air)** or **TN 2 Skulduggery (Water) check**, spot one section of the painted art along one wall that doesn't seem to fit in with the rest. Depressing this spot opens up a small closet containing several shelves stacked with scrolls and papers. A dust-free spot on a shelf reveals that some of them are missing. These are all handwritten notes concerning the worrisome state of the Emerald Empire, and all in the same style as the ones found earlier in the room.

On another shelf, the PCs find some tiny feathers; a **TN 1 Design (Earth)** or **Labor (Earth) check** indicates these are from chickens (namely ones from the henney just outside the castle). Asking anyone in the castle about such feathers points the PCs to the henney, should the PCs not notice it on the map.

Inspecting Satsume's offices reveals little of interest. The Emerald Archives are more impressive, though. A trio of scribes write out copies of legal documents, their movements slow and perfect. The walls are lined with scrolls, but nothing that seems of interest.

The PCs do find Kāgi as they depart, however, in the audience room. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players as they enter:

Kāgi doesn't notice your arrival at first as he assembles a pile of scrolls laying on the floor. He then looks up and you can make out a sad smile on his face, which fades as he becomes properly expressionless. "Still some of the magistrate's scrolls to return to the Emerald Archives. They never seem to make it up the stairs and onto the shelves on their own," he says. "Just like their master, filled with secrets and always disappearing and reappearing somewhere else. Though without so much painful effort."

If asked about these words, Kāgi hesitantly admits that Satsume would disappear for long periods with no explanation other than claiming that he took nightly walks along a nearby river or through the fields. He also often had secret visits from outsiders who were not registered in the guest logs nor processed through the Room of Questioning, the place where unexpected visitors and strangers are received.

Kāgi can confirm that Satsume was indeed of declining health, but kept it a close secret. Only those close to him, like Kāgi himself, knew it. It is unlikely anyone else noticed, as Kāgi admits that no one really liked Satsume, not even his own daughters. That made sense, Kāgi adds, as the Emerald Champion never appeared to care much for his daughters, Hotaru (the Crane Champion, who visits the castle occasionally) and Shizue, though he seemed less indifferent to his son, Kuwanan.

Once the PCs are done with Kāgi, he mentions it is time for dinner. This is a simple affair; if desired, Sumiko can formally announce the start of training tomorrow and mention the PCs (and their part in the affairs of the recent Topaz Championship). Kāgi can later escort the PCs back to their quarters if desired, and soon sleep claims them.



DAY 2: INVESTIGATION TRAINING

The PCs awake and begin their three-day training to become Emerald Magistrates. They gathered several important clues yesterday concerning Satsume and his affairs, but following up on them will have to wait until the afternoon, after their training session is done.

BREAKFAST

The dining hall is filled with samurai, including Kāgi. The talk this morning still concerns Satsume's death. The Ruby Champion hasn't made an official declaration concerning the matter, which has only provided fuel for gossip. On the surface, everyone is saddened, but it's clear no one is actually upset. Many still talk about Satsume's frequent trips to the cave under the castle, and more than a few relate how they saw him enter but never saw him leave. This should be a strong hint for the PCs to investigate it later on.

A small group of Emerald Magistrates watch the PCs while eating and mutter to themselves. They are all a few years older than the PCs and seem genuinely unhappy, though apparently not about the death.

Akodo Kiruhage (along with a small entourage of fawning Lion and Crab samurai) is also here. If the PC Akodo Masako (sister of Kiruhage) is included the game, this can become a tense scene should she confront him as part of her complication. If this appears to get out of hand, though, Kāgi steps in to calm this and insist the PCs depart for training. He quietly whispers that Masako will have other opportunities to discuss family matters with her brother, but surely becoming an Emerald Magistrate must take priority now. Kiruhage was in the castle when Satsume died, and will be in the castle until tomorrow morning should the PCs desire to interview him later today.

Akodo Kiruhage—Lion

Akodo Kiruhage, a Lion bushi, is the twin brother of Akodo Masako (the Lion PC) and inheritor of their family's estate. He is here to discuss aspects of the Imperial Legions' martial training with the acting Emerald Champion as he did with Satsume earlier. All of the Emerald Magistrates here love him for being tough, intelligent, and hilarious, even though he isn't an Emerald Magistrate himself. No one can understand why Masako hates him (in her eyes, he cheated her in a duel, and she might be right), and they often criticize her for being too harsh. She may challenge him to a duel. However, he will not do the same, no matter how she may taunt him. She is far beneath his concern, and he's more likely to insult her accidentally and without malice than on purpose.

TRAINING

The PCs' first day of training concerns investigation and takes place in the Court of Judgment. Their instructor is Seppun Hokuto. He is a member of the Imperial Seppun family, not one of the Great Clans.

INVESTIGATIONS IN ROKUGAN

Investigations in the Emerald Empire are generally less about physical evidence and more about talking to people and finding an acceptable culprit or outcome. They are usually conducted by gathering testimonies and confessions as proof of events. This is because samurai, sworn to Bushidō, are trusted to act honorably and loyally in the name of Imperial law.

Having said this, gathering evidence (from interviews and interrogations, physical clues, and so on) is still very important. Not everyone behaves honorably, and so physical proof is often vital, even if only to direct investigations towards useful people to question. Evidence can help convince superiors of the correctness of one's accusations or could be turned into useful blackmail material, and so investigators should always find as many clues as possible. What they do with them, though, is another matter entirely. A conclusion that does not benefit the Empire is not a correct conclusion, as the PCs will learn.

As the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

You enter the Court of Judgment, an elegant outdoor setting. Several other students, all much older than you, are already there. Seppun Hokuto, a thin, angular man of advancing years wearing the Imperial Chrysanthemum mon, sits beneath a small awning and beckons you to sit before him under the clear sky above. "So," he says with a slow, even tone. "You are to become Emerald Magistrates. We shall see."

Seppun Hokuto is a famous investigator and artist from Otosan Uchi, the capital of Rokugan. Rumors suggest that he has solved over a thousand cases without ever leaving his library.

Hokuto asks the PCs to relate their backstories, and asks why those so young wish to serve the Empire in this way. He offers a noncommittal grunt after each response, then when they are finished launches into a lecture covering interrogation and interview techniques, evidence gathering, and the various types of criminals and heretics Emerald Magistrates might encounter.

Hokuto's lessons concern not only the importance of gathering testimonies and noticing clues, but also on fitting them together. He relates some of his old cases which featured conflicting testimonies and subtle clues that joined like parts of a puzzle. He pauses after reviewing his last tale of a Minor Clan daimyō who was betrayed by someone in her immediate family and providing the clues and testimonies gathered, and allows the PCs to solve it for him. *You have all the information that I had on that day*, he says. *What is your conclusion? What answer best serves the Empire?* Any PC who makes a **TN 3 Courtesy** or **Games check (Water 2, Earth 2, Fire 5)** correctly places the blame on the least politically connected individual involved, solving the matter and gaining a smile from the otherwise taciturn sensei.

He closes with strong words about their new role in uncovering threats to the Empire, lest it fall to dangers less obvious than the horrors of the Shadowlands. *Even this very castle and the people in it, Hokuto says, are not immune to infiltration from those who would tear down the Empire.* He says he already deduced the true reason why the PCs are here, and wishes them well in their mission. He then dismisses them.

