

D Penny readful

THROUGH
THE BREACH

THE OBSIDIAN GATE

Wyrd

Through the Breach books:

Core Rules
Into the Steam
Under Quarantine
Into the Bayou
Above the Law

Through the Breach adventures:

In Defense of Innocence
Northern Aggression
A Night in Rottenburg
Nythera
The Bayou Games
Fire in the Sky
A Stitch in Time
Northern Sedition



WyrD Miniatures, LLC | wyrd-games.net

Customer Service - <http://www.wyrd-games.net/contact>

This book is printed under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Contents copyright ©2005-2019, WyrD Miniatures, LLC. All rights reserved. This book is a work of fiction; any resemblance to organizations, places, events, or actual persons – living or dead – is purely coincidental. Copies of materials herein are intended solely for your personal, non-commercial use, only if you preserve any associated copyrights, trademarks, or other notices. WyrD Miniatures, LLC holds exclusive rights to this work. Unauthorized duplication is prohibited. You may not distribute copies to others for a charge or other consideration without prior written consent of the owner of the materials except for review purposes only.

MALIFAUx is a trademark of WyrD Miniatures, LLC 2005-2019. The WyrD logo, the MALIFAUx logo, the Through the Breach logo, the Penny Dreadful logo, and all related character names, places, and things are trademarks and copyright ©2005-2019 WyrD Miniatures, LLC.

First published: July 2019.

THROUGH THE BREACH - PENNY DREADFUL: THE OBSIDIAN GATE
978-1-7331627-7-7
WYR30209-E



THE OBSIDIAN GATE



This text is protected by the copyright laws of the United States of America. Contents copyright © 2005-2019, Wyrd Miniatures, LLC. All rights reserved. This book is a work of fiction; any resemblance to organizations, places, events, or actual persons - living or dead - is purely coincidental. Copies of materials herein are intended solely for your personal, non-commercial use, only if you preserve any associated copyrights, trademarks, or other notices. Wyrd Miniatures, LLC holds exclusive rights to this work. Unauthorized duplication is prohibited. You may not distribute copies to others for a charge or other consideration without prior written consent of the owner of the materials except for review purpose only.

MALIFAUX is a trademark of Wyrd Miniatures, LLC 2005-2019. The Wyrd logo, the MALIFAUX logo, the Through the Breach logo, the Penny Dreadful logo, The Other Side logo, and all related character names, places, and things are trademarks and copyright © 2005-2019 Wyrd Miniatures, LLC. The Malifaux game system is patent pending, serial no. 12/821,427.

CREDITS

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Nathan Caroland

DESIGN

Mason Crawford

WRITING

Mason Crawford

TTB LOGO ARTIST

Patrick Guinane

ART

Hardy Fowler, Jorge Gomez, Sarah Lindstom,
Alyssa Menold, & Hueala Teodor

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT

John Cason

EDITING

Kayli Ammen & Kyle Rowan

PLAYTESTERS

Crain Bishell, John Burgin, Kate Burgin, Hayden Burns,
Samuel Burns, Joe Chasek, Amberleigh Clark, Kimberly Cooper,
Kyle Dolenc, Yann Fitzpatrick, Jon Goulbourne, Brent Hattley,
Brian Jacob, Jeremy Lang, Robert Lefferts, Samantha Lennox,
Paul Lippincott, Levan Mania, Alexander William Martin, Branislav Micko,
Roderick D. Mitchell Jr., Jamie Morgon, Brittany Norris,
Adam Rogers, Robert Vancel, Shaun Vavra, Kai Wall

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....4

ADVENTURE.....6

ACT I.....7

Act I, Prologue: Temple Visit.....7

Act I, Scene 1: Wicked Intentions.....8

Statue Explosion.....10

Unworthy Vessel.....13

Soul Transfer.....13

Act I, Scene 2: Dark Omens.....14

The Demon Cult.....14

Spiritual Protection.....18

Act I, Scene 3: A Haunted Hike.....19

Incomplete Ritual.....21

Absolute Asura.....23

Act I, Scene 4: The Temple of Peace.....25

ACT II.....28

Act II, Prologue: The Exorcist.....28

Act II, Scene I: The Proposition.....29

Act II, Scene II: The Morning Train.....33

All Aboard.....34

Act II, Scene III: Mount Oeyama.....38

The Summit.....42

Act II, Scene IV: The Corrupted Shrine.....43

The Ritual.....45

ACT III.....48

Act III, Prologue: That's My Bag, Baby.....48

Act III, Scene 1: A Rude Awakening.....49

Act III, Scene 2: Escape Plan.....53

Rock Hopping.....53

Riders in the Sky.....54

Chillin' with the Quilin.....55

A Bird in the Bag.....57

Act III, Scene 3: The Palace of Wind.....59

The Divine Wind.....63

Act III, Scene 4: Out of the Bag.....64

Mandatory Evacuation.....69

ACT IV.....70

Act IV, Prologue: Refugees.....71

Act IV, Scene I: Guild Concerns.....72

Act IV, Scene 2: From the Deep.....75

Act IV, Scene 3: Eve of Destruction.....79

Sword of Ancients.....82

Act IV, Scene 4: Sleeping Potion.....84

Brewing the Potion.....87

Act IV, Scene 4: Shadow of the Titan.....88

Face to Face.....89

We Can Fly!.....90

Kaiju Climbing.....91

Down the Hatch.....93

A Perfect Strike.....94

Conclusion.....95

FATEMASTER CHARACTERS.....96

Satori no Michi Cultist.....97

Mipam Tsundue.....98

Satori no Michi Devotee.....99

Living Mural.....100

Possessed Tsundue.....101

Asura.....102

Investigating Officer.....103

Obsidian Oni.....104

Guild Soldier.....105

Yagiza.....106

Aobozu.....107

Nuppeppo.....108

James Whitaker.....109

Zhong Kui.....110

Yamabiko.....111

Tengu.....112

Quilin.....113

Suzaku.....114

Fujin.....115

Zhong Kui, the Demon Queller.....116

Yokai.....117

Speckled Crawler Swarm.....118

Barbed Crawler Swarm.....119

Striped Skulker.....120

Kappa.....121

FATED CHARACTERS.....122

Character Factions.....123

Abyssinia.....123

The King's Empire.....123

The Cult of the Burning Man.....123

The Gibbering Hordes.....123

The Three Kingdoms.....123

Kimon.....123

The Court of Two.....123

The Guild.....123

Aida Omari.....124

Zesiro Selassie.....125

Kimber Daniels.....127

Dr. John H. Watson.....128

Hu Heng.....129

El.....130

Abel Negasi.....131

Vh'udraa.....132

Cpl. Nakazawa Sadao.....133

Soldier.....134

Shinkai Shige.....135

Nakajima Aiko.....136

Takamaru Kazuya.....137

Fan Luoyang.....138

Karlheinz Bennewitz.....139

ADVANCED PURSUIT - POSSESSED.....140

Requirements.....140

Advancement.....140

CONDITIONS.....143

THE OBSIDIAN GATE



INTRODUCTION

The Obsidian Gate is a Penny Dreadful adventure for the *Through the Breach* roleplaying game. This adventure's corresponding worldwide event that took place in 2018 allowed the players to influence the destiny of Earth and the future of *The Other Side*. Now, players are free to explore this adventure freely so that it impacts the world built at each Fatemaster's table.

The Obsidian Gate adventure consists of four adventures (called Acts), each one encompassing a single play session, though some adventures may take longer than others. In those instances, we encourage players to break up the adventures into multiple play sessions.

Fourteen pregenerated characters have been provided for the players to control during these adventures. While it is encouraged to play these characters during

the adventure, Fatemasters are equally encouraged to fit this adventure in with their existing campaign. You'll just need a good reason as to why the adventurers are headed to Japan.

The Obsidian Gate uses the rules found in the second edition of *Through the Breach*. As such, the pregenerated characters included in this adventure have been constructed using the second edition rules.

As this is a Penny Dreadful, if you are not a Fatemaster who plans on running this adventure, then stop reading! You wouldn't want to spoil the surprise of what happens before you play.

Have fun!

WITHIN THESE PAGES

Here's a list of what you'll find in this adventure!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the section you're reading now!

CHAPTER 2: ADVENTURE

The adventure makes up the bulk of *The Obsidian Gate*. The adventure is broken up into four separate Acts. Each Act will be presented individually and is intended to be played over a single game session. If a session runs longer than expected, don't be afraid to split it up into multiple sessions.

CHAPTER 3: FATEMASTER CHARACTERS

This chapter contains the stat blocks for the various adversaries the Fated might encounter over the course of the adventure. It contains descriptions and backgrounds for such characters as well as stat blocks for those characters the Fated might face in combat.

CHAPTER 4: FATED CHARACTERS

This chapter contains pregenerated characters the players can use to play through *The Obsidian Gate*. If a character dies during this adventure, that character will be unavailable for players to select in subsequent adventures. With fourteen characters, however, there should be plenty of room for a few mistakes along the way!



CALL OUT BOXES

There are many call out boxes like this one scattered throughout the adventure.

These boxes have two main functions. Boxes like this one highlight rules or special notes for the Fatemaster.

Boxes like the box on the right are used to show dialogue or description. They are intended to be read by the Fatemaster aloud to the players. Be careful, though; some are only intended to be read if the Fated take certain actions or are successful at certain challenges.

“Yeah, I was there.” The drifter sighs, his shoulders slumping at the admission. “It only lasted a moment, and I still don’t know how I lived through it. There was only the one Ortega, but she was so fast with that gun of hers...” He shakes his head. “Two of the bandits were dead before they even realized she had drawn on them.”

His gaze becomes distant as the memory comes back to him. “It was a ballet of death.”



ADVENTURE

The Obsidian Gate begins on Earth, in the coastal city of Kamakura, Japan. This adventure is intended to take place in mid-April of 1907, but Fatemasters are welcome to move the date around as they see fit.

As the Fated are visiting Kokuyōseki-in, a Buddhist temple in the southern part of the city and less than a mile from the coast, it comes under attack by the Satori no Michi, which not only means "the Road to Enlightenment," but is also the name of a dangerous cult that worships demonic oni.

It has been over fifty-years since the Guild Commodore Perry's gunboat diplomacy forcibly opened Japan - long before shrouded in isolation - to Western traders. In addition to imposing harsh treaty stipulations on the defeated Tokugawa Shogunate, Guild forces also occupied Japan, where they have maintained a considerable presence to ensure continued access to the nation's lucrative ports. Western culture - including philosophy, cuisine, and dress - has begun slowly trickling onto the island, but more traditional values remain deeply entrenched - much to the Guild's chagrin.



The will of the people has not been completely crushed, however. Japan is but one of the Three Kingdoms, and the Boxer Rebellion of China has driven many of the Guild's officers and troops out of that nation. While some might see this rebellion as a source of hope, others see it as an ill wind: fearful of losing their grip on the Three Kingdoms entirely.

While playing through this adventure, there are four important aspects that both players and Fatemasters should keep in mind:

Language: While some of Japan's residents (namely those who do business with the Guild or tourists) are capable of speaking English, the primary language of Japan is still Japanese. Signs are written in Japanese, as are menus, and many of the people the Fated encounter speak Japanese as their only language. Characters incapable of speaking Japanese will have a difficult time accomplishing anything in Japan without a translator.

Currency: While it's not impossible to find merchants who will accept the Guild's scrip, most of the Japanese deal in yen (¥). The current exchange rate is roughly ¥10 per Guild scrip.

The Haitorei Concord: By Guild decree, anyone carrying firearms, swords, or other weapons is in violation of Guild law and is subject to arrest. The only exceptions are Guild employees, and more recently, the Japanese military. Though seldom enforced, due to the Guild's waning strength in the Three Kingdoms, many have chosen to keep them a secret because of the risk. When honor is not enough, a few places will enact the Concord in an attempt to keep the peace or sanctity, as well.

Earthside Magic: Channeling magic on Earth is much more difficult than in Malifaux. As a result, all Spells and Manifested Powers cast while on Earth suffer a  to the flip. This penalty applies equally to Fatemaster characters. The easiest way to mitigate this penalty is to use the Focus action to gain the **Focused** Condition, which can grant a character a  to their spellcasting attempt.

ACT I

ACT I, PROLOGUE: TEMPLE VISIT

Read the following text as the Fated arrive at Kokuyōseki-in:

Your travels through Japan have brought you to the seaside town of Kamakura. The sleepy little tourist town is well-known for its numerous beaches, Shinto shrines, and Buddhist temples, and it's the last of these that you've decided to visit today.

Kokuyōseki-in is one of the most significant Buddhist temples in Kamakura, and as you pass beneath the large red torii arch that marks the temple's entrance and hear the greeting of the monk stationed next to it, you feel the weight of the world slough from your shoulders. You have yet to set eyes on the temple's primary attraction, a monumental obsidian statue of a celestial Buddha, but already you can feel its soothing presence.

The other visitors moving toward the shrine are an eclectic group of natives and non-Japanese. Many of them are dressed in brown robes and carry small satchels and brightly painted white masks, though they have yet to don the latter.

If the Fated are meeting for the first time, this is an excellent opportunity to have them describe themselves and their reactions to the shrine.

As they pass through the torii arch, the characters catch sight of a wooden sign that stands adjacent to the path. In Japanese kanji, it reads: "Stranger, whosoever thou art and whatsoever be thy creed, when thou enterest this sanctuary remember thou treadest upon ground hallowed by the worship of ages. This is the Temple of Buddha and the gate of the eternal, and should therefore be entered with reverence."

The mask-carrying visitors are members of Satori no Michi, a Japanese-Tibetan doomsday cult that worships oni. If the Fated attempt to speak with them, they speak in fluent Tibetan or halting Japanese and engage in polite, if uncomfortable, conversation.

If the Fated engage them in another language, the visitors motion that they do not understand and smile politely as they continue on their way toward the statue.




ACT I, SCENE 1: WICKED INTENTIONS

As the Fated pass beneath the torii arch and into an open courtyard, they finally see the famous statue at the temple's heart. The "Great Buddha" is a huge obsidian statue that stands at the center of the temple, in an open courtyard.


Set into the statue's forehead is a shimmering stone, milky and seemingly emerald. Unbeknownst to the Fated, this gem is the Obsidian Gate, an enchanted gem that serves as a spiritual lock on the Beyond, a hellscape prison that holds the immortal spirits of countless murderous oni at bay.

As the Fated approach the Great Buddha, read the following text:



Ahead of you, a handful of stairs lead up to a square courtyard surrounded on three sides by the temple's buildings. At the center of the courtyard is a small dais containing the "Great Buddha." The towering obsidian statue stands over forty feet tall, and its jet-black surface has been worn smooth from centuries of exposure to the elements. A milky green gem is set in the statue's forehead like a sparkling third eye.

Most of the other visitors, the ones carrying masks, approach the Buddha in a reverent manner. They kneel down to the statue's right, place the colorful masks over their faces, pull their satchels in front of them, and bend forward, as if bowing before a god, though they do not straighten.



There are two Satori no Michi Cultists (pg. 97) per Fated. The cultists are feigning prayer; in actuality, they are setting explosives at the base of the statue.

The cultists are wearing stylized demon masks. Any character that sees these masks can make a TN 11 History Challenge. On a success, they remember hearing about a demon-worshipping cult that has defaced a number of Buddhist temples in recent years. A Margin of Success on the History Challenge even allows the character to remember the cult's name: the Satori no Michi.


Additionally, any Fated in the vicinity of the "praying" cultists can make TN 10 Notice or Scrutiny Challenges.

Characters that succeed on the Notice Challenge realize that the masked men and women are manipulating objects in their satchels while praying. If the character achieves a Margin of Success, they see enough to realize that the objects being manipulated are crude explosive devices.

Characters that succeed on the Scrutiny Challenge realize that the masked visitors are only feigning prayer. With a Margin of Success, the character also senses that the masked people seem to be waiting for something to happen; their muscles are tense, as if they are preparing to flee at any moment.


The cultists waste no time in arming the explosives hidden in their satchels. Once their demo charges have been set, they begin counting upward in Tibetan ("Cheek, Nyee, Soom, Zhee, Nga, Drook, Dhun, Gyay, Goo, Choo"), even while in combat. Each number marks the passage of a single round, so if the Fated decide to investigate, simply begin the combat described below with the appropriate amount of time having passed.

If the Fated disturb with the cultists, half of the cultists stand and attack the Fated, while the other half focus upon protecting the demo charges from interference. Read the following text:



One of the masked worshipers climbs to his feet, revealing wild eyes hidden behind a garishly painted oni mask. In his hand is a wickedly curved knife, which had evidently been hidden inside his satchel right up until this moment.

With a muffled cry, the man lifts his dagger and lunges toward you! Behind him, more of the masked people are standing and drawing knives of their own.



COURTYARD



COURTYARD



DEMO CHARGES

Each of the Satori no Michi Cultists brought a demo charge with them, so there are twice as many demo charges as there are Fated. The charges are each set to explode one minute after they have been armed, at the end of the tenth round of Dramatic Time. The cultists will focus their attacks upon any characters that attempt to move or otherwise disable the demo charges.

On the eighth round of Dramatic Time, any surviving cultists will make every effort to move as far away from the demo charges as possible.

A character within 1 yard of a demo charge can pick it up or kneel down in front of it as a 1 AP Action. Demo charges can be disarmed in one of two ways: a character with three or more ranks in Explosives can carefully disarm a demo charge as a 2 AP Action, or any character can attempt to disarm it by spending 1 AP and making a TN 12 Explosives Challenge.

If the Fated succeed on the Explosives Challenge, the demo charge is successfully neutralized. On a failure, the demo charge remains active, but the character can try again... unless they generate a Margin of Failure, in which case the demo charge detonates prematurely.

As a 1 AP Action, a character can throw a demo charge 3 yards away (though since the statue is surrounded by temple buildings on three sides and a stairway on the fourth, these demo charges are still likely to damage other things when they detonate).

The demo charges are sealed, so brief spikes in temperature (such as being struck by a gout of magical flame) are not enough to detonate them, though sustained flames (at least four rounds of continuous heat) are still capable of setting them off. Submersion in water is not too sufficient to defuse the demo charges.

KABOOM!

When the demo charges explode, each character within 5 yards of a demo charge suffers 4/6/8 damage ignoring Armor. Any other demo charges in the blast radius detonate as well (even if they have been disarmed); characters increase the damage they suffer from the exploding demo charge by +2 per additional demo charge in range.

After the demo charges explode or have been defused, see the "Statue Explosion" section below to see how the explosions affect the Great Buddha. Should the statue be Damaged or Destroyed, the Fated might suffer shrapnel damage in addition to any damage caused by the exploding demo charges.

STATUE EXPLOSION

The damage dealt to the Great Buddha by the demo charges is proportional to the number of Fated and the number of demo charges that detonate next to statue, as shown in the chart below.

FATED	INTACT	DAMAGED	DESTROYED
2 or less	1 or less	2-3	4+
3-4	2 or less	3-5	6+
5+	3 or less	4-7	8+


Find the appropriate row for the number of Fated, then follow it right until you've found the number of demo charges that detonated next to the Great Buddha. That column will tell you whether the statue is Intact, Damaged, or Destroyed.

Once you have determined the status of the statue, proceed to the matching section on pages 11-12.

INTACT


If the Fated successfully disarm or neutralize most or all of the explosives, the Great Buddha survives the destruction attempt intact.

Read the following text, omitting the first paragraph if none of the demo charges detonated next to the Great Buddha:



The explosives detonate with an ear-shattering boom, and you stagger backwards as the shockwave washes over you. The sheer intensity of the explosion overwhelms your hearing, drowning out all noise in a disorienting, muffled ringing sound.

Despite the attempt to destroy it, the Great Buddha stands resolute and intact. The milky gem set in its forehead sparkles in the sunlight, but you can't help but feel as if the statue's serene expression has somehow taken on a mischievous aspect.



The Fated can attempt TN 12 Notice or TN 10 Mathematics Challenges. Those who succeed realize that the green gem set in the statue's forehead is sparkling far brighter than it should be, given the angle of the sun overhead.

If any of the Satori no Michi Cultists are alive, they climb to their feet, swear in Japanese (“*Kuso!*”), and rush toward the statue. Since destroying the statue failed, the cultists intend to climb the statue and snatch the sparkling Obsidian Gate from its brow.


Climbing the statue requires 2 AP and a successful TN 8 Athletics Challenge. On a success, the character moves a number of yards equal to half their Walk Aspect (rounded up), plus one yard per Margin of Success. For the Satori no Michi Cultists, this means they climb 3 yards per round. The Obsidian Gate is 11 yards above the ground; if a Satori no Michi Cultist reaches the gem, they reach out to grab it.

If any non-Fated character touches the gem, proceed to “Unworthy Vessel” (pg. 13). If a Fated character touches the gem, proceed to “Soul Transfer” (pg. 13).

If the Fated prevent the Satori no Michi Cultists from reaching the gem, proceed to “Scene 2: Dark Omens” (pg. 14).

DAMAGED


Enough explosives detonate next to the Great Buddha to damage the statue without destroying it. Read the following text:



The explosives detonate in a chain-reaction of deafening sound, knocking you off your feet. The sheer volume of the explosion is enough to overload your hearing and turn your world into a disorienting, muted ringing that seems to come from every direction at once.

Gradually, your battered body begins to register pain, and glancing down at your chest, you can see why: a few razor-sharp slivers of obsidian have embedded themselves in your chest and arms, and you can feel blood dripping down from where the rock shards embedded themselves in your face.

Behind you, one entire side of the Great Buddha has been blown away, and though what remains of it is still upright, it does not appear to be very structurally stable. Shards of black rock are scattered across the entire courtyard. The milky green gem set in the statue's forehead seems to be glowing with an inner light.




Every character within 15 yards of the Great Buddha must succeed on a TN 12 Evade Challenge. Those who succeed only suffer some superficial damage from the obsidian shrapnel, but those who fail suffer 1 damage and end up with dozens of tiny stone shards embedded deeply in their flesh.

The damage dealt by these shards cannot be healed until they are removed (which requires ten minutes of work and a successful TN 8 Doctor Challenge). If the character performing the procedure generates a Margin of Failure, they nick an important artery, and their patient gains **Bleeding Out +1**. If either of the monks are present, they can stop the bleeding with some frantic bandaging, though the obsidian shards remain within the character.

If any of the Satori no Michi Cultists are alive, they climb to their feet, swear in Japanese (“*Kuso!*”), and rush toward the statue. Since destroying the statue failed, the cultists intend to climb the statue and snatch the sparkling Obsidian Gate from its brow.

Climbing the statue requires 2 AP and a successful TN 8 Athletics Challenge. On a success, the character moves a number of yards equal to half their Walk Aspect (rounded up), plus one yard per Margin of Success. For the Satori no Michi Cultists, means they climb 3 yards per round. The Obsidian Gate is 11 yards above the ground; if a Satori no Michi Cultist reaches the gem, they reach out to grab it.

If a character climbing the damaged statue achieves a Margin of Failure, they unbalance the statue and it tips over; each character within 3 yards of one side of the statue (Fatemaster's choice) must succeed on a TN 10 Evade Challenge or be crushed by the statue. Crushed characters suffer 4/7/10 damage and are pinned beneath the statue's heavy bulk. Characters climbing the statue on the side it tips over onto have a  on this Challenge.

Pinned characters can be rescued by any adjacent non-pinned character that spends 2 AP and makes a successful TN 12 Athletics Challenge. After one minute of being pinned, a character gains **Bleeding Out +1** as a result of their organs being slowly crushed by the statue's weight.

If the statue falls over onto its side, an adjacent character can attempt to grab the Obsidian Gate as a 1 AP Action (which the Satori no Michi Cultists attempt to do, if able).

If any non-Fated character touches the gem, proceed to "Unworthy Vessel" (pg. 13). If a Fated character touches the gem, proceed to "Soul Transfer" (pg. 13).

If the Fated prevent the Satori no Michi Cultists from reaching the gem, proceed to "Scene 2: Dark Omens" (pg. 14).

DESTROYED

The Great Buddha is utterly destroyed by the explosives. Read the following text:



The explosives detonate in a chain-reaction of deafening sound, knocking you off your feet. The sheer volume of the explosion is enough to overload your hearing and turn your world into a disorienting, painful ringing that seems to come from every direction at once.

As you roll over onto your back, a large chunk of obsidian falls from the sky and shatters against the stone courtyard beside you, sending brittle slivers of obsidian lancing into your body like a hundred tiny knives. You can feel, rather than hear, the pieces of the Great Buddha slamming into the ground and the nearby mulberry trees, each one shaking the earth like the footsteps of an ancient god.

After wiping the blood from your eyes, you sit up, obsidian shards falling off your chest and tinkling to the ground around you. Where the Great Buddha had once rested, there is only a jagged crater ringed with glossy black chunks of sharp obsidian, the largest about the size of your head.



Every character within 20 yards of the Great Buddha must succeed on a TN 12 Evade Challenge. Those who succeed only suffer some superficial damage from the obsidian shrapnel, but those who fail suffer 2 damage and end up with dozens of tiny stone shards imbedded deeply in their flesh.

The damage dealt by these shards cannot be healed until they are removed (which requires ten minutes of work and a successful TN 8 Doctor Challenge). If the character performing the procedure generates a Margin of Failure, they nick an important artery and their patient gains **Bleeding Out +1**. If either of the monks is present, they can stop the bleeding with some frantic bandaging, though the obsidian shards remain within the character.



If any of the Satori no Michi Cultists are alive, they climb to their feet and begin searching the area for the Obsidian Gate. They eventually find the gem after a full minute of searching; it landed at the bottom of a small koi pond just beyond the courtyard.


If the Fated search for the gem, they can find it with a TN 13 Notice Challenge. If a Fated character touches the gem, proceed to "Soul Transfer." If any non-Fated character touches the gem, proceed to "Unworthy Vessel." The cultists make it a point to attack any Fated that reveals they are in possession of the emerald.

If the Fated prevent the Satori no Michi Cultists from reaching the gem, proceed to "Scene 2: Dark Omens" (pg. 14).

UNWORTHY VESSEL


If a non-Fated character touches the Obsidian Gate with their bare skin, it creates a strong enough conduit for one of the oni waiting on the other side of the barrier to possess them. The changes forced upon the character's body are too much too soon, however, and the character dies before the oni can fully pass through the Obsidian Gate.

Read the following text:



As soon as [NPC] touches the gem, you feel a wave of vertigo wash over you. They lift it upward as crackling blue-green lightning arcs out of its depths and dances across their body. A deep, soul-shaking peal rings out, as if from a massive bell, and then [NPC] screams in agony as eight spikes of solid bone lance upward from their back and spear down into the ground, planting themselves like the legs of a blood-splattered spider.

[NPC]'s chest then tears itself open, revealing a gaping mouth filled with a lolling, arm-like tongue. The demonic thing releases a tortured gasp, and for a moment, you get a sense of a nightmarish creature super-imposed upon [NPC]'s physical form. Suddenly, [NPC] shudders violently and the gem clutched in their hand grows dim as the corpse of the monster-thing they've become collapses to the ground, dead and lifeless.




Any remaining Satori no Michi Cultists attempt to snatch up the gem (this time by with a satchel to avoid touching it with their bare skin) and flee the compound to regroup and reconsider the situation.

Unless the Fated do something foolish (like snatch up the gem themselves), proceed to "Scene 2: Dark Omens" (pg. 14).

SOUL TRANSFER


If a Fated character touches the Obsidian Gate with their bare flesh (a 1 AP Action during Dramatic Time), they run the risk of becoming possessed by an oni. The character can attempt a TN 13 Centering or Counter-Spelling Challenge; on a success, they sense a powerful, malevolent force building within the gem and have enough time to break contact with the gem before the oni on the other side of the Gate possesses them.

On a failure, the character becomes possessed. Read the following text:



As soon as you touch the milky gem, emerald in color, you can feel the power held within it. Or rather, the power that is being held back by the gem.

A moment later, a wave of blue-green lightning crackles out of the stone and dances across your body. You can feel pressure building behind your eyes and a malevolent force spreading through the core of your being like black ink dripped into a glass of clear water.



The possessed character's turn ends immediately, and they are **Paralyzed** on their next turn. Starting on their third turn, the possession is complete and the character can act normally. Their body returns to normal, but they have a lingering sense of violation that they just can't shake. Even when alone, the character feels watched, and when they sleep, the oni torments their dreams, resulting in plenty of screaming and thrashing during the night.

At the end of the session, the possessed character must advance one rank in the Possessed Advanced Pursuit (pg. 140) instead of their current Pursuit.

Once the character has had time to recover, proceed to "Scene 2: Dark Omens" (pg. 14).

ACT I, SCENE 2: DARK OMENS

Drawn to the sounds of explosions and combat, the monks that tend to the Kokuyōseki-in temple hurry to the courtyard and behold the aftermath. If the Great Buddha has been damaged or destroyed, they are momentarily stunned by the extent of the damage the ancient statue has suffered.

Read the following text, choosing whichever Fated seems the most confident as the one approached by the monks:



Gradually, you catch glimpses of orange robes and shaved heads as two men approach you, their gazes moving from one scene of violence to the next. The thinner of the two monks approaches [FATED], his brow furrowed in sorrow and confusion. "Please, stranger," he asks in Japanese, "what is the meaning of this violence?"

If the statue is intact or damaged:

A short distance away, the burly monk turns over the body of one of the oni-masked strangers and recoils from it in sudden recognition and revulsion. "The Satori no Michi!" He immediately glances up at the obsidian Buddha. "The Gate..."

If the statue is destroyed:

A short distance away, the burly monk turns over the body of one of the oni-masked strangers and recoils from it in sudden recognition and revulsion. "The Satori no Michi!" He immediately stands and begins to frantically search through the obsidian rubble surrounding him. "Did they take the Gate? Where is it?!"



The thinner monk is named Sengai, while the burlier monk is Taicho. Both speak fluent Japanese, but their English is more halting, and neither can read the language. If the majority of the Fated are foreigners, the monks switch to English for their benefit.

Should any of the Fated be injured as a result of their battle, the monks can tend to their wounds using First Aid. Each application of First Aid heals 2 damage but prevents the character from receiving further First Aid for the rest of the day. They do not believe themselves to be skilled enough to remove any obsidian shards that may have been lodged in the Fated, but if pushed (a TN 10 Convince Challenge), they surprise themselves and prove capable of removing the shards.

If there is any unexploded dynamite, the monks attempt to carefully move it to the side, away from everyone, so that they can safely dispose of it at a later time. If the Fated refuse to turn over the demo charges, each undetonated charge contains two sticks of dynamite (treat each stick as a Thrown Weapon that, when lit, deals 3/4🔫🔫/5🔫🔫🔫 damage, ignoring Armor).

If the Obsidian Gate is still in its place atop the Great Buddha, the monks are relieved. If it is missing, Taicho searches desperately for it but will be relieved if it is in the care of the Fated. Both monks know not to touch the gem with their bare flesh and will fetch a blessed cloth bag so that they can safely reclaim it from the Fated.

If the Fated refuse to turn over the gem, the monks plead with them to reconsider. They are both pacifists, so if the Fated continue to refuse to turn over the gem, they find themselves conflicted over how to respond. They will tell the Fated the true purpose of the gem (see below), attempt to appeal to the other Fated, and if anyone became possessed (whether fatally or not), they will point toward that event as an example of the danger posed by handling the Obsidian Gate.

If, by some event, the Satori no Michi Cultists escaped with the gem, the monks enter into a state of near panic

THE DEMON CULT

Sengai and Taicho recognize the threat posed by the Satori no Michi, which they know to be a cult that worships oni. The monks are conflicted over what to do about the cult: they are both pacifists, yet the oni held at bay by the Obsidian Gate are anathematic to all living things.

Read the following text, adjusting the monks to be more desperate if the cultists escaped with the Obsidian Gate:

Taicho brings one of the oni masks worn by the demolition-happy cultists to Sengai and holds it up for the other monk to see. “Do you believe me now? The Satori no Michi are a threat, not just to us, but to all of humanity.”

Sengai sighs wearily. “Hatred does not cease through hatred at any time. Hatred ceases through love. This is an unalterable law.”

“There is no love in the heart of an oni,” Taicho retorts before turning to you. “The Satori no Michi seek nothing less than to drown the world in a tide of blood. We have lodged complaints with the government, with no resolution. I do not wish violence upon them, but the path they walk is too dangerous to ignore.”

Even if the Fated successfully defended the temple, the monks are convinced that the Satori no Michi will attack the temple again.

In order to win the Fated’s trust, the monks confide in them the true nature of the Obsidian Gate. Read the following text:

A look of deep concern etches itself into Sengai’s features. “The gem is more than a mere bauble to be peddled for coin. It stands between this world and another, just as the Great Breach of the Guild stands between this world and Malifaux. The entities sealed behind the Obsidian Gate attempted the destruction of our world once before.”

“I do not know what the Satori no Michi seek to gain by destroying the Obsidian Gate, but if they succeed, the end of our world is certain. The barrier will shatter, and the horrors waiting on the other side will force their way into our reality.”

Even if the Fated defeated the cultists and protected the gem, the monks know that the cult is larger than just a dozen people. Sengai and Taicho do not wish to tell the authorities about the attack, as they do not trust the Japanese government (or the Guild) to keep the Obsidian Gate safe; they are concerned that, with the tumultuous fighting between the Guild and the desperation of the government, either organization might try to leverage the Obsidian Gate to protect (or enslave) Japan.