AFTERNOON

After their training and midday meal, the PCs have several hours of free time. They are likely to want to investigate the henney (based on the feathers found in the hidden closet in Satsume's room) and the cave (based on the stories of Satsume's visitations here and mysterious disappearances). These locations, along with the secret room, could be encountered on other days, though, and the GM should adjust things accordingly.

THE LION IN THE GARDEN

Akodo Kiruhage is in the Gardens of Verdant Serenity, telling stories to adoring fans. Should the PCs wish to talk with him, Kiruhage says he did not know Satsume very well and knows very little about his death. Sadly, the Crane was one of the few people here who did not seem to like the Lion.

If she is one of the PCs, Akado Masako would probably wish to pin a murder on her brother; while Kiruhage is not a great suspect, but he could be a convenient one if desired. If Masako is not part of the adventure, Kiruhage can still be used as a foil for the PCs, always getting in their way and always more admired (and perhaps more skilled) than they are. If needed, he can be represented by the Veteran Bushi profile on page 43 of the Rulebook.

THE PEASANT IN THE HENNERY

The henney is a small building for raising and storing chickens, located just outside the castle walls and connected via one of the granary and storage rooms. What few know is that it is secretly a drop location where spies and saboteurs have often left hidden notes.

Upon arriving here, the PCs meet Oji, an elderly man charged with feeding the chickens. As the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The henney is a small wooden structure with a sloped roof and straw scattered across the floor. Feathers swirl in the wind around the building and the smell of feed grain is thick. Approaching, you can hear a cacophony of clucking hens inside. The door opens, and an elderly peasant emerges, bowing but appearing very happy to see you. "Ah, honored samurai! I am so happy someone is here to investigate this terrible tragedy!"

The PCs may be shocked, assuming the peasant is referring to their murder investigation. He isn't, however. This is Oji, and either as a response to their questions or on his own he relates the terrible matter: several of his chickens all mysteriously died on the same day a few weeks ago, with no signs as to the cause. He's been asking for someone to look into this for some time, and assumes the PCs are here for this.

He is delighted to have visitors of any sort, though—the Emerald Champion himself visited here quite often and they would discuss the weather, the health of the birds, and the quality of recent eggs. But no one else ever comes here.

If the PCs ask, the chickens perished the day before Satsume was found dead. Oji thinks their deaths portended Satsume's, like some kind of ill omen. If the PCs don't bring this up, Oji should mention it before they depart. This is a strong clue that whatever killed the chickens is linked to the death of the Emerald Champion.

It probably occurs to them that the chickens' deaths could point to poison (if none arrive at this, any PC who makes a **TN 2 Skulduggery** or **TN 1 Medicine check** puts the two together). If someone concocted or possessed poison at the henney (or in actuality, near a feed bag inside the nearby granary), some of it could have spilled, killing the chickens the day before Satsume was poisoned with it. The PCs might not determine who did it, but this now indicates that poison may have been involved.

If the PCs visit here at night and hunt around, they easily find a note containing what looks like gibberish wedged between two of the boards, hinting that the spot might be used as a type of secret message drop between the outside and the castle. The note uses a code that relies on the reader possessing a decoding phrase, so they won't be able to decipher it. They can add this to their report to Sumiko later on, however, as a sign of dishonorable activities in the castle. Should it come up (Sumiko might share its contents with the PCs later on), its message is a simple one: *There is great joy from your first accomplishment. Now that the green is dead, ensure the red is next.*

THE TREASON IN THE CAVE

The cave appears small on casual observation, but there are lots of footprints inside. It's a somewhat popular place to relax without scrutiny; the PCs could even find Kāgi smoking a pipe here.

When the PCs arrive at its entrance, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The cave has a wide entrance, but draws to a close after 30 or so feet. There are a few pipe ashes and scraps of paper on the ground, but these appear to simply be debris from students who come here to gain moments of solitude. Several boulders line the sides, with a large one at the end.

Any PC who succeeds at a **TN 3 Skulduggery** or **TN 2 Survival check** notices that a boulder in the back of the cave looks artificially placed (any with a vigilance of 2 or more also spot this). With some effort (a **TN 3 Fitness check [Water 2, Fire 5]**), the boulder can be moved to reveal a small exit into a tunnel that leads to the other side of the castle. Up to two PCs can aid the one who makes this check, as per the **Assistance** rules on page 6 of the Rulebook. This could be the way Satsume left the castle grounds without anyone noticing.

The PCs discover a small candle and flint just inside the opening, along with a small metal bar for easier movement of the boulder. As they move through this underground path, strewn on the ground are also some papers, probably dropped by accident during someone's passage through this tunnel. The PCs can easily note the papers don't have any footprints or other marks on them.

THE KOLAT

Like the Empire, the Kolat arose when the Kami fell to Rokugan. Yet while all others bow to the might of the Heavens, the discontent groups now known as the Kolat chafe at being ruled by those descended from gods. The ultimate goal of these groups is nothing less than to overthrow the Hantei Dynasty and allow humankind to rule itself. To this end, they have established a network of spies, saboteurs, and deadly assassins across the Emerald Empire (and perhaps even beyond). Among the Kolat's most terrible weapons are their sleeper agents, who may operate under an assumed identity for years, even decades, collecting information and awaiting the call to more severe deeds. For their successful deeds, especially the assassination and corruption of prominent Imperial officials, to become exposed would surely weaken the Empire and cause great harm to Rokugan.

Several of them have handwriting in an elegant blue ink; a **TN 1 Composition check** confirms that this matches Satsume's handwriting (if the PC have any of the papers from his quarters or his hidden closet with them, then no check is required to realize this). The writing concerns his duties and meetings as Emerald Magistrate as well as other official business. These could very well be the papers missing from Satsume's hidden closet.

Others papers, though, are not so mundane—they are filled with correspondence concerning the unjust nature of how Rokugan is governed, specifically about the Imperial family and its fitness to rule. The handwriting on them doesn't match any the PCs have seen before, but appears to be addressed to Satsume.

The PCs can make a **TN 1 Government** or **Skulduggery check** in the Library (see page 9 and page 28) or similar location to research the writings, and learn that the contents of the papers represent the teachings of a heretical group known as the Kolat. Its members refuse to acknowledge the Emperor's right to rule, and seek to eliminate the role of the Kami-founded Great Clans. PCs who gain one or more bonus successes learn the other information from the **Kolat** sidebar as well.

Given the talk of Satsume's use of the cave and his disappearances, the PCs likely conclude these were all papers he had in his possession, but dropped during one of his more recent passages under the castle. They may (rightfully) wonder why he would have papers denouncing the Empire on his possession.

Should the PCs continue through the tunnel, they find it exits on the other side of the castle.

DINNER

Tonight Shiro Yogasha hosts a special dinner to celebrate the Festival of Millet, a holiday that honors farmers and is specific to the Plains of the Emerald Champion. All the inhabitants of the castle are there, including Agasha Sumiko. There are also a few of the more important peasants from Takahara Village who are properly seated far off in a separate section away from the samurai. The dining hall is crowded and the sake started very early tonight as part of the celebration.

This is a great opportunity for social roleplaying. Everyone knows that an investigation into Doji Satsume's death was completed and some are still unhappy with the outcome. A few Emerald Magistrates accept the "natural causes" explanation; others do not and take the dinner as the perfect opportunity to direct attention toward someone they want blamed. Duels (see page 23) may be arranged if conversations become too accusatory. The PCs could become involved if any accusations are directed against their clan and they feel they must defend their clan's honor. In most cases, such duels should be to the first strike.

Some of the discussion topics could include:

- ✦ *Satsume was too strict with everyone. Good riddance.*
- ✦ *Who are these new samurai here for training? They can't be the ones from the recent Topaz Championship. Those were heroes—these are mere children. And their training is set for only a few days! Why is Sumiko favoring them?*
- ✦ *Everyone knows what happened to the Grinning Crane. Look at how little his daughter grieves for him!*
- ✦ *The death was the best thing for everyone (and the Empire too). Who cares how it happened?*
- ✦ *Kāgi is obsessed with Kolat. He sees them everywhere!*
- ✦ *Satsume spent too much time with peasants. That's clearly why death came for him.*
- ✦ *I've heard that the Perfect Land Sect is gathering adherents in the nearby villages. Something needs to be done about that!*
- ✦ *Too many people are pointing at his own family for killing their father. It all feels too obvious—I bet the Scorpion are attempting to frame them, especially Hotaru.*
- ✦ *The Crane are having enough problems with their farmlands falling to the tsunami and now losing Satsume. Another failure, especially one that humiliates the Doji family, would be devastating.*



DAY 3: WEAPONS TRAINING

With the clues they gathered yesterday, the PCs may now believe that there are Kolat members in the castle! Now they may get involved with the intrigues between the Crane and Scorpion Clans.

BREAKFAST

Hiruma Shigeki, an Emerald Magistrate of the Crab Clan, is at breakfast today. This burly former scout talks loudly to everyone around him concerning the importance of defending the Empire against Shadowlands Taint. Several other samurai clearly aren't impressed. They talk in low tones about the frequent clashes Shigeki and Satsume had concerning lack of proper support for the war against the evils beyond the Wall, but this palace is far to the north and thus far from such dangers. Or so everyone wants to believe.

Now that the PCs are more aware of the Kolat, they also hear whispers of the group and how much the Ruby Champion has fought against them. Sumiko was very vocal and forthright that the only thing worse than the Kolat would be for its threat to become widely known.

TRAINING

The PCs' second day of training concerns weapons and takes place in the Ruby Dōjō. Their instructor is Shosuro Koharu of the Scorpion Clan. As the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The Ruby Dōjō is filled with all manner of weapons, from tiny daggers to massive tetsubōs. Leaning against the far wall is a small woman dressed in red and black, wearing a simple mask that obscures her eyes with crimson patterns. She holds an item you recognize as a *jitte*, the pronged fork weapon that many magistrates carry as a symbol of their authority. "In a perfect world," she says, "those who disobey the Emperor's Law would quietly admit their guilt and accept their punishment." She gracefully spins her *jitte* in her hand. "That so few do so means you will need methods of persuasion to bring them to justice."

Shosuro Koharu is a veteran of work in Ryokō Owari Toshi, the Scorpion-controlled City of Lies, where she served as an investigator for more than twenty years. She has mastered the *jitte* and can use it in any situation against almost any weapon.

Shosuro Koharu displays the weapons in the dōjō and lectures her students about the history and nature of weapons that samurai commonly use, all the while twirling her *jitte*. Then she has them select any weapon and attack her with it. After disarming each student with ease, she returns the favor, opting to attack them with some of her favorite weapons among the street variety. Strange for most samurai but common among peasants, these include clubs, long sticks, and wooden hammers. If a student can defend themselves against the sensei by making a **TN 2 Martial Arts [Melee] check**, Koharu allows them to keep the peasant weapon she used as a memento of their training.

The sensei then discusses dishonorable weapons, such as poisons. Emerald Magistrates are expected to know of poisons, including how they are used and ways to hide them, but course would never employ them—that would be a violation of Bushidō! She relates how some of her toughest investigations in the City of Lies involved poisons, and so she became something of an expert in them.

If the PCs have uncovered the secret room near the granary and discovered the items within, Koharu can identify them as ingredients for a deadly, untraceable poison that kills hours after application. She may also want to know where these were found, but should the PCs invoke Sumiko's name she backs off.

She concludes her training with an admonishment that as Emerald Magistrates, their greatest weapon is their unyielding duty to the Emperor. *Nothing, not even honor or truth, is as important as the Emperor and the Empire*, she says.

AFTERNOON

The PCs may wish to explore the cave again today, but they have something more important to deal with. There is a message waiting for them at their midday meal—their instructor for tomorrow's training, Miya Kotsumi, has assigned some reading before the class concerning famous criminal cases from the past. It says the library contains everything needed.

A SCORPION IN THE LIBRARY

The PCs may have already visited this location to learn more of the Kolat (see page 27). It is located above the dining hall, and is filled with more books than the PCs probably ever knew existed, let alone have seen. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players as the PCs enter:

The library is a testament to the many centuries of Rokugani civilization. Countless books, scrolls, and even loose papers fill the room, and you can feel the history of the Empire as a solid weight in the air. A stooped individual with long black hair and a small black mask turns as you enter the section covering famous crimes, and puts down a thick book he was perusing. "Ah, fellow appreciators of sordid history," the Scorpion Clan samurai says loudly with a smile. "We're quite alone, so no need to whisper today!"

This is Bayushi Ago, an Emerald Magistrate who is earnestly leafing through ancient records for help on a case he must win. Or so he introduces himself—he is actually Shosuro Hametsu, diamyō of the Shosuro family, wearing a very good disguise (see page 29). The PCs have never met Hametsu before, though, so they would not recognize him even if they saw through his disguise (a **TN 5 Skulduggery check** would be needed just to realize the makeup and other implements of the masquerade).

Hametsu (as Ago) is here to drop hints that suggest Doji Hotaru is responsible for her own father's death; it is clear, he says, that she was not properly mourning her father as a loyal child should. He also insinuates that Hotaru hated her father and has the best motive for doing him in—revenge for her mother's passing. He also points out that Hotaru has not actively openly pursued vengeance or justice, which some could see as a sign of guilt.

This is all part of his own plot to throw suspicion on her. He hates Hotaru, whose clandestine relationship with his sister Kachiko compromises his sister's loyalty to the Scorpion and, worse in his eyes, threatens to make his sister happy. He may have murdered Satsume and is now attempting to frame Hotaru for the crime; Hametsu is a master poisoner and could have easily killed the Emerald Champion and left no trace.

Overall his goal is the humiliation of Hotaru's family or a Crane Clan scandal. The more people convinced Hotaru is linked to the death, the more shame she suffers and the happier he is. Satsume outed as Kolat would be quite an excellent bonus.

The PCs likely have no idea of Ago's true identity now, but this is something they can deduce or discover in future adventures, either as they learn more of Crane-Scorpion rivalries or become adept at disguise techniques themselves. They may even one day see Hametsu at a court function, and realize who it was they talked to in the library.

It is very possibly the PCs may suspect "Ago" of murdering Satsume, especially should they discover his true identity. The GM can adopt this into the plot, while keeping another assassin as the one who is targeting Sumiko later in the adventure.

As a possible side plot, the GM can have Hametsu actively try to get blackmail material on the PCs. Planting a vial of poison—but not the type the PCs later discover—on one of the PCs (especially the Crane PC) could be a worthy side plot for him.

The PCs should ideally remember to conduct their assigned reading before leaving, but if not "Ago" can remind them before they leave by asking why they came.