As always, anonymity is the Gate’s greatest protector.



AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY

Fortunately, Taicho soon has an idea that allows the Fated to deal with the Satori no Michi without resorting to violence or placing the Obsidian Gate at risk. Read the following text:

Taicho's eyes suddenly light up. "Wait, I have it!" He steps toward you. "The Satori no Michi have been building explosives and worshipping oni. The oni were said to be violent creatures, and the rituals to appease them were filled with blood and sacrifice."

Sengai's brow furrows as he tries to understand what the other monk is saying.

"If the full extent of the cult's activities are revealed to the government," Taicho continues, "they will step in and arrest the Satori no Michi as a matter of public safety. We won't have to mention the Obsidian Gate or the attack upon the temple at all."

He gestures back to one of the temple's side buildings. "A visitor left a camera at the temple a few weeks ago. If you take photographs of the Satori no Michi and their defiled shrine, it may be enough to force the government to take action."

Taicho glances back at Sengai, as if expecting an argument, but the other monk merely nods in silent agreement.

The camera is a No. 3B Quick Focus Kodak, a box-like handheld camera with four of its ten exposures remaining. The film can be developed by paying ¥5 (about half a scrip) and waiting a few hours at a photography store in town; Kamakura is a tourist town, so such "rush jobs" are common.

If asked why they do not take the pictures themselves, the monks point out that they must tend to and protect their temple, especially now that the Satori no Michi have shown an interest in the Obsidian Gate. Also, they don't know exactly where the Satori no Michi gather; searching for the cult is handled in the "The Hidden Shrine" on page 17.

If the cultists have already taken the gem, the monks also beseech the Fated to find the Obsidian Gate and return it to the temple. There is no telling what sort of terrible creatures the Satori no Michi might unleash upon the world with it, but the monks still stress that the Fated should avoid killing any of the oni worshipers.

The monks still believe that the best way to deal with the cultists is to expose their activities to the authorities. While the Fated are dealing with the cult, the monks intend prepare a purification ceremony so that they can undo whatever damage the cult might have done to the Obsidian Gate during the short time it was in their possession.

Above all else, however, the monks stress that the Obsidian Gate must be returned to the temple, lest the entire world suffer the consequences.

In any event, the monks ask the Fated to return to the temple once they have finished their dealings with the Satori no Michi. The cult's practices are unclean, they explain, and without purification, the Fated might be subjected to further corruption or worse, potential possession by an oni.

If any of the Fated have already been possessed, the monks are far more insistent about the purification ritual and claim that without it, the character's spirit will eventually be consumed and replaced by that of the oni.



INTERROGATION

If the Fated left any of the cultists alive, then interrogation is an option, though the monks object to any violence or threats of violence, especially within their temple. They intend to keep any captured cultists tied up in their temple until the Fated are able to have the other members of the cult arrested (at which point they will turn the captured cultists over to the authorities).

A TN 10 Intimidate or TN 12 Convince Challenge is sufficient to force one of the cultists to speak, though they can only communicate in Tibetan or Japanese. They claim that they meet at a small shrine in the mountains surrounding the town. They can provide directions if pressured and can draw a map if asked to do so.

If asked about the shrine's defenses, the cultists reveal that there are another half-dozen Satori no Michi adherents in the shrine, as well as their guru, Mipam Tsundue. If the Fated achieved a Margin of Success, they also mention the shrine's guardian: a living mural that houses a gyalpo guardian spirit.

If asked about their beliefs, the cultists are fairly eager to talk about their faith: they are adherents of Mipam Tsundue, a Tibetan guru who teaches that the spirits trapped behind the Obsidian Gate are not wrathful oni but rather gyalpo, guardian spirits that were unjustly imprisoned after they were honor-bound to the service of a long-dead warlord. Tsundue is overwhelmed by the knowledge that these spirits have been suffering for centuries, and he seeks to free them from their torment. All of the cultists take offense at being referred to as such, and they accuse the Buddhists at the temple of being misled by "ancient stories."

A Margin of Success on the Convince or Intimidate Challenge results in the cultist referring to Tsundue as an "immortal" guru; if pressed, the cultist claims that Tsundue is centuries old.

THE HIDDEN SHRINE

A few hours spent gathering information in town allows the characters to make their choice of either a TN 10 Bewitch Challenge if they asked local residents about the cult or a TN 10 Literacy Challenge if they consulted back issues of the town's newspapers for articles on the cult. If a character does not speak or read Japanese, the language barrier proves difficult and they suffer \square to this Challenge.

If the Fated succeed, they learn that the cult follows a Tibetan mystic, Mipam Tsundue. According to reports (either eye-witness or via news clippings), Mipam Tsundue was originally seen as something of a holy man by the town's residents, who visited him at a shrine in the Kamakura mountains. Over time, however, his popularity fell as the peculiar and disturbing natures of his Tibetan followers became common knowledge.

If the Fated fail these challenges, they hear some vague rumors about the cult living in the mountains around Kamakura, but nothing definite; unless they learn the location of the shrine from another source, they increase the TN of the "Hiking to the Shrine" Ongoing Challenge (pg. 19) by +2.

WE HEARD AN EXPLOSION!

If the demo charges detonate, the Japanese police arrive at Kokuyōseki-in a little over an hour later. If the Great Buddha is intact, the monks deflect the questions asked of them and the police leave the scene, no closer to learning what caused the explosion.

If the Great Buddha is damaged or destroyed, however, the police investigate further as the monks pretend to be amazed by the statue's destruction and completely ignorant as to the causes. Suspicious, the police place the temple under surveillance and may question the Fated if they are seen visiting multiple times, but ultimately, this investigation doesn't actually result in anything more than a few mild annoyances for the Fated and monks.

When the Fated are ready to depart for the Kamakura mountains, proceed to "Scene 3: A Haunted Hike" (pg. 19).

SPIRITUAL PROTECTION

It's possible that the Fated will ask the monks for some means of spiritual protection against the threat of oni. The monks themselves don't have much in the way of protections, but they can direct the Fated toward a local Shinto shrine that peddles in such charms. They don't place much stock in such trinkets, however, and they will warn the Fated of as much.

Visiting the Shinto shrine and speaking to its caretakers takes forty minutes total, so pursuing this option will count against the time limit imposed by the "Hiking to the Shrine" Ongoing Challenge in Scene 3.

If the Fated visit the priest, read the following text:

After a little searching, you find yourself at Tama-jinja, a large Shinto shrine that stands at the center of Kamakura. *Kannushi* in ceremonial garb and tall hats move through the temple grounds, welcoming visitors and explaining to tourists how they honor the various spirits, or *kami*, that call Japan their home.

The Fated can convince a *Kannushi* - one of the shrine's caretakers - to grant them protective items with a successful TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, or Deceive Challenge. On a success, the character is allowed to make a modest donation of ¥5 (about half a scrip) to gain one of the following items. The *Kannushi* will describe the item's intended purpose to the Fated, but the exact mechanical uses of the item should be kept secret until the Fated use it.

Cleansing Bell: This small bell creates a pure sound when rung. A character holding the bell (which must be readied just as if it were a weapon) can spend 1 AP to make a TN 10 Music Challenge. On a success, they activate the bell's powers, and every oni within (X)10 becomes **Dazed** until the start of the character's next turn. The bells are fragile, however; if a character holding a bell suffers Moderate or Severe damage from any source, the bell shatters or otherwise snaps off in the character's hand.

Purified Water: This water, carried in a purified wooden box, is anathematic to oni. When splashed on an oni (which requires the entire box to be used as a Thrown Weapon), it deals 2/4/5 damage, ignoring Armor. Alternatively, a character can use the water to lower the value of their **Haunted** Condition by 1.

Sacred Rice: This blessed rice is said to keep oni and other evil spirits distracted. When thrown on the ground, the oni is compelled to stop whatever it is doing and count the rice grains. When used (which requires the entire bag to be used as a Thrown Weapon), any oni present don't pay any particular attention to the rice; this bit of folklore does not have any basis in fact (though the rice still does a good job of distracting pigeons).

Shimenawa: This sacred rope is believed to act as a ward against evil spirits. Oni and other spirits are unable to enter an area that has been warded by this rope, nor can they remove the rope themselves. People who are possessed by malevolent spirits are unaffected by the rope and can both touch it and pass freely through warded areas. The Fated are given 20 feet of the sacred rope.

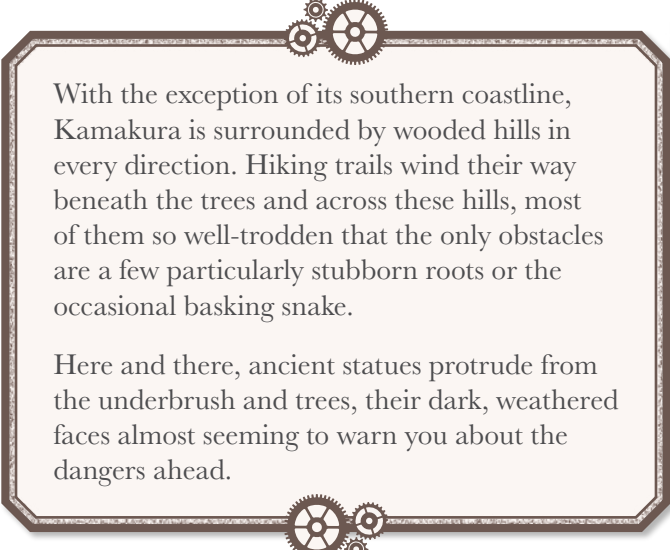
A TN 8 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that the *Kannushi* is completely confident in the effectiveness of each of the items he offers to the Fated.



ACT I, SCENE 3: A HAUNTED HIKE

To reach the Satori no Michi shrine, the Fated will have to march north into the mountains surrounding Kamakura. Normally, this would be a relatively peaceful and scenic hike (especially if the Fated know where they are going), but Mipam Tsundue was using a Divination spell to observe the events at Kokuyōseki-in and is keenly aware of the Fated and their journey to his shrine. As the Fated make preparations to expose (or murder) the cult, the cult begins fortifying its surroundings and trapping the path up the mountain.

As the Fated set out, read the following text:



With the exception of its southern coastline, Kamakura is surrounded by wooded hills in every direction. Hiking trails wind their way beneath the trees and across these hills, most of them so well-trodden that the only obstacles are a few particularly stubborn roots or the occasional basking snake.

Here and there, ancient statues protrude from the underbrush and trees, their dark, weathered faces almost seeming to warn you about the dangers ahead.

Following the mountain paths to the Satori no Michi shrine is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

HIKING TO THE SHRINE

Skills Allowed: Acrobatics, Athletics, Notice, Wilderness

Target Number: 10

Duration: 20 minutes (max 2 hours)

Success Requirement: 3 per Fated


Failure Requirement: 1 per Fated

At the end of each Duration, if the Fated did not complete this Ongoing Challenge, they experience one of the Encounters listed in the following section.

If the Fated succeed at this Ongoing Challenge, they reach the Satori no Michi shrine before Mipam Tsundue can complete his oni-summoning ritual. Proceed to "Incomplete Ritual" (pg. 21).

If the Fated achieve a catastrophic failure, or if they spend more than 2 hours on this Ongoing Challenge, they still find the Satori no Michi shrine, but only after Mipam Tsundue has summoned an Asura to defend himself. Proceed to "Absolute Asura" (pg. 23).

ENCOUNTERS (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER)

- **Sniper:** As the Fated travel through the mountains, a distant cultist with a rifle takes a shot at whichever Fated is the most intimidating (or, at the very least, the most heavily armed). The sniper has an attack of 4 (10) and gains a  to his attack flip as a result of taking the Focus Action. On a success, the target suffers 3/5/6 damage.

The sniper immediately ducks behind cover and withdraws from sight. They can be followed with a TN 10 Track Challenge, which results in a stand-off with the sniper as they hide behind some (hard cover) trees thirty yards from the Fated.

Treat the sniper as a Satori no Michi Cultist (pg. 97) with Long Arms 3 and a Howles Pattern 1874 rifle (☛24, 3/5/6 damage, Capacity 1, Reload 1 AP, and the Rifle special rule). The Sniper has a total of ten bullets for the rifle.

The distraction proves to be time-consuming, however; any characters that pursue the sniper cannot participate in the next Duration.

- **Dead Cultist:** The Fated encounter the corpse of a female woman who perished while trying to set up an explosive device. Both of her arms and one of her legs have been blown from her body, and most of her internal organs are scattered across the ground around her, being pecked at by a group of large, surly crows.

A TN 10 Doctor Challenge reveals that the woman was killed by a point-blank explosion that sent a lethal amount of shrapnel into her chest, blowing her backwards and dismembering her. She's been dead for ten minutes longer than the Fated have spent on this Ongoing Challenge. A TN 10 Notice Challenge turns up the (useless) remains of an explosive device.

- **Booby Traps:** The cultists have planted some crude, homemade explosive devices on the path leading up to their shrine. Consisting of gunpowder, a small detonator, a simple tripwire, and a can of coins, nails, and bolts, these devices are intended to shower interlopers with deadly shrapnel. Determine the walking order of the characters. The first character(s) in the group may attempt a TN 12 Notice Challenge to see the hidden tripwire. Once alerted to the tripwire, character can safely bypass the tripwire (and can safely alert the rest of the group).

If the first character(s) fail this Challenge, the next characters in line can attempt the same Notice Challenge at +1 TN, and then the character(s) behind them at +2 TN, and so on, until either someone notices the tripwire or the group stumbles blindly into it. Characters who are explicitly looking for trip-wires and mines gain **+** to this Challenge.

Once the tripwire has been noticed, the Fated can either avoid it or attempt to disarm the explosives. Disarming requires a TN 12 Explosives Challenge, and on a success, the character gains one explosive device with the stats listed below (salvaged explosives must be set up with a TN 12 Explosives Challenge). If the character generates a Margin of Failure, either while disarming or setting up the explosive, it detonates in their hands and they suffer the damage flip listed below with **+** to the damage flip.

If the explosives detonate, the character(s) in the lead must succeed on a TN 16 Evade Challenge or suffer 3/5/6. If a character achieves any Margins of Failure on this Challenge, they also suffer a Critical Effect of the appropriate severity for each such Margin of Failure.

- **Creepy Effigies:** The Fated encounter two human-sized effigies propped up in the middle of the path, much like scarecrows. Both are stuffed with leaves and straw and seem to depict blue-skinned demons with snarling teeth and bulging eyes. A TN 10 Homesteading Challenge reveals that the effigies have been exposed to the weather for about a week or so.

The effigies were placed here to frighten trespassers away from the Satori no Michi's shrine. They are not dangerous in any way.


- **Haunted Trees:** The Fated come across a group of trees that have strings of blue stones hanging from their branches. A closer inspection reveals that the stones are all round, and that their surfaces have been painted with white paint to resemble glaring eyes. A TN 10 History Challenge reveals that these are "Oni Eyes," an inversion of a ward against the evil eye that is said to attract the attention of malignant spirits.

The Fated may avoid the trees and go around them, but doing so adds a Failure Requirement to this Ongoing Challenge. If the Fated press onward, they must succeed at TN 10 Centering or Counter-Spelling Challenges. If a character fails, they draw the attention of unclean spirits and gain the **Haunted +1** Condition. The **Haunted** Condition is described on page 143.




INCOMPLETE RITUAL

The Fated arrive at the Satori no Michi shrine before Mipam Tsundue has an opportunity to complete his summoning ritual. Read the following text:



The path grows narrower and less traveled as it climbs further up the hill. It eventually terminates at a moss-covered stone torii arch, behind which stands a small, single-story shrine. Strings of blue rocks hang from the flat roof in multiple places, and the entire compound is smothered in the overwhelming scent of strange incense.

In the courtyard of the shrine, a bronze-skinned, bearded man with a white and red V-shaped mark painted on his forehead is shouting up at the sky in a foreign language. His orange robes swirl around the elaborate geometric designs chalked onto the stone at his feet, and in his hands, he holds a thin, emaciated dog that has been completely gutted. As the man shakes the dog's corpse in front of him, blood splatters out from its body and lands on the ground, where it hisses as if boiling-hot.




If investigated, each of the blue stones hanging from the building is revealed to be a stylized blue eye. A TN 10 History Challenge reveals that these trinkets are "Oni Eyes," an inversion of a ward against the evil eye that is said to attract the attention of malignant spirits.

The man is Mipam Tsundue. He is speaking Tibetan, and anyone familiar with the language will recognize his words as being some sort of mantra or prayer, though many of the words he uses are very archaic. If interrupted, Tsundue will react appropriately: if the Fated attempt to speak with him, he will feign cordiality and speaks loudly so that the the cultists in the shrine can overhear him. Mipam Tsundue only speaks Japanese and Tibetan.

If the cultists succeeded in stealing the Obsidian Gate, the gem is clenched tightly in Tsundue's hand. He refuses to part with it under any circumstances. While he has thus far been able to resist becoming possessed by an oni, the stone is still dangerous to others; see the "Unworthy Vessel" and "Soul Possession" sections on page 13.


Even if Tsundue can't communicate with the Fated, he smiles in a friendly manner and motions for them to join him inside the shrine. If the Fated attempted to disguise themselves as members of the cult, Tsundue greets them in this way as well; his divinations have rendered their disguises meaningless.

A TN 14 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that Tsundue's kindness is only an act; if the Fated actually enter the shrine, they find the remaining members of the Satori no Michi waiting for them. Read the following text if the Fated enter the shrine (omitting the second paragraph if the Fated have already defeated the cultists inside):



The interior of the shrine is separated into two sections by a simple folding screen. The main area of the shrine seems to have been hastily converted into a workshop: four large tables dominate the room, each of them laden with detonators, percussion caps, bowls of half-eaten rice, and, most notably, a single, opened crate of dynamite. The entire room reeks of sweat and desperation, and the walls have been painted with depictions of fearsome, blue-skinned demons.

As you enter, you find yourselves face to face with a half-dozen men and women in bright orange robes. The closest, an Indian woman with an elaborate henna tattoo across her face and arms, is upon you before your eyes can fully adjust to the light, her razor-bladed fighting claw slashing at you a mere inch from your face.



There are a total of one and a half Satori no Michi Devotees (pg. 99) per Fated (rounded up) in the shrine. If Djore Tsundue is behind the Fated, they find themselves caught between two enemy forces, though the door to the shrine creates a bottleneck that can be exploited to keep the Devotees trapped within.

If the Fated simply choose to attack Djore Tsundue on sight, he shouts out to the Devotees, who stream out from the shrine at the start of the third round.

INSIDE THE SHRINE

If the Fated enter the shrine at any point during the battle, its guardian, a gyalpo spirit, possesses one of the murals inside the shrine and steps free of the wall to assist the Satori no Michi Devotees.

When the mural appears, read the following text:

Movement catches your eye, and you glance toward it only to witness a nightmare being born. One of the blue-skinned demon drawings is pulling itself free of the wall, its horned head swiveling toward you as its painted lips curl back in malicious delight.

Strangely, the living painting doesn't seem to take on any depth; it exists entirely as a two-dimensional drawing, albeit one that is very large and frightening. The space that the drawing once occupied on the wall shimmers softly in its absence.

Stats for the Living Mural can be found on page 100.

Searching the shrine requires a TN 8 Notice Challenge. A success allows the Fated to recover six sticks of dynamite (treat each stick as a Thrown Weapon that deals 3/4/5 damage when lit, ignoring Armor) and roughly ¥50 (5 scrip) worth of bomb supplies.

If the Fated achieve a Margin of Success, they also find a basin of purified cleansing water that can be used to either purify themselves (reducing the value of their Haunted Condition, if any, by 1) or thrown offensively against oni (it deals 2/4/5 damage, ignoring Armor). The cultists have been drinking the purified water and are unaware that it is anathematic to oni.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Alternatively, the Fated might choose to simply snap a picture of Mipam Tsundue as he performs his ritual. It requires a TN 13 Stealth Challenge to get close enough to Tsundue to snap a clear picture of his ritual (the cameras of the era are not exactly high-definition), but on a success, the Fated can retreat and hand the photograph over to law enforcement.

On a failure, Tsundue catches sight of the Fated, realizes what they are trying to do, and attacks them while shouting to the Satori no Michi. The Devotees stream out of the shrine at the start of the third round of Dramatic Time.

Taking a picture of Tsundue during combat is also an option, though generally speaking, the Fated probably won't have much of a use for the authorities at that point.


See Police Raid (pg. 24) for more details.



ABSOLUTE ASURA


If the Fated arrive at the Satori no Miichi shrine after Mipam Tsundue has completed his summoning ritual, they are in for a difficult battle.

Read the following text:



The path grows narrower and less traveled as it climbs further up the hill. It eventually terminates at a shattered stone torii arch, behind which lies the collapsed remains of a shrine. Blue rocks, each of them bearing a crude eye motif on their surface, are scattered haphazardly across the surrounding area, as are many dismembered limbs and a great deal of viscera and gore. The scent of blood hangs heavy in the area, but underneath it, you can detect the faint odor of incense.

Crouched amidst the destruction is a bronze-skinned, bearded man. His orange robes are torn and blood-stained, and though his back is turned to you, you can still see his head moving as he focuses on something in front of him.



The man is Mipam Tsundue, though he has been possessed by an oni as a result of his summoning ritual. He has already destroyed the shrine and murdered all of his followers, and now he is holding one of their skulls and feasting on the delicious brain-meat inside.


If disturbed - whether as a result of an attack or merely calling his name - Tsundue swings around to confront the Fated. Attempting to discreetly snap a clear picture of the possessed guru requires a TN 13 Stealth Challenge. On a success, the characters get their photograph, but on a failure, Tsundue catches sight of them and attacks.

If the cultists successfully stole the Obsidian Gate, the emerald is embedded into Tsundue's forehead (literally; he pounded it into place with a rock, cracking bone around it) like a gleaming third eye. Each time he draws upon one of his magical powers, the Obsidian Gate glows brightly as he siphons energy from the Beyond to fuel his magic. While he possesses the Obsidian Gate, Tsundue gains + to his attempts to cast his Spell and Manifested Powers.

If Tsundue suffers a Moderate or Severe Critical Effect to the head, the gem is knocked free and he loses this bonus. If separated from the Obsidian Gate, Tsundue desperately attempts to retrieve it at all cost (picking it up and shoving it back into the wound in his forehead is a 1 AP Action).

Stats for Possessed Tsundue can be found on page 101.


When Tsundue is killed, the oni possessing him asserts its dominance. When this happens, read the following text, adjusting as appropriate for any missing limbs or other notable Critical Effects:



Tsundue falls to his knees, his fingers grasping a handful of blue stones as they curl into fists. He trembles, then throws back his head and howls in agony, forcing you to cover your ears in pain. He shudders, and then his shoulders split open, allowing a second and then a third set of arms to burst out from his body in a gory mess. A fissure appears in the center of his face as the two halves begin pulling away from each other, and his scream becomes something inhuman as a new face appears from between the splitting halves, this one fanged and wickedly inhuman.

With a building growl, Tsundue forces himself to his feet. His clothing tears as his body begins growing larger, and as the disturbing sounds of breaking bones and tearing muscle fill the air, blue-black bruises well up across his body, turning him the color of a spoiled blueberry.

The screaming dies out as the demon-thing turns its head, glancing at you as it curls one of its six hands into a fist. "This world still reeks of filth," it says, the words spilling contemptuously out of each of its three mouths at once. "Let us see how well this mortal body suits my spirit."



The oni possessing Tsundue is an Asura (pg. 102). As with all of its kind, the oni speaks in a non-language that can be understood by everyone, even animals and deaf people, regardless of what languages they know.

If the Obsidian Gate is present, it glows brightly in the oni's presence.

The Asura takes great joy in its attempts to defeat the Fated. Whenever it lands a blow on them, it mocks their weak mortal flesh, and when they wound it, the oni laughs and claims that it cares little for the flesh that houses it, for its spirit is immortal.

When the Asura is defeated, read the following text:



The oni raises its fist in preparation for another attack, only for the sound of snapping bones to fill the air. One of its faces snarls in momentary annoyance. "This flesh is weak," it announces as it draws itself up to its full height. "Let us continue this battle once I have found a more suitable vessel. You have proven to be worthy opponents."


With that, the oni leans forward, grabs its chest with each of its clawed hands, and in a single violent motion, tears itself in half. For a moment, you can almost make out the ghostly after-image of a six-armed, three-headed spirit standing proudly at the center of its collapsing flesh-body. Then the feeling of oppressiveness that had settled over you is gone, like a smothering pillow mercifully removed just before you were about to pass out.



The Asura's spirit has left in search of a more suitable host, but for the moment, the Fated are victorious. When they return to Kokuyōseki-in, proceed to "Scene 4: Temple of Peace" (pg. 25).

POLICE RAID

If the Fated attempt to alert the Japanese police about the danger posed by the Satori no Michi, they will have to succeed on a TN 14 Bureaucracy Challenge to convince the authorities to act. If the Fated mention the attack on Kokuyōseki-in, the TN drops down to 12; on a failure, the police will investigate but won't immediately assume that the Satori no Michi are involved.

If the Fated have photographs of the cult being "weird" - which might be anything from Mipam Tsundue shaking a dead dog in the air to a living oni mural - the Fated gain  to this Challenge.

Alternatively, the Fated can go directly to the Guild in an attempt to convince them to investigate the cult. If they do so, the TN is increased by +2 (as the Guild aren't inclined to get involved in what they see as a provincial matter), but the results generally play out in the same way.

If the Fated fail to convince one group, they can attempt to convince the other without penalty, but multiple attempts to convince the same group are doomed to failure; they are given empty platitudes and assurances that the matter will be looked into, but very little actually happens in any sort of timely manner.

Should the Fated successfully convince one of the groups to investigate, a group of six officers (whether Japanese police or Guild agents) travels to the Satori no Michi shrine to investigate. The officers ask the Fated if they would be willing to accompany them in order to identify any cultists they might encounter, but this is not mandatory; if the Fated refuse, the investigating group understands their hesitation. If the Fated agree to accompany the group, they are asked to stay back in order to keep them from being exposed to attack.

If the Fated have already defeated the cult, the explosives alone are enough for the investigating group to deem the Satori no Michi a dangerous organization; arrest orders are issued for its remaining members. If the Fated removed the explosives from the shrine, though, the lack of firm evidence is only enough to result in the cult's members being placed on a watch list.

If the Fated have not defeated the cult, the officers arrive to find a possessed Mipam Tsundue eating the remains of one of his erstwhile followers. If the Fated are present, the fight unfolds as described in the "Absolute Asura" section, save that the Fated have six subordinate Investigating Officers that they can command during the battle.

If the Fated are not present, the group succeeds in defeating the crazed guru when he attacks them, but the Asura that appears upon his death butchers the rest of the patrol before its physical body fails it. An article about the missing police appears in the next morning's newspaper.

Stats for the Investigating Officers can be found on page 103. If the officers are Guild agents, they use the Guild version of the Investigating Officer, as they are authorized to carry swords and firearms.

ACT I, SCENE 4: THE TEMPLE OF PEACE

When the Fated return to Kokuyōseki-in, Sengai and Taicho are tending to the Great Buddha statue. Read the following text:

If the statue is intact:

You find Sengai and Taicho near the Great Buddha, bowed down in prayer. As you approach, Sengai straightens and approaches you, while Taicho continues to pray. “I am pleased to see that you have returned,” Sengai says, bowing as he greets you. “Please, tell me your story.”

If the statue is damaged:

Upon returning to Kokuyōseki-in, you notice that a large pile of obsidian shards has been stacked near the Great Buddha. Sengai and Taicho can be seen at opposite ends of the courtyard, each of them carefully searching for small shards of obsidian that they reverently pick up and place into wicker baskets carried under their arms. As he notices you, Sengai smiles and approaches, bowing as he draws near. “Welcome back. Please, tell me your story.”

If the statue is destroyed:

You return to Kokuyōseki-in to find it in better condition than when you left. The spot where the Great Buddha once stood has been swept clean, and multiple piles of obsidian shards have been formed around it, each one as tall as your waist. Sengai and Taicho are nearby, working together to carry a heavy chunk of obsidian to the nearest pile. After setting it down, Taicho raises his hand in greeting, revealing the thick gloves he is wearing to protect his hands from the sharp edges of the rock. As the burly monk moves on to the next piece of the obsidian statue, Sengai approaches you and bows. “It warms my heart to see that you have safely returned,” he says. “Please, tell me your story.”

Sengai listens carefully to the Fated’s story and will ask for clarifications if the Fated are vague, confusing, or too brief in their recounting. If the Fated attempt to lie to him, a TN 9 Deceive Challenge is enough to pull the wool over his eyes. On a failure, he is clearly upset by the knowledge that the Fated are lying to him and will attempt to give them an opportunity to change their story (“You do not need to protect me from the truth, my friends. There is no judgment within this monk or this temple.”), but if they decline to change their story, Sengai does not force the issue.


Fated who admit to having harmed or killed people during their trek into the mountains earn a sad but understanding nod from Sengai. The path he has chosen to walk is his own, he says, but he regrets the deaths of the cultists despite the danger they posed to the world. He does offer the Fated one piece of advice as way of guidance, rather than chastisement: “If you continue to walk this path, you may arrive at where you are heading.”

If the Fated retrieved the Obsidian Gate, the monks breathe a sigh of relief. They attempt to convince the Fated to hand the gem over to them and warn of the dangers of taking the gem beyond the walls of the temple, where the creatures within can feed upon the weakness of humanity.

If the monks already have the Gate, or if they convince the Fated to hand it over, they mention that they intend to purify it in the hopes of calming the oni trapped on the other side. Even if the Fated defeated the Satori no Michi, the monks are concerned that the attempt to steal the gem may have agitated those waiting on the other side of the Gate.


TSUNDUE'S POSSESSION

Should the Fated mention Mipam Tsundue's possession or the Asura, Sengai becomes quite concerned. Read the following text:



Sengai's brow furrows as you tell him of the guru's fate. "It is quite disturbing to learn that the Satori no Michi found a way to draw an oni from the Beyond into this world, but truthfully, I cannot be surprised. Only a few years ago, one of this shrine's guardians was similarly possessed when a group of foreigners attempted to steal the Obsidian Gate."

He sighs at the memory. "With both her and the leader of the Satori no Michi becoming possessed, we must consider the possibility that the Obsidian Gate has begun to weaken. If we cannot find some way to strengthen the barrier, I fear for the future of our world."



If asked about the possessed girl, Sengai explains that, up until a few years ago, the Obsidian Gate was protected by the Tanaka family, who were tasked with tending to the shrine, appeasing the spirits, and ensuring that the gem stayed safe.


When the foreigners attempted to steal the Obsidian Gate, Yukio Tanaka was killed and his daughter, Asami Tanaka, was terribly wounded. As she lay dying, her broken body was possessed and healed by a powerful oni. Asami killed the foreigners, but she was quickly spirited away by an unknown group. Neither Sengai nor Taicho were present for the attack, but they both witnessed the results of the battle and helped to tend to the dead.

Sengai laments that the "Tanaka girl" disappeared before they could find a way to cleanse her soul of the oni that had possessed it. He doesn't know where she disappeared to or who took her, but that was the first time they realized that the Obsidian Gate was becoming weaker. Taicho believes that the oni who crossed over to possess Asami may have forged a path that other oni have attempted to follow, but even he admits that his theory is little more than a guess.

The metaphysical workings of the Obsidian Gate are a mystery to both monks.


A MYSTERIOUS LETTER

Midway through their talk with the monks, a messenger arrives at the temple to deliver a letter. Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate if none of the Fated speak Japanese:



Sengai ceases talking as a Japanese man in simple clothing steps into the clearing. He glances down at a letter in his hands, then steps forward and bows. "Pardon me," he says in Japanese. "I was asked to deliver a letter to the monks of this temple."

Taicho approaches the man and takes the letter from him. After the two exchange bows and the messenger leaves, the burly monk opens the letter, squints at it, and then looks up to you. "Can any of you read English?"



The letter, when translated, proves to be three different letters. The first is a letter of introduction written by James Whitaker, a traveling exorcist. He claims to have been "warned of the peril of the Obsidian Gate" by his spirit guide and informs the monks that he will be arriving on the morrow to "dispel the foul spirits that have cast your holy temple into metaphysical gloom."

The other two letters are letters of recommendation, one from an Ottoman manufacturer praising Whitaker for defeating an "Uylak" that had possessed his daughter, and the second from a Russian boyer who claims that Whitaker drove the "Ovinnik" that had been possessing his home out into a sack of frogs.

Needless to say, Sengai and Taicho are more than a little suspicious of a "wandering exorcist" who just happened to send them a letter on the same day that cultists attempted to steal the Obsidian Gate. Sengai asks the Fated if they could come to the shrine tomorrow morning to meet with the exorcist, in case his intentions are less than honorable.

PURIFICATION RITUALS

If any of the Fated touched the Obsidian Gate or spent time in its presence, the monks will offer to purify them in the hopes that it will help to remove their corruption. The purification ritual involves hours of chanting and guided meditation which proves to be calming for any characters that choose to participate.

Despite the best intentions of the monks, however, the ceremony does nothing to remove a possessing oni, which remains lodged in the possessed Fated's soul like a poisoned thorn. Any possessed characters can feel the corruption still lingering inside of them and are aware that nothing has changed.

If the Fated mention that they believe the ritual failed, the monks become quite concerned. They ask the character to avoid any sort of physical or spiritual corruption (smoking, drinking, violence, impure thoughts, etc.) while they research more powerful prayers. Taicho also suggests that the character ask James Whitaker how to remove the demon when he visits the temple tomorrow.