SHOSURO HAMETSU, FAMILY DAIMYŌ

Shosuro Hametsu is the daimyō of the Shosuro family and brother of Bayushi Kachiko. He is currently posing as an Emerald Magistrate named Bayushi Ago. His cover story is that he is here to study historical rulings to help with overseeing a major criminal case in his own jurisdiction.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
60 HONOR	3	ENDURANCE 10	4
58 GLORY	4	COMPOSURE 14	3
70 STATUS	2	FOCUS 6	3
+2, -1 DEMEANOR - SCHEMING		VIGILANCE 6	
ARTISAN 2 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 4 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 4			
WEAPONS AND GEAR			

Katana: Damage 4; Range 1.

Gear: Wakizashi, concealed armor under robes (Resistance [3]), variety of hidden vials filled with poisons.

NPC ABILITY: MASTER OF POISONS

As a Support action, Hametsu may make **TN 2 Skulduggery (Air) check** instead of a **Medicine check** to apply a dose of poison to a weapon or item (see page 26 of the Rulebook). If successful, no one notices this action.

NPC ABILITY: MASTER OF DISGUISES

Hametsu may make a **TN 1 Skulduggery (Water) check** to adopt a disguise. The TN of checks to notice this disguise is 2 plus the number of bonus successes he gains on this check. Characters must know Hametsu personally or have seen him in person to determine he is the one in disguise, however.

A CRAB FAR FROM THE WALL

The PCs may wish to talk with Hiruma Shigeki as someone who had arguments with Satsume and thus had a possible motive for eliminating him. If they don't, the GM can have Shigeki encounter them before dinner or even during a midday meal.

Shigeki is an Emerald Magistrate from deep in the Crab lands and a fierce opponent of all things Shadowlands. He has been at Shiro Yogasha for several weeks, giving talks on the dangers of the Shadowlands and its demons while trying to secure more financial and military support for the Kaiu Wall and its defenders. He borders on the paranoid, seeing evidence of Shadowlands Taint everywhere.

The Crab has very vocally admitted to being annoyed with Doji Satsume's repeated refusals to send the Imperial Legions to augment Crab forces on the Wall. Rumors that he was pleased about Satsume's death have circulated, but if that was a victory it was a short-lived one, as Sumiko has followed Satsume's example and continues to refuse additional support. Shigeki sticks around the castle, hopeful that the next Emerald Champion will take the situation at the Wall more seriously.

Shigeki doesn't believe Satsume died from natural causes, and suspects the claw of the Shadowlands is responsible. Why a Shadowlands creature would kill someone who was restricting more support for the Crab, however, isn't clear. But Shigeki is still certain in his belief.

He was once one of the finest scouts in Rokugan, however, and should the PCs listen attentively to him Shigeki offers tips for stealthy motion and using cover, as well as countering enemies using stealth. This provides a slight bonus in their later nighttime battle on page 33.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: SOMEONE IS FOLLOWING US!

This encounter can be used at any time during the PCs' training, especially just after the PCs have uncovered an important clue. Should they keep what they have learned a secret, or risk bringing in someone else into their confidence?

As the PCs investigate throughout the castle, those with a vigilance of 3 or more, or who succeed on a **TN 2 Fitness (Air) check**, realize someone is surreptitiously shadowing them; this can also be done by Success reveals that it is none other than Kitsuki Kāgi! Ever inquisitive about the goings-on in the castle, he has been curious about them since their introduction to Sumiko. Their odd meeting in her private estate room sparked his interest, and he has been watching them ever since.


He could be a great ally if the PCs tell him what they are doing, but this would mean violating Sumiko's instructions to keep their investigation a secret. Further, he could be a suspect, so they must decide if he is valuable enough as an ally to tip their hand to him. The PCs must decide who they want to trust the most, and if Kāgi's aid is worth Sumiko's displeasure.

DINNER

The dinner tonight is a more raucous affair as Sumiko is dining alone in her estate this night and the next, catching up on work. The sake seems to never stop, and the noise surely reaches far-off Otosan Uchi.

Several Emerald Magistrates—the same ones who seemed unhappy with the PCs on their first morning here—get quite vocal in their jealousy of the PCs. They view the PCs as unworthy upstarts to whom Sumiko showed unfair favoritism by selecting them to become Emerald Magistrates right after their gempuku, and with only mere days of training. These veterans might treat them poorly during the meal, perhaps "accidentally" spilling miso on them or knocking them to the floor. Everyone else seems to treat it as a rite of passage for the youthful students, though.

As dinner ends, the veterans call the PCs out for "special lessons" in the training yard. Another samurai appears with a bundle of *bokken*, the wooden training swords the PCs so recently used in Tsuma. *All part of your training!* a veteran laughingly insists.

The veterans make a **TN 1 Tactics check** and add their focus to determine initiative, while the PCs add their vigilance. There is one veteran for each PC, and they fight with fancy moves designed to impress. The PCs can do the same, and spend  from their checks to impress the veterans and onlookers using the veterans' **This is How It's Done** ability below. Attempts to inflict serious injuries, though, draws shouts and insults from their opponents as their goal is more to show off to these youths than injure them. Shugenja and monk PCs can use their unique proficiencies instead of using the swords to impress the crowd.

Characters who would unmask after their strife exceeds their composure instead bow out of the mock battle (perhaps literally). The GM should have one of the veterans do this first, to show the PCs the expected and approved action. Doing so in a way that shows respect for their opponent draws cheers from the crowds, and the character removes strife as if they had unmasked.

The combat can go on as long as the players are enjoying it, but generally three or so rounds should be plenty. If the PCs fight well, or at least honorably, the veterans judge them as worthy of becoming Emerald Magistrates after all. The veterans then lead the PCs to help finish off a few bottles of fine sake that they lifted from the dining hall.

JEALOUS EMERALD MAGISTRATES


Older and quite experienced, these Emerald Magistrates are skilled enough that even when using practice weapons they could kill their foes. In this "battle," though, they only seek to show these new students they still have much to learn.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL		
55 HONOR		ENDURANCE 12		
50 GLORY		COMPOSURE 8		
40 STATUS		FOCUS 5		
+2, -2 DEMEANOR - ASSERTIVE		VIGILANCE 3		
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 0
WEAPONS AND GEAR				


Bokken (wooden sword): Damage 2; Range 1.

Gear: Daishō, dining kimono, empty sake jug (soon to be filled).

NPC ABILITY: SIT DOWN, CHILD!

While making an Attack action check, the magistrate may spend  to knock their target down. Their target suffers 1 strife and the Prone condition (see page 15).

NPC ABILITY: THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE

While making an Attack action check, the magistrate may spend  to employ an especially impressive technique. If they do and the check is successful, their target suffers strife instead of damage. Should this make the opponent unmask, the attacker gains 4 glory.

DAY 4: LAW TRAINING

The final day of training concerns the laws of the Emerald Empire, and how the PCs as Emerald Magistrates are to enforce them. Perhaps more importantly, the PCs may uncover the means by which Doji Satsume was killed—and why.

BREAKFAST

The PCs may be feeling the effects of last night's events and be moving slowly and quietly. Everyone else is talking about the unexpected visit from Doji Hotaru, the Crane Champion and eldest daughter of the late Doji Satsume. Many still suspect her for his death, especially as "everyone knows" that she has close ties to the Scorpion Clan and actually seems to trust them. *She might even be conspiring with them!* The PCs hear from a nearby table filled with Crane.

PCs who seek out Bayushi Ago cannot find him. It seems he vanished at dawn for reasons unknown.