If any of the characters are **Haunted**, the purification ritual has a chance to help them dispel the evil spirits plaguing them. Each character with the **Haunted** Condition can attempt a TN 10 Centering or Counter-Spelling Challenge to reduce the value of their **Haunted** Condition by 1.

CONCLUSION

After the Fated have agreed to meet the exorcist alongside the monks, Sengai and Taicho thank them for all of the assistance they have rendered thus far. The monks allow the Fated to stay at the temple for the night; the accommodations and meals are simple and unremarkable, but there is no payment expected from the Fated, which makes this an excellent way for frugal Fated to save some yen.

James Whitaker's arrival (and his proposed solution to the problem of the Obsidian Gate) is covered in Act II.



ACT II

Sengai and Taicho are suspicious about the unexpected letter they received from the wandering exorcist, James Whitaker. In his letter, Whitaker claimed that he would be arriving at the temple on the following day. That day has arrived, and the monks have asked the Fated to help them welcome the foreigner, as they're unsure of his motives following the attempts of the Satori no Michi to steal the Obsidian Gate.

ACT II, PROLOGUE: THE EXORCIST

When the Fated arrive at the temple, read the following text, choosing the appropriate option as fitting the state of the Great Buddha at the end of the last Act:

Intact or Damaged

After a night of fitful sleep, you return to Kokuyōseki in the early morning. Sengai and Taicho are waiting for you in front of the Great Buddha, and they bow deeply as you approach them. "Good morning," Sengai says, the bags around his eyes betraying that he also had trouble sleeping. "Thank you for assisting us this day. I wonder what sort of man this exorcist will prove to be?"

Destroyed

After a night filled with dreams of demons and screaming cultists, you return to Kokuyōseki in the early morning. Sengai and Taicho are waiting for you near the obsidian stones, which they are still sorting between piles. As you approach them, they stand and bow. "Good morning," Sengai says, the bags around his eyes betraying that he also had trouble sleeping. "It will take a great deal of time to rebuild the Great Buddha, but this, too, is a lesson. We appreciate your assistance this day."

If any of the Fated became possessed or participated in a purification ceremony the day before, the monks inquire as to how those characters feel after sleeping.

Before the monks can speak about anything at great length, however, James Whitaker arrives at the temple. Read the following text:

Without much fanfare, a grinning Caucasian man shuffles into view. He's a wide man dressed in a blue kimono, and his large belly hangs out well past his obi in a manner that is in no way flattering. His face is equally large and framed with coarse black hair, almost as if he peeking out at you through a particularly coarse bush. A wooden staff is clenched in his left hand, and as he makes his way toward you, he leans heavily upon this staff to support his girth.

"Howdy, folks!" he calls out, raising a fat hand to wave. "I'm James Whitaker! You folks get my letter?"

Sengai and Taicho exchange confused looks as Whitaker appears, making it clear that neither of them had anticipated the exorcist's unique appearance.

REPLENISHING AMMO

Since guns are restricted in Japan, finding ammunition can be difficult.

After the Prologue has finished, each character can attempt a TN 10 Barter Challenge. On a success, they have the opportunity to purchase 10 rounds of ammunition for ¥30 (about 3 scrip), plus an additional 10 rounds per Margin of Success. If the character is a member of an organization with access to firearms (such as the Guild or the Japanese or Abyssinian military), they gain a + on this Challenge and do not have to pay for their ammunition (even if not on active duty).

ACT II, SCENE I: THE PROPOSITION

James Whitaker is a friendly and gregarious fellow. He's also unknowingly possessed by a powerful oni, Zhong Kui, who seeks to destroy the Obsidian Gate to allow his demonic brethren to return to Earth.

Zhong Kui keeps his influence over Whitaker to a minimum to avoid detection. Every so often, he whispers into Whitaker's mind, guiding him and manipulating his emotions, bringing him ever closer to the ultimate prize: the Obsidian Gate. All of Whitaker's powers as an exorcist are the result of Zhong Kui either banishing spirits himself or whispering the correct rituals into the man's mind; Whitaker is too foolish to realize that he's been manipulated from the very start of his career.

Whitaker introduces himself with an offered handshake, only remembering at the last moment that the Japanese bow; anyone attempting to shake his hand finds it swiftly retracted as he bows instead. All in all, Whitaker should come across as a very friendly person, albeit one who is all but oblivious to social cues and any disdain pointed in his direction.



Once introductions have been made, read the following text:

Sengai folds his hands together over his stomach and gives the much larger exorcist a serene smile. "It is quite fortuitous that your letter arrived when it did, Mr. Whitaker. Just yesterday, our temple came under attack by cultists seeking to steal the Obsidian Gate."

Whitaker nods his head, the smile never leaving his face. "I know what you're thinking, I do. 'How did this great big fellow know that the Gate was in danger so quickly?'" He taps his temple with a fat finger. "The answer's mighty simple, unbelievable though it may seem. You see, past few years, whenever spirits get riled up, I get these visions that come to me from my spirit guide on the other side. Just so happens, this time my spirit guide brought me to Japan to banish this real nasty demon-bird that was rampagin' 'round Sendai. From there, I worked my way down to Tokyo and helped a woman get rid of a Kappa that had gotten into her basement."

He grins and leans forward on his walking staff. "Soon as I recovered, I wrote a letter and sent it off. From what I saw in my vision, we gotta repair the Gate 'fore all the demons on the other side of it break through. They're already startin' to cross, I'd wager."

Whitaker allows the monks and the Fated to question him further. He understands that him showing up out of the blue might seem suspicious, but he expects everyone to accept his explanation once they hear it.

A TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that Whitaker seems to be telling the truth about his motives and reasons behind his visit.

The following topics might come up during conversation with Whitaker (either now or later in the adventure):

The Demon Bird: Should the Fated inquire as to the “demon bird” he banished, he tells them about Suzaku, a colossal pheasant with bright red feathers that was burning down villages under the control of the Japanese government. He went in and, after a terrible battle with the fire-bird, banished it back to the “Ten Courts of Hell,” or the afterlife. He still has a few burn marks on his arms that he can show the Fated as “proof” of the battle.

The Kappa: If the Fated ask about Whitaker’s last assignment, he says that he banished a Kappa - a “wicked little frog-turtle-sorta-demon” - back to the “Ten Courts of Hell,” or the afterlife. He claims that Tokyo has “all kinds of problems” with Kappa and mentions that he hopes to get back there after this whole “Gate business” is finished to root out the rest of their nest.

His Spirit Guide: Whitaker’s spirit guide technically does most of the banishing, and he’s not ashamed to admit that. He views his role mainly as a conduit to the spiritual power of his spirit guide, “Lao Wai.” Of course, what Whitaker doesn’t realize is that “Lao Wai” is just the pseudonym that Zhong Kui has been using since possessing Whitaker.

Whitaker describes “Lao Wai” as an ancient philosopher who contacted him in a dream. “Lao Wai” has been guiding him for a few years now, and he trusts the spirit implicitly. If asked to describe his spirit guide, Whitaker describes a large man with a bushy beard, much like himself, though more muscular and in shape.

His Vision: Whitaker claims to have seen the Obsidian Gate shatter, releasing an “avalanche of demons” that devoured the world. He claims that his spirit guide, Lao Wai, has never been wrong about these things before, and that Lao Wai believes the only way to stem the tide of demons is to strengthen the barrier that keeps the two worlds separate.

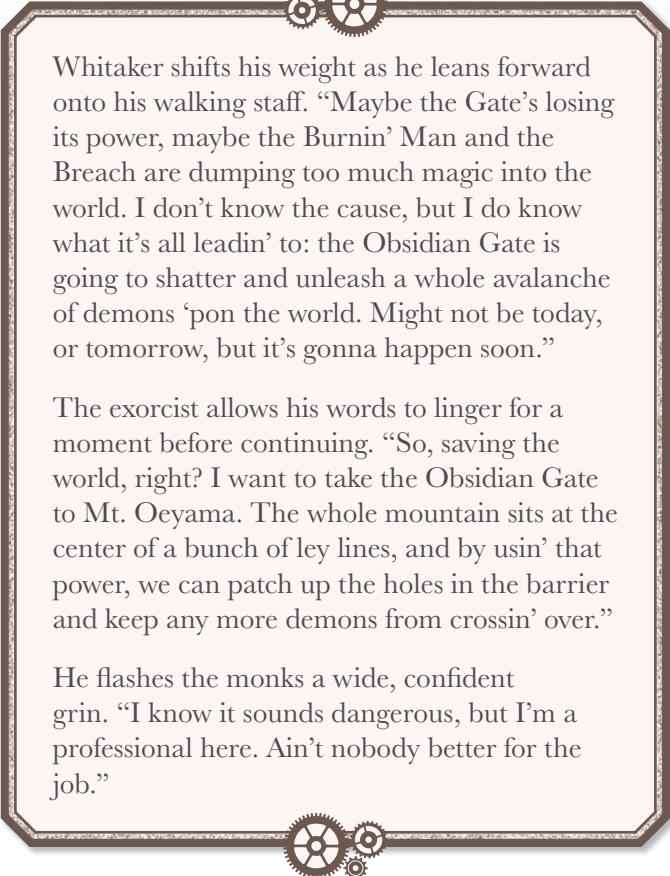
The Obsidian Gate: Whitaker knows a surprising amount of information about the Obsidian Gate, all of it learned through meditating and speaking with his spirit guide, Lao Wai. According to Lao Wai, the Obsidian Gate was created nine hundred years ago, after Minamoto Yorimitsu and his five retainers killed the demon king, Shuten-doji. The oni’s head was buried at the heart of Mt. Oeyama, but Japan was still plagued by demons. One of Yorimitsu’s retainers crafted Shuten-doji’s right eye into the Obsidian Gate; since Shuten-doji had been a mortal before he became a demon, his body drew power from both worlds, and the retainer turned that power against the demons, banishing them and locking them away with the strength of Shuten-doji’s corrupted soul.

Possession: If any of the Fated is possessed, Whitaker claims to be able to drive the spirit from their soul. Doing so takes an hour-long ritual, which involves Whitaker chanting and imploring his spirit guide, Lao Wai, to drag the possessing spirit to the Ten Courts of Hell. When the ritual is complete, the Fated feels much better, as if a heavy presence was lifted from their soul... but this “purification” does not last. In truth, Zhong Kui merely commanded the possessing oni to hide itself so as to better sell Whitaker as a “holy man” who can be trusted with the Obsidian Gate. Still, his ritual is enough to count as a purification ritual for the purposes of the Fated’s Borrowed Time Talent.

The Ritual to Repair the Obsidian Gate: Whitaker is perfectly happy to explain the ritual he intends to perform to purify the Obsidian Gate (he enjoys talking about his work). He intends to exhume Shuten-doji’s corpse; the so-called demon king drew power from both Earth and the realm beyond, he explains, making it a nexus of dimensional contradictions. By tapping into the ley lines beneath Mt. Oeyama, Whitaker intends to transfer the latent energy in the Shuten-doji’s remaining eye into the Obsidian Gate, strengthening its barriers. If pressed, Whitaker admits that the ritual might be dangerous and that having the Fated present to help battle any oni that might appear to stop him would actually be rather helpful.

REPAIRING THE GATE

Once the Fated have finished asking him questions, Whitaker explains his plan to repair the Obsidian Gate. Read the following text:



Whitaker shifts his weight as he leans forward onto his walking staff. “Maybe the Gate’s losing its power, maybe the Burnin’ Man and the Breach are dumping too much magic into the world. I don’t know the cause, but I do know what it’s all leadin’ to: the Obsidian Gate is going to shatter and unleash a whole avalanche of demons ‘pon the world. Might not be today, or tomorrow, but it’s gonna happen soon.”

The exorcist allows his words to linger for a moment before continuing. “So, saving the world, right? I want to take the Obsidian Gate to Mt. Oeyama. The whole mountain sits at the center of a bunch of ley lines, and by usin’ that power, we can patch up the holes in the barrier and keep any more demons from crossin’ over.”

He flashes the monks a wide, confident grin. “I know it sounds dangerous, but I’m a professional here. Ain’t nobody better for the job.”

Both Sengai and Taicho are noticeably concerned about the idea of sending a random stranger off with the Obsidian Gate, though they do recognize that something must be done.

The Fated can attempt TN 12 Enchanting + Intellect duels. On a success, they are able to confirm that the ritual Whitaker is discussing does have the potential to replenish the Gate’s strength.

The monks will discuss the matter with the Fated, but ultimately, they both arrive at the same conclusion: they want the Obsidian Gate to be repaired, but they don’t trust Whitaker to do it. Even though they believe his sincerity, he doesn’t project an aura of confidence or skill. The only solution, in their minds, is to ask the Fated to accompany Whitaker... and to personally protect the Obsidian Gate.

Whitaker is briefly annoyed at the suggestion - a TN 10 Scrutiny duel reveals that his pride seems injured - but after a few moments of consideration, he admits that it would be a good idea for the Fated to accompany him. The Obsidian Gate is dangerous, after all, and he believes that it is safer if held by those who do not possess innate magical powers, as those powers might serve as a conduit for the oni on the other side of the Gate to cross over into the mortal realm.

Whitaker doesn’t expect that it will be all that eventful of a trip, but they will still be traveling a considerable distance (roughly a quarter of the length of Japan’s main island). Taking the train from Kamakura to Mt. Oeyama (in the present day, it is more commonly known as Mt. Oe) will take roughly nine hours.

If the Fated refuse to accompany Whitaker, the monks are forced to deny his request; they simply cannot allow the Obsidian Gate to leave their temple without supervision, and neither of them is comfortable with the idea of carrying the gem beyond the boundaries of the temple (as doing so may result in their possession). The “Cracked Emerald” section (pg. 32) provides an additional scene that may provide particularly stubborn characters with some additional motivation.

If the Fated agree to accompany Whitaker, the monks are relieved. If the Obsidian Gate came free of the Great Buddha in the last Act, then Sengai has prepared a purified box (a cylindrical container about three inches in diameter and two inches in height) to hold the gem, complete with sacred ropes to hold it shut.

If the Obsidian Gate is still in place atop the Great Buddha, the monks will fetch a ladder to remove it. Since touching the gem is dangerous (see Soul Transfer, pg. 13), the monks give the Fated a blessed cloth bag that will allow them to handle it without risking their souls. When the Fated are ready, they can proceed to “Scene 2: The Morning Train” (pg. 33).

CRACKED EMERALD

If the Fated decline the monk's request to accompany Whitaker with the Obsidian Gate, Sengai and Taicho are disappointed but understanding. After all, they say, the Obsidian Gate is their burden, not that of the Fated. Whitaker is disappointed with the monks' refusal but nevertheless gives them the address of the hotel he is using while in Kamakura. He says that if they change their mind, he will be staying in the area for a few days.

Zhong Kui, on the other hand, is furious that his plans might be so easily thwarted by the distrust of the monks. He takes control of Whitaker once the large exorcist falls asleep and performs a ritual to summon a pair of oni to steal the gem for him. Even if the oni fail, he wagers, it should convince the monks that the situation is more dire than they had believed and lend new weight to Whitaker's offer.

If the Fated are present at the temple that night (perhaps a possessed character is being led through another purification ritual), read the following text, choosing the appropriate option as fitting the state of the Great Buddha at the end of the last Act:

Intact

The quiet night is suddenly loud with the sound of cracking stone. An unwholesome blue light emanates from the temple's center, where inhuman faces and hands are pressing outward from the surface of the Great Buddha. With a loud cry of pain, two humanoid creatures formed entirely of obsidian force their way free of the statue's belly and stumble out into the moonlight. Dragging heavy clubs nearly as large as they are, the obsidian demons begin stalking toward the temple's horrified monks.

Damaged or Destroyed

An unwholesome blue light emanates from the temple's center, where the fallen chunks of obsidian have begun to join together to form humanoid creatures made entirely of obsidian. With a painful cry of birth, they heft heavy chunks of obsidian into the air, screaming loudly as the rocks shatter, revealing heavy clubs almost as large as they are. With singular purpose, the two obsidian demons turn and begin stalking toward the temple's horrified monks.

The summoned creatures are two Obsidian Oni (pg. 104). The oni attempt to seek out and kill the temple's monks; once that is finished, they intend to search for the Obsidian Gate.

If the Fated are not present when the oni are summoned, the monks barely manage to fend off the oni; Taicho is slain by the creatures, his head and back crushed beneath their heavy clubs, while Sengai survives with a broken arm and leg. He summons the Fated and Whitaker the next morning to relay the tale to them; he only survived because he overturned a basin of purified water that burned the oni's legs and feet, forcing them to retreat. Just as they renewed their assault, they unexpectedly crumbled into chunks of obsidian (the magic of the summoning spell dissipated to the point that the oni could no longer hold onto a physical form).

Faced with what he believes to be the weakening Obsidian Gate, Sengai has no choice but to allow Whitaker to take the Obsidian Gate and strengthen its barriers, albeit with the Fated protecting the gem itself.


If the Fated agree to travel with Whitaker, proceed to "Scene 2: The Morning Train" (pg. 33). If they refuse yet again, Sengai reluctantly allows Whitaker to take the emerald himself, with terrible consequences; see the Conclusion on page 47.



ACT II, SCENE II: THE MORNING TRAIN


Whitaker plans to take the train from Kamakura to Miyazu, which reduces the long trip down to a much more manageable nine hours. He is willing to wait for the Fated to make whatever preparations they wish, provided that they do not take longer than an hour or two.

When the Fated are ready, he accompanies them to the train station. Read the following text:



After a short, twenty minute walk through Kamakura, you arrive at a modern train station. A crowd of businessmen, tourists, and laborers move through the building's open doors in small groups, most of them too concerned with their own troubles to give you much thought. The only real interactions you have with the crowd are a few mumbled "*Sumimasen*" (Japanese for "Excuse me") as people bump into you and some awkward glances at Whitaker and his bulging kimono.

Whitaker purchases rail passes with a handful of crumpled yen and hands each of you one of the bright green tickets. "This should get us all the way to Miyazu," he assures you, his fat fingers only partially smearing the ink on each of the passes. "We're riding first class, so we shouldn't have to worry too much about having to brush shoulders with other people."




Inside the station, the Fated can see numerous small shops set up right beside the train tracks. A few are peddling minor souvenirs - including small, miniature Buddha statues carved from obsidian (¥5 each) - but most are selling boxed meals of *onigiri* (rice balls wrapped in seaweed) and *takuan* (pickled radish), crabmeat and rice-stuffed squid, and even a few western sandwiches. Some of these merchants are selling their wares through the windows of the stopped train to eager and hungry passengers. Each boxed meal costs ¥5.


Whitaker's purchase of the Fated's train tickets reveals that he is both generous and fairly wealthy. Should any of the Fated decide to pick his pocket (and succeed on a TN 8 Pick Pocket Challenge), they're able to lift his wallet, which contains ¥120 (or around ¥90 after he has purchased train tickets).

GLIMPSES OF DANGER

As they make their way to the train, the Fated can attempt TN 12 Notice Challenges. On a success, they catch a glimpse of the Satori no Michi cultist that has been following them since they left the temple. Read the following text:



Had it not been for the encounter with the Satori no Michi the night before, you might not have given any thought to the dark-skinned man. You remember seeing him as you left the temple, just another face in the crowd, but here he is now at the train station, doggedly following you through the crowd. His eyes, framed as they are by his braided hair, are intense and seem riveted on your location.



The man is Rinchin, one of the Satori no Michi cultists who was not present at the shrine when the Fated (or the authorities) arrived. Upon learning of the Fated's involvement, he decided to follow them to learn more about such potential threats.

If the Fated make a commotion in an attempt to draw attention to Rinchin or approach him without making a successful TN 12 Stealth Challenge, he notices them and disappears into the crowd. Should they confront Rinchin without causing him to bolt, he denies having anything to do with the Satori no Michi, but a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals this to be a lie. If assaulted, he shouts for assistance and claims (truthfully) that he is being attacked. Should the Fated remain in the station, they are detained by officials that delay their departure for the better part of a day.

Ultimately, Rinchin isn't a threat in this scene. He merely follows them until they board the train, at which point he retreats to ponder what to do next (and misses his opportunity to do anything). Rinchin uses the stats of a Satori no Michi Devotee (pg. 99), though he is currently unarmed.

ALL ABOARD

Once the Fated board the train, read the following text:



A helpful conductor guides you to the green car and helps you inside. Whitaker goes last, and it takes a bit of work (and a bit of shoving) for the conductor to get the exorcist's bulk fully past the narrow door.

"Don't see why they make the trains over here so tiny," he harrumphs as he spreads out across the entirety of one of the bench-like seats. "Like livin' in a dollhouse."

You're the only ones in the lavish car until just before the whistle sounds, when two Indian women wrapped in deep purple saris board the train. Their eyes move over each of you, one at a time, as they make their way to the distant side of the car and lower themselves into open seats. Both carry satchels on their shoulders, which they reposition into their laps as the train lurches into motion.



The women - Dalaja and Idha Acharya - are sisters-in-law who are traveling to Kyoto as part of a visit to Japan. Neither is particularly friendly to outsiders, and they only speak Hindi, which makes any sort of communication with them difficult.

The women glower at the Fated out of general xenophobia and occasionally whisper secretly to each other. Despite being somewhat rude, though, they are ultimately harmless, though a TN 9 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that they are speaking derogatively about the Fated, even if the character does not understand their soft whispers.

Once the train lurches into motion, Whitaker will relax and inform the Fated that they have an hour-long ride to Yokohama, followed by a four hour ride to Kyoto, and then another four hour ride to Miyazu.

To pass the time, he asks the Fated about themselves, where they are from, and so on, making polite conversation with them. Every so often, he asks whether the character holding or closest to the Obsidian Gate is feeling well. If the Fated are being friendly, he may even ask to see the Obsidian Gate to "confirm that the barrier isn't growing weaker," but a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that he just wants to see the gem. He doesn't touch the Gate in any event (and if he does, nothing seems to happen; none of the oni on the other side of the Obsidian Gate wish to challenge Zhong Kui's claim on Whitaker's soul).

After an hour of uneventful traveling, the train arrives at Yokohama station. The Fated don't have to change trains to continue traveling to Kyoto, but they do have to wait while passengers embark and disembark, which takes roughly twenty minutes, all told. Dalaja and Idha Acharya remain in their seats, as they are traveling to Kyoto.

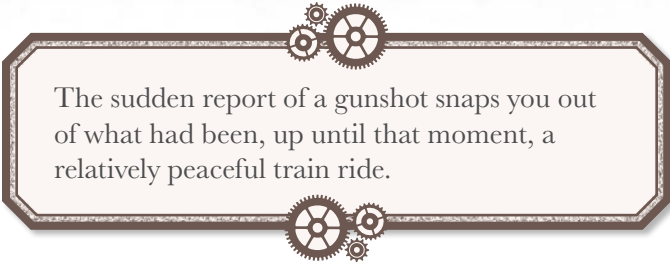
During the stop, Whitaker leans out the window and waves down one of the boxed food merchants. After a bit of haggling, he purchases a box of food and warns the Fated that it's a four hour trip to Kyoto, so if they want food, now is the time to get it. Each of the boxed meals costs ¥5.

Whitaker is quite delighted to open his box and find that the rice balls have been decorated to look like little animals, and he is enthusiastic about making certain all of the Fated get a chance to see them before he devours their tiny, rice-y bodies.

Any character ignoring Whitaker and looking out the window can attempt a TN 10 Notice Challenge. On a success, they notice four armed, rowdy Guild soldiers boarding the train near the engine.

GUILD INSPECTION

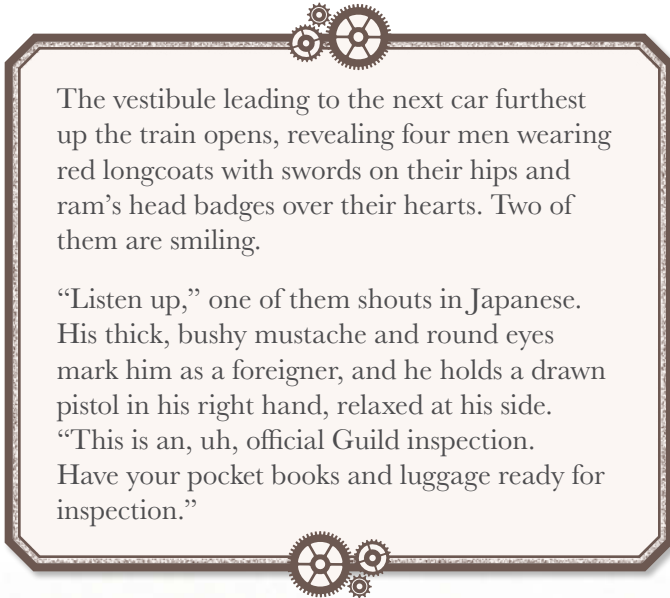
About half an hour after the train pulls out of Yokohama, the Guild soldiers - who had clearly been drinking - work their way through the train, berating passengers and abusing their power, searching through luggage for weapons and contraband. Read the following text:



The sudden report of a gunshot snaps you out of what had been, up until that moment, a relatively peaceful train ride.

One car ahead of the Fated, the Guild soldiers discovered a passenger who was carrying a pistol. If the Fated peek through the window connecting the two cars, they see the soldiers forcing a man to the ground, confiscating his pistol, and clapping him in irons. After the scuffle, the soldiers continue inspecting luggage to rummage through its contents.

The Fated have roughly five minutes to react and prepare before the Guild soldiers finish their inspection of the car ahead of the Fated and move on to the one they occupy. When this occurs, read the following text:



The vestibule leading to the next car furthest up the train opens, revealing four men wearing red longcoats with swords on their hips and ram's head badges over their hearts. Two of them are smiling.

"Listen up," one of them shouts in Japanese. His thick, bushy mustache and round eyes mark him as a foreigner, and he holds a drawn pistol in his right hand, relaxed at his side. "This is an, uh, official Guild inspection. Have your pocket books and luggage ready for inspection."

With his speech finished, two of the soldiers move to the first group of people in the car, is Dalaja and Idha Acharya (unless they moved). The women initially protest when one of the soldiers grabs Idha's satchel and starts rummaging through it, but his partner shoves his pistol up against Idha's temple, turning her shouts of outrage into terrified sobbing.


The remaining soldiers keep watch over the rest of the car's passengers: Whitaker and the Fated.

Once Dalaja and Idha have had their satchels searched, the soldiers order them to their feet, where they pat the women down in a thorough manner. No weapons or other contraband are discovered, so the soldiers motion for the women to be seated and hand back their ransacked satchels.

The Fated can either submit to the inspection or resist.

SUBMISSION

If they submit, characters who are not carrying weapons or questionable items (such as dynamite) have nothing to fear; their luggage (if any) is searched and returned to them, and once they have been patted down, the character is deemed to no longer be a threat.

Characters can attempt to conceal a weapon with a TN 12 Stealth Challenge. If the weapon is particularly large, such as a two-handed sword, they suffer a  on this Challenge. On a failure, the character might be able to claim that the weapon serves a different function, should it be something such as a staff or cane (as described below). If the discovered object is clearly a weapon (such as all firearms), the scene shifts into Dramatic Time as the soldiers arrest the character. This plays out as described in "Resistance," pg. 36.

Characters carrying weapons that could be explained as being non-weapons may attempt TN 10 Convince or Deceive Challenges to convince the soldiers that the weapon is not intended for violence. On a failure, the weapon is discovered and the scene shifts into Dramatic Time as the soldiers attempt to execute the character. This plays out as described in "Resistance," pg. 36.

Guild employees and members of the Japanese military are exempt from the Haitorei Concord and are allowed to carry weapons. Any character attempting to pass themselves off as a member of the Guild or Japanese military (or such a character trying to claim weapons carried by another character as their own) must succeed on a TN 10 Deceive Challenge to pull off the ruse.

If, during the course of their searching, the soldiers come across the Obsidian Gate (because none of the Fated thought to hide it), they decide to "confiscate" the gem, which is surely stolen property. As soon as any of the soldiers come into contact with it, however, they are possessed by a violent oni; see the "Oni on a Train" section, pg. 36.

RESISTANCE

If a character is discovered to be in possession of a weapon, the Guild soldier searching them warns the others. The soldiers initially attempt to arrest any characters with weapons, but any sort of resistance prompts them to react with lethal force. There are a total of four Guild Soldiers (pg. 105).

Characters who allow themselves to be arrested are dragged to the front of the train and kept under guard until the train reaches the next station, at which point they are transferred into Guild custody and effectively removed from the adventure, pending their eventual trial and execution.

The train is narrow, which makes any sort of fight cramped and intimate. Characters hiding behind the train's seats have Hard Cover. It's possible for characters to climb over the seats to get closer, but they count as Severe terrain (and thus require twice as much movement to traverse). See the provided map for the dimensions of the train car.

Whitaker initially attempts not to get involved with the Guild, but if a scuffle breaks out, he assists the Fated as best he is able. His stats can be found on page 109.

Dalaja and Idha Acharya take cover and hide throughout the fight. If the Fated kill the Guild soldiers, the sisters-in-law report the murders to the police in Kyoto unless the Fated succeed on a TN 9 Intimidate Challenge. If the murder of the soldiers is reported (or if the bodies of the soldiers are found in the Fated's train car), the Guild begins searching for the Fated (which won't have any direct influence upon this adventure but may cause problems in the future).

The soldiers focus their attention upon anyone in the possession of weapons and anyone attacking them. Characters who avoid getting involved in combat are in no danger from the soldiers (save, perhaps, from stray bullets whizzing past their heads or imbedding into nearby seat cover).

If the search party is reduced to only a single soldier, he retreats to the front of the train and spends the rest of the trip with the engineer, safely locked in the engine's control room.

ONI ON A TRAIN

If any of the Fated allow their bare skin to come into contact with the Obsidian Gate, they may become possessed by an oni; see the "Soul Transfer" section (pg. 13) for more information.

If any of the soldiers touch the Obsidian Gate as part of their search, they become possessed by an oni waiting on the other side of the portal. Read the following text:



The moment the Guild soldier touches the gem, you feel a wave of vertigo wash over you. Crackling blue-green lightning shoots out of the gem's depths, arcing into the man's eyes as he screams in pain. A deep peel rings out, as if from a massive bell, and then the soldier's dark hair begins to thicken and spread across the bubbling flesh of his body. Twin horns of bone force their way through the top of his skull and sweep backwards before curling in on themselves. His face lengthens, and his uniform rips at tears as his expanding muscles burst free of their confinement.

With a mighty laugh, the oni lifts a clawed hand and curls it into a fist. "Wonderful! How I have missed the sensation of mortal flesh!" Its voice is every language and none, all at once, and every syllable of its booming voice is like a nail hammered into the inside of your skull.



The Yagiza (pg. 106) possessing the soldier wastes no time in attacking everyone around it. If there are any Guild soldiers remaining in the car, they wage a fighting retreat back to the front of the train, splitting their turns between moving and firing until they are able to leave the car and hold up in the engine's control room. Each attack the soldiers make hits the oni (unless they have to randomize their target due to the oni being in melee) and deals Weak damage.



FRONT OF
THE TRAIN

DALAJA AND
IDHA ACHARYA

DOOR

VESTIBULE

DOOR

DOOR

VESTIBULE

DOOR

JAMES
WHITAKER

0 1 2
YARDS

AFTERMATH

If the Fated attacked or fought against the Guild soldiers, Whitaker is agitated and upset for the rest of the journey. He tells the Fated that they need to hide the soldiers somewhere and, if none of the Fated suggests doing so, he suggests throwing their bodies off the train and then never speaking of the event again. By this point, he's half-convinced that the Fated are going to get him arrested or executed and becomes nervous in their presence.

Should any of the soldiers have transformed into a Yagiza, Whitaker points toward the transformation as further proof that the barrier of the Obsidian Gate has begun to weaken.

Regardless, four hours after leaving Yokohama, the Fated arrive in Kyoto. There's another stop at a train station (along with more boxed meals being sold through the train windows), followed by another four hours of rather dull traveling before the Fated arrive at Miyazu.



ACT II, SCENE III: MOUNT OEYAMA

When the Fated arrive in Miyazu, Whitaker and the Fated have no problem with disembarking and making their way into town. Read the following text:

Miyazu is a bustling port town that seems torn between historical traditions and Western industry. Men in western suits walk next to women in kimono, and behind both trudge grimy factory and textile workers in bland laborer's garb, their eyes lowered to the ground.

Surprisingly, a good portion of Miyazu's population seems to be made up of foreigners. Most are Caucasian, and many of them are wearing the red longcoats that designate them as members of the Guild of Mercantilers.



Whitaker stops at a street vendor's cart to purchase a bowl of rice and vegetables for himself and, after a moment of debate, for each of you as well. In the distance, you can see a large Guild steamship berthed in the port's harbor, its cannons not-so-subtly aimed at the town as distant workers slowly load precious cargo into its hold. There are so many soldiers stationed around the ship that it almost appears to be a fortress built upon the water.

"It's a good hike up the mountain to get where we need to be," he warns. "Even then, the ritual's gonna take an hour or two, and then we have to hike back down. We might as well find a hotel room here in town and wait until morning to head out."

The Guild's presence within Miyazu is primarily mercantile; the ship docked in port is the GMS Lancaster, an armed trade ship. Many of the Guild soldiers stationed in the town are effectively occupying Miyazu in order to protect the port (and thus, the Guild's shipping interests). The Guild is effectively the law in Miyazu, and they will not hesitate to shoot someone they suspect of making trouble (which has obviously not been good for morale in Miyazu). Stats for the Guild Soldiers can be found on page 105.

A NIGHT IN MIYAZU

When the Fated arrive in Miyazu, it will most likely be approaching night. Rather than try to stumble up a potentially difficult mountain path in the darkness, Whitaker rents everyone a room at the Royal Plaza, a western hotel that caters to foreign visitors. In addition to a full meal in the hotel's dining room, each room also comes with room service and a full bathroom, complete with tub and working plumbing. If any of the Fated take advantage of the room service, Whitaker balks at the bill in the morning but grudgingly pays with a few grumblings about the Fated taking advantage of his hospitality.

If the Fated speak with any of the town's residents or otherwise seek to learn some local rumors, they can attempt TN 9 Bewitch or Intimidate Challenges. Because of the tense atmosphere in the town, characters who are not Asian suffer a  to this Challenge. Characters who appear to be members of the Guild suffer an additional  penalty to this Challenge.

On a success, the character learns that people have been "disappearing" with alarming frequency as of late: over twenty people have gone missing over the past three months. Most of the missing people are assumed to have been "disappeared" by the Guild for getting in their way, seeing too much, or voicing anti-Guild sentiments. If the character achieves a Margin of Success, they learn that a few of the missing people were actually Guild employees, which casts doubt on the Guild being the ones behind the disappearances. (In actuality, the missing people have been snatched up by Aobozu; see "The Skinning Shack" on pg. 40 and "The Summit" on page 42 for more information).


If the Fated insist on traveling to the mountain at night, Whitaker won't resist, but he does note that traveling up the mountain at night will be dangerous. The group will need to purchase electric lanterns (¥30 each) to have any chance of finding their way. The talk of expenses reminds Whitaker that they will need shovels (¥2 each) to make digging easier.

NIGHTTIME HAUNTING

If the Fated rest for the night (either in the hotel or on the road), the character(s) guarding the Obsidian Gate experience a visit from Zhong Kui's spirit once Whitaker falls asleep. Annoyed by their stubbornness, Zhong Kui intends to use his Conjuring Magia to mark the Obsidian Gate, ensuring that he can summon it to his hands should push come to shove.


If the character(s) guarding the Obsidian Gate do not keep a constant watch over the gem, the attempt automatically succeeds as the ghostly Zhong Kui quietly performs the ritual and retreats. Since he is Incorporeal in his spirit form, Zhong Kui can walk through walls, reach through bags (even if purified), and avoid any traps left for him as he seeks out the gem.

If the Fated post continuous guards on the Obsidian Gate, he attempts to use his Sleep Magia on the guards. They must immediately attempt TN 12 Unconsciousness Challenges or fall asleep. If this is not successful, he simply steps through the nearest wall, thrusts his hand into whatever container might be holding the Obsidian Gate, and marks it. If this happens, read the following text, adjusting the details as appropriate:



The hours drag on as you find yourself listening to the nighttime sounds of Miyazu. You can hear the distant cries of prostitutes calling out to potential customers mixing with the annoyed voices of patrolling guardsmen complaining about the "backwater" town and its "idiot" residents. Mixed in with that local charm is the muffled sound of Whitaker's snoring, which penetrates the thin walls just a bit too well.

Just as you're debating whether or not you could make earplugs from something in the room, a hideous apparition floats through the wall adjoining the street. Its face is incredibly ugly and scarred, but its body is muscular and wrapped in fine eastern clothing, though the aesthetic is more Chinese than Japanese. The ghost barely seems to notice you as it floats directly toward the Obsidian Gate!



The appearance of Zhong Kui shifts the scene into Dramatic Time. His stats can be found on page 29, but for the moment, he is also Incorporeal, which means that he suffers half damage from Close Combat and Ranged Combat attacks.

At the start of his turn (Initiative step 13), he moves toward the Obsidian Gate with his first AP and places an invisible mark upon it with his second AP. Once he has marked the gem or been reduced to 0 Wounds (whichever comes first), Zhong Kui waits until the Fated's next attack, at which point he feigns grievous injury and flees in "terror." Fated who question his flight can attempt TN 17 Scrutiny Challenges; on a success, they realize that the spirit was feigning injury.

If the Fated mention the spirit to Whitaker in the morning, he is horrified and claims that it must have been a vengeful spirit sent to reclaim the Obsidian Gate for its spirit-binder master. He suggests that they leave town as quickly as possible (after swinging by the dining room to snatch up some breakfast for everyone to eat on the trip to the mountain).

THE SKINNING SHACK

Once the Fated are ready to leave, Whitaker hires a private bus - really just a horse-drawn carriage that seats about a dozen people - to take them to Mt. Oeyama. The ride only takes an hour, but the bus doesn't have padded seats and the bumpy dirt road is quite uneven, so by the time the driver pulls to a stop outside a stone fountain, everyone is sore and miserable.

Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate if the Fated arrive at night:

Whitaker leans heavily onto his walking staff as he looks up at the "mountain" before you. In reality, it seems much more like a particularly tall hill, and you can almost feel Whitaker's relief as he leans on his walking staff.

"Well, this shouldn't be too bad," he says. "The shrine should be at the top of this mountain. Keep your eyes open for anything out of the ordinary. The ley lines of Japan converge beneath this mountain, and supernatural creatures are drawn to such places."

The bus driver agrees to wait for Whitaker to return from the mountain, but only after the exorcist pays him for the entire day in advance.

When the Fated begin climbing the mountain, read the following text:

It doesn't take long for you to find a trail leading up the mountain's side, and soon you're making a good pace along its forested side. Abandoned nickel mines dot the landscape, most of them boarded up and marked with signs warning against entry.

Any investigation of the abandoned nickel mines turns up empty tunnels that have been recently abandoned. A TN 10 History Challenge allows a character to remember some newspaper stories about the mines shutting down due to multiple miners abandoning their jobs without any sort of forewarning. If a character achieves a Margin of Success on this Challenge, they remember reading another article that suggested that the miners had disappeared, rather than quit.

Continue with the following text:

After another fifteen minutes of hiking, Whitaker is breathing heavily and lagging behind everyone else. He leans heavily on his walking staff, forcing himself to continue as his face grows progressively redder and redder.

The hiking trail leads to a clearing that looks out onto the surrounding mountains. Someone has built a shack near one side of the clearing, and in front of it are a few rocks that seem designed to serve as places for travelers to rest. As soon as he sees them, Whitaker makes a beeline toward the largest rock. "Let's... take a breather... shall we?"

Whitaker is physically unable to continue any further without a rest, but Fated characters who press onward should have no problem continuing the rest of the way to the summit. The shack is currently unoccupied (its owner, Aobozu, is at the summit), so any shouting or knocking on the door will go unheeded.

The shack has no windows, but if one of the Fated opens the door to look inside, read the following text:

You've no sooner cracked the door open than the scent of rotting meat hits you like a fist. A swarm of fat, black flies billow out of the shack, but past them, you can make out the shapes of humanoid creatures hanging upside down from the ceiling on lengths of thick rope. The oppressive heat in the shack only seems to make the smell and the buzzing of the flies all that much more unbearable.

Any further investigation of the shack reveals that there are four corpses hanging from the ceiling, all of them skinned. Further clues can be found with a TN 8 Notice Challenge. Each character that succeeds on this Challenge finds one of the following Clues, plus one Clue per Margin of Success.

Clues (in no particular order):

- The skinless faces of the corpses are contorted in expressions of agony, hinting that they were skinned alive and died screaming. All of them are missing their teeth.
- There's no sign of any of the removed skins anywhere in the shack, but there is a great deal of dried blood on the ground, indicating that the hanging people were likely skinned inside the shack.
- There doesn't seem to be any bed or sleeping area in the shack, nor is there anything resembling a kitchen or eating area.
- Some of the blood splatters on the wall are in the shape of Japanese kanji. If read, the kanji form blasphemous promises to resurrect the Shuten-doji so that it might once again defend Japan from "foreign monsters."
- Tracks lead into the wooded area behind the shack. Many of the broken branches of the underbrush are smeared with dried blood.

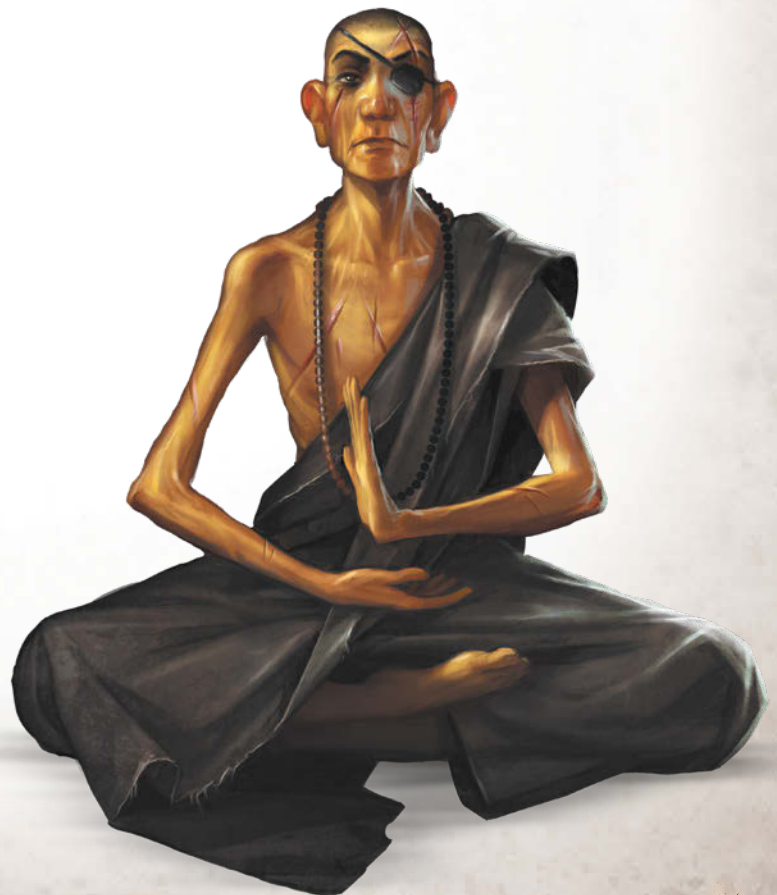
If the Fated show Whitaker the shack's contents, he vomits up his last meal and spends the rest of the hike looking visibly disturbed.

An investigation of the area around the shack finds numerous shallow graves in the wooded area behind the shack (around forty in total). Some of the graves are so shallow that they have been uncovered, presumably by the wild animals that fed upon them.

An old shovel rests against one of the trees, and bundles of personal belongings have been haphazardly tossed around the area, as if the owner did not care about such items. If the Fated take the time to go through the bundles of personal belongings, they find multiple wallets containing a total of ¥124 and 4 Guild scrip. These items belong to the people who have been disappearing from Miyazu in recent months, as well as the nickel miners who went missing in the months before that.

Unfortunately, the spirits of the dead do not rest easy on Mt. Oeyama; any character who pockets this money (including multiple characters if the money is split up among the group) gains the **Haunted +1** Condition.


Fated searching the area around the shack can also attempt a TN 11 Track Challenge; on a success, they find bare footprints, heavy drag marks, and dried blood on the path leading up to the mountain's summit. If the character achieves a Margin of Success on this Challenge, they realize that there are multiple sets of tracks of various ages, all of them indicating someone dragging something heavy toward the summit.




THE SUMMIT

From the shack, it's another ten minutes of hiking to reach the summit. If any Fated went on ahead of the others, the second group will take an appropriate amount of time to catch up to those who went on ahead.

Read the following text when the Fated arrive:



The path eventually opens up onto a broad summit plateau. Patches of trees dot the plateau in places, but they do little to block the view of the surrounding mountains. Just as you manage to pull your gaze away from the superb view, you realize that you are not alone on the summit: twenty five yards ahead of you, an old man dressed in black Buddhist robes is dragging a heavy bucket along the ground. His destination seems to be a distant shrine on the other side of the plateau, ten yards further ahead.




The old man is Aobozu, a corrupted monk who has been trying to resurrect Shuten-doji, a powerful oni who was killed on the mountain's peak nine hundred years earlier, for the past few months. His attempts are doomed to failure - Shuten-doji cannot be resurrected without the Obsidian Gate - but he does not know this and has accidentally created a Nuppeppo, which he believes to be an unformed Shuten-doji.

If the Fated call out to Aobozu, he looks up, revealing that he is wearing a patch over his left eye. Despite clearly having heard them, he then returns to dragging his heavy bucket toward the shrine.

If the Fated attack Aobozu, he abandons his bucket (which is filled with the skin of his last victim) and flees to the shrine.

If Whitaker is with the PCs, he confirms that the shrine at the top of the mountain is where they must go to perform the ritual that will strengthen the Obsidian Gate.


When the Fated approach the shrine, read the following text:



As you draw closer to the shrine, the horrible scent of rotting flesh becomes more and more apparent. The monk stands at the shrine's entrance, beneath a torii arch whose pillars have been wrapped with crude strings of bloody teeth.

A patch covers the monk's left eye, but his right is wide and bloodshot as he leers at you. "Have you come to offer your flesh to the Shuten-doji?" he asks in Japanese before laughing disturbingly. "The great demon king is nearly reborn! The foreigners that have defiled our great nation will soon be destroyed. He only needs a bit more flesh..."

The monk grins as a large, quivering shape rises up from behind him and flows forward, parting as it flows past him. It's an avalanche of bruised and rotten flesh, and the monk cackles as the huge glob of disgusting flesh flows toward you like a giant amoeba.



Stats for Aobozu and the Nuppeppo can be found on pages 107 and 108, respectively.

During the battle, Aobozu supports the Nuppeppo (which he refers to as "Shuten-doji") by summoning pillars to block off the Fated while pushing them closer to the Nuppeppo. The Nuppeppo, for its part, just rolls forward and tries to absorb the Fated into its bulk.

If Whitaker is present, he shouts out that the mass of putrid flesh isn't the Shuten-doji, and that it's a Nuppeppo, a "corrupted pile of rotting flesh." He does his best to assist the Fated however he is able, but his lack of combat experience makes it difficult for him to contribute in any meaningful manner.

Should the Fated defeat the Nuppeppo before they defeat Aobozu, the monk panics at the destruction of "Shuten-doji's vessel." Aobozu attempts to flee from the Fated and escape back down the mountain. If captured and interrogated, it should quickly become obvious that he is absolutely and irredeemably crazy.

ACT II, SCENE IV: THE CORRUPTED SHRINE

Once the Fated have dealt with Aoboizu and his Nuppeppo, Whitaker approaches the shrine (catching up with them as necessary and giving a large berth to the rotting mass of the Nuppeppo in any case) and begins inspecting it for corruption. Read the following text:

Whitaker shuffles around the defiled shrine, pausing occasionally to smudge out a few kanji or to cut down the strings of human teeth wrapped around the torii arch. "The shrine's been pretty well corrupted," he admits as he wipes some sweat from his brow. "Fortunately, this ain't my first time dealin' with something like this. 'Fore we do anything else, we had best purify it to make sure that there ain't any impure spirits hangin' around when we perform the ritual."

Purifying the shrine is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

PURIFYING THE SHRINE

Skills Allowed: Acrobatics, Counter-Spelling, History, Music

Target Number: 11

Duration: 10 minutes

Success Requirement: 10

Failure Requirement: 4

There are a few ways that the Fated can help Whitaker purify the shrine.

They can perform precise and demanding sacred dances with Acrobatics, dispel the corrupted magic clinging to the shrine with Counter-Spelling, remember ancient prayers with History, or sing to the kami to entice them to return to the shrine with Music. Whitaker explains each possible avenue of assistance and guides the Fated through some (rough) choreography and prayers before turning his attention toward his own preparations.

If the characters have any of the effective protective items from Act I - purified water, shimenawa, or cleansing bells - then using that item as part of this Ongoing Challenge grants the character a **+** to their Challenge.

Each time the characters achieve a Margin of Failure on this Ongoing Challenge, every character participating in the Ongoing Challenge gains the **Haunted +1** Condition as they attract the attention of hostile spirits.

If the Fated achieve a catastrophic failure, the foul spirits clinging to the shrine prove to be too strong to dispel. Whitaker is concerned, but he puts on a brave face and declares that it "probably won't matter too much," though a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge allows the Fated to notice that he's more concerned than he lets on.

The shrine's corruption doesn't have an immediate effect, but during the battle with Zhong Kui in "The Ritual" (pg. 19), every Oni character (including characters with the Possessed Advanced Pursuit) within 10 yards of the shrine gains **Fast** at the start of its turn.

If the Fated succeed on the Ongoing Challenge, Whitaker breathes a sigh of relief and declares that the shrine is clean.



Once the Fated have made their attempt at cleansing the shrine (regardless of their success or failure), Whitaker takes a few moments to commune with his spirit guide, Lao Wai. Read the following text:



Whitaker plants his staff in the ground and holds his hands out toward it, as if he were channeling some great, unseen energy through his hands and into the walking aid.

“Lao Wai!” he calls out dramatically. “Come, assist me! We are ready to strengthen the Obsidian Gate!”

You feel the presence of something very old and very powerful stir within the exorcist. Behind his bushy beard and mustache, you see his eyes sparkle with the knowledge of centuries. Then, just like that, the presence is gone, leaving Whitaker exhausted and fatigued.

“We must dig,” he says, his voice strained. “Lao Wai says that the skull of Shuten-doji is buried beneath this shrine, but time is of the essence. The barrier between worlds is weakening, and only with the second eye of the oni can we prevent disaster.”



If the Fated are suspicious of Whitaker, a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that he believes what he is saying. The exorcist is exhausted from his contact with “Lao Wai,” but he waves off any concerns for his well-being, claiming that contact with the spirit always leaves him drained. “The price of speaking with the ancient dead,” he half-jokes.

DIGGING A HOLE

Unfortunately, Whitaker isn’t in any sort of shape to dig a large hole beneath the shrine, so that task falls to the Fated. Digging the hole takes twelve hours, but each character can attempt a TN 10 Athletics Challenge to reduce this time by 30 minutes, plus an additional 30 minutes for each Margin of Success, to a minimum digging time of one hour.

If any of the characters has a shovel (there’s one in the wooded area behind Aobozu’s shack), it reduces the total digging time by four hours (again, to a minimum digging time of one hour).

Once the Fated have finished digging the hole, read the following text:



With a groan, you uncover another large rock. It was difficult enough to move the heavy stones when the pit was only a few feet deep, but now that you’re fifteen feet down, it’s an utterly torturous experience. As you reach down to turn the rock over, though, you notice that it’s the color of bone.

A bit more clearing reveals the misshapen skull of some great, ancient beast, fully four feet across from one side to the other. Two horns as thick as a man’s forearm sweep back from its forehead, and its mouth is filled with serrated teeth as long as steak knives.

By far the most interesting feature of the skull, however, is the fist-sized green stone set into the skull’s left eye socket.



The huge skull belongs to Shuten-doji, the so-called king of the oni. Unlike the Obsidian Gate, the emerald set into its eye socket can be touched without any fear of possession. No matter what the Fated try, however, it cannot be removed from the skull.

When the Fated uncover the skull, Whitaker becomes excited and tries to help them haul it out of the pit as best he is able. There’s rope in the shack (suspending the hanging corpses) if the Fated need a bit of mechanical assistance with hefting the skull out of the pit.

THE RITUAL

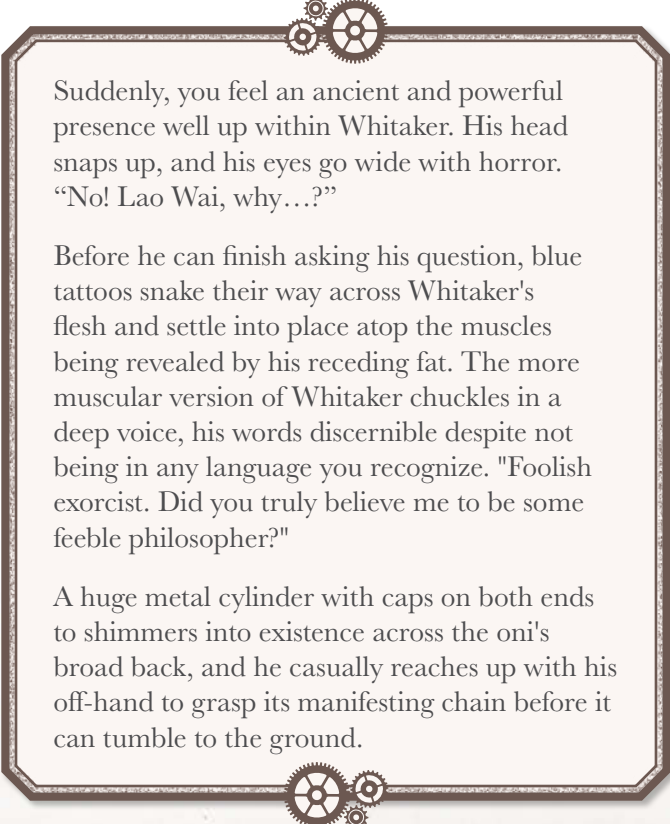
Once the skull has been removed from the hole, Whitaker asks the Fated to help him prepare for the ritual that will strengthen the barrier between worlds. He instructs them to prepare the Obsidian Gate and remove it from its carrying case (if any), as he will soon need to manipulate it as part of the ritual.

Whitaker draws a detailed protected circle in the dirt around the huge skull and warns the Fated that once he begins the ritual, evil spirits will be drawn to the skull. He warns them to tend to their wounds and ready their weapons, because once he begins, any sort of interruption will be dangerous.

Once everyone's preparations are complete, Whitaker dons a pair of white gloves and asks for the Fated to hand him the Obsidian Gate. If the Fated do so, he holds the gem aloft and begins to perform the strengthening ritual. As Whitaker prays, however, Zhong Kui possesses the exorcist and uses the power of the Obsidian Gate to resurrect Shuten-doji.

If the Fated refuse to hand over the Obsidian Gate, Zhong Kui finally loses his patience and assumes complete control of Whitaker.

Either way, read the following text:



Suddenly, you feel an ancient and powerful presence well up within Whitaker. His head snaps up, and his eyes go wide with horror. "No! Lao Wai, why...?"

Before he can finish asking his question, blue tattoos snake their way across Whitaker's flesh and settle into place atop the muscles being revealed by his receding fat. The more muscular version of Whitaker chuckles in a deep voice, his words discernible despite not being in any language you recognize. "Foolish exorcist. Did you truly believe me to be some feeble philosopher?"

A huge metal cylinder with caps on both ends to shimmers into existence across the oni's broad back, and he casually reaches up with his off-hand to grasp its manifesting chain before it can tumble to the ground.

EMERALDS ARE AN ONI'S BEST FRIEND

The scene plunges into Dramatic Time as the Fated find themselves faced with the mighty Zhong Kui, the Loyal Servant (pg. 110).

If Zhong Kui has (or gets) the Obsidian Gate, he uses his first available AP to slam the gem into the skull of Shuten-doji. See the "Welcome Back Shuten-Doji" section (pg. 46) for more information on what happens if he does so.

If the Obsidian Gate is currently being held by a character with one or more ranks in the Possessed Advanced Pursuit, Zhong Kui uses 1 AP to reach out toward the possessed character and bark "Now!" in a harsh voice.

The Possessed character may attempt a TN 20 Centering Challenge; on a failure, the oni within the Possessed character overwhelms her just long enough for the character to throw the Obsidian Gate to Zhong Kui. On a success, the character remains in control of herself for the remainder of the scene.

Alternatively, if Zhong Kui was able to mark the Obsidian Gate with his Conjuring Magic in the Royal Plaza, he simply uses 1 AP to summon the Obsidian Gate to his hand. "You should have posted more guards before camping for the night," he taunts them before plunging the gem into the demonic skull.

If none of these methods result in Zhong Kui gaining access to the Obsidian Gate, he relies upon his Snatching Spirits trigger to steal the Obsidian Gate from the character possessing it.


If any of the Fated are being particularly annoying, Zhong Kui will use his Into the Bag action to suck them into his demon bag, but only if they do not possess the Obsidian Gate. In the event that the Fated attempt to throw the Obsidian Gate into the demon bag, Zhong Kui simply reaches into the bag and pulls the glowing gem free with his next available AP.

See the "Devoured by the Bag" section on page 46 for more information.

WELCOME BACK SHUTEN-DOJI

If Zhong Kui gains possession of the Obsidian Gate, he uses 1 AP to return the gem to Shuten-doji's monstrous skull.


If he does so, read the following text:



The oni possessing Whitaker grins as he slams the Obsidian Gate into the empty eye socket of the huge, demonic skull. Bright green light flares outward from the gem, nearly blinding you as it casts hideous shadows across Whitaker's sinister face.

As you watch, the Shuten-doji's skull floats upward, its emerald eyes pulsing with unwholesome light. Wisps of soul-energy swirl around the skull in a vortex of dark power, and somewhere, you hear a distant bell begin to toll as the air on the mountain top grows hot and humid. Bones begin to materialize from soul-energy swirling around it, and ropes of muscle soon twist into existence to lash them together. With each beat of your heart, the floating creature seems to grow ever larger.

The thing wearing Whitaker's body laughs victoriously. "Return to me, my king! Let the land shake once more beneath your mighty step!"




The Fated can attack the Shuten-doji if they wish (its Defense and Willpower are both considered to be 2 (4) at the moment), but doing so has no lasting effect upon the oni: its body is regenerating so quickly that any damage dealt to it immediately heals, and any attempts to teleport or otherwise interfere with its reforming body parts just result in them reforming and returning to its body.

With the return of the Shuten-doji, Zhong Kui unleashes his full power upon the Fated. He focuses upon sucking each of them up into his demon bag with his Into the Bag action. See the "Devoured by the Bag" section in the following column for more information.

DEVOURED BY THE BAG


Ideally, all of the Fated will be sucked up in Zhong Kui's strange demon bag, as much of Act III takes place inside of it. The first time a character is sucked up into the bag, read the following text:



The burly man grins as he swings the large cylinder from his back. "I banish you to the depths of my demon bag!"


He wrenches the lid of the container open, creating an impossibly strong vortex of air that sucks a whirlwind of dirt, rocks, and stray leaves into its depths. The strength of the wind is overpowering, and in the blink of an eye, [CHARACTER] is sucked up into its depths, their body lengthening unnaturally as they disappear into its black depths.

With a flourish, the man slams the cap back onto to cylinder with the finality of a funeral bell. "Such is the fate of all who stand in the way of destiny," he chuckles.



Characters sucked into the demon bag are not dead, merely trapped with its depths (and it's okay to inform players of as much to keep them from panicking about the seeming death of their characters).

When the last Fated is sucked into the demon bag, read the following text:



Despite your best attempts to fight the whirlwind and cling to anything within range, the winds of the oni's demon bag prove to be too strong.

As you disappear into the depths of the demon bag, the last thing you see is the burly man grinning down at you. "Farewell, mortals. Had you not been such trouble, perhaps you would have witnessed the destruction of your world at the hands of Shuten-doji!"

His cruel laughter follows you into the void.



CONCLUSION

Should the Fated (somehow) succeed in defeating Zhong Kui before he can summon the Shuten-doji, then they have successfully managed to stop a significant threat to the world. The invasion of the oni trapped behind the Obsidian Gate is halted in its tracks, and they can return to their lives knowing that they were the heroes that the world needed at that moment.

People will still become possessed by the occasional oni - the barrier between the worlds is still weak - but all in all, it is a small price to pay for the safety of the world. Congratulations!

If the Fated defeat Zhong Kui but are unable to stop the return of Shuten-doji, then they still have a significant problem to deal with. The rapidly growing oni forces them to retreat back to the road and, most likely, to Miyazu to regroup and decide how to deal with the resurrected oni king.

If none of the Fated were trapped in Zhong Kui's demon bag, they can skip Act III entirely and proceed directly to Act IV, where they can tackle that kaiju-sized problem on its own.

Should a few of the Fated become trapped within the demon bag, it is recommended that those Fated be allowed to play through Act III, with any non-trapped Fated taking on the roles new characters who were previously trapped in the demon bag (perhaps they got in the way of Zhong Kui's spirit back in Miyazu). When they escape at the end of Act III, they will not have to deal with Zhong Kui, as he was already defeated by their companions!


Of course, the most likely outcome of their encounter with Zhong Kui is that all of the Fated will end up trapped in the demon bag as Zhong Kui continues his sinister plan to shatter the barrier between worlds. Their attempts to escape the demon bag and avenge themselves are covered in Act III.



ACT III

The Act opens with the Fated in a perilous position: they have been drawn into Zhong Kui's demon bag. The interior of the demon bag is a strange and alien landscape of rocks, trees, and the occasional statue floating in a limitless void.


There's very little in the way of food or water within the demon bag, which isn't a concern for the oni that have been trapped within its depths, but for the Fated, such a concern places a very obvious time limit on their escape plans. Fortunately, few of the oni trapped within the demon bag have a favorable opinion of Zhong Kui, a fact that the Fated may be able to turn to their advantage...

Since the demon bag is an inherently magical object, the portions of this Act that take place inside the bag are exempt from the  penalty to casting Spells and Manifested Powers while on Earth.




ACT III, PROLOGUE: THAT'S MY BAG, BABY

After their brief confrontation with Zhong Kui in the previous Act, the Fated awaken to find themselves in a strange, alien landscape. Read the following text:



Gradually, you awaken to a splitting headache and painful pressure behind your eyes and ears. As the pain recedes and you start looking around to get your bearings, you have the distinct sense that you are dreaming. The world around you is a void of utter darkness, but despite that, you have no problem seeing yourself, your companions, or the wide piece of rock that you're all sprawled across. There doesn't seem to be any discernable light source, and you don't seem to be casting any sort of shadow.

More worrying still are your surroundings, or rather, the lack thereof. Chunks of stone and rock float around you in the void, some no larger than pebbles, others the size of a large house. Some movement to your left catches your attention: large creatures, each of them resembling something like a cross between bulls and gorillas with vermillion fur, are bounding toward you, leaping from one floating rock to the next with practiced ease.



The leaping creatures are Yamabiko that have been trapped within the demon bag for centuries. While they don't have any biological need to feed on flesh, they still enjoy a good hunt followed by devouring their doomed prey. The opening of the demon bag drew their attention, and now that they have found the scent of mortal flesh, they intend to use the Fated for blood sport.

ACT III, SCENE 1: A RUDE AWAKENING

The rock island that the Fated are floating upon is roughly 8 yards in diameter. The “northern” quarter is covered in rubble that makes it count as Severe Terrain, while a fallen tree - one ripped right out of the ground and sucked into Zhong Kui’s demon bag - provides hard cover.

Two small islands float near the central island. Both are roughly 6 yards in length by 4 yards in width. There is a 2-yard gap between the “northwest” island and the central island and a 3-yard gap between the “southeast” island and the central island. Additionally, the “southeast” island is partially covered in rubble that counts as Severe Terrain and is floating about a yard higher than the central island.

Characters can leap up to 0.5 yards for each point of Height they possess without problem. If they use the Run or Charge Actions, this distance is doubled.

A character can attempt a TN 5 Athletics Challenge to leap further than this distance. On a success, the character adds an additional 0.5 yards per point of Height to its maximum leap distance, plus an

additional 0.5 yards for each Margin of Success. If they use the Run or Charge Actions, this distance is doubled.

Jumping is done as part of a Walk, Run, or Charge Action and does not require any additional AP beyond what the character spent on those Actions.