TRAINING

The final day of training on law is in the Room of Law, as one might expect. The instructor is Miya Kotsumi. Like Hokuto, she is also of an Imperial family (in this case, the Miya). As the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The Room of Law is quite still and silent. It is here that many of the Empire's laws originate, and it is here where they are all stored so that the Emerald and Ruby Champions can see to their proper enforcement. "I am Miya Kotsumi," the finely dressed samurai here says. "Let us learn of the Emperor's Laws today." She pulls down a book, and begins to lecture.

Miya Kotsumi, the law sensei, specializes in the intricacies of Ritsuryō, Rokugani traditional law, which has been passed down for centuries. For eleven years, she has analyzed and judged clan disputes in Shiro Yogasha. Kotsumi's talk ranges from the origins of Imperial law to the latest cases featuring complex technicalities between rival clans. The PCs are likely unaware of exactly how many laws exist in the Emerald Empire, and how intertwined they are. She then launches into hypothetical cases of law. She sets a stage complete with the parties in dispute as if they were grand puzzles to solve, and asks the students for their judgments.

Her final case relates to the assigned reading. *And so this would seem to be an intractable situation, but not so!* she says. *For an earlier Emperor himself provided guidance for a solution. How did his divine words allow both clans to claim victory and retain honor?* This calls for a **TN 3 Government check**; PCs who visited the library earlier treat the TN as 1 lower. Successful PCs are given a small blank book, in which Kotsumi charges them to fill with their own cases to use in teaching their own students one day.

Kotsumi stresses, however, that resolving cases based on facts or history are only part of their duties, for Emerald Magistrates must also consider the Empire's well-being. *The Law, she says sternly, serves the Emperor, and exists only to maintain the Empire.* The GM can use this to relay some of the information from the **Investigations in Rokugan** sidebar, on page 25, relating to arriving at conclusions that are acceptable for the Empire as often being more important than what the evidence provides.



AFTERNOON

After their midday meal, the PCs' plans are interrupted by an important meeting.

QUESTIONING A CRANE

As they depart the dining hall, Kāgi motions them over. It seems that Doji Hotaru, the daughter of Doji Satsume, wishes to speak with them. He ushers them into a small side room next to the Room of Questioning, where they find the Crane Champion. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The room is small and unassuming compared to the Room of Questioning, hardly fit for a Clan Champion. Doji Hotaru stands within, dressed in the blue and white colors of the Crane. She gracefully sits on a tatami mat and motions for you to do the same. "Please sit," she says. "I am honored to meet the samurai who preserved the life and honor of Kakita Riku."

Hotaru asks the PCs to tell the story of how they saved Riku from dishonor and possible seppuku at the Topaz Championship. It's clear she's heard this before, but is honestly delighted to hear it from the PCs. Any mention of Bayushi Sugai brings small wincing to her otherwise perfect composure, however.

Hotaru does seem indifferent to her father's death (PCs who make a **TN 1 Sentiment check** pick up on this). It could be that she does not really care to avenge his death, even if it was a murder, or that she believes her father deserved to die, so there is nothing to avenge. Either way, some might think it an odd reaction to the death of a family member, even one who was disliked.

Her time is limited, but once they are done the PCs can ask a few questions of her. Some sample questions and answers follow, and the GM can adopt them to craft replies. Each question after the first one requires the PC who asks to make a **TN 2 Courtesy check**. Success means Hotaru answers fully, but failure results in a curt response that offers no information.

- ❖ **Why are you here at the castle?** *I am here today to ensure that my father's possessions are safely sent to my uncle in Tsuma. This includes the final move of all of her family's last possessions out of the castle to make way for the new Emerald Champion and their family.*
- ❖ **What was your relationship with your father?** Hotaru acknowledges that her relationship with her father was strained, even confrontational. She also secretly (though everyone knows) blames Satsume's cruelty and indifference for her mother's passing.
- ❖ **Do you know of anyone who wished ill for the Emerald Champion?** Hotaru hesitates. *My father made many enemies. I always assumed it went with the position.*
- ❖ **Do you think the Scorpion Clan could have something to do with his death?** *Surely not!* She seems almost upset by the question, but quickly recovers. *The Scorpion, after all, embody the Bushidō tenet of Duty.*

She has been content with the determination of death due to natural causes. Her main (and private) concern is preventing the Scorpion Clan as a whole from being blamed because of her love for Bayushi Kachiko, a Scorpion who is the Imperial Advisor and Hametsu's sister. Hotaru is seemingly unaware that Hametsu is plotting against her, though she would not be opposed to Hametsu's fall in this or some other matter. It is possible, though, that she does know and is concealing her knowledge so well that no one, not even Hametsu, is aware of this.

COUNTING CHICKENS, HATCHING SCHEMES

As the PCs are leaving the Room of Questioning, or are moving elsewhere through the castle, Oji appears before them. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

As you turn a corner, suddenly the peasant Oji rushes up. "Ah, fortune smiles on me!" he says, panting slightly. "I had hoped to find you. More chickens have died, and I fear it is a sign that another samurai is sure to perish soon!"

Oji (respectfully) asks the PCs to follow him to the hennery, assuming the PCs aren't already going there. He points out two dead fowl he's placed near the door that leads into the granary.

Oji explains they were all fine when he fed them this morning, but when he returned after midday meal he found two dead. As before, there are no indications as to a cause.

WHAT IF THE PCS HAVEN'T DISCOVERED THE CLUES?

If by the end of the afternoon on this day the PCs haven't discovered the hennery or the secret room, or the hidden passage through the cave, their investigation is in serious trouble. This is where the GM needs to step in and offer stronger hints and direction to allow the PCs to uncover evidence.

For aid in linking the hidden closet in Satsume's room to the hennery, Doji Hotaru or Kitsuki Kāgi can mention Satsume must have had some other place to store papers in his room, as they know many were missing when they were gathered for transport to Tsuma. Oji could find the PCs and report finding papers that seemed to belong to the Emerald Magistrate based on the mon, possibly left behind in one of Satsume's visits to the hennery. Such papers can mention others hidden in his room. The GM should work these into the PC's third day at the castle to ensure they stay on track.

The secret room (and the cave's secret passage) can also be revealed through Doji Hotaru, who can mention its existence as something she discovered when spying on her father long ago. Both locations should be uncovered before dinner on the PCs' last day of training so that they have the evidence of Kolat activity and poison.

The PCs may wish to look at the feed he uses; if they do not, Oji begs them to inspect it to remove any possible guilt that could be assigned to him. *I only use what is delivered, and never alter or add to it!* he (respectfully) insists.

The storage and granary room is indeed filled with sacks of grain and barrels of dried fish, among other foodstuffs. Oji points to an open feed bag resting next to a large barrel, but the sounds of clucking hens calls to him; he bows and begs permission to tend to his remaining flock.

Inspection of the feed bag and its contents proves fruitless, except for some dark green stains on the bag. PCs with a vigilance of 3 or more, or who make a **TN 3 Skulduggery (Water)** or **TN 1 Labor (Air) check** notice the floor below the barrel has scratch marks, as if the barrel was moved frequently. If the PCs move the barrel away, they uncover a trap door which they can lift to expose a stairway into a small chamber below.

The Secret Room

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players if they follow the stairs downward:

There is nothing but darkness below you, but at the bottom of the stairs you make out several oil lamps that you can use for illumination. Lighting them reveals a small room stuffed with scattered supplies and packs of clothing, a table covered with papers and writing materials, another covered with exotic items, and a caché of small weapons.

The clothing is uniformly dark, but there are also kimonos with the colors of almost every Great Clan inside the packs.