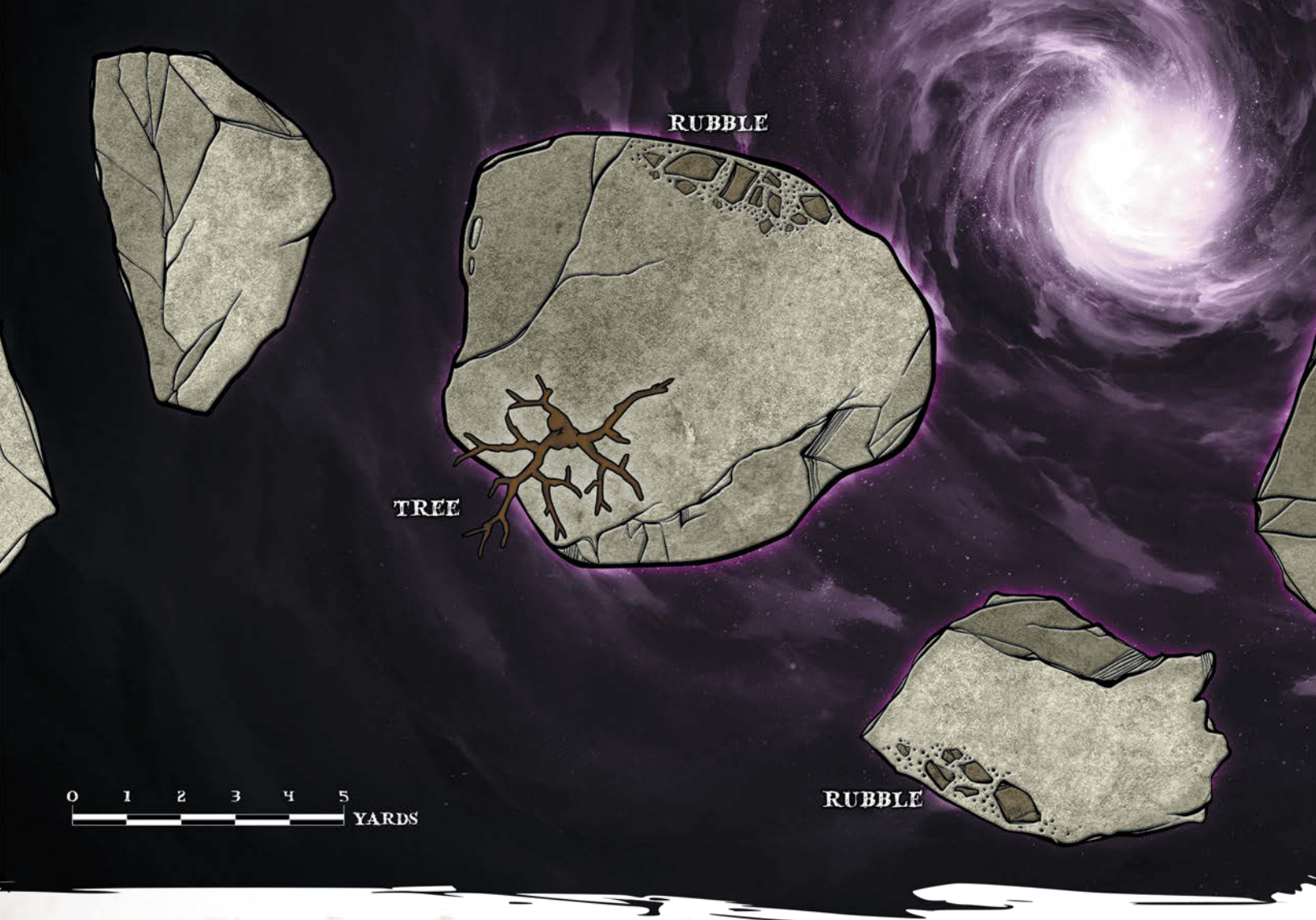
LEAPING ON!

As the scene opens, two Yamabiko (pg. 111) are advancing toward the disoriented Fated. If there are four or more Fated characters, a third Yamabiko joins the pack.

The Yamabiko approach from the “southeast” and land on the far edge of that island at the start of Dramatic Time. They use either the Charge or Run Actions (as appropriate) to safely leap from one island to the next on their turn.

If seriously injured, the Yamabiko flee to one of the floating islands to allow their innate Regeneration to heal their injuries before they return to battle. If a character uses the Wait Action and shoots a Yamabiko as it leaps, a result of Moderate or Severe damage injures the creature enough to ruin its leap and send it careening into the void below, never to be seen again.





INTO THE VOID

If a character falls into the void (because they missed a jump, got pushed off the edge of an island, etc.) and cannot fly, they fall for a variable distance before striking a piece of debris large enough to halt their fall (such as a tree trunk, a rock island, part of a large statue, a colossal bone, or the like). Flip a card from the Fate Deck and consult the chart to the right to learn how far the character falls.

Regardless of how far a character falls, they will either have to find some way back to their companions, either by climbing a rope (if any of the characters have one) or jumping across an number of floating rock islands, each 2-3 yards apart, equal to half the distance they fell, rounded up.

CARD VALUE	FALLING DISTANCE	FALLING DAMAGE
Red Joker	7 yards	None; the character lands safely in a pool of water.
Weak	3 yards	2/4/6
Moderate	9 yards	5/7/9
Severe	15 yards	8/10/12
Black Joker	20 yards	The character suffers 8/10/12 damage and flips for 1 Critical Effect (in addition to any made from damage suffered).

TENGU ASSISTANCE

Starting on the second round of combat, the Fated receive some assistance from an unlikely source: one of the oni trapped inside the demon bag. Read the following text:

“Mortals!”

The screeching caw comes from above you. Looking up, you see a horned bird-creature staring down at you from a small piece of floating rock. The trio of eyes set in its forehead burn like hot coals, and a large beak dominates its head. Strangely, despite being covered in dull gray feathers, it doesn't seem to have any wings.

“Mortals!” it screeches again. “Time your attacks for when they jump to the next rock! I shall mend your delicate flesh!” It then throws back its feathered head and begins crooning in a strange language.

The oni is a Tengu (pg. 112). It uses its Regenerative Song action on whichever Fated are most injured, only resorting to its Inspirational Teaching if the Fated are relatively healthy. Regardless, it remains on its floating perch above the battlefield (and beyond the reach of the Yamabiko, which hiss at the Tengu as it assists their intended meals).

Once the battle has finished, the Tengu teleports down from its perch; each time it travels in this way, its glowing eyes are the last thing to disappear and the first to reappear.



A BIRD IN THE HAND

The Tengu congratulates the Fated for a hard-won battle, noting that “Yamabiko are dangerous adversaries.” When it speaks, it uses a non-language that can be understood by other characters regardless of the language they speak (even if they are deaf).

Once the Fated have recovered from the battle, read the following text:

The bird-creature regards you carefully with all three of its eyes. “It is not often that mortals become trapped in the demon bag,” it muses, its voice shrill and grating. “Zhong Kui must have manifested in your world, yes? Forced his way into mortal flesh?”

It makes a faint clicking sound with its beak. “A pity to be trapped during such momentous times. Trapped in the demon bag with mortals. A pity that there is no food and little water to sustain your flesh. A pity that you will die.” It ruffles its feathers and begins preening the feathers of its arm. “Three pities in the same day, yes?”

The Tengu is willing to answer any questions posed to it. It doesn't have much of a reason to lie to the Fated, given that they will soon be dead, and it will go so far as to tell them such.

All in all, the oni is both blunt and honest; in its mind, the Fated are the best chance it has to escape the demon bag, so it is trying to earn their trust.

Here are some possible conversational points that may come up with the Tengu, either now or in the future:

The Tengu: The Tengu does not wish to share its name with the Fated, but if asked, it says that they can call it “sensei,” or teacher. It was imprisoned in the demon bag as the result of a trick it played on Zhong Kui many centuries earlier; it replaced both of his sandals with sleeping Tanuki (raccoon spirits). When he tried walking, the Tanuki woke up and wet themselves with each step he made upon their bladders. Zhong Kui did not find the trick amusing and condemned the Tengu to his demon bag. Though the Fated will likely side with Zhong Kui in failing to find the humor of the situation, the Tengu insists that it was quite humorous and, more importantly, was intended to teach Zhong Kui a lesson. The Tengu does not remember just what that lesson was supposed to be.



Yamabiko: The Tengu considers the Yamabiko to be nothing more than mindless brutes, and it's not shy about voicing its opinion to the Fated. It claims that the ape-like oni spend much of their time scouring the floating rocks for something to either pummel or devour, and that they are really not adjusting to their imprisonment very well at all. The Tengu feels no more kinship for the Yamabiko than the Fated might feel for a rabid wolf.

Zhong Kui: If asked about Zhong Kui, the Tengu explains that Zhong Kui was once a mortal exorcist. In his efforts to drive away the hostile spirits that plagued his lord, Zhong Kui traveled the world in search of Fujin, an oni who possessed a magical wind bag. Feigning friendship, Zhong Kui got Fujin drunk on sake, stole the wind bag, and used his magic to turn its powerful winds inward, corrupting it and transforming it into the demon bag. Fujin was the first to be imprisoned within the demon bag, but as the Fated have learned, he was by no means the last.

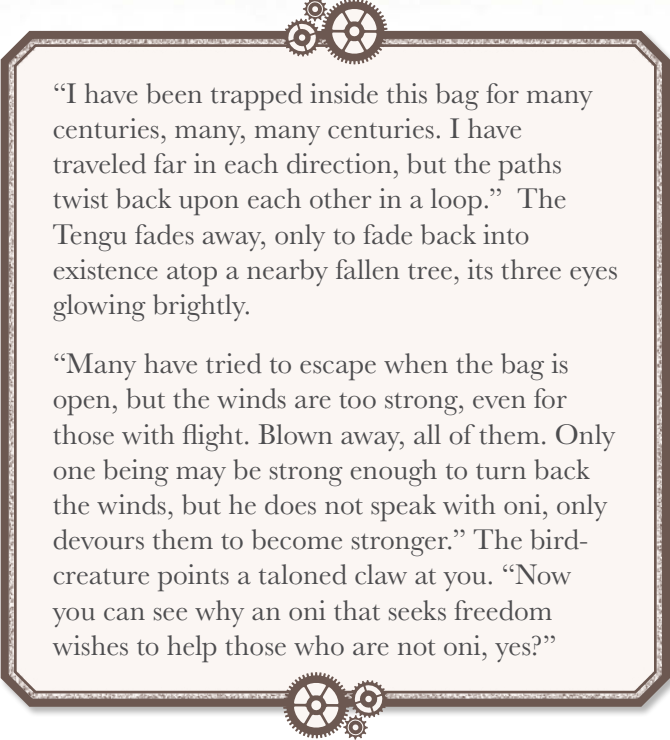
The Demon Bag: The Tengu will confirm that the Fated are trapped inside the demon bag. The only things present in the bag are what has been sucked inside of it, and most mortal creatures perish from lack of food and water after only a few weeks. Every so often, the bag opens and the creatures within can see out, but the winds are too strong to defeat, even for those oni with wings.

Why It Helped: If the Fated ask why the Tengu helped them, it claims that it wants them to help it escape from the demon bag. If they aren't willing to help, then they will die and it will attempt to enlist the help of the next mortals to come along. A TN 11 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that the Tengu is being brutally honest in its reasoning. Proceed to “Scene 2: Escape Plan” on page 53.

Fujin: If the Fated bring up Fujin, the Tengu's three eyes gleam with mischief. Proceed to “Scene 2: Escape Plan” on page 53.

ACT III, SCENE 2: ESCAPE PLAN

Once the Fated realize that their situation is dire and that escape is the only option, the Tengu explains its plan. Read the following text:



“I have been trapped inside this bag for many centuries, many, many centuries. I have traveled far in each direction, but the paths twist back upon each other in a loop.” The Tengu fades away, only to fade back into existence atop a nearby fallen tree, its three eyes glowing brightly.

“Many have tried to escape when the bag is open, but the winds are too strong, even for those with flight. Blown away, all of them. Only one being may be strong enough to turn back the winds, but he does not speak with oni, only devours them to become stronger.” The bird-creature points a taloned claw at you. “Now you can see why an oni that seeks freedom wishes to help those who are not oni, yes?”

The Tengu is referring to Fujin, the original owner of the demon bag. The Tengu believes that, if the Fated can convince Fujin to turn aside its winds, they will all be able to escape confinement together. If the Fated aren't interested in meeting with Fujin, the Tengu reiterates that they don't have much in the way of food or water. How long do they expect to survive?

If the Fated agree to meet with Fujin, the Tengu is pleased at their decision. It explains that the rock they are standing upon should drift near Fujin's domain in a few years, or they can exhaust themselves by hopping from one rock to the next for a few days. Traveling in this way is exceedingly dangerous, however.

The best solution, the Tengu claims, is to convince a herd of Quilin - fast demon horses that can gallop across the void - to assist them. There is a herd that has been trapped within the demon bag for many years, and the Tengu knows how to summon them.

If the Fated decide to hop across the rocks, see the “Rock Hopping” section in the next column.

If the Fated decide to summon the Quilin, see the “Riders in the Sky” section on page 54.

ROCK HOPPING

Hopping from one floating rock to the next is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

HOPPING ROCKS

Skills Allowed: Acrobatics, Athletics

Target Number: 10

Duration: 1 day

Success Requirement: (see below)

Failure Requirement: (see below)

It takes a total of 10 days to reach Fujin's domain. Characters capable of sustained flight gain a + to these Challenges.

At the end of each Duration, compare the number of accumulated Successes and Margins of Success made during that Duration to the number of Margins of Failure made during that Duration.

If the number of accumulated Successes and Margins of Success is greater than the Margins of Failure, then the characters have managed to traverse the strange landscape and lower the remaining time it will take to reach Fujin's domain by 1 day, until there are 0 days left and the Fated reach their destination.

If the number of accumulated Successes and Margins of Success is tied with the number of Margins of Failure, then the characters spend the day struggling to keep everyone on the floating platforms and make no progress toward Fujin's domain.

If the number of accumulated Successes and Margins of Success is less than the number of Margins of Failure, the characters land on a floating rock only for it to crumble underfoot and send them careening down into the void. The characters make no progress and fall as described in “Into the Void” (pg. 50), but with a + to their flip.

Once the characters have reached Fujin's domain, proceed to “A Bird in the Bag” (pg. 57).

Traveling in this way is very slow, and Living characters risk perishing from lack of food and water. In addition, if any of the Fated are **Haunted**, they will have to deal with their spirits haunting them becoming increasingly more malicious and dangerous.

FOOD

Each day, if a Living character did not eat during the previous day, she must attempt a Centering Challenge at TN 10, +1 for each additional day she has attempted this Challenge since last eating. On a success, the character suffers no mechanical penalties for her hunger. On a failure, she gains the following Condition: “**Hungry +1**: This character subtracts -1 from her Physical and Mental Aspects, to a minimum of -5. If all of the character’s Physical and Mental Aspects are at -5, she dies from hunger.”

The only way a character can recover from hunger is to get some food; other means of removing the Condition are ineffective. Every 6 hours the character has access to and eats sufficient food, the value of her **Hungry** Condition is lowered by 1.

WATER

Thirst is a more immediate threat than hunger, however.

If a Living character did not have any water during the previous day, she gains the following Condition: “**Parched +1**: This character subtracts -1 from her Physical and Mental Aspects, to a minimum of -5. If all of the character’s Physical and Mental Aspects are at -5, she dies from thirst.”

The only way a character can recover from thirst is to get some water; other means of removing the Condition are ineffective. If a character is given water, her **Parched** Condition is lowered by 2.

Fortunately, there are a few small pools of water that the Fated can drink from, as well as some sparse animals (squirrels, snakes, etc.) that were sucked into the demon bag and are slowly starving to death themselves.

FINDING RESOURCES

Each day they spend in the bag, a character can attempt a TN 10 Wilderness Challenge. On a success, she finds one unit of resources, plus one unit of resources per Margin of Success. Each unit of resources provides enough food or water to sustain one person for one day; each time a character gains a unit of resources, they can choose whether they find food or water.

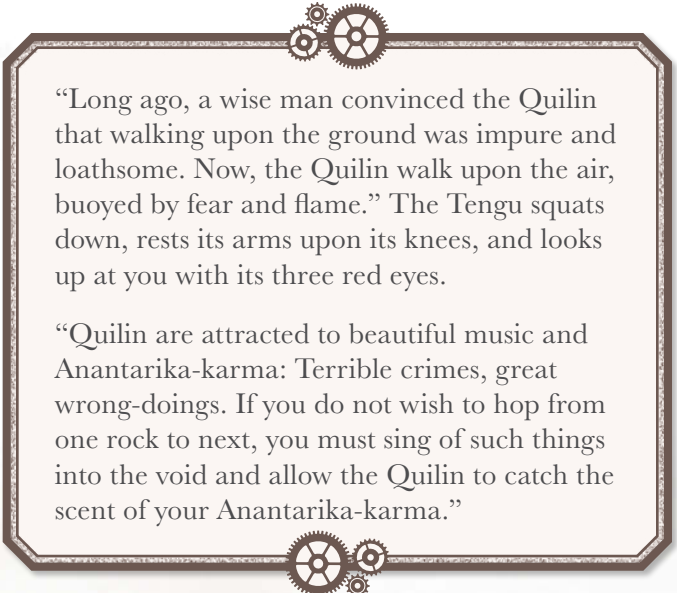
If the characters have appropriate containers, they can store excess resources to eat and drink on subsequent days.

The Tengu follows along after the Fated, deftly teleporting from one rock to the next as it encourages them to keep moving. Their failure means a significant delay in its escape attempts, so it effectively serves as a personal trainer, switching between encouragement and beratement according to whatever will keep the Fated motivated and moving.

RIDERS IN THE SKY

The fastest way to travel through the void of the demon’s bag is with the assistance of a Quilin. Fortunately for the Fated, there is a herd of such oni trapped in the bag with them. Unfortunately, they are distrustful of others and must be convinced to assist the Fated.

Read the following text:



“Long ago, a wise man convinced the Quilin that walking upon the ground was impure and loathsome. Now, the Quilin walk upon the air, buoyed by fear and flame.” The Tengu squats down, rests its arms upon its knees, and looks up at you with its three red eyes.

“Quilin are attracted to beautiful music and Anantarika-karma: Terrible crimes, great wrong-doings. If you do not wish to hop from one rock to next, you must sing of such things into the void and allow the Quilin to catch the scent of your Anantarika-karma.”

Attracting the attention of the Quilin is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

SIN-SINGING

Skills Allowed: Deceive, History, Leadership, Music

Target Number: 10

Duration: 5 minutes

Success Requirement: 2 per Fated

Failure Requirement: 1 per Fated

The Fated can use Deceive to embellish their misdeeds into irresistible ballads of exaggerated wrong-doing, History to adopt the faults of various historical figures more notable than the character herself, Leadership to organize everyone into an acapella group of harmonized immortality, or Music to simply sing in a particularly breathtaking manner.

If the Fated succeed, they attract the attention of a herd of Quilin, which arrive at the end of the current Duration. See the “Chillin’ with Quilin” section in the adjacent column for more information.

If the Fated fail, the Quilin hear their songs but are unimpressed with either the Fated’s misdeeds or their singing and ignore all further attempts to draw their attention. The Fated have no choice but to hop across the floating rocks on their way to find Fujin. See “Rock Hopping” on page 53.

CHILLIN’ WITH THE QUILIN

When the Quilin arrive, read the following text:

Gradually, you begin to notice a light forming in the distant blackness of the void. It grows larger and brighter until you can make out the thin, graceful bodies of horned, horse-like creatures riding toward you through the air with flaming hooves. As they quickly close the distance, you can make out their colorful manes and the long, sinuous tails that whip back and forth behind them.

A moment later, the blue-skinned creatures are upon you. They circle once around the floating island upon which you stand, red-orange flames trailing from their hooves as they rear up in front of you. “What trickery is this?” the lead demon-horse asks as it glares down at you with its four eyes. “Mortals in the demon bag?” Despite not knowing the hissing language of the beasts, you seem to have no trouble understanding their words.

The Quilin (pg. 113) are very interested in the Fated’s story, and they circle around the Fated’s floating island as they listen to the Fated explain how they ended up in Zhong Kui’s demon bag. When the Fated speak to the Quilin, the oni refer to them in a manner keeping with their confessed misdeeds, using phrases such as “Kin-Slayer” or “Coin-Taker” in lieu of their actual names.

There is one Quilin in the group, plus one additional Quilin per Fated character.

The Quilin have already guessed why the Fated have them. They explain that they cannot take the Fated out of the demon bag - the winds are too strong, even for them, or they would have escaped many centuries ago - but they can take the Fated anywhere else in the demon bag without too much trouble.

In exchange for their service, however, the Fated must agree to protect the Quilin from Fujin and to take the Quilin with them once they are free from the bag.



If the Fated agree, they must succeed at either a TN 11 Convince or Deceive Challenge, depending upon their sincerity, to persuade the Quilin that they will honor their arrangement. On a failure, the Quilin snorts smoke and disappears back into the void, claiming that there is no trust to be found among mortals as untrustworthy as the Fated.

If the Fated wish, they can attempt to battle the Quilin and force themselves onto the creatures' backs, but this is a dangerous prospect. The scene shifts into Dramatic Time as the Quilin attempt to escape into the void, but if the Fated are quick and can physically reach a Quilin (most likely by jumping into the void toward one of the demon-horses), they can attempt a single TN 12 Athletics Challenge to mount the creature. On a failure, the character falls into the void as the Quilin shakes them off; see "Into the Void" on page 50 to determine falling damage.

If the character succeeds in mounting the Quilin, it focuses its efforts upon shaking the character free. On its turn, the Quilin may spend 2 AP to wildly buck and charge through the void. The Quilin moves a distance equal to its Charge Aspect, then the character(s) mounting it must succeed on TN 12 Athletics Challenges. On a failure, the mounting character is considered to be **Paralyzed** on its next turn. If it generates a Margin of Failure, it also falls into the void.

On a success, the Quilin gains the following Condition: "**Broken +1**: Reduce the TN of any Athletics Challenges to remain on this character by an amount equal to this Condition's value." For each Margin of Success on the Athletics Challenge, the Quilin gains an additional **Broken +1**. If a Quilin ever reaches **Broken +6**, it gives up the fight and submits to the character. From that point on, the character may command the broken Quilin as a mount.

During the battle, the Tengu supports the Fated with its magic in whatever way it deems most suitable.

If the characters persuade the Quilin into taking them to see Fujin (or breaking the wills), the demon-horses allow the Fated to climb onto their backs. Up to two characters may ride a Quilin at one time, and the Fated must also bring the Tengu if they hope to have any chance of knowing which direction to travel. Once the characters are situated, they may proceed to "A Bird in the Bag" (pg. 57).

If the Quilin escape or are driven off, they will have to take the long way to find Fujin. See the "Rock Hopping" section on page 53 for more details.

While riding a Quilin, characters use the Mounted Combat rules listed below. If the Quilin is serving willingly, it does not need to be guided, and thus, the character is considered to have both of her hands free regardless of her Husbandry Skill Rank.

MOUNTED COMBAT

A character with a Husbandry Skill of 2 or higher can ride a non-Swarm mount into combat and still have one hand free to use a weapon. With a Husbandry Skill of 4 or higher, the character can guide the mount with her knees, allowing her to keep both hands free.

A mounted character must use the mount's Walk Aspect in place of her own Walk and Charge Aspects. A ridden mount does not get a turn during Dramatic Time, but the character riding it may spend AP to force her mount to perform Actions (including any attacks it might have). The mount counts as a subordinate character for the purposes

of these Actions. If the mount has a Talent that affects movement or charging – such as Flight – the character gains that Talent while riding her mount. If a character or her mount are pushed, both move together.

Each time a mount is injured, the character must make a Husbandry Challenge against a TN equal to 6 + the damage dealt; on a failure, the character is thrown from the mount, takes 1/2/4 damage, and immediately falls **Prone**. The mount likely flees from the combat. If the mount is the character's Animal Companion (see the Primal from *Into the Steam*, pg. 104), the character automatically passes this Challenge.

A BIRD IN THE BAG

Regardless of whether the Fated spend a great deal of time hopping from one floating rock to the next or bypass all that with the help of the Quilin, a significant obstacle still stands between them and Fujin.

One of Whitaker's most recent exorcisms was the "demon bird" Suzaku, which had been roused from its slumber and was burning down entire villages. When Whitaker called upon "Lao Wai" to banish the bird, Zhong Kui trapped the bird in his demon bag.

Suzaku is quite furious at its imprisonment, and it has been venting its frustrations on everything around it. The Fated are nothing more than the next unfortunate prisoners to draw Suzaku's attention.

When Suzaku appears, read the following text, choosing the first option in brackets if the Fated are rock-hopping or the second option if they are riding Quilin:

Despite only being imprisoned within the demon bag for a short time, the inky blackness of the void - completely bereft of wind, weather, or any sort of celestial body to mark the passage of time soon becomes depressingly familiar. You stop often, resting when necessary, always to the quiet annoyance of your Tengu companion, who never seems to grow tired or hungry.

When the light first appears, you initially mistake its painful, flaming brightness for the sun. You're momentarily distracted by a screech of fear from the Tengu, and when you glance back at the sun, you realize that the light is actually an enormous bird, wreathed in fire and rage, that is descending through the void on a collision course. As if in response to the Tengu's shriek of surprise, the larger bird releases a deafening screech of its own, so intense that the floating islands of rock tremble and shatter, breaking apart [beneath your feet/all around you].

Suzaku (pg. 114) is furious at its imprisonment, but not at the Fated themselves. If they act quickly and seek to hide from its attention, there is a chance that the flaming bird will pass them by. Any Fated that wish to hide among the shattered rocks can attempt TN 11 Stealth Challenges. If the Fated are riding Quilin, the flames of the flying beasts make it difficult to avoid detection and impose a \square on this Challenge.

If every character succeeds at this Stealth Challenge, Suzaku fails to notice them and instead flies through the rocks and outward into the void; everyone gains **Burning +2** as the bird's flames wash over them.





Should any of the Fated remain visible, however, Suzaku slows its momentum and engages them in combat. The flaming bird is a dangerous opponent, but the Fated will have the Tengu backing them up, which will tilt the odds, however so slightly, a bit more in their favor.

If the Fated are riding Quilin when Suzaku attacks them, they use the Mounted Combat Rules (pg. 56). If they suffer too much damage, the Fated might be knocked from their mount, in which case they will fall into the void. Flip a card from the Fate Deck and consult the chart to the right to learn how far the character falls.

Regardless of how far a character falls, they will either have to find some way back to their companions, either by climbing a rope (if any of the characters have one) or jumping across an number of floating rock islands, each 2-3 yards apart, equal to half the distance they fell, rounded up.

If Suzaku is forced to use its Flicker Ability, it screeches in rage and soars off into the void, using the Run action to escape from the Fated.


Once the Fated have evaded or defeated Suzaku, they can continue onward to “Scene 3: The Palace of Wind” (pg. 59).

CARD VALUE	FALLING DISTANCE	FALLING DAMAGE
Red Joker	7 yards	None; the character lands safely in a pool of water.
Weak	3 yards	2/4/6
Moderate	9 yards	5/7/9
Severe	15 yards	8/10/12
Black Joker	20 yards	The character suffers 8/10/12 damage and flips for 1 Critical Effect (in addition to any made from damage suffered).

ACT III, SCENE 3: THE PALACE OF WIND

Over the course of the many centuries that he has been imprisoned within the demon bag, Fujin has built a number of palaces for himself. Most of these palaces are no more, having been smashed into pieces by the oni after one failed escape attempt or another. His current residence is the Palace of Wind, a self-aggrandizing structure that has done nothing to keep the oni from slipping into a deep depression.


When the Fated arrive at the palace, read the following text:



Not long after your encounter with the flaming bird, you're able to make out the shape of a tall, stone pagoda in the distance. As you approach it, you're able to feel the faint caress of cool air moving against your cheek, gently at first and then stronger as you draw closer to the imposing structure. It stands in the middle of the storm like the eye of a hurricane.

"The Palace of Wind," the Tengu murmurs, its beady eyes narrowing as it gazes into the distance. "Even without his bag, the winds obey Fujin's command. He does not wish to be disturbed."

The bird-demon pauses in thought before turning its attention back to you. "You must walk these final steps alone. Be respectful and remember your promise to this one."




If the Fated are accompanied by Quilin, the beasts refuse to approach the pagoda unless the Fated succeed on TN 14 Convince or Intimidate Challenges, or TN 12 Husbandry Challenges if they are riding broken Quilin. On a success, the oni-steeds hesitantly approach the structure, but on a failure, fear keeps them from drawing any closer.

Approaching the pagoda is time-consuming but ultimately not very difficult. If the Fated are hopping from one island of rock to the next, the increase in wind strength is mitigated by the islands being larger and closer together.


The front doors of the pagoda are impressively huge: each is ten yards wide and thirty yards tall. They are very heavy, weighing a few tons each, but fortunately, one of the doors is cracked open just wide enough for the Fated (and any companions they might have with them) to squeeze through.

Once inside the pagoda, read the following text:



Despite the immense scale of the pagoda, the interior is empty and abandoned. Your footsteps echo loudly off the bare stone walls as you pass one empty room after another, only to mingle with the distant howling of the winds that continue to rage outside. The hallways are lit by floating blue flames that give off plenty of light but little in the way of heat.

Eventually, the central hall opens up to reveal a magnificent throne room... or rather, a room that would be magnificent were it decorated in any way. As is, the only objects of interest in the room are the floating blue flames that hover overhead and the massive stone throne seated at the far end of the room. Slouched over in the chair, his head propped up in boredom by a meaty fist, is a large, green-skinned oni dressed in archaic breeches and an open vest. He barely glances your way as you enter his throne room.



Fujin (pg. 115) has been depressed for decades, ever since his last attempt to escape the demon bag was thwarted. He is uninterested in the Fated and demands to be left alone, though in his current state, he finds it difficult to muster up any true anger over their presence.


The Fated are welcome to ask Fujin for assistance, but the oni's interest is difficult to rouse. Convincing him to help them escape the demon bag requires a successful TN 13 Bewitch or Convince Challenge. If the Fated are disrespectful to the oni (or attempt to Intimidate him), see "Reaping the Whirlwind" on page 61.

If the Fated fail at one of the Bewitch or Convince Challenges, read the following text:


Fujin lowers his arm and sits up in his throne, his expression turning annoyed. “You wish to escape the demon bag? Hah!” His voice booms throughout the empty room, pushing you backwards as if by a strong wind.

He gestures toward the ceiling with a massive hand. “Do you not think I have tried to escape? Each time I reverse the winds and escape into the mortal realm, my floating spirit is snatched up by Zhong Kui and tossed back into the bag. There is too little magic on Earth for an oni to manifest without latching its spirit onto a mortal host.”

The Fated have a few options here. If they mention that there is more magic on Earth now - thanks to either the opening of the Breach or the presence of the Burning Man - the oni’s interest is roused. Similarly, one of the Fated could offer their body and soul to Fujin, allowing the oni to possess them and “ride” them out into the mortal realm.

If the Fated attempt one of these options or come up with an inspiring option of their own (such as a reassuring pep talk), the Fated can reattempt the Bewitch or Convince Challenge at TN 11, with a  if they suggest that the oni could possess one of their bodies.

Further failure results in Fujin considering the matter for a moment and shaking his head. He says that he must consider the matter and waves his hand at the Fated, dismissing them.

They can return in three days to petition the oni once again, at TN 11 with the noted  for suggesting possession, but approaching before the three days have passed only results in Fujin revealing that he has not yet finished thinking things over and sending the Fated away.

If the Fated succeed on any of these Challenges and earn Fujin’s assistance, read the following text:

Fujin leans back in his throne and strokes his chin as he looks you up and down for the first time. “Perhaps there is value in sending mortals to strike at my enemy before he can banish my spirit back to this accursed bag. Even if Zhong Kui were to break your fragile bodies and toss your remains back into the bag, he may not notice my own escape.”

The oni’s lips pull back in a wide smile, revealing a mouth full of sharp teeth. “Yes! I like this!” He stands and claps his hands, the sound reverberating through the room like thunder. “Let us prepare, mortals! The next time the demon bag is opened, we make our escape!”

Having convinced Fujin to assist them, the Fated can proceed to “Scene 4: Out of the Bag” (pg. 64).



REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

Should the Fated disrespect (or attack) Fujin, the oni rises to the challenge. Read the following text:

Fujin rises to his feet, his lips pulling back in a snarl as he towers over you. “You dare?!” he bellows. Almost immediately, a howling wind picks up and begins circling around him at growing speed. With the mighty roar of the hurricane, the oni charges toward you!

Fujin focuses his attacks upon the character that insulted or attacked him, intending to pummel that character into oblivion.

Any characters who back away from the fight and show him proper deference (i.e., apologizing and not attacking him) are spared from his wrath.

When Fujin is reduced to 0 Health or below, read the following text:

Gradually, Fujin’s snarl of anger gives way to a faint smile that blossoms into a full grin. “Hah!” he laughs, his voice booming through the room as the swirling winds die down. “This battle has rekindled the fire in my heart! You are strong fighters, mortals. It has been many centuries since I have seen your equal.”

He claps his hands together in delight. “If you can match my power, you should have no problem with defeating Zhong Kui! We need only to return you to the mortal realm.”

Having convinced Fujin to assist them, the Fated can proceed to “Scene 4: Out of the Bag” (pg. 64).

If Fujin successfully kills all the characters that disrespected him, he turns to those who remain. Read the following text, substituting the last character he killed in the prompted location:

Fujin grins sadistically as he kicks [CHARACTER]’s corpse. “Hah! A fitting death for a pitiful wretch!”

The oni cracks his knuckles as he turns to the rest of you. “Kneel, and pledge yourselves to Fujin, mightiest of the oni! I have use for meat-sacks such as yourselves.”


If any of the Fated refuse to pledge themselves to Fujin, he relaunched his attack against them and fights until all those who defied him are killed. Once they are dead, he begins working with his new “servants” to return to the mortal realm. The surviving Fated can proceed to “Scene 4: Out of the Bag” (pg. 64).



PATIENT ONI

Once the Fated have convinced Fujin to assist them (either through talking nicely or reigniting his fighting spirit), he leads them down the hallway and through the gates of his pagoda, which he effortlessly pushes open.


Read the following text, choosing whichever Fated it prefers the most as the target of its teleport:



As soon as Fujin steps beyond the doors of his pagoda, the waiting Tengu drops into a kneeling position. "Mighty Fujin!" it caws in not-words. "This one brought the mortals to the Palace of Wind, to help him escape. It is clever and can be of great use in the mortal realm, should he deign to show his favor upon it."

Fujin glares at the bird-demon for a moment, then makes a dismissive gesture with his hand, banishing the swirling winds around his pagoda. "Stay quiet and out of the way, Tengu, and you shall be spared."


The Tengu bobs its head in acknowledgement and teleports to [FATED]'s side. It catches your eye and grins as maliciously as a creature with a beak is able.



If the Fated previously mentioned the Tengu (and, possibly, the Quilin) to Fujin, then his response is much the same. Fujin is more than willing to allow "lesser oni" to grovel before him.


Once his conversation with the Tengu is complete, Fujin hops to a large piece of floating rock, sits down cross-legged, and explains his plan to the Fated. He intends to wait until Zhong Kui opens the demon bag, at which point he will reverse the winds pouring into the bag and ride them out into the mortal realm.

If none of the Fated suggested that Fujin should possess them, read the following text:




"This is not the first time I have tried to escape," Fujin explains as he looks upward into the blackness of the abyss. "Each time, Zhong Kui has plucked my spirit from the aether and shoved it back into the bag before I could manifest a physical form. My freedom will depend upon you mortals."

The green-skinned oni takes another opportunity to look you over. "When next the bag opens, we will make our escape. You must throw everything you have at the demon-queller. So long as he is distracted, I can keep the winds of his demon bag from sucking you in, but if I am captured, we will find ourselves back in this prison."




If the Fated offered to let Fujin possess them (and are not already possessed), the oni demands that the character approach him. Read the following text, inserting the Fated's name where appropriate:



Fujin reaches forward and, using one of his sharp claws, carves the kanji of his name into [FATED]'s chest. "From this day forward, you are mine," he growls. "When Zhong Kui next opens the demon bag, I shall reverse the strength of the winds and send you back to the mortal realm. Once there, you must defeat the summoner while I suppress the winds of the demon bag for a short time."

The oni places a hand on [FATED]'s chest, and then his body is gone, replaced with a luminous green mist that flows into [FATED]'s bleeding wound. The wound heals immediately, but it leaves an ugly green scar behind that pulses in time with [FATED]'s heartbeat.



The character is now possessed by Fujin's spirit and must advance in the Possessed Advanced Pursuit (pg. 140) at the end of the session.

THE DIVINE WIND

The amount of time the Fated must wait before the demon bag is opened is variable; it might open the next day, or it might be a full week of waiting in boredom.

At the start of each new day, the Fatemaster flips one card from the top of the Fate Deck into the discard pile. If the result is a ♠, ♠, or Black Joker, no portal opens that day. If the result is a ♣, ♣, or Red Joker, the portal opens at some point that day.

For each day that passes, the Fated will need to find food and water, as noted on page 54. Similarly, if they have the **Haunted** Condition, it will progressively worsen as the days slowly pass and the disembodied spirits become more malicious.

During the wait, if Fujin has not possessed one of the Fated, he sits outside his pagoda, staring patiently up at the blackness overhead as he waits. He treats any sort of attempts to speak with him with short, annoyed answers and councils the Fated to have more patience, even as they slowly starve to death around him.

When the demon bag is finally opened, read the following text:



Suddenly, the void overhead parts, revealing a circle of smoky, crimson-laced sky. Smoke-tinged air blows downward with hurricane strength, stinging your eyes as you raise your arm to shield your face.

~ If Fujin is not possessing a Fated ~

Fujin climbs to his feet, laces his fingers together, and cracks his knuckles. "The bag is open! Mortals! Prepare to face the demon-queller!" The oni stretches his hands out in front of him, closes his eyes, and then shoves his hands upward in a violent motion. Almost immediately, the soot-stained wind shifts direction and begins lifting you upwards towards the smoky crimson portal with increasing speed.

~ If Fujin is possessing a Fated ~

[FATED] suddenly jumps to [HIS/HER] feet, [HIS/HER] eyes glowing with a bright green light. "The bag is open! Prepare to face the demon-queller!" [FATED] extends [HIS/HER] hands and makes an upward shoving motion. Almost immediately, the soot-stained wind shifts direction and begins lifting you upwards toward the smoky crimson portal with increasing speed.



The Tengu is lifted upward as well, as are any Quilin that are still accompanying the Fated. The flaming demon-steeds kick and panic as the wind grips them but soon settle down as they realize what is happening.



ACT III, SCENE 4: OUT OF THE BAG

The opening in the demon bag returns the Fated to the mortal realm... sprawled out in front of Zhong Kui. While this is, in many ways, where the Fated want to be, the circumstances of their situation are not favorable.

Shuten-doji has been fully resurrected and is in the process of terrorizing Japan as Zhong Kui follows in the oni king's wake. They have already leveled Miyazu and have cut a path of destruction all the way to Kyoto, where Zhong Kui was attacked by a patrol of Japanese soldiers. He opened his demon bag to suck them in, only for the wind to reverse itself and expel the Fated!

Read the following text:



You pass through the portal, only to find yourselves tumbling onto a cobblestone street. The flaming buildings around you belch acrid black smoke into the crimson sky, and over the crackle of flames, you can hear the sounds of screaming and distant rifle fire. Three Japanese soldiers shout in surprise as they flee from Zhong Kui, who stands a short distance in front of you.

The burly sorcerer is shaking and struggling with his demon bag. The large canister doesn't seem to be sucking anything into it, and an annoyed expression is plastered over the features that once belonged to James Whitaker. "Fujin!" he shouts. "I grow tired of your petty sabotage! You know that you cannot escape me!"

Just as you regain your footing, the ground trembles as if from a minor earthquake. You glance behind you only to catch sight of a colossal oni the size of a mountain. It brings down its blue-skinned foot onto a building, shattering it to pieces and sending another alarming tremble through the ground.

With a huff, Zhong Kui shoves the demon bag back over his shoulder and draws a sword from the sheathe on his hip. "Very well!" he shouts in the strange non-language of the oni, drawing your attention back to him. "Your fates are sealed!"



The Fated are immediately thrust into a battle with Zhong Kui, the Demon Queller (pg. 116) with no time to prepare. Zhong Kui begins the battle six yards from the Fated.

If any of the Fated avoided being sucked into the bag, despite Zhong Kui still being alive, then they are present in this battle, having been the ones working alongside the Guild to corner and defeat the demon summoner. It is their presence here that compelled him to open his demon bag, allowing the rest of the Fated to escape.

Many of the buildings surrounding the Fated are on fire and count as Hazardous Terrain; any character that moves through or begins their turn within 1 yard of a burning building gains **Burning +1**. Entering a burning building (or being pushed into or through one of its fragile walls) increases this to **Burning +3**.

A fountain at the center of the courtyard provides Hard Cover as well as an easy solution to being on fire: as a (1) Action, a character adjacent to the fountain can fling themselves into the water, becoming **Prone** and ending their **Burning** Condition (if any).

The Tengu that accompanies the Fated back to Earth is not strong enough to manifest a physical form and thus exists as nothing more than a spectral version of its former self. Fearful of getting sucked back up into the demon bag, the Tengu possesses the nearest object, which should be something carried or worn by the Fated. During the battle, their hat/sword/shirt/whatever suddenly grows a face and feathers and begins coaching the Fated on how best to fight Zhong Kui, often by giving meaningless bits of advice like "Lower your stance!"

As a side effect of the possession, the character wearing or wielding the object possessed by the Tengu gains the following ability as long as they possess the item: **"Regeneration +1:** This character heals +1 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time."

During the battle, the Fated will have to contend to with the indirect carnage dealt by the massive oni king, Shuten-doji. At the start of the second round and every three rounds after that (fifth round, eighth round, twelfth round, etc.), the Fatemaster consults the value of the top card in the Fate Deck Discard Pile and applies the effect listed on the Shuten-Doji Rampage Table on page 66.

If the Fated are still accompanied by Quilin, any of the horse-demons that were not broken dash off into the sky at the first available opportunity. Broken Quilin will continue to serve the Fated as mounts.



GUILD APPROACH
DIRECTION





SHUTEN-DOJI RAMPAGE TABLE

CARD VALUE	RESULT
Weak	<p>Shuten-doji laughs in a deep, booming voice as he snatches up a handful of Japanese and Guild soldiers and hurls them across the battlefield!</p> <p>The Fatemaster places two Corpse Piles anywhere on the battlefield. Each Corpse Pile is roughly two yards in diameter and counts as both a corpse (for those with necromantic skills) and Severe Terrain. Each time a Corpse Pile is placed next to a character, that character must attempt a TN 10 Horror Duel, as screaming people unexpectedly falling from the sky and splattering on the ground next to someone tends to be somewhat shocking.</p>
Moderate	<p>Shuten-doji opens a demon gate!</p> <p>All throughout the city, emerald-green portals open up and disgorge battle-crazed Yokai into the streets. Such a portal drops one Yokai (pg. 117) per three Fated right into combat. As soon as the oni appear, Zhong Kui orders them to attack anyone with whom he is not currently engaged.</p>
Severe	<p>Shuten-doji hurls a building across the battlefield!</p> <p>Target whichever character(s) is furthest from a building. That character and every character within 3 yards of them must succeed at a TN 12 Evade Challenge or suffer 3/4⁴5⁵ damage as the ruined building slams into them. Every character that attempts this Challenge, regardless of success or failure, becomes Prone.</p>
Black Joker	<p>Shuten-doji takes a deep breath and breathes a sheet of fire over the entire city!</p> <p>Every character gains Burning +2. Characters more than 4 yards from any sort of terrain gain an additional Burning +3.</p>

GUILD REINFORCEMENTS

Fortunately, the Fated are not the only ones seeking to put an end to Zhong Kui (or rather, to the oni attacking Kyoto). At the start of the third round of Dramatic Time, a group of Guild soldiers begin moving toward the sound of the battle. Read the following text:

In the distance, you can hear the sound of a woman shouting orders in English. Glancing in that direction, you see a small patrol of red-coated Guild soldiers hurrying toward you, pistols in one hand and swords in the other.

The woman leading the patrol, a blonde-haired Caucasian woman with a fresh gash across her face, is only wielding a pistol, most likely because her other arm is wrapped in a make-shift sling.

The Guild soldiers are still a fair distance away; they arrive in the battle at the start of the fifth round. Their leader, Sergeant Astorith Janith, immediately shouts for any Fated in melee combat to take cover. On their turn, Sergeant Janith orders the soldiers to spread out and assist the Fated.



The Guild Soldiers (pg. 105) are considered to be subordinate characters. There is one Guild Soldier per Fated, including Sergeant Janith. Any of the Fated can command a single Guild Soldier with (1) Order Actions, in which case the Guild Soldier takes a full turn immediately after the commanding character's turn ends. Sergeant Janith has no sword and a broken arm, which makes her incapable of contributing to melee combat. If they are not ordered, the soldiers fire shots at Zhong Kui, dealing a total of 1 damage to him per two Soldiers (rounded up) at the end of each round of combat.

If any of the Fated have been knocked unconscious or killed, each such player can assume control of one of the Guild Soldiers, in which case it functions in a manner similar to a Fated character (i.e., it takes a normal turn, can flip cards, can Cheat Fate, and makes Unconsciousness Challenges like a Fated character).

When Zhong Kui is defeated, read the following text (adjusting as appropriate for any Critical Effects affecting him):

Zhong Kui's sword slips from his fingers as he stumbles backward. His eyes roll upwards into the back of his head, and then he collapses to the ground with a heavy thud. His body twitches a few times, then a spectral version of the oni rises upward from the ground. It bears a passing resemblance to the reshaped body of Whitaker, save that its eyes are much older as a spirit.

"This is not a victory," Zhong Kui scoffs, his words reverberating in your mind. "It is merely a setback until I find a new host. So long as Shuten-doji remains in this world, the barrier between worlds is doomed to collapse." With a bitter grin, the oni's spirit fades away.

If the Fated have a Soulstone in range (or the ability to devour a soul, such as with the Harvest Chi Talent of the Ghost Eater Pursuit), they can trap (or devour) Zhong Kui's spirit before he disappears, disrupting his future plans and earning a final, definite victory over the demon summoner.

The Fated don't have very long to celebrate Zhong Kui's defeat. Proceed to "Mandatory Evacuation" (pg. 69).

TEMPORARY POSSESSION

If Fujin is not possessing any of the Fated, once the battle is finished and he no longer has to concentrate upon keeping the winds of the demon bag neutralized, he decides to possess one of the Guild Soldiers.

If the soldiers have all been killed, he instead waits until after the second patrol arrives (see “Mandatory Evacuation,” pg. 69) to take a body. If this happens, the other Guild Soldiers quickly flee with their terrified refugees in tow, leaving their transforming comrade behind them.

Regardless, when the possession happens, read the following text:

Suddenly, one of the Guild soldiers drops his weapon and falls to his knees, grabbing his head. He screams in pain as his muscles expand, ripping first his clothing and then his flesh, revealing green skin underneath.

Two powerful horns push their way free of his face, which the soldier finally rips off. The hideous visage of Fujin grins back at you, and he laughs as he brushes chunks of human flesh from his shoulders. “How wonderful! This body should serve nicely, for a time.”

Fujin wastes no time in striding towards the demon bag. “Now, I reclaim what is rightfully mine!”

If the Fated allow Fujin to reclaim his demon bag, he laughs as he snatches up the bag and disappears, leaving his erstwhile allies behind to deal with Shuten-doji.

If the Fated wish to launch into another battle with Fujin (or refuse to hand over the demon bag, if they have claimed it for themselves), he uses the same stat block as he did in the demon bag (pg. 115), save that his Height is reduced to 2.

Defeating Fujin allows the Fated to claim the demon bag for their own. Without Fujin or Zhong Kui controlling its winds, however, the oni trapped within the bag will find it easier to slip through the bars of their prison.

If Fujin is possessing one of the Fated, once the battle is finished, he commands that character to approach the demon bag and make it their own. So long as the character is possessed by Fujin, they gain a + on their attempts to activate the demon bag.

DEMON BAG (ENCHANTING/CUNNING)

RANGE

TN

Demon Bag

10 yds

14

Effect: A single non-Titan target is drawn into the demon bag and removed from reality.

Special: Whenever the Black Joker is flipped by any character, an uncontrolled oni forces its way free of the demon bag. Flip a card on the following chart to determine the sort of oni that appears:

☞: Yamabiko (pg. 111)

☞: Yokai (pg. 117)

☞: Quilin (pg. 113)

☞: Obsidian Oni (pg. 104)

Joker: Asura (pg. 102)

If the owner has taken measures to prevent the demon bag from opening (such as chaining it shut or weighing it down), the uncontrolled oni remain in the bag until a card with a value of 11+ is flipped to determine what sort of oni escapes, at which time all of the oni break free of their confinements and pile out of the bag as a vengeful group.



MANDATORY EVACUATION

With Zhong Kui's defeat, the Guild returns to its primary focus: evacuating Kyoto. If there are any Guild Soldiers left alive after the battle (particularly Sergeant Janith), they inform the Fated that the Guild is abandoning Kyoto to the giant monster. If all of the Guild Soldiers are defeated, a second patrol - this one escorting fourteen frightened townsfolk - quickly come across the site of the battle (and thus, the Fated).

Their patrols are moving through the streets, rounding up refugees and trying to get them to the train station, which is being used to evacuate everyone southwest to Osaka. The soldiers order the Fated to follow them to the train station; there isn't much more time, and anyone left in the burning city when the last train departs is surely doomed.

If the Fated refuse to leave the town, the Guild Soldiers briefly consider forcing the Fated to accompany them but ultimately decide that they just don't have the time to waste on stupidity. They point out the direction to the train station as Shuten-doji rips a building from its foundation, lifts it up above his head, and shakes it, causing the screaming people inside to tumble out and down to the ground.

Should that display of power not convince the Fated, the Tengu speaks up, claiming that Shuten-doji is far more powerful than its brethren. When it was killed centuries earlier, it was only because the oni had been placed in a magical slumber; anyone attempting to fight the oni while it is awake is, in its opinion, throwing their lives away.

Broken Quilin remain at the side of the Fated that broke them, but the colorful oni attract all sorts of attention, especially from the Guild and Japanese military. Fated who wish to keep the oni as semi-trusty steeds would do well to keep the Quilin out of sight.

Instead of being herded onto the train, Fated with broken Quilin can ride the beasts through the skies to Kyoto. The flying oni steeds will be of considerable help during this adventure's final Act.

When the Fated finally arrive at the train station (with or without a Guild escort), read the following text to those Fated who are not riding broken Quilin (paraphrasing as appropriate if all of the Fated are riding broken Quilin):



The Kyoto train station is a chaotic sea of panicking refugees and overwhelmed Guild and Japanese soldiers. For now, the two groups of soldiers seem to be working together to shepherd everyone onto the crowded train cars. Each time the ground shakes, the crowd surges forward in desperation, forcing the Guild soldiers to hold them back at gunpoint.

Fortunately, it doesn't take long for you to work your way forward through the crowd and find a cramped place aboard one of the trains. As your car pulls out of the station, you catch sight of Shuten-doji's massive form stomping toward the station. Just before the car turns the bend and cuts off your sight of the terrible oni, you see it bending down to snatch the last train from the tracks.

Kyoto has fallen, and you're not sure what, if anything, can be done to halt the doom that Shuten-doji has brought to the land of the rising sun.



CONCLUSION

The destruction of Kyoto will no doubt have severe repercussions for not just Japan but the rest of the world as well. The Fated may have escaped their prison, but the titanic Shuten-doji is in the process of destroying Japan and must be stopped.

Dealing with the ramifications of Shuten-doji's rampage will consume the entirety of Act IV.

ACT IV

As the Act opens, the colossal Shuten-doji is rampaging across Japan. Both the Guild and the Japanese military are completely unprepared to deal with such an unexpected problem, but with some hard work and a bit of luck, the Fated might just be able to save Japan.

The actions of the Fated during this final Act will determine whether the people of Japan will ever be able to return to a normal life, or whether their island nation will drown in a tidal wave of blood and sadistic oni.

If the Fated defeated Zhong Kui before they could be sucked into the demon bag, then the Fatemaster will have to adjust the opening of this adventure. Consult the “Ahead of Schedule” callout box below to fill in the blanks created by skipping Act III.

These “catch-up” notes can either be summarized for the players as their characters are caught up in the chaos following Shuten-doji's appearance, or they can be played out fully, which will most likely expand the length of this Act into two sessions.



AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

If the Fated defeated Zhong Kui at the end of Act II without any of their number becoming trapped in the Demon Bag, they will still have to deal with Shuten-doji. The resurrected oni's rapidly increasing size and seeming invulnerability will force the Fated to retreat from the mountain lest they be crushed beneath its rapidly expanding bulk.

Most likely, the Fated retreat to Miyazu. They only have a day to prepare before Shuten-doji reaches his full size and begins rampaging through the countryside. As the oni king reaches Miyazu, the Guild ships in the port unleash a withering barrage of heavy fire upon Shuten-doji, only for him to rapidly heal from the damage as described in “Scene 5: Shadow of


the Titan” (pg. 88). Shuten-doji retaliates by charging through the city, grabbing the ship, and hurling it toward Mt. Oeyama.

Faced with an immortal beast, the Guild evacuates the residents of Miyazu to Osaka, where this Act picks up. From that point on, this Act should proceed in more or less the indicated direction, though without the assistance of the Tengu, they will not know about the *Shinbenkidokushu* (a sleeping potion) or receive the benefits of its insight. On the other hand, they will also not have released Fujin or any Quilin into the world, which is better for Japan in the long-term.

ACT IV, PROLOGUE: REFUGEES


The authorities only managed to evacuate around 20,000 people from Kyoto before the rail lines were destroyed; a significant number, to be sure, but still only 5% of the city's total population. The Guild and Japanese military are both trying to corral refugees as they arrive in Osaka, but the lack of a true leader, conflicting orders, and rumors of Kyoto's destruction are causing panic and chaos throughout the city.

Read the following text:



Upon arriving in Osaka, you were shuttled off the train and left to your own devices. It's clear at a glance that the city was unprepared for the sudden influx of twenty thousand homeless refugees. A few of Osaka's residents opened their homes to the traumatized survivors, but most ended up sleeping upon the ground in huddled groups of terrified family members. Voices called out for lost friends and family through the night, their frightened tones just barely audible over the shouted orders of the Japanese military.


The moon is high in the sky when news finally ripples through the crowd, leaving both relief and fear in its wake. The giant monster, Shuten-doji, had turned eastward, away from Osaka and toward Nagoya.



The Fated have a few moments to settle down or otherwise interact with the crowd before they're spotted by Orval Hallman, a Guild officer in command of the battlecruiser *GMS Wormwood*.

The *GMS Wormwood* was the first ship to fire upon Shuten-doji upon its resurrection. The attack was completely ineffective, and now Hallman is frustrated with his absent superiors not fully understanding the situation that he (and the rest of the Guild in Japan) has been thrust into. Fortunately, Hallman just finished reading a report that mentioned the Fated's battle with Zhong Kui, and their descriptions are fresh in his mind.


Read the following text:



Nearby, the distinct sound of English words rises above the sea of Japanese voices. "I don't give a damn what the operations manual says!" They come from an older, mustached man in a Guild coat who is speaking to a younger female officer. "We had a cruiser unload its full armament into the side of that monster, and it barely seemed to notice! This isn't a battle we can win with sheer firepower."

The man sighs and turns, his eyes settling on you. After a moment of confusion, his expression brightens and he waves the woman off. Striding forward, he stops in front of you and offers you a formal bow. "Forgive me for bothering you," he says, his Japanese a bit halting. "I am Orval Hallman, Commander of the Thirty-Second Guild Occupational Detachment. One of my officers reported a group of people matching your description doing battle with the sorcerer who we suspect was responsible for summoning that towering monster."

Hallman holds his hands up, as if to stop your protest. "The way I see it, we just got a mountain of trouble dumped on us, and you folks seem to have some sort of a handle on this mess. I'd appreciate it if you would accompany me to my ship so that my officers can pick your brains. If you agree, I will make certain that you get a warm meal, someplace warm to sleep, and a few fistfuls of yen for your trouble. Sound good?"



If the Fated seem reluctant to accept Hallman's offer, he tells them that he's not afraid to swap out the carrot for the stick. He has reports of them using unlawful weapons and/or magic (as appropriate), and if he wanted to, he could make their lives very difficult. However, he doesn't want to do so: his troops need information about the monsters that have sprung up in the wake of the giant that is destroying Japan, and the Fated are the only lead he's found.

Should a bit of a push be required, the Tengu (which is possessing one of the Fated's objects by this point) will whisper in the ear of the character holding or wearing it, claiming that the "red-coated soldiers" may be of use in sealing the tear between worlds.

ACT IV, SCENE I: GUILD CONCERNS

Once the Fated have agreed to work with Hallman, he escorts them to the port. Read the following text:

The Osaka port is swarming with so many people that you're forced to push your way through the crowd to follow Hallman. There are no apologies or murmured *Sumimasen* this time, though; only the shouts of people desperately trying to purchase passage on one of the few ships docked in the harbor.

The crowd fortunately thins as you reach a line of Guild soldiers standing guard in front of a large pier. They salute and step aside as Hallman approaches and ushers you past, toward the *GMS Wormwood*. The heavy cruiser lurks at the end of the long pier like a floating fortress, its huge guns pointed, perhaps not coincidentally, directly into the heart of Osaka.

Hallman escorts the Fated onto the *GMS Wormwood*, marching them past the Guild's guards and the porters that are preparing the ship to launch. The crew is currently pulling tarps off the two deck-mounted heavy machine guns, each of which is large enough to include its own seat mount. If the Fated ask about the presence of the guns, Hallman explains that they are a concession to the growing threat posed by the Gibbering Hordes, the sea-creatures that were released into Earth's oceans following the Battle of London.

From there, Hallman leads the Fated through a door and down a narrow hallway to a reasonably-sized meeting room. The only furnishings are a thin table and some steel chairs, both of which have been bolted to the floor.

The Fated have a few moments to settle into place as Hallman leaves to round up his officers. When he returns, read the following text:

Roughly ten minutes after Hallman left, he returns with five Guild officers. They offer to shake hands as they're introduced, then seat themselves around the table and look expectantly to Hallman. Only one member of the group is Japanese: a slight, nervous-looking man who introduces himself as Lieutenant Serizawa Daisuke.

"These people put down the summoner that unleashed that monster on Japan," Hallman explains in English. "Please tell us everything you know about that monster. We need to find some way to defeat it before it can cause any further destruction."

Hallman and the other Guild officers listen intently to the Fated's stories, interrupting them when necessary to clarify points or ask questions about the more fantastical elements. The character who is explaining things should make a TN 10 Convince or Deceive Challenge, as appropriate; if the characters take turns explaining parts of the story, one character still makes the flip, but the other characters are considered to have used the (1) Assist action to assist her.

On a success, the Guild officers believe the story and commend the characters for their bravery in trying to protect Japan. On a failure, many of the officers roll their eyes or shake their heads during the story, indicating that they don't believe anything the characters have told them. Margins of Success or Failure increase the reaction to looks of admiration or verbal scoffing, respectively.

If the Fated mention or imply that the giant monster is Shuten-doji, Serizawa recognizes the name. If the Fated do not mention the Shuten-doji, one of the officers shares blurred black-and-white photographs of the oni king and mentions that some of the refugees have been calling it "the Shuten-doji," which in turn sparks Serizawa's recognition. Either way, proceed to "The Legend" (pg. 73).

THE LEGEND

Mention of the Shuten-doji reminds Serizawa of the myth surrounding the oni king. Read the following text:

Upon mention of the Shuten-doji, Lieutenant Serizawa jerks upright in his seat, his eyes widening in surprise.

Hallman glances over at him in concern. "Something wrong, Serizawa?"

"Stories from my childhood," he admits, looking a bit embarrassed. "If this monster is truly Shuten-doji, as these people claim, then it is no surprise that our cannons have not harmed it. According to legend, there was only one weapon that could kill Shuten-doji: *Dojigiri*, one of the five greatest swords ever made. A thousand years ago, Minamoto Yorimitsu used the blade to kill the oni king and free Japan from its terrible abuses."

Hallman stares at Serizawa for a long moment, the skepticism etched into his features eventually giving way to tired resignation. "Sure, magic sword, why not. Can't say that I haven't seen stranger things. Where's this sword now?"

Serizawa awkwardly clears his throat. "Tokyo, sir. It's on display in the Imperial Household Museum."

Hallman commands Serizawa to send a telegraph to the Guild Enclave in Tokyo, ordering them to confiscate the sword from the museum. He sends a second officer to begin preparations for immediate departure to Tokyo, claiming that even if the sword doesn't actually kill Shuten-doji, the story behind the relic could still be useful to the Guild's "PR" efforts after the oni has been defeated.

After the exchange, if the Fated have not yet finished their story, Hallman motions for them to continue.

Once the meeting is finished, Hallman issues the Fated bunks aboard the *GMS Wormwood* and encourages them to get some rest. These bunks are little more than mattresses on steel frames that are anchored to the walls and stabilized by taut chains running from floor to ceiling. There are thirty bunks to a room.

Commander Hallman fully intends to bring the Fated with him to Tokyo. In addition to retrieving the Dojigiri, he intends to have the Fated - one of the few sources of intelligence on the enemy that he has encountered - brief his commanding officer, Brigadier General Royle McManus.

If the Fated object to leaving, Hallman assures them that he intends to give them their promised rewards once they reach the capital and Brigadier General McManus has been briefed and asked any questions he might have of the Fated.



TENGU TALKS

If the Tengu is still present, it suggests another means of defeating Shuten-doji as the Fated begin to rest.

Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate to match whatever object the Tengu possessed during Act III:

There are roughly thirty bunks crammed into the small sleeping compartment, but fortunately, most of the crew is otherwise preoccupied and you have the uncomfortable room to yourself.

As you settle down, a beaked face presses out from the surface of [OBJECT]. “The red-coated ones seek the Dojigiri, hmm? If the blade they seek is truly the correct sword, it might be able to send the oni king back to the sleep of death, but do you think they will be the ones plunging it into Shuten-doji’s chest?”

The [OBJECT] chuckles in a raspy voice. “You helped me escape, yes? Here is a favor for a favor. Do you know the story of Shuten-doji? Before the mortals slew the oni king, they tricked him into drinking *Shinbenkidokushu*, a sleeping potion.”

Despite being made from [OBJECT’S MATERIAL], the Tengu’s eyes seem to gleam with mischief. “Perhaps it would be useful to brew *Shinbenkidokushu* of your own, hmm?”

If the Fated are interested in the sleeping potion, the Tengu will rattle off the ingredients of the potion:

- *Chabotokeiso* (passion flower extract)
- Crushed *Hokkai-Kisso* (Japanese Valerian root)
- *Rabenda* (lavender) petals
- Powdered *Sekiei* (quartz)

All of these ingredients are mixed together and suspended in a solution of blessed sake that has been mixed with the water from a Kappa’s bowl.

A TN 12 Alchemy Challenge will reveal that most of these ingredients can be purchased in any reasonably-sized city without too much hassle, save for the blessed sake, which would require a visit to a temple, and the water from a Kappa’s bowl, which requires finding a Kappa, a mythical turtle-like creature.

If the Fated think back to their discussion with Whitaker at the start of Act II, they might remember that he mentioned having encountered some Kappa in Tokyo. If memories of that discussion have faded (which is understandable, given everything the Fated have been through since meeting Whitaker), the Tengu suggests that they might be able to find some Kappa in Tokyo, since the turtle-creatures prefer to live near coastal waters.




ACT IV, SCENE 2: FROM THE DEEP

It takes the *GMS Wormwood* fifteen hours to travel from Osaka to Tokyo. Since the ship left Osaka in the middle of the night, this means that the Fated are expected to arrive in Tokyo at some point during the afternoon.

In the early morning hours, however, the battle cruiser comes under attack by an unexpected enemy: the Gibbering Hordes.


If the Fated decided not to sleep or woke up early, the attack happens while they are on deck. Read the following text:




The wind is heavy with the twin scents of salt and water as you stroll along the *Wormwood's* deck. Lost in your own thoughts, you almost don't hear the shout coming from the far side of the deck. The shouting sailor disappears over the edge of the ship, only to be replaced with the scaled, clawed hand that hefts its owner, a hideous, fish-like creature with bulging eyes, onto the deck.

To either side of it, more of the piscine horrors appear, each one hauling itself over the railing. Scrabbling sounds behind you draw your attention away from the invading creatures, revealing more of their number climbing onto the opposite end of the deck. Shouts of warning go up all across the ship. One of the sailors darts toward the machine gun emplacements, only to collapse like a rag doll as two of the fish-creatures intercept him and pull him down to the deck.

The *Wormwood* is under attack!




If the Fated are asleep or resting when the attack comes, instead read the following text:




The gentle rocking of the *GMS Wormwood* makes it difficult to fall asleep, but eventually you manage to doze off to dreams filled with leering oni and glowing emeralds. As the memory of Zhong Kui looms over your dream self and opens his demon bag, you're snapped awake by a two-tone alarm blaring loudly into the room from a wall-mounted speaker.

Before you can get your bearings, a crew member races past your doorway, only pausing to lean into the room and shout at you. "Enemies on deck! All hands!" Then he's gone, leaving only the deafening alarm and the distant sound of gunfire to mark his absence.




When the Fated arrive on deck, read the following text:

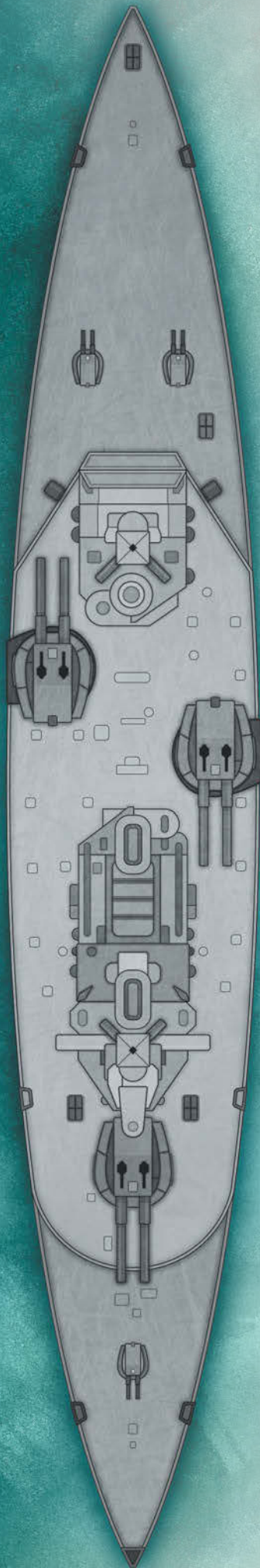
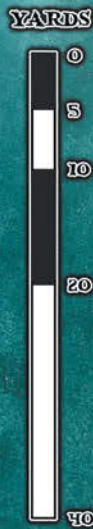


As you race out onto the deck, you find the ship in chaos. The crew is engaged in a desperate battle with a swarm of chittering, monstrous fish-people that seem to have somehow climbed up out of the dark waters below. Small pockets of resistance still hold out where sailors fight back-to-back with machine guns, but the sheer number of piscine creatures surrounding them bodes ill for their future.

The heavy machine gun emplacements are unmanned, though the fallen bodies surrounding the quad-barreled weapons hint at a failed attempt to bring the machine guns to bear on the invading monsters.



Both sides of the cruiser are under attack, each by a wave of Gibbering Hordes monsters consisting of a Speckled Crawler Swarm (pg. 118) and a Barbed Crawler Swarm (pg. 119). Unless the Fated deliberately split up to fight off the crawlers on both sides of the ship, they only have to worry about one side; the ship's crew will hold their own despite heavy casualties and repel the Gibbering Hordes from whichever side does not involve the Fated.