The papers contain the same unfamiliar handwriting as on the papers found earlier in the cave tunnel, but are addressed to someone called "Hidden Serpent." The words angrily denounce "the green" for betraying humans to the Kami. This is clearly directed at Satsume, the Emerald Champion.

The other table has an assortment of bottles, vials, and jars full of bizarre plant and animal parts, such as crushed andromeda flowers and pickled silver wasps. A **TN 2 Medicine, Skulduggery, or Culture check (Fire 1, Air 3)** reveals that these ingredients are used in both poisons and medicines. Shosuro Koharu can also identify them, as noted on page 28.

There are small, dark green stains on this table—the same as the PCs spotted on the feed bag. This is where the poison was mixed, and the same poison was spilled onto the feed bag while moving between the granary and this room, probably while moving the barrel over the trap door. A PC can also make a **TN 1 Medicine check** to determine this.

At this point the PCs now have some solid clues as to how and why Satsume was killed (and that it was indeed murder). What they do with the knowledge will have to wait a bit, as it's time for dinner—and some fighting after the meal.

DINNER

The PCs' last dinner at the palace is relatively quiet compared to the previous night, even though Sumiko is again dining alone in her estate. The veterans are on a mission, and Doji Hotaru has departed as well. Hiruma Tomoe is quite loudly still here, however, but few wish to discuss the many Shadowlands horrors he has fought along the Wall. After a rather dull meal, the PCs turn in for the night, perhaps rehearsing what they will report to Sumiko tomorrow before they are officially named Emerald Magistrates.

DAGGERS IN THE DARK

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players as they leave the Dining Hall:

As you near the bridges to your quarters near the Ruby Dōjō, you see a figure walking toward the tower of the Ruby Champion's Estate. There are still several samurai walking the grounds even at this late hour, but there is something not quite right about this one...

The GM should now pick a PC who hasn't had a major role in the investigation to be given an opportunity to shine. This PC can make a **TN 1 Smithing (Water)** or **TN 1 Culture (Earth) check** to notice something about the figure (who the GM should describe as being from their clan) that is incorrect in their clothing or weapons. It could be the color is slightly wrong, or the cut is not the way the clan wears their kimonos, or their katana hilt has a pattern no one in that clan would display. If the PC is unsuccessful, other PCs can also spot something similarly incorrect by making a **TN 2 Culture (Water) check**.



Just as the figure reaches the estate walls, they discard their kimono to reveal dark clothing underneath and pull on a dark fabric mask. The figure is actually a Kolat assassin, making their way to assassinate the Ruby Champion!

The Fight

If the PCs don't challenge the assassin, the assassin notices the PCs and attacks first in order to eliminate any witnesses. The PCs may seek just to capture their foe for questioning, but soon discover that won't be possible.

Each character makes a **TN 1 Tactics check** as normal to determine initiative. If the assassin attacked first, they add their focus value and the PCs add their vigilance. If the PCs attacked, both groups add their focus. This fight is mostly in the dark, but not enough to impact combat unless the GM wishes it to count as Obscuring terrain (see page 11) for additional impact on the struggle. The terrain far on either side of their location is a steep drop, however, and is Dangerous. The PCs may cry for guards, but none will arrive in time to aid them.

If the PCs gained fighting tips from Hiruma Shigeki (see page 30), they may ignore the first **Q** result they would otherwise suffer during the clash.

The fight should be bloody but somewhat one-sided, as there are likely four PCs against the single assassin. That single assassin is quite proficient with both their melee weapons and *shuriken* (throwing discs), but wasn't expecting a fight, let alone one against a group. The assassin is totally dedicated to their cause, however, as the PCs will soon learn. If the group is made of veteran players the GM can also include a second assassin lurking in the shadows who emerges once the fight is underway.



As the fight ends, Sumiko appears (she happened to spot it from her room high above). The GM can also use her to finish the battle if needed. If the PCs haven't already, she unmasks the assassin. She clearly knows this face, but won't divulge this to the PCs. PCs who make a **TN 3 Culture (Earth) check** recognize him: the assassin is one of Kāgi's assistants who they saw when they arrived at the castle a few days ago.

Should the PCs search the fallen assassin, they find several vials of green fluid (if they do not search, Sumiko can prompt them to do so). Needless to say, it would be very bad for them to drink this liquid. There is also some Kolat propaganda that matches the unknown handwriting on the papers the PCs found in the cave and in the secret room, but more unsettling there are some papers with graceful calligraphy in a familiar blue ink.

If the PCs earlier found Satsume's papers or have any of his papers with them, they realize the writing style is identical. Otherwise, a **TN 1 Composition (Air) check** confirms that this matches Satsume's handwriting. These are correspondence with someone he calls "his friend and peer" at Otosan Uchi, the Imperial capital. In them, Satsume says he is convinced that the two Imperial heirs are totally unsuited for rule, one being too cruel and the other too weak. Such thoughts, while not formally of the Kolat, are still blasphemy against the rule of the divine Hantei family!

Whoever his high-ranking correspondent is, that person seems to have encouraged such dangerous beliefs, but became upset when Satsume indicated he had a possible solution to the matter that would keep the Empire stable. Satsume's words assure him that all will be well and that the Empire will endure, but they are still highly heretical and treasonous. It is possible the assassin planned to plant these notes on his new victims to tarnish the entire castle's leadership as corrupt and disloyal.

Just as Sumiko begins to question the assassin, however, he grimaces and greenish liquid emerges from his mouth. The PCs can recognize this as the same color they spotted in the secret room. Within seconds the assassin is quite dead. Sumiko has the guards (who are finally arriving) dispose of the body, and orders everyone (including the PCs) to tell no one of the matter.

After the body is taken away (a remarkably speedy process), Sumiko turns to the PCs and simply says, "I look forward to your report tomorrow." With that she departs back into her estate.

KITSUKI TOMO, KOLAT ASSASSIN

Tomo has been a fanatical member of the Kolat for years now, ever since he witnessed one of the Emperor's heirs angrily kill a peasant who had fallen in his way. This convinced Tomo that humans needed to rule Rokugan, not the offspring of the Kami. Tomo serves as one of Kāgi's assistants, which has allowed him to discover the castle's many secrets. His Kolat superiors at Otosan Uchi determined Satsume must be eliminated, for though Satsume didn't want either Imperial heir on the throne, he did want to keep the Empire secure—something they are against. Tomo eagerly accepted the assignment, and now sets out to destabilize the Empire further by killing the Ruby Champion as well.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
55 HONOR		ENDURANCE 10	
47 GLORY		COMPOSURE 10	
35 STATUS		FOCUS 6	
+2, -1 DEMEANOR · FANATICAL		VIGILANCE 4	
ARTISAN 0		MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 2
		SOCIAL 2	TRADE 3
WEAPONS AND GEAR			

Katana: Damage 4; Range 1.

Shuriken: Damage 2, Range 1–3.

Gear: Daishō, thick clothing with concealed armor (Resistance [3]), vials of poison, coil of thin rope, climbing hooks.

NPC ABILITY: SKILLED ASSASSIN

When making an Attack check, Tomo may spend to move 1 range band and throw a shuriken at a character at range 1–2 other than his target. That character must resist with a **TN 3 Fitness (Earth) check** or suffer 5 damage.