The fore (front) of the cruiser contains less maneuvering room than the aft (rear), as well as only a single Deck-Mounted Heavy Machine Gun, compared to the two mounted on the ship's aft. The Heavy Machine Guns can be manned by the Fated, though getting into position is somewhat time-consuming: it takes 1 AP to climb into the attached seat and 1 AP to prepare the weapon for firing.

The Heavy Machine Guns have the following stats:

HEAVY MACHINE GUN (HEAVY GUNS)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Heavy Machine Gun	36	4/5 6/6
Special: Capacity 50, Reload 8 AP. Special: Deadly (this weapon automatically gains + to the attack flip), Special Ammo, Loader (up to 3 characters can work together to reload this weapon, each contributing AP to the reload) Trigger: <i>Stutter Fire:</i> After damaging, immediately make another attack with this weapon against a different target. This extra attack cannot declare Triggers.		

Unless the Fated specifically note which deck they are on or traveling to, assume they are on or traveling to the aft deck. Regardless of the location, the Crawlers climb up the sides of the battleship and swarm onto the deck, ready to devour anything edible. The Speckled Crawlers charge headlong into melee, while the Barbed Crawlers hang back and pepper their prey with fired barbs, only entering melee when they have an opportune target.

Starting on the fifth round of Dramatic Time, a group of Striped Skulkers board the cruiser and make a dash for the command bridge: the Hordes have learned that humans in these towers are the alphas of the 'rock ships' and that eliminating them will throw the rest of the human "pod" into confusion.

Read the following text:

Amidst the chaos of the battle, you notice a strange distortion near the side of the ship. The air and deck twist and shift as you stare at it, until part of the distortion twists, revealing the vague shape of some sort of camouflaged fish-creature with a long, twisting tail. It lowers itself to all fours and scampers across the deck, weaving its way through the battle toward the open door leading deeper into the ship. More distortions follow in its wake, no doubt the rest of the camouflaged hunting pack.

The distortions are Striped Skulkers (pg. 120). There are twice as many Skulkers as there are Fated characters. They ignore the Fated and dart toward the ship's entrance on their turns. At the end of the seventh round, any Striped Skulkers that have not been killed or otherwise immobilized escape into the ship's interior and start hunting for the command staff.

Any Fated that follow the Skulkers into the ship can attempt to stop the murderous assassins. Doing so is handled with an Ongoing Challenge that unfolds alongside the remaining combat on deck (if any).

CATCH THE SKULKERS



Skills Allowed: Acrobatics, Archery*, Athletics, Pistol*, Shotgun*, Thrown Weapons, Magical Skills (as appropriate)


Target Number: 12

Duration: 1 round

Success Requirement: 2 per Skulker in the ship

Failure Requirement: 2

The Success Requirements of this Ongoing Challenge are dependent upon the number of Striped Skulkers that made it into the ship. Every two successes defeats, traps, or otherwise kills one of the Skulkers. Characters with the **Hobbled** Condition suffer a  to these Challenges. Each time the Fated use a Ranged Combat Skill during this Ongoing Challenge, they must expend one round of ammunition. If they are forced to stop and reload, the character may do so, but they suffer a  to any Ranged Combat Challenges they make during that Duration (they may use a non-Ranged Combat Skill without penalty).

The Fated can use Acrobatics and Athletics to chase the scampering Skulkers down. The Fated can also use Archery, Pistol, Shotgun, and Thrown Weapons to attack and kill the Skulkers, provided that the character has a weapon of the appropriate type readied (save for Thrown Weapons; there are plenty of objects around the ship that can be quickly thrown at the Skulkers without needing to be readied). Characters can Ready a weapon during this Ongoing Challenge, but if they do so, their Challenge for that Duration suffers a .

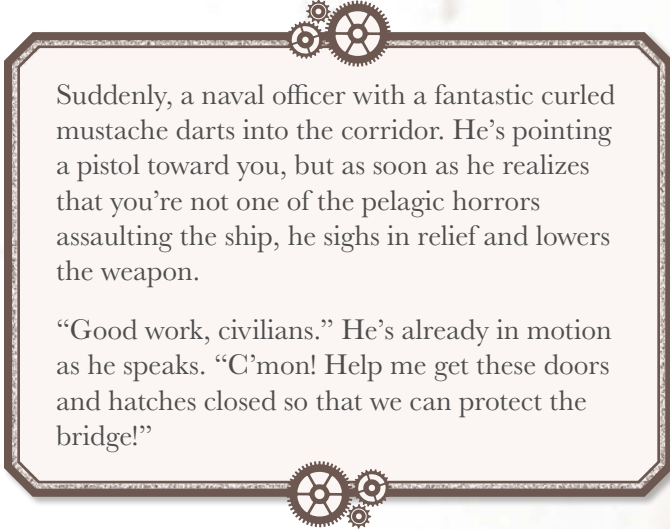
Similarly, if any of the Fated know Spells or Manifested Powers that could feasibly be used to halt or harm the Skulkers, the Fated can use the appropriate Skills on this Ongoing Challenge.

If the Fated succeed, they catch up to the last of the Skulkers just as it is about to skitter into the bridge. See the "Disaster, Averted" section in the next column.

In the event of a catastrophic failure, the remaining Skulkers reach the bridge and murder the command staff. See the "Dead Officers" section on page 78.

DISASTER, AVERTED

If the Fated succeed in defeating the Skulkers before the creatures can reach the bridge, one of the ship's crew, Petty Officer Third Class Horacio Von Rossem, arrives on the scene a few moments later. Read the following text:



Suddenly, a naval officer with a fantastic curled mustache darts into the corridor. He's pointing a pistol toward you, but as soon as he realizes that you're not one of the pelagic horrors assaulting the ship, he sighs in relief and lowers the weapon.

"Good work, civilians." He's already in motion as he speaks. "C'mon! Help me get these doors and hatches closed so that we can protect the bridge!"


It's up to the Fated whether they wish to assist Von Rossem with the bulkheads; even if they don't, the bridge doesn't come under any further attack from the Gibbering Hordes. If the Fated wish to return to the battle on the deck, it takes them a number of rounds equal to the number of Durations they spent on the Catch the Skulkers Ongoing Challenge; they're essentially just retracing their steps.

Once the battle is finished, the surviving crew throws the bodies overboard as the *GMS Wormwood* continues on its way to Tokyo. The Fated are eventually thanked by Commander Hallman for their service, complete with a clap on the shoulder and the confirmation that he knew the Fated were "full of piss and vinegar" from the first moment he saw them. Afterwards, some of the surviving crew members come up to the Fated and echo their commander's praise, if not his colorful way of expressing it.

After the Fated have received their congratulations from Hallman and the crew, proceed to "Scene 3: Eve of Destruction" (pg. 79).


DEAD OFFICERS

If the Fated fail to prevent the Skulkers from reaching the bridge, the surviving creatures ruthlessly butcher the command staff. Read the following text, adjusting it as appropriate if only a single Skulker remains:



You turn a corner just in time to see the pelagic horrors slamming their bodies over and over again against a steel door. Before you can take another step, the door gives way with the wretched sound of twisting metal, and the gibbering fish-men pile inside to the sounds of frantic gunfire and shouting.

By the time you've reached the doorway, the bridge has become a slaughterhouse. The walls are splattered with blood, both red and ichor-green, and the steel floor is littered with corpses. Some of the corpses belong to the piscine invaders, but most are the remains of the command staff. The commander is slumped against one of the bulkheads, the stump of his severed left arm pressed against his thigh in an attempt to halt the bleeding.



Each Striped Skulker (pg. 120) that the Fated did not prevent from reaching the bridge is in the room. They hiss at the Fated and leap onto them, and attack with renewed fierceness.

Commander Hallman is still alive but is very wounded; one of the Skulkers bit off his hand, and he currently has the **Bleeding Out +1** Condition, which worsens by +1 at the start of each round after the first.

At the end of each round, Hallman uses his off-hand to fire one pistol shot at the nearest Striped Skulker, dealing 2 damage to it. This continues until he has expended five rounds of ammunition, at which point the hammer of his pistol only clicks upon empty chambers.


If the Fated defeat the Skulkers, Hallman seems surprised to see them, but his expression changes to one of grim amusement as he laughs bitterly and tells the Fated that they're "too late." Unless the Fated can stop his bleeding with a TN 15 Doctor Challenge (which requires 2 AP to attempt), Hallman will bleed out and perish alongside the rest of his command staff.

Once the battle is finished, the steering house contacts the bridge via a speaking tube. Read the following text:




A crackling voice fills the room. "Commander, this is the steering house. We've sustained minor injuries, but the doors and hatches are sealed. Requesting updated orders and coordinates, sir."

After a moment of confusion, you realize that the voice is coming from one of the multiple speaking tubes located at the front of the bridge. "Requesting direction, sir!"



The Fated have a few options here. If Hallman survived, he informs the Fated that they were in the middle of recalculating their coordinates when the ship was attacked, and that if they don't finish, they will lose important time as the ship sails blindly to the northeast.

If they don't reply or seek another crewman to provide an update, the ship continues on its previous path, allowing it to reach Tokyo, albeit one day later than expected due to the confusion and subsequent course correction.

If they instead try to calculate the coordinates themselves, they must attempt either TN 12 Mathematics or TN 14 Wilderness Challenges. If Hallman survived, he can walk them through the calculation process and grant them a  to their flip.

On a failure, the *GMS Wormwood* ends up delayed and arrives at Tokyo one day later than expected. If the Fated achieve a Margin of Failure on this Challenge, they end up veering wildly off course for half a day before one of the other crew members realizes the mistake and corrects their heading; the ship arrives in Tokyo two days later than expected.

On a success, the Fated succeed in correctly plotting a course for the battleship and ensure that it arrives in Tokyo when expected.

Either way, once the battles raging across the ship's decks have finished, proceed to "Scene 3: Eve of Destruction" (pg. 79).

ACT IV, SCENE 3: EVE OF DESTRUCTION

Eventually, the Fated arrive in Tokyo. Depending upon how quickly they were able to eliminate the Skulkers, the Fated might be arriving on time, one day late, or even two days late (in which case they will arrive in port only a few hours before Shuten-doji arrives on the outskirts of the city, making it difficult for the Fated to formulate any sort of cohesive plan).

Read the following text:

If you did not know better, it would be hard to imagine that the deck of the *GMS Wormwood* had recently been soaked in the disgusting green ichor of the fishmen. The bodies have been thrown out to sea and every surface has been scrubbed, restoring the ship to her former, unblemished state.

Through the spray of the sea, you can gradually see the approaching sprawl of Tokyo. The ship's crew scurries back and forth on the deck in preparation of docking, leaving you momentarily forgotten in the well-rehearsed hustle.

CHANGING ORDERS

As the *GMS Wormwood* arrives in the Port of Tokyo, its crew receives new orders: the proposed briefing to Brigadier General McManus has been canceled, and the *Wormwood* has been ordered to pull out to sea and prepare to shell the approaching Shuten-doji.

Hallman breaks the news to the Fated; if he perished in the Gibbering Hordes attack, Lieutenant Serizawa informs them of the change. Read the following text, choosing the appropriate commander in the indicated places:

You can feel the ship's momentum shift beneath you, and a moment later, the ship's progress toward the coastal city halts. As you're wondering just what is happening, a crew member approaches and informs you that you have been summoned to the bridge.

One short walk later, you're standing before [COMMANDER HALLMAN/LIEUTENANT SERIZAWA] on the bridge. "We've just received new orders," he grumbles. "Despite our failed attempts to shell the monster back in Osaka, the brass wants us to give it another go. We're to move into position and give the creature everything we've got."

He folds his gloved hands behind his back. "However, you are not members of my crew. In the interest of ensuring your safety, I intend to use the Captain's gig to ferry you to shore." [HALLMAN/SERIZAWA] hands [RANDOM FATED] a sealed envelope.

"This letter authorizes you to take possession of the Dojigiri sword. Our agents have retrieved it from the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum and are waiting on site to deliver it. It is my hope that our guns will bring the beast down, but if not..."

He leaves the implications unspoken as he salutes you. "Good luck."



If the Fated have any additional questions, Hallman/Serizawa will answer them to the best of his ability. Some possible topics are listed below.

Shuten-doji's Location: If Shuten-doji has not yet arrived in Tokyo, Hallman/Serizawa will inform them that the Japanese military has been tracking Shuten-doji's movements and keeping them updated. If the Fated arrived on schedule, they expect that the oni king will reach Tokyo within two days' time. If they arrived one day late, Shuten-doji is expected to arrive on the following day. If they became lost and arrived two days late, then the Fated don't really need much of an update: they have already seen the oni king tearing the city apart.

The Guild's Plan: As noted, the *GMS Wormwood* has been given orders to hang back and shell the oni king from a safe distance. Neither Hallman nor Serizawa expect the shelling to stop Shuten-doji, but they have no intention of going against their orders; giving the Fated the Captain's gig and a letter of authorization is as far outside the lines as they are willing to step. Once the Fated have left the ship, the *GMS Wormwood* moves into position in the harbor and prepares for the oni king's arrival.

If the Fated succeed on a TN 14 Bewitch or Convince Challenge, he will reluctantly command the two crew that will be taking them to shore to remain with the Fated, effectively giving them two subordinate Guild Soldiers that they can command.

TO SHORE!

Once the Fated have finished speaking with Hallman/Serizawa, they can gather up their things before being escorted to the Captain's gig, a petrol-powered patrol boat that will carry them quickly to shore. Accompanying the Fated are two Guild Soldiers (pg. 105): Private Second Class Marje Rot and Private Second Class Breton Millward.

Unless the Fated talked Hallman/Serizawa into giving them command of the soldiers, they return the Captain's gig to the *GMS Wormwood* after dropping the Fated off at the docks.

TIME IN TOKYO

At this point, the Fated only have a certain amount of time to prepare before Shuten-doji arrives in Tokyo. The amount of time they have depends upon when the Fated arrived.

On Time: After arriving in town, the Fated have a day and a half (38 hours) to prepare before Shuten-doji reaches Tokyo.

One Day Late: The Fated have one day (14 hours) to prepare before Shuten-doji reaches Tokyo.

Two Days Late: The Fated only have 1 hour to prepare before Shuten-doji reaches Tokyo.

There are a number of things the Fated can try to accomplish while in Tokyo. A rough list of potential activities is included on the following page; if the Fated attempt to accomplish something that is not listed here, the Fatemaster should use this list as a guideline when determining the difficulty and time requirements of such endeavors. If the Fated decide to split up in order to make the best use of their time, it is recommended that the Fatemaster switch between the various groups in a relatively even fashion, allowing the Fated to move between groups without too much trouble.

As they're running around the city, the Fated shouldn't know just how long they have until Shuten-doji arrives. At best, they should only have a general idea of how far the titanic oni is from the city:

20 Hours Away: There are rumors in the city that Shuten-doji has been spotted heading towards Tokyo.

10 Hours Away: Refugees from the neighboring towns begin flooding into Tokyo in search of safety and loved ones.

5 Hours Away: The government starts trying to evacuate people northward. The trains are heavily delayed and essentially become unusable, and the populace grows increasingly terrified and frantic as Shuten-doji draws closer.

Remember, Living characters need at least 6 hours of sleep each night to avoid becoming fatigued. Those who do not get this much sleep are considered to be **Dazed** until they sleep for at least 6 hours.

Find Ammunition (3 hours): Rumors of Shuten-doji's destruction of Kyoto and Nagoya (the latter of which occurred while the Fated were on the *GMS Wormwood*) has reached Tokyo and created a bit of a panic. The people in possession of illegal firearms and ammunition aren't willing to part with them in the face of such unknown danger, but a TN 12 Barter Challenge allows a character to purchase 10 rounds of ammunition for ¥30 (about 3 scrip), plus an additional 10 rounds per Margin of Success.

If the character is a member of an organization with access to firearms (such as the Guild or the Japanese or Abyssinian military), they gain a **+** on this Challenge and do not have to pay for their ammunition (even if not on active duty). The Fated can make this attempt multiple times; each attempt takes 3 hours.

Purchase Equipment (1 hour): The Fated can purchase any sort of common items in Tokyo, though they will have to pay +50% more due to disaster pricing and general panic. If they expect that they will have to climb the oni king to strike at its vital parts, an Athletics Toolkit or two may prove to be particularly useful...

Retrieving the Dojigiri (1 hour): Retrieving the *Dojigiri* involves a visit to the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum and is discussed in "Sword of Ancients," pg. 82.

Visit a Shinto Temple (2 hours): If the Fated wish, they can visit one of Tokyo's Shinto temples to restock on purified water, cleansing bells, sacred rice, and *shimenawa*. With a successful TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, or Deceive Challenge, a character is allowed to make a modest donation of ¥5 (about half a scrip) to gain one such item. The items in question are described on page 18. While at the temple, the Fated can also attempt to procure some blessed sake (as described in "Scene 4: Sleeping Potion" (pg. 84).

Crafting the Shinbenkidokushu (Variable): Crafting the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion will require the Fated to gather the appropriate resources and then brew the potion itself. This process is detailed in "Scene 4: Sleeping Potion" (pg. 84).

Engage Shuten-doji Early (Variable): If the Fated decide to take the fight to the oni king early, they can travel to the less inhabited areas beyond the city's borders and attack him there. This plan only works if the Fated depart while Shuten-doji is at least two hours away from Tokyo, but it ensures that the devastation dealt to the city is minimized; the more time the Fated have remaining, the less infrastructure is damaged by taking the fight to the oni king.

If this occurs, many of the descriptions in "Scene 5: Shadow of the Titan" will have to be adjusted, but the core mechanics should still function the same.

OUT OF TIME

When the Fated run out of time (or after they have finished all the preparations they wish to make), proceed to "Scene 5: Shadow of the Titan" (pg. 88).



SWORD OF ANCIENTS

If the Fated visit the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum to retrieve the *Dojigiri*, read the following text:

The Tokyo Imperial Household Museum is a picturesque structure of white stone with a wide façade. The building overlooks an open courtyard containing a long, shallow reflecting pool. A group of four Japanese soldiers are leaning up against the building, relaxing as they smoke cigarettes, but they quickly grind them out and straighten up as you approach. One of them, a woman with a patch across one eye, is holding a long, silk-wrapped package in her arms.

The Japanese soldiers are initially somewhat hostile toward the Fated and inform them that the museum is closed in light of the approaching “monster.” If the Fated present them with the letter from Hallman/Serizawa, however, they read through it, and hand over the *Dojigiri* sword in its silk wrappings.

The *Dojigiri* has the following stats:

DOJIGIRI (MELEE)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Dojigiri	2	2/4/5
Special: This weapon gains +1 to damage and Critical Effect flips. Oni reduced to 0 Wounds by this weapon cannot discard cards when their Flicker Ability resolves.		

Unfortunately, there is a bit of a problem that will become obvious to the Fated as soon as they accept the sword. While the blade is intact, polished, and very sharp, it has no hilt or handle, only a rough area at the blade’s bottom where a hilt would be attached.

If the Fated do not immediately look at the weapon, the Guild soldiers will note that blade didn’t have a handle attached to it when they took it from the display. They did a search of the museum and saw a few other blades without handles, but they couldn’t find any of the handles proper.

At this point, the Fated have a few options, as outlined below.

BARE STEEL

The Fated can attempt to wield the *Dojigiri* without a handle. If the weapon is used without a handle, it suffers 1 to its attack flips and its Special abilities are ignored. Furthermore, if the attacking character generates a Margin of Failure on their attack flip, they fumble and drop the weapon, which is particularly significant if the Fated are climbing Shuten-doji or soaring around on a flying Quilin.

THE WEAPONSMITH

The most obvious solution to this problem is to find a swordsmith to repair the weapon, but many have repurposed their image as metalsmiths. Searching for such a person requires 2 hours and a successful TN 12 Barter, Bewitch, or Intimidate Challenge. If they are searching at night, the TN of this Challenge increases to 14. Characters who do not speak Japanese suffer a 1 to this Challenge.

On a failure, the Fated fail to find anyone capable of repairing the blade, but they can attempt this search any number of times, provided that they spend 2 hours per search attempt.

On a success, the characters find a smith who is willing to repair the blade for ¥30 (about 3 scrip). A Successful TN 10 Barter Challenge will talk the weaponsmith down to ¥20 (about 2 scrip) but will insult him in the process and cause him to work slower. The process of crafting the hilt, attaching it to the blade, and then wrapping it takes two hours, or four hours if the weaponsmith is working slowly.

Once the blade is properly fitted with its hilt, it can be used to its full capabilities.

PERSONAL CRAFTING

Alternatively, the Fated might decide to craft the weapon's hilt themselves. Doing so requires two hours of work, ¥10 (about 1 scrip) in raw materials, and a successful TN 12 Blacksmithing or Homesteading Challenge. On a failure, the raw materials are ruined, but the blade is unharmed; once the raw materials have been replenished, another attempt can be made.

It is assumed that the Fated intend to fit the blade with a standard sword handle, but if they achieve a Margin of Success on the Blacksmithing or Homesteading Challenge, they can choose to instead set the blade into a longer handle, effectively transforming it into a makeshift naginata. This transforms the blade into a Heavy Melee weapon.

If they wish to add pneumatic upgrades to the weapon (such as setting the blade into a motorized device), the process takes an additional ¥30 worth of raw materials, two additional hours, and a successful TN 12 Artefacting Challenge (in lieu of the Blacksmithing or Homesteading Challenge mentioned above). Once the upgrades have been added, the blade becomes a Pneumatic weapon.

Alternatively, particularly innovative (and culturally destructive) characters might try to just melt the blade down into bullets. This process requires two hours of work and a TN 15 Blacksmithing Challenge. On a failure, the character succeeds in crafting two dozen bullets, though none of them are particularly dangerous to Shuten-doji. On a success, the character crafts the same number of bullets, but they retain their unique Shuten-doji-killing properties.

This makes the fight against Shuten-doji much easier; a character on the ground can land a deadly shot on the titanic oni, but only if they specifically aim at one of the oni's weak spots (its eyes, mouth, or neck) and make a successful attack against TN 15. This option should not be presented to the players as something that is possible, but if they get the idea into their heads to turn a priceless artifact into bullets...

ANOTHER OPTION

While Serizawa and the Tengu are convinced that the *Dojigiri* blade is the only weapon that can kill Shuten-doji, that might not be the case.

If the Fatemaster wishes, they could have any particularly powerful and enchanted weapon possess the ability to kill the oni king, such as Zhong Kui's sword or even one of Malifaux's infamous Relic Hammers. If one of the Fated is wielding such a weapon, then they might not need the *Dojigiri* at all...



ACT IV, SCENE 4: SLEEPING POTION

Depending upon their priorities and how much time they have to work with, the Fated may decide to craft the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion mentioned to them by the Tengu. This is a complicated endeavor, but one which affords an alternative way of defeating Shuten-doji.

In order to create the sleeping potion, the Fated will first have to gather its ingredients. *Chabotokeiso* (passion flower extract), crushed *Hokkai-Kisso* (Japanese Valerian root) and *Rabenda* (lavender) petals, and powdered *Sekiei* (quartz) can all be purchased at an apothecary shop from the morning to the late evening for ¥20, though a TN 10 Barter Challenge will reduce this price to ¥15. Visiting an apothecary takes one hour.

Alternatively, the Fated could attempt to track down these plants and rocks within the city, but doing so is time consuming, and the raw materials will still require processing. Searching for a specific item takes one hour and a successful TN 12 Wilderness Challenge. On a success, the character finds the item in question. On a failure, they do not find the item but can attempt the search indefinitely (or at least, until Shuten-doji arrives and starts destroying the city). Once the Fated have collected all of the items, they must spend one hour and make a successful TN 11 Alchemy Challenge to properly prepare the items; on a failure, the raw materials are ruined and must be obtained again.

That leaves only the more difficult-to-find ingredients: blessed sake and the water from a Kappa's bowl.

BLESSED SAKE

Obtaining the blessed sake is not particularly difficult, provided that the Fated have the time to do so. Sake is sold at multiple places throughout the city, and the Fated can purchase a single bottle for ¥5 (or about half a scrip).

If the Tengu is present with the Fated, he recommends purchasing at least four 60-ounce "*Ishobin*" bottles of sake; Shuten-doji is a large oni, and while the *Shinbenkidokushi* is potent, the Fated will still need a good amount of alcohol for it to take effect. If they use less than the recommended amount of sake, the Fated suffer a \square on their attempts to craft the *Shinbenkidokushi*. Purchasing the sake takes one hour.

Once the Fated have the sake, they need only to visit a temple and convince a *Kannushi* to bless it. This is not an entirely absurd request, and thus it only requires an hour of work and a TN 8 Barter or Bewitch Challenge to find a willing *Kannushi*. If the Fated fail this Challenge, they can spend another hour and visit another temple to try again.

KAPPA WATER

The most troublesome ingredient of the sleeping potion is the water from a Kappa's bowl. The "bowl" mentioned by the Tengu is actually a depressed section in the Kappa's head that is filled with water.

The Fated only need about twelve ounces of Kappa water, so the water from a single Kappa's head bowl should be sufficient to create the sleeping potion.



As mythical creatures, however, Kappa are somewhat difficult to track down and locate. Doing so is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

KAPPA HUNT

Skills Allowed: Bewitch, History, Literacy, Wilderness

Target Number: 12

Duration: 30 minutes

Success Requirement: 8

Failure Requirement: 2

The Fated can use Bewitch to ask the city's residents whether they've seen any strange aquatic creatures, History or Literacy to consult historical records and mythical stories of Kappa in the Tokyo region, or Wilderness to explore the coastal areas surrounding the city.

After each success, the Fated encounter fleeting stories of aquatic creatures that might be Kappa, though details are always vague or the product of unreliable eyewitnesses. Characters using History or Literacy encounter numerous stories that describe Kappa as being mischievous but shy creatures resembling turtles that become weak or powerless when the water is removed from their head-bowls. Most of the stories involve Kappa trying to steal, devour, or otherwise obtain their two favorite foods: human babies and cucumbers.

On a success, the Fated finally uncover the testimony of Corporal Takumi Yamazaki, either by speaking with him personally or reading an account of his encounter with the strange creatures. Yamazaki alleges that he spotted a group of "bowl-headed turtle creatures" on Syonan Beach, on the western side of the Miura Peninsula south of Tokyo. See the "Syonan Beach" section in the next column for more details.

On a catastrophic failure, the Fated encounter the testimony of Sho Kimura, a rickshaw driver who claims to have captured a Kappa in his basement. A local newspaper did a story (written entirely in Japanese) on the "Kappa" and described it as being a "man-sized lizard" with a "foul temperament." Investigating this "Kappa" takes an additional two hours; it's still in Kimura's basement, where he's been keeping it as a pet and feeding it fish and cucumbers. As it turns out, the "Kappa" is actually a "giant pepper fish," a Japanese giant salamander. While five feet long and almost sixty pounds in weight, the brown-and-black mottled creature possesses no particular magical properties.

SYONAN BEACH

Syonan Beach is a popular tourist destination for people visiting Tokyo... or rather, it was a popular destination prior to the arrival of the Gibbering Hordes. Fear of the aquatic creatures has resulted in the beach's near-abandonment, and in the absence of humans, the Kappa that live just off the coast have moved a bit further inland.

Traveling to Syonan Beach takes prohibitively long on foot (roughly fourteen hours there and another fourteen back), but there are some faster travel options available to the Fated. Alternatively, the Fated could hire a bicycle-pulled rickshaw to take them (at a rate of ¥2 per hour), which reduces the travel time down to seven hours either way, or to three hours if they hire a motorized rickshaw (which costs ¥5 per hour).

The quickest way to reach the beach, however, is to take a train. This allows the Fated to reach the beach in two hours, though the tickets will cost them ¥10 (about 1 scrip) each. Because of the government's poor evacuation attempts, travel by train becomes an impossibility once Shuten-doji is five or fewer hours away from Tokyo.

When the Fated arrive, read the following text, adjusting as appropriate for the time of day:





The sapphire blue waves crash peacefully against the flat, sandy Syonan Beach. In the distance, you can see a small group of barrel-chested tourists playing in the shallow waves. One of the larger tourists snatches up a fish in his bare hands and bites into it, drawing the chirping attention of his companions.


Gradually, you start to realize that the squabbling “tourists” aren’t human at all. Their barrel-shaped chests are actually shells, and they have turtle-like beaks in place of mouths. The group doesn’t seem to have noticed you yet, but as soon you step out onto the beach proper, you’re almost certain to be spotted.




The Kappa (pg. 121) are 40 yards away from the Fated when they’re spotted. There are two Kappa, plus one per two Fated. The sandy beach counts as Severe Terrain, as does the shallow water along the coast.


Any sort of long-range attack against the Kappa will surprise them (making them **Slow** on the first round of combat), but as soon as they are no longer **Slow**, the turtle-creatures will dart for deep water and escape into the ocean at the end of their turn.

Particularly sneaky Fated can attempt to creep up on the Kappa; doing so requires a TN 12 Stealth Challenge each round with a  modifier; if a character thinks to crawl on their belly, they move at half normal speed but can ignore the . On a success, the character moves closer to the Kappa. On a failure, the Kappa spot the character and the scene shifts into Dramatic Time with the Kappa becoming surprised and fleeing as described above.

If the Fated successfully kill a Kappa, the player should flip the top card from the Fate Deck (which may be Cheated); on a Red Joker or , the Kappa landed in such a way that the water remained in its head-bowl. Otherwise, its head-water spilled out as it collapsed to the ground.

Alternatively, the Fated can call out to the turtle-creatures to warn them of their presence before they approach. If they do so, the Fated must succeed on a Bewitch Challenge, TN 12 + 1 per 10 yards the Fated have approached the Kappa, rounded down) to avoid spooking the creatures. If spooked, the scene shifts into Dramatic Time and the Kappa are spooked (and attempt to flee) as outlined above.

If the Fated successfully make contact with the Kappa without frightening them, the turtle-creatures allow the Fated to approach but remain wary and ready to bolt at a moment’s notice. Convincing the Kappa to give up the water in its head is a difficult proposition, as losing the water is painful to them, even if they have the opportunity to immediately refill it with ocean water. It takes a successful TN 16 Bewitch or Convince Challenge to talk a Kappa out of its head-water. If the Fated have something to offer the Kappa in exchange for the water, they can instead attempt a TN 14 Barter Challenge, with a  if they are offering cucumbers (or babies, if the Fated are terrible people).

On a failure, the Kappa demand that the Fated return with cucumbers or babies, both of which have roughly equal value in their minds. Cucumbers are relatively easy enough to find in the nearby city of Fujisawa; a character need only to succeed on a TN 9 Barter Challenge and spend ¥1 to obtain three hearty cucumbers; this takes half an hour per attempt. If the Fated are performing this search at night, they suffer a  to this Challenge and it takes them a full hour per attempt. Upon returning, the Fated can attempt the Barter Challenge as noted above.

Obtaining a baby is (obviously) more difficult and involves either accosting parents on the street or breaking into someone’s home and stealing away with their child (both of which take two hours and a successful TN 12 Intimidation or Stealth Challenge, or a TN 12 Close or Ranged Combat + Tenacity Challenge. If the Fated decide to pursue child-napping over purchasing relatively cheap and plentiful cucumbers... well, maybe they deserve to be squashed by a giant oni, you know?).

Regardless, if the Fated succeed in the initial duel or return with the requested items, the Kappa will begrudgingly hand over the water from their head-bowls. Literally. Hopefully the Fated have some way to store the water, or they’re going to have get more cucumbers (or another baby) to trade away for a second helping of water.

BREWING THE POTION

Once the Fated have gathered all of the ingredients they need to brew the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion, the only obstacle that stands between them and the finished potion is the actual brewing process. This is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

SHINBENKIDOKUSHI!

Skills Allowed: Alchemy, Culinary, Enchanting + Cunning

Target Number: 10

Duration: 15 minutes

Success Requirement: 6

Failure Requirement: 2

The Fated will need some sort of large container to brew and store the potion in, such as a barrel or a large drum of some sort. If they find a particularly suitable mixing site (such as a large bakery or a chemist's laboratory, both of which require an hour of searching and a TN 12 Bewitch Challenge or a TN 10 Barter Challenge and ¥10 to rent out for a short time), they gain a **+** to this Challenge.

If any of the Fated have an Alchemy or Culinary toolkit, the toolkit is not large enough to function as a suitable mixing container but still provides its bonus to the resulting Skill Challenge.

On a success, the Fated succeed in brewing up roughly three gallons of the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion.

On a catastrophic failure, the Fated mix the brew incorrectly; they still brew up a potent sleeping potion, but it evaporates quickly into a potent sleeping gas that billows out from the brewing site and quickly covers a quarter-mile in thick, enchanted sleeping fog. The Fated (and every other Living character in the area) must succeed on a TN 12 Carouse Challenge or fall asleep for one hour, plus one hour per point by which they failed the Challenge.


Sleeping characters can be awoken with significant effort, but even then, they are groggy, and for the entire duration, they are considered to be **Slow**, cannot Run or Charge, suffer a **□** on all Challenges, and cannot declare Triggers of any type. Furthermore, the sleeping potion boils away and is ruined.

If the Fated obtained extra ingredients, they can attempt the brewing process again, but only after they have spent half an hour cleaning out the brewing container to avoid contamination. If they skip this step, all subsequent attempts to brew the potion receive a **□** until the container is cleaned.