NPC ABILITY: SINGLE-MINDED

During battle scenes, Tomo does not receive strife from results on his checks.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE REWARDS

This ends the second act of the adventure, and the GM should award appropriately:

- Completing all three stages of training: 1 XP
- Uncovering Satsume's blasphemous beliefs: 1 XP
- Determining that poison was used in his murder: 1 XP
- Defeating the assassin: 2 XP

The GM can also award additional XP should the PCs complete any optional encounters, as well as for exceptional role-playing in general during the past four days.

Act 3: The Findings

In this act, the PCs analyze the clues they have gathered and make their determination regarding who or what killed Satsume (or at least who they think should be blamed for it). Their original obligation to and subsequent manipulation by Sumiko should be taken into account, as should the request of Satsume's ghost to avoid a familial scandal. The possible consequences to Rokugan's stability if any part of the Emerald Champion's administration is implicated in the affair should also receive significant consideration. At the end of the day, choosing to rule that Satsume's death was indeed due to natural causes might be what is best for everyone, regardless of the truth.

The GM should remember that the PCs are allowed to weigh the evidence and testimony they have gathered in a way that does not reflect what really happened. They can accuse and punish the wrong people, accidentally cause unjust rifts and feuds, or make other mistakes with severe consequences. These types of outcomes accurately reflect the difficulty of the Emerald Magistrates' duty not only to vigilantly seek truth in a complex world but also to responsibly wield power.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast today feels oddly normal after everything that happened yesterday. Those PCs who were injured last night have had medical attention, and are at least mobile and healthy enough for today's activities—becoming Emerald Magistrates and then reporting their findings to the Ruby Champion.

DECIDING ON THE REPORT

At this point, the GM should give the PCs suitable time to discuss what they want to report. They have several options and many ways to justify them. They could present their gathered evidence that Satsume had anti-Imperial beliefs and was killed by a Kolat assassin. They could leave out Satsume's thoughts, and only report the assassination. They could shift the entire blame to the Scorpion Clan, as poison was involved. They could also simply say it was all natural causes, burying any mention of Kolat to prevent harm to the image of the Empire's strength.

A revelation that Satsume was convinced that neither of the Emperor's heirs were worthy of the throne would be terrible. No one should ever suspect an Emerald Champion of such blasphemous thoughts, since that would cause panic in the courts and a loss of trust in the law enforcement and administration that this office oversees. It would also be a major blow against the Empire if the Kolat is linked to his death, tipping Rokugan into the kind of chaos that weakens the Imperial bureaucracy and allows more infiltrators to slip in through the cracks.

The PCs may have gathered a great deal of physical evidence: items found in the secret room that indicate Satsume was poisoned, and papers found on the assassin that link the Kolat to the assassin and blasphemous beliefs questioning the Imperial family's divine right to rule to Satsume. They may even have the coded note found at the henery. What the PCs do with this evidence and what determination is best for the Emerald Empire will be a test of what they really learned in their time here.

First, however, it is time for graduation.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

The PCs are given time to bathe and dress in their finest, then are summoned to the Garden of Verdant Serenity for a brief ceremony. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players as enter the gardens:

A small crowd is gathered in the gardens under a bright sky. It feels like Lady Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, is surely watching over the event! Agasha Sumiko, now in her impressive ceremonial armor, stands before you and several other students set to gain the title of Emerald Magistrate.

The Ruby Champion gives each PCs a small icon with their own mon and the mon of the Emerald Champion. This serves as their badge of office, and they can use it in further adventures to establish their authority. Their instructors are also present, and congratulate each student as well.

The PCs are now Emerald Magistrates. It grants them great honor and prestige to have achieved such positions so early in their adult lives. The Ruby Champion loudly congratulates her new magistrates, then pointedly looks at the PCs before departing for her estate. It is time for them to also depart and make their private report to her.

New Title: Emerald Magistrate

The PCs each gain the Emerald Magistrate title. As a result of their training, each can gain +1 rank in any Scholar skill, +1 rank in any Social skill, or +1 rank in any Martial Arts skill. They all gain 10 Status.

The title also confers the following new abilities:

Voice of Authority: Once per game session when making a Support or Scheme action check using a Social skill (Command, Courtesy, Games, or Performance), you may choose additional targets equal to your glory rank. You cannot choose any additional target with a vigilance higher than the highest among your initial targets.

Harsh Scrutiny: Once per session when performing an investigation, you may suffer 2 strife to count your vigilance as 1 higher.



YOUR REPORT TO THE RUBY CHAMPION

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players as they enter the Ruby Champion's private estate:

Once again you are in the Ruby Champion's private rooms, though now you feel much more seasoned than when you first arrived at the palace. Sumiko has removed her armor, and is wearing a more comfortable kimono. She gestures for you to begin, and sits back in anticipation of your gathered evidence and conclusions.

REPORT OPTIONS

The following are some of the possible reports the PCs might make, along with Sumiko's responses.

Natural Causes

Satsume did indeed perish of natural causes, as there was no evidence they could find that proved otherwise. The PCs may or may not present any of the evidence they gathered, or even include a written report of their conclusions concerning "unrelated matters" for Sumiko's use. Both the PCs and Sumiko know what really happened, but this is the best finding for the Empire and Sumiko readily accepts it.

If the PCs make this case, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

Sumiko looks closely at each of you, and pulls out a small disc—one of the shuriken recovered from last night's combat. "I concur with your findings," she says evenly as she rubs her fingers along the flat metal.

If the PCs presented any of the evidence of "unrelated matters" they gathered as well, read or paraphrase this aloud to the players as well:

"I thank you for your excellent work in also gathering such interesting information for me," she continues. "I am certain it will be of great benefit to the next Emerald Champion and to the stability of the Empire."

The PCs may make a **TN 2 Sentiment (Water)** or **Government (Water) check** to discern that she is quite pleased with this determination.

If the PCs report that Satsume's death was due to natural causes but they do not include the evidence they gathered, Sumiko may wonder if they are hiding this from her as so to retain possible blackmail material for themselves. If the GM desires, she may respect them more for such a move, even if she ends up with nothing to show for her efforts in employing them for this mission during their training, or may even suspect the PCs of disloyalty.

The PCs may also wish to withhold evidence as they don't trust Sumiko and suspect her of being a part of the Kolat. They may even desire to present it to others or use it to strike against the Kolat (or even join it) in later adventures. They may even forfeit 10 honor to distribute their findings publicly to shame the Ruby Champion for her actions to suppress them (they must also forfeit 20 glory if this is linked to them).

Kolat Assassination

Satsume had Kolat leanings or was a member of the Kolat, and was assassinated by Kolat members or a rival Kolat cell. The PCs should have plenty of evidence to back this up, and Sumiko looks over everything they present carefully.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players once the PCs are done presenting their case:

Sumiko looks closely at each of you and offers a slight sigh. "Are you certain of your findings?" she asks. "I see much here, but I feel...strongly...that you should reconsider your determination of the matter."

Sumiko looks at you earnestly. It seems she expects something else. What do you want to do?

Sumiko was clearly hoping the PCs would maintain that the death was from natural causes. The PCs may make a **TN 2 Sentiment (Earth)** or **Government (Earth) check** to confirm this. Even if they fail, they may spend **✳ ✳** on their check to see that Sumiko prefers another finding that is best for the Empire, not necessarily one that best fits the facts.

If the PCs change their minds and alter their findings to one Sumiko prefers, use the words under the **Natural Causes** option to offer Sumiko's response to their revised determination.

If the PCs keep to their original report, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

"I see," she says with a somewhat disappointed expression on her face. "Thank you for your work and once again congratulations on completing your training," she continues. "The cases that await you should hopefully be more instructive."

Something Else...

Satsume died from some other cause: he was poisoned by persons unknown, or a peasant pushed him down the stairs, or perhaps he killed himself. They might even decide an assassin was about to kill him, but he died of natural causes first. Whatever their presentation, the PCs should have good evidence for it. They might twist the evidence they found to fit their determination, or include their own accounts of encounters that back up their case. These are probably less likely as options, but the PCs may have reasons of their own to pursue them.

If the PCs make no mention of Kolat activity or don't blame a Great Clan (or anyone who is a member of one) in their report, Sumiko accepts this finding. Any evidence they present she sets aside without looking at it, as both she and the PCs know their finding has little to do with facts.

If the PCs do include mentions of Kolat, though, the GM should adopt the **Assassination** option for her responses. Clearly, Sumiko doesn't want to hear any mention of that vile organization—at least not officially.

As mentioned earlier, the PCs may want to take their evidence to others or go public with it. Presenting a finding to Sumiko that she desires, simply to have them appear to be following her expected outcome, could be part of this. It could be a difficult task to forge a different path, but the PCs may believe that such adversity on their part is the best way to serve the Emerald Empire.

WAIT, SO THIS WAS ALL FOR NOTHING?

If Sumiko disregarded the PCs' findings, the players should not leave the adventure feeling blindsided or as though they have wasted their time! Their hard work may not be used officially, but Sumiko will find it invaluable not only for information about people who might threaten the Empire but also as part of their training as Emerald Magistrates, for whom investigations are much more than merely sniffing out clues. Investigation can have serious political repercussions that could occur, and findings often must bend to them for the greater good. Accusing a powerful daimyō of murder, for example, may be utterly impractical unless someone of even greater rank can be convinced of this. Even then, it may be best to keep that as possible blackmail material and pin the crime on a person everyone would rather see punished for other reasons.

Much of what the instructors taught emphasized this point. If desired, though, Sumiko might explain the "death due to natural causes" verdict in order to help maintain the Empire's stability. Sumiko can tell them that the reason why she had them investigate was more to test their mettle and gather information, and that their successful actions proves them capable of operating as Emerald Magistrates—which is why, after all, they came to the castle. The PCs gained valuable information regarding some of the major powers in Rokugan while doing this, which will help them in later adventures.

The PCs can also decide to use their evidence and conclusions to act on their own. This could be part of a quest for justice or to force officials such as Sumiko (and the new Emerald Champion) to admit the corruption in the castle. Either way, they can make their own mark on the Emerald Empire in a fashion of their own choosing.

THE OFFICIAL FINDING

With their report concluded, Sumiko dismisses the PCs. Read or paraphrase (especially if there were multiple assassins) the following aloud to the players:

When you reach the bottom of the tower, you see Kāgi calling out commands to his assistants just like when you arrived. You realize that he is missing one of his assistants—there are only nine now. He also keeps looking up worriedly. Above him, you can see Sumiko watching him like a cat who has caught a mouse.

THE RUBY CHAMPION'S STATEMENT

Later that day, most of the castle is buzzing with discussion. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

You overhear lots of chatter later in the day. When you ask someone, it seems that the Ruby Champion has released her long-awaited official declaration concerning the Emerald Champion's recent death. After much reflection and review, she has confirmed that the death was from natural causes.

The PCs probably aren't surprised at this, especially if that was also their determination. After learning this, and thinking on how their reports went, any who wishes to can make a **TN 2 Government (Void) check** to gain awareness that their investigation was really more of an information-gathering mission than an exploration to gain the truth. By reporting what they found, the PCs have let Sumiko know both what probably happened to Satsume and the level of Kolat infiltration in the castle (and possibly elsewhere). Anyone linked to the murder is either dead or someone Sumiko has leverage on, whom she can blackmail in order to maintain the stability of the Empire (and her position, should she need support). As the PCs' investigation was secret, she also has plausible deniability should anyone complain of their behavior during their time at Shiro Yogasha.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE REWARDS

This ends the last act of the adventure, and the GM should award appropriately:

- ✦ Presenting the determination that Sumiko desires: 2 XP
- ✦ Presenting another determination, but acting with honor should Sumiko disregard their findings: 2 XP

Remember, if the PCs revealed their secret investigation to anyone, then each PC's honor value is reduced by 10.



Epilogue

The PCs are now Emerald Magistrates, and soon will be sent out from the palace to investigate and enforce the Emperor's Law.

Depending on how Satsume's death was resolved, the PCs may have also made some powerful enemies or allies among the inhabitants of Shiro Yogasha. These could have further-reaching repercussions for their interactions in the future on a personal or even a Great Clan level. Angering a lowly magistrate might deny a person the ear of the Emperor later. However, kindness shown toward a single peasant might save one's life in the future.

First, they have a visit from a now-familiar face.

A FINAL TEA CEREMONY

During the next night, either at the castle or on the road to their next adventure, the PCs once again encounter Doji Satsume's ghost. If they declared the death to be of natural causes, found the murderer, or assigned blame to someone not of his family, he is satisfied. In any case, he knows his time is done now.

If the PCs cleared Hotaru and his family, Satsume's ghost is happy with the results of their investigation and thanks them for their service; read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

Despite his usually stern or indifferent visage, Doji Satsume appears happy, a smile actually softening the Grinning Crane's face. He thanks you for your service to his family and his clan (and the Empire), and he bows to you before vanishing into the darkness. You expect that this is the last that you will see of the late Emerald Champion, but as you've learned in your brief time as samurai, Rokugan is filled with the unexpected.

FUTURE ADVENTURE IDEAS

The Ruby Champion, now that she has seen their prowess, likely has many new cases for the PCs to investigate. The following are some ideas for missions the PCs could be sent on in other adventures at the castle or in other areas:

- ✦ The Kolat conspiracies at the castle (and perhaps even in Otosan Uchi) need to be eradicated, perhaps in secret if the PCs wish to keep Satsume's blasphemous beliefs concerning the Imperial heirs from being disclosed.

USING THE MAPS IN OTHER ADVENTURES

The Tsuma and Castle maps may be reused for other adventures, since the basic layouts of small country villages and large castles are largely similar from village to village and castle to castle. The GM may choose to make necessary accommodations for specific or necessary locations in new settings for future adventures.

- ✦ Someone hired the bandits who attacked the PCs on the way to the castle, and the PCs are very likely eager to find out who it was.
- ✦ A messenger carrying Imperial secrets is waylaid on the road between the castle and Otosan Uchi, and the PCs must track down the bandits (and work with local magistrates) to recover those scrolls.
- ✦ The appearance of goblins (and possibly an ogre) that the PCs encountered on the way to Shiro Yogasha calls for investigation.
- ✦ The tengu appears to the PCs as they travel and offers training to one or more of the characters who impressed her earlier. They can gain +1 to any ring at half XP cost. The tengu tells them to be wary of tides that move slowly and darkly, then flies away. (This is a very subtle hint concerning **Dark Tides**).

DARK TIDES

If the GM desires, at the end of the adventure they can have the PCs receive word of their first assignment: the **Dark Tides** adventure, which is featured in the *Legend of the Five Rings Game Master's Kit*. In that adventure, they are sent to Otosan Uchi, the capital of Rokugan, to investigate a report regarding samurai from various Great Clans going missing. Their investigation takes them to the sleepy village of Slow Tide Harbor, where they uncover a conspiracy of kidnappings and mahō use that could threaten the Emerald Empire!