ACT IV, SCENE 4: SHADOW OF THE TITAN

Eventually, Shuten-doji arrives at Tokyo and begins destroying the capital city. When it does so, read the following text, adjusting as appropriate depending upon the time of day:




Shuten-doji's arrival is heralded by a terrible roar that seems to shake every building in Tokyo. The ground trembles with each of the mountain-sized oni's heavy footsteps, and its fanged maw opens in a crude grin as it scoops up a handful of people in its terrible claws.

Before it can shove the bite-sized people into its mouth, however, a series of echoing booms ripple outward from the bay as the *Wormwood* opens fire on the oni. Shuten-doji staggers to its left as the shells slam into the right side of its body, blowing away chunks of flesh and bone with each relentless salvo.

Through the smoke, you can see Shuten-doji's massive form hunched forward on its knuckles, ichor pouring out of its savaged body like waterfalls of blue-green gore. It sucks in one heaving breath after another and for a moment seems as if it is going to collapse, but then it pushes itself upright and releases another building-shaking roar. As the smoke clears, you can see that the wounds in its body are already closing as bone and flesh knit themselves back together.

Even after being bombarded with one of the most destructive weapons devised by mankind, the titanic oni king is still alive.



There are only a few ways to truly defeat Shuten-doji, and at least one of them is in the hands of the Fated: the *Dojigiri* blade. The Fated might also be in possession of the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion, which offers them another method of dealing with the oni king.

If the Tengu is present, it urges the Fated to hurry toward Shuten-doji, reassuring them that with the *Dojigiri* blade (or the sleeping potion) in their possession, they possess the means to slay the oni king. If they don't have the *Dojigiri* blade or the potion, the Tengu is much less certain of their fate and instead suggests that the Fated try to find the *Dojigiri*.

Of course, the Fated might decide not to fight the titanic oni and retreat from the battle. If they are intending to reorganize and attack Shuten-doji elsewhere, then the remainder of this adventure can proceed more or less as written, just at a different place (with far more damage to Japan, given that Tokyo has been destroyed). If they simply try to flee from Shuten-doji in the hopes of letting someone else deal with the oni king... well, that doesn't bode well for Japan's future. See the Conclusion on page 95 for details.

If the Fated are up to the task of defeating Shuten-doji, they have to first reach the mountain-sized oni. If they are capable of flight (either through magic, technological devices, or the accompaniment of one or more Broken Quilin), they can skip directly ahead to "Face to Face" on page 89.

Any characters not capable of flight must force their way through the panicking crowds, all of whom are trying very hard to get *away* from the colossal oni. Each character must attempt a TN 10 Athletics or Leadership Challenge to either force their way through the crowds or calm them down long enough to allow passage. Shouting at them (via Intimidation) is completely ineffective; Shuten-doji is far more intimidating of a presence than any of the Fated.

On a failure, the character is lost among the crowd and will reach Shuten-doji far later than their companions. On a success, the character can proceed onward to "Face to Face," bringing an additional character per Margin of Success (even if that character has already failed to move through the crowds). It takes the Fated roughly half an hour of hurrying through the streets to reach the oni king. When they do, proceed to "Face to Face" (pg. 89).

FACE TO FACE

When the Fated who made it through (or flew over) the crowd finally reach Shuten-doji, read the following text:

The closer you come to the titanic oni, the larger it appears, until finally it looms over you like a god given flesh. It's still lumbering eastward, and you've managed to get ahead of it and find your way to a public square surrounded by tall, three-story shops and businesses.

The earth trembles with each of the oni's heavy, building-crushing footsteps. It should be upon you at any moment.



If the Tengu is present with the Fated, read the following text, adjusting as appropriate to match whatever object the Tengu possessed during Act III:

The surface of [OBJECT] contorts to reveal a beaked face and beady eyes. "Hark, assassins of fate!" it squawks.

If the Fated only have the Dojigiri blade:

"Shuten-doji's flesh is too thick for an effective killing blow! You must aim your strike at a vulnerable location: an eye, the inside of its mouth... or perhaps the neck, where the blade took its head many centuries ago."

If the Fated only have the sleeping potion:

"The oni king is clever and will not be tricked into drinking the potion a second time. If you intend to banish it to the realm of dreams, you must throw the potion into its open maw."

If the Fated have both the Dojigiri Blade and the sleeping potion:

"Shuten-doji's flesh is too thick for an effective killing blow! You must aim your strike at a vulnerable location: an eye, the inside of its mouth... or perhaps its neck, where the blade took its head many centuries ago." Its beady narrow mischievously. "Easier to stab a sleeping enemy than one who is awake, yes? Hurl the potion down its throat and move in for the kill!"

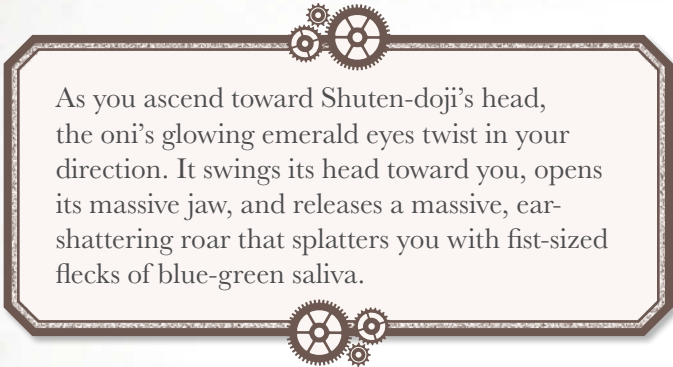
If the Fated are capable of flight, the Tengu expects them to simply fly up to the oni and either stab or it throw the sleeping potion down its throat. See the "We Can Fly!" section on page 91 for more details.

If the Fated are incapable of flight, the Tengu only sees one possible way of getting close enough to the oni to stab it or feed it the potion: climbing up its body. See the "Kaiju Climbing" section on page 91 for more details.

WE CAN FLY!

If the Fated are capable of flight, they can simply soar up towards Shuten-doji's face and attempt to either stab it or hurl the potion down its throat.

Unfortunately, this also draws the oni king's attention. Read the following text:



As you ascend toward Shuten-doji's head, the oni's glowing emerald eyes twist in your direction. It swings its head toward you, opens its massive jaw, and releases a massive, ear-shattering roar that splatters you with fist-sized flecks of blue-green saliva.

Every flying character must immediately succeed on a TN 12 Toughness Challenge. On a failure, the roar is so loud that the character's eardrums rupture, granting them the following Lasting Critical Effect:

Ruptured Eardrums: You are deaf. During Dramatic Time, you are **Dazed**. Additionally, you suffer ☐☐ on any action that normally requires hearing.

After roaring at the Fated, Shuten-doji swipes at them with one of its clawed hands. The flying character must succeed on a TN 12 Evade Challenge. If the character is riding a flying mount (such as a Broken Quilin), the mount is the one that must make this Challenge. If the mount is being ridden by a Fated character, it can flip a card from the Fate Deck and the character riding it can Cheat Fate for the mount.

Characters who succeed on the Evade Challenge avoid being struck by Shuten-doji's hand. Those who fail are grabbed and squeezed; each such character suffers 6/9/12 damage. Any Critical Effects caused by this damage receive + to their flip.

Then, Shuten-doji hurls every character in his hand into his mouth, too quickly and forcefully for them to take flight and escape. See the "Swallowed Characters" callout box (pg. 91) for more information.

After Shuten-doji has swiped at the flying characters, they can attempt to either throw the sleeping potion down his gullet or fly in and slash at the oni king with the *Dojigiri* blade.

Sleeping Potion

If a character attempts to throw the sleeping potion down Shuten-doji's gullet, they need only to succeed on a single Thrown Weapons attack against a TN of 8. On a failure, the sleeping potion plummets to the ground or shatters against Shuten-doji's skin, ruining it.

On a success, though, Shuten-doji suffers the effects as described in "Down the Hatch" (pg. 93).

Dojigiri Blade

If a character attempts to slash at Shuten-doji with the *Dojigiri* sword, they can take a single Charge action targeting Shuten-doji's neck, eye, or mouth. The neck has a total Defense of 15, the eye has a total Defense of 13, and the mouth has a total Defense of 11.

On a successful strike, Shuten-doji suffers the consequences as described in "A Perfect Strike" (pg. 94).

If a character attacked the mouth, Shuten-doji chomps down on them at the end of their turn, even if they were successful in their attack; they are swallowed as described in "Swallowed Characters" (pg. 91).

Angry Oni

If Shuten-doji is not defeated, it continues to swing its claws at flying characters on each subsequent round, with a cumulative +1 increase to the Evade TN each round the characters continue to fly around its head.

After making this Evade Challenge each round, any flying characters can make new attempts to kill or incapacitate the oni king.

KAIJU CLIMBING

If the Fated cannot fly, they have few options other than to climb up Shuten-doji's mountain-like body to reach its head. Climbing up the oni king is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

CLIMBING SHUTEN-DOJI!

Skills Allowed: Acrobatics, Athletics, Husbandry

Target Number: 10

Duration: 5 minutes

Success Requirement: Special

Failure Requirement: Special

Characters who were delayed by the crowd cannot join this Ongoing Challenge until three Durations have passed for everyone else. Note that because of the length of the Durations, the attempts by flying characters to halt Shuten-doji should be fully resolved (for good or ill) before any non-flying characters attempt this Ongoing Challenge.

The best way to "mount" Shuten-doji is to either leap onto its legs from one of the tall buildings surrounding the public square or to rush toward its foot as it comes down in the center of the square.

During this Ongoing Challenge, each character tracks their successes separately from the others. After a character has accumulated three successes, they have reached Shuten-doji's head and may either attempt to throw the sleeping potion down its throat or attack its neck or mouth with the *Dojigiri* blade on the next Duration, as described in the "We Can Fly!" section on page 90.

With four successes on this Ongoing Challenge, the character can attempt to attack its eye. If an attack with the *Dojigiri* blade misses, the character loses their footing and cannot make another attack until the next Duration.

If Shuten-doji consumes the sleeping potion, it suffers the consequences as described in "Down the Hatch" (pg. 93). If an attack with the *Dojigiri* blade is successful, Shuten-doji suffers the consequences as described in "A Perfect Strike" (pg. 94).

If a character achieves a Margin of Failure, they lose their grip and plummet to the ground below. If there is a flying character nearby, they can attempt a TN 12 Acrobatics (or Husbandry, if they are riding a flying creature) Challenge to catch the falling character.

SWALLOWED CHARACTERS

If a character is swallowed while holding the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion, then congratulations! Shuten-doji has consumed the potion and suffers the effects as described in "Down the Hatch" (pg. 93).

If a swallowed character is holding the *Dojigiri* sword and was not swallowed immediately following a failed attack with it, they can make a single attack with the weapon as they enter Shuten-doji's mouth. On a success, the oni king is killed as described in "A Perfect Strike" (pg. 94).

If Shuten-doji is killed by "A Perfect Strike" as it swallows a creature, every consumed creature suffers an additional 5/7/9 damage as the oni king collapses to the ground before it can fully digest them.





Each swallowed character can attempt a single TN 15 Athletics Challenge to escape the oni's belly. If they have a sharp melee weapon, they can alternatively attempt a TN 13 Melee Challenge. On a success, the character forces or cuts their way to freedom. On a failure, they suffer 3/5/7 damage but may attempt to escape on the next Duration.

If Shuten-doji isn't killed by "A Perfect Strike," all of the consumed characters are digested by the oni king and killed (even if it has been put to sleep by the sleeping potion).

If they fail, or if there are no flying characters capable of attempting the rescue, the falling character strikes the ground, becomes **Prone**, and suffers 4/6/8 damage, +4 damage per Success Requirement they had achieved on this Ongoing Challenge. The character can attempt

this Ongoing Challenge again, but if they do so, their accumulated Success Requirements reset to 0.

After each Duration, the Fatemaster should flip over the top card of the Fate Deck and resolve the matching event on the Kaiju Event Table below.

KAIJU EVENT TABLE	
CARD SUIT	RESULT
	Building Stomp: Shuten-doji brings its foot down on a building, smashing it to rubble and sending reverberations rippling through the oni's body. Characters climbing the oni are Dazed during their next Duration (until the end of the next Kaiju Event).
	Fire Breath: Shuten-doji inhales deeply and then breathes out a large sheet of flame across Tokyo. As it does this, the air around the oni heats to high temperatures; every character climbing the oni must succeed on a TN 10 Toughness Challenge or suffer 2 damage. Characters who are immune to the Burning Condition are immune to this damage.
	Forward Stride: Shuten-doji strides through Tokyo, wrecking devastation on an epic scale. Any Fated who have not yet joined the Ongoing Challenge are delayed by one additional Duration. Characters present in the Ongoing Challenge but not climbing the oni must succeed on a TN 12 Athletics Challenge (or a TN 10 Husbandry Challenge, if they are riding an animal, or a TN 10 Engineering Challenge, if they are driving a mechanical vehicle) or be unable to participate in the Ongoing Challenge during the next Duration as they race to catch up.
	The Gate Opens: Shuten-doji's eyes sparkle with green light as dozens of oni manifest around it and rain down to the ground below. Most of the oni survive their landing and dart off into the city to brutalize its residents. While this doesn't affect the characters climbing Shuten-doji, keep track of how many times this result occurs, as it will affect the state of Tokyo (and Japan) at the adventure's end. Characters on the ground will be harassed by small groups of Yokai (pg. 117), Yamabiko (pg. 111), and Obsidian Oni (pg. 104); each group consists of roughly one oni per Fated. Because of the length of each Duration in this Ongoing Challenge, resolve any battles taking place at Shuten-doji's feet before continuing onward to the next Duration.
Red Joker	<p>Snapping Jaws: Shuten-doji leans forward to snap up a large group of people in its jaws. Any Fated on the ground near the oni (or trying to get closer to the oni) must succeed on a TN 12 Evade Challenge or be swallowed by the oni, as described in "Swallowed Characters" (pg. 91). After succeeding, these characters can attempt to attack the oni with the <i>Dojigiri</i> blade (its mouth is TN 11, but afterward, the character is swallowed) or throw the sleeping potion down its throat (Thrown Weapons, TN 8).</p> <p>Any characters that are currently climbing the oni gain a free success as the relatively horizontal nature of the oni allows them to run safely along its back. Characters that already have three or more successes can instead make an attack against the oni with the <i>Dojigiri</i> blade or attempt to throw the sleeping potion down its throat as described above.</p>
Black Joker	Incoming Fire: The <i>GMS Wormwood</i> fires another salvo at Shuten-doji, temporarily injuring the oni and savagely wounding anyone unfortunate enough to be climbing it. Each character suffers 8/12/18 damage and must succeed at a TN 10 Athletics Challenge. Those who fail are knocked free of the oni king and fall as described in the Ongoing Challenge.

DOWN THE HATCH

If the Fated succeed in feeding the *Shinbenkidokushi* sleeping potion to Shuten-doji, the titanic oni feels its effects almost immediately. Read the following text:



Shuten-doji reaches down to uproot another building, only to lurch forward onto its knuckles. Its glowing emerald eyes grow heavy as it blinks in confusion. “What...?” Its deep, rumbling voice forces its way into your mind like a jackhammer, the word almost too large for your mind to comprehend.

It lurches forward again, shaking its head as it tries to clear its thoughts. “No... not... again...” Its clawed hands close into fists as it tries to force itself upright, but then its eyes close and it tumbles over to the side, a tidal wave of flesh bearing down on Tokyo.

The entire city shakes as the colossal oni slams into the ground, sending a shockwave of destruction through Tokyo. Shuten-doji’s claws twitch a few times as it struggles to open its eyes, but without success: soon the oni king is asleep, a monument of destruction slumbering in the heart of Tokyo.

If any characters are still climbing when Shuten-doji falls asleep (and they are not capable of flight), they have a rough ride down to the ground and risk being crushed beneath the oni’s heavy bulk. Another flying character can attempt a TN 12 Acrobatics (or Husbandry, if they are riding a flying creature) Challenge to catch a falling character.

If they fail, or if there are no flying characters capable of attempting the rescue, the falling character strikes the ground, becomes **Prone**, and suffers 4/6/8 damage, +4 damage per Success Requirement they had achieved on the Ongoing Challenge.

A successful TN 12 Acrobatics Challenge allows a character to slide down the side of the falling oni and halves the final result of the damage flip, with each Margin of Success providing a  to the damage flip. If the suit of the damage flip is a , the character must also immediately succeed on a TN 12 Evade Challenge to scramble away from the falling oni king. On a failure, the character is crushed by the oni king’s bulk and killed.

With the sleeping potion coursing through its body, Shuten-doji has been put into a deep slumber. If any of the Fated possess the *Dojigiri*, they can slay the oni with a well-placed stab to its eye, throat, or inner mouth. See “A Perfect Strike” (pg. 94) for more details.

If the Fated do not have the *Dojigiri* blade (because it was lost or swallowed by the oni), then there is very little that anyone can do to harm the slumbering giant.

Tokyo has been saved, but its residents will have to find some way to live their lives around the slumbering oni king. See the Conclusion (pg. 95) for more information.



A PERFECT STRIKE

If the Fated successfully strike Shuten-doji with the *Dojigiri* blade, it instantly slays the titanic oni. Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate based upon the circumstances of the strike:

The *Dojigiri* pierces Shuten-doji's flesh like paper. Bright green light spills out from the wound as it widens further, unleashing a wave of blue-green ichor. Despite the deluge, your grip on the blade never wavers, and for a moment, you almost imagine that you can feel another set of hands holding your own, guiding the blade deeper into the oni king.

Shuten-doji releases a desperate shriek of pain that crashes into your brain like an avalanche of poisoned knives. It twists around as it raises a massive, clawed hand to bat you away, only for its arm to disintegrate into sparkles of brilliant emerald light. The oni's eyes widen in horror, and then the rest of its body follows suit, disintegrating into light so bright that it casts the entire city in a green tint.

Then the oni king is simply gone, replaced with a twisted skeleton only twice the size of a human. The bones hover in the air for a moment, the emeralds wedged into the skull roaring with green flames. Then the flames extinguish, the green light dissipates, and everything begins plummeting down to the city far below.

If any characters are still climbing when Shuten-doji is killed (and they are not capable of flight), they plummet to the ground along with Shuten-doji's bones. Another flying character can attempt a TN 12 Acrobatics (or Husbandry, if they are riding a flying creature) Challenge to catch a falling character. If they fail, or if there are no flying characters capable of attempting the rescue, the falling character strikes the ground, becomes **Prone**, and suffers 4/6/8 damage, +4 damage per Success Requirement they had achieved on the Ongoing Challenge.

Shuten-doji's bones clatter to the ground below. Many of them shatter upon impact, but the skull - still infused with the power of the Obsidian Gate - slams into the ground, bounces a few times, and eventually tumbles to a halt at the feet of any of the Fated on the ground.

Both of the emeralds set in the skull glow with an inner light. Shuten-doji's rebirth and subsequent death have effectively transformed the second emerald into a new Obsidian Gate, though the barrier between dimensions has not been strengthened in the slightest.

Either gem can be removed by the Fated, but as before, anyone who comes into contact with either of the emeralds risks becoming possessed by the oni trapped on the other side of the Obsidian Gate. If the Fated are in possession of the *Dojigiri* blade, a solid strike to the oni's skull (and a successful TN 12 Melee Challenge) is enough to shatter the skull and ensure that the oni king cannot be resurrected again.

Shuten-doji's death has saved Tokyo (and, arguably, all of Japan) from destruction, but depending upon how events played out, its future might still be bleak. See the Conclusion (pg. 95) for more information.



CONCLUSION

The fate of Japan (and, to a larger extent, the world) largely depends upon Shuten-doji's status at the end of the adventure.

Shuten-doji is Alive and Active

If Shuten-doji remains active at the end of the adventure, all of Japan is forfeit. Without the *Dojigiri* sword, the oni king simply regenerates too quickly for any sort of attack to have any long-term consequences. The oni that sporadically appear from the opened Obsidian Gate soon swarm across the island nation, leaving thousands of corpses in their wake.

Many of the Japanese people evacuate to China and Vietnam, the other members of the Three Kingdoms, leaving the island in the hands of the merciless oni king. Those who linger behind search desperately for a means to destroy or otherwise incapacitate Shuten-doji with little luck.

The Fated could become part of this resistance movement, or they might turn their backs on Japan, only for the oni king to turn its gaze abroad...

Shuten-doji is Alive but Asleep

If Shuten-doji is placed into a slumber but not killed, the people of Tokyo are forced to find some way to live their lives around the sleeping giant in the center of their city. Life gradually returns to some semblance of normalcy, and before too long, a handful of brave spiritualists discover that Shuten-doji's saliva, tears, and ichor are highly magical. By harvesting these bodily fluids and infusing them into members of the military, the Japanese government is able to create troops imbued with magical talent. Spiritual corruption and possession run rampant within the ranks of the military, but the government turns a blind eye to these problems and focuses upon using these enhanced troops to drive the Guild from their nation.

The Fated could find themselves allied with either the Guild or the Japanese military, depending upon the events of this adventure. Alternatively, they might find themselves using the oni's fluids to increase their own power at the risk of becoming further possessed or haunted...

Shuten-doji is Slain

If Shuten-doji is slain, the danger may not have entirely passed. If the "The Gate Opens" Kaiju Event resolved at any point during the adventure, then a significant number of oni are still loose within the city (and even more so if the Fated fell back and allowed Tokyo to be destroyed before finally dealing with Shuten-doji). Each subsequent time "The Gate Opens" resolved during the adventure, the number of oni increase significantly: two resolutions means that the Japanese military and Guild occupation forces are both taxed to their limits, and four resolutions or more results in both groups being overwhelmed by the summoned oni. Unless heroes such as the Fated step forward and attempt to find some way to banish the oni, the people of Japan may find themselves forced to evacuate their nation.

Most likely, Tokyo is severely damaged from Shuten-doji's rampage, but if the Fated chose to engage the oni outside of the city limits, the damage is relatively minimal. The people of Tokyo will be quite thankful should they learn of the Fated's role in stopping the monster's rampage, and the Fated may become local and national heroes overnight.

Furthermore, a slain Shuten-doji leaves the Fated with not just one Obsidian Gate, but two. The barrier between dimensions has been significantly weakened, but perhaps there is a way to combine the power of both gems? Sealing away the shattered barrier for good could very well become a campaign in and of itself... and until they are successful, the twin Obsidian Gates present a significant threat to anyone in their vicinity.

Should the Fated report back to the Guild, the organization honors Commander Hallman's promise to reward them with "fistfuls of yen," which amounts to a total of ¥5,000 (about 500 scrip), which the Fated can split between themselves. If the Guild has been made aware of the power of the Obsidian Gate, it will surely attempt to claim the power of the gem for themselves, which may involve working with the Fated or against them, as the situation dictates.

There is also the matter of Zhong Kui and, possibly, the Asura that possessed Mipam Tsundue. Though they were defeated, both of these spirits will certainly wish to take control of the Obsidian Gates to further their own ambitions. If the Fated released Fujin or any Quilin into the world, they will certainly cause trouble down the road as well.

The battle may be over, but the war with the oni has only just begun...



FATEMASTER CHARACTERS

The Obsidian Gate takes place across a variety of locations, both in Japan and elsewhere. As the Fated progress in their adventure, they will encounter a variety of Fatemaster characters. The important ones have been noted here for ease of reference and are arranged in order of appearance.

As with any roleplaying game, it is the characters in the story that make it worth telling. The Fatemaster is encouraged to add her own special touches to the people and monsters the Fated encounter to make them unique and memorable.

For instance, when the Fated encounter the Satori no Michi Cultists at the start of the adventure, they fight as a group of characters with equal stats. However, if they are described in greater detail - perhaps one of them has a gruesome scar across his face while the other has numerous piercings in her ears, each of them dangling with blue, eye-shaped stones - it adds that extra bit of flavor that can turn a good fight into a truly memorable one.

The following pages contain the stat blocks for the Fatemaster characters who are likely to appear in the adventure. They have been created with an eye toward ease of use by the Fatemaster and provide all the information needed to run the characters present in this adventure.

Above all else, have fun!



SATORI NO MICHICULTIST

The Satori no Michi are a Japanese offshoot of a Tibetan oni-worshipping cult. Its members tend to be either Japanese miscreants who have been ensnared by Mipam Tsundue's charisma and fanaticism or Tibetan expatriates who believe that drawing upon the oni - or the gyalpo, as they call them - is the best way to free their nation from the iron hand of the Guild.

The cultists spend much of their time locked in prayers to the gyalpo, but lately, their efforts have taken a more productive turn. They have stolen a rifle and some ammunition from the Japanese military, bound a weak gyalpo into a mural in their shrine, and carefully constructed a great number of explosive devices. Most of them weren't entirely certain why they have been doing these things, but they all had faith that, when the time came, their guru would tell them of his plan.

On the morning that this adventure begins, Tsundue finally revealed his plan to his excited students. The Great Buddha - or the Great Fool, as Tsundue often called him - would be destroyed by the explosives of the cult, and the Obsidian Gate, the prison in which humanity's gyalpo friends had been imprisoned, would be destroyed.



SATORI NO MICHICULTIST

Minion (5), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 6 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Athletics 4, Centering 3, Deceive 3, Explosives 2, History 1, Intimidate 2, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2, Notice 4, Sorcery 2, Stealth 2, Toughness 1.

Expendable Fanatic: When this character is killed or knocked unconscious, it may give a friendly character within 6 yards the **Focused +1** Condition.

Flick of the Wrist: This character may use Grace in place of Might when making a Melee or Pugilism attack.

(1) Ritual Knife (Melee)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

☞ **Overwhelm:** After damaging, take this action again against the same target. This attack has -1 AV for each other time this Trigger has been declared this turn.

☞ **Kick to the Chest:** After succeeding, the target is knocked **Prone**.

(1) Sand in the Eyes (Martial Arts)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target gains the **Blind** Condition until the start of this character's next turn, plus one turn per Margin of Success on this attack.

☞ **Surprise! It's Gunpowder!:** After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until it washes the gunpowder off: "**Explosive Residue:** If this character gains the **Burning** Condition, it may discard a card. If it does not, this character and every character within (X)2 suffer 2 damage, and this character ends the **Burning** Condition and this Condition."

MIPAM TSUNDUE

Enforcer (8), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Evade 2, Bewitch 2, Centering 3, Convince 3, Deceive 4, Enchanting 2, History 3, Intimidate 1, Leadership 3, Notice 2, Prestidigitation 3, Toughness 3.

Blood Magic (Magical Theory): When this character casts a Spell, he may suffer 1 damage to ignore any ☐ penalties to his casting attempt. For every additional damage he suffers in this way, he may add one Margin of Success to his Spell.

Guru: Other friendly Cultists within 10 may take this character's Magical actions, using his AV, during their turn. Magical actions taken in this way use the Blood Magic Magical Theory (above). Each of this character's Magical Action can only be taken in this way once per round.

Implacable: This character may add his ranks in Centering to the final total of any Horror Duel he makes.

(1) Telecaedo (Prestidigitation/Intellect)

AV: 5 (13) == TN: 12 == Rg: 10 yds == Resist: Wp
The caster teleports one or more small objects into the target's body. If the target is not Incorporeal, they suffer 1/3/5 damage as the object(s) permanently lodges in their body. Lodged objects can be removed via Surgery or Repair as if they were lasting Critical Effects. Particularly deadly objects (such as acid or poison) may increase the damage by +1 or give the **Poison +1** Condition, at the Fatemaster's discretion. Teleported explosives are rendered inert.

✗ **Crippling Pain:** After succeeding, the target becomes **Dazed** until the end of its next turn.

(1) Restrain (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 4 (12) == TN: 12 == Rg: 2 yards == Resist: Wp
A Living target gains the following Condition for 1 round: "Restrained: This character's Walk and Charge Aspects are reduced by -2 (to a minimum of 1). This character suffers ☐ to its attack flips."

(0) Oni's Breath (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 4 (12) == TN: 10 == Rg: 2 yards == Resist: Wp
Target gains the following Condition for 1 minute: **"Poisoned Chi:** After this character suffers damage from a source other than the **Poison** Condition, this character gains **Poison +1.**"

MIPAM TSUNDUE

Mipam Tsundue has been many things over his long life: farmer, father, beggar, student, teacher... each of these is but a small fraction of the man who murdered his guru in a moment of intense theological disagreement.

Horried, Tsundue fled into the mountains to avoid punishment for his heinous crime. While wandering and hungry, Tsundue was amazed to discover a golden palace seated atop a tall mountain. For four days, Tsundue tried to climb the mountain, but each time the rocks would give way beneath his feet and send him plummeting back down to the ground below. On the fifth day, Tsundue finally relented, his body and spirit broken by his failures. It was then that the ruler of the palace, a mighty gyalpo spirit, descended to speak with the strange dying man at the foot of his mountain.

Out of amusement, the gyalpo healed Tsundue's wounds and taught him three of the secrets of the world. Armed with this newfound knowledge, Tsundue had no problem in attracting students to his side, but before he could truly establish himself, mechanized Russian troops marched into Tibet with the intent of seizing the nation's treasures and knowledge for its own.

Tsundue was once again forced to flee, this time with his students. His flight brought him to Burma, Siam, and, eventually to Japan and the town of Kamakura.



SATORI NO MICHİ DEVOTEE

Among the Satori no Michi, there are two grades of students: the Initiated and the Devoted. The Initiated are new recruits; students that have yet to fully embrace Tsundue's teachings. The Devoted are those students who have given Tsundue everything they had and more.

To become a Devotee, an Initiated must bring one of their loved ones to the cult's shrine. They then watch as Tsundue cuts the sins and weakness away from their loved one, watching as he shows them the first secret of the world. Halfway through the process, after the loved one has been flayed and is screaming for death, Tsundue hands the Initiated his knife and asks them to answer his unspoken question. Thus far, all of them have found the truth hidden in their loved one's soul.

The Devotees are fanatically loyal to Tsundue and desire to serve him above all else. Each of them would willingly give their life for him, were he just to ask it of them. In his wisdom, Tsundue has instead asked his Devotees to train; he knows that conflict with the military and the Guild is inevitable, and when he shatters the Obsidian Gate and frees the nine thousand and ninety nine gyalpo imprisoned within its depths, he will need an army of believers to stand beside them.

The Devoted are just delusional enough to believe themselves to be that army.



SATORI NO MICHİ DEVOTEE

Minion (6), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (10)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Centering 3, Deceive 2, Explosives 2, History 2, Homesteading 1, Intimidate 2, Martial Arts 3, Notice 2, Sorcery 2, Stealth 2, Toughness 1.

Df (♣) Izuna Drop: After a Close Combat attack succeeds against this character, the attacker may choose to cancel their attack. If they do not, after resolving the attack, the attacker falls **Prone**.

Expendable Fanatic: When this character is killed or knocked unconscious, it may give a friendly character within 6 yards the **Focused +1** Condition.

Merciless: This character gains **+** to attacks against **Prone** characters. If such an attack inflicts a Critical Effect, increase the severity of the Critical Effect by one step (from Weak to Moderate or from Moderate to Severe).

(1) Fighting Claw (Martial Arts)

AV: 5 (11) ===== Rg: ♣ 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This weapon ignores one **□** on the damage flip.

♣ **Frenzy Slashes:** After damaging, every enemy within (X) 1 of this character may choose to fall **Prone**. Those that do not suffer 1 damage.

♣ **Next Target:** After damaging, this character may move up to 4 yards in any direction.

(2) Flurry

This character may discard a Twist Card to take three 1 AP attack actions with a Close Combat weapon against a single target.

(0) Shrug Off

This character may discard a Twist Card to end a Condition affecting it.

LIVING MURAL

One of the more prestigious accomplishments of the Satori no Michi cult was the binding of a gyalpo spirit - an oni - into the mural they painted on the interior of their shrine. The oni is mildly annoyed to be constrained to such an imperfect vessel, but ultimately, an imperfect body is better than having no body at all.

The Living Mural has been charged with the defense of the shrine, and as a means of acting out against its summoners, it has decided to take its orders quite literally: it defends the shrine from outsiders but is more than happy to wait and watch as the cult's members are murdered by interlopers who remain outside the shrine's doorway.

If roused to action, the Living Mural makes for a difficult opponent. Its essence is tied to the mural within the shrine, not its animated body of painted lines, and that makes its form highly resistant to damage. Worse yet, it is capable of dragging its enemies into the mural, effectively imprisoning them in a two-dimensional world of painted torment.



LIVING MURAL

Enforcer (8), Construct, Oni

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 4
<i>Charm</i> 3	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 3	<i>Initiative</i> 6 (14)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (12)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Art 5, Melee 3, Notice 4, Toughness 2.

Enchanted Painting: This character is linked to an enchanted painting. If this character ever ends its turn more than 10 yards from the painting, this character suffers a Severe Critical Effect. The painting is considered to have a Defense of 0 (5) against physical attacks, but any damage it suffers (from any source) is reduced by half, rounded down, then this character suffers a similar amount of damage that cannot be reduced.

Living Art: This character may enter or leave its painting as a (0) Action. While in its painting, this character is indistinguishable from a normal painting.

Nothing But Paint: Reduce all damage this character suffers to 1. If this character is damaged by a Spell or Manifested Power using the Water Immuto, the damage is not reduced and this character becomes **Slow**.

(1) Painted Claws (Melee)

AV: 5 (13) ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage and gains the following Condition until it washes the paint off: "**Covered in Paint:** This character cannot declare Triggers. Any attempts to Track this character gain + +."

Painted Into a Corner: After succeeding, the target cannot take Movement actions until the start of this character's next turn.

(1) Still Life (Art)

AV: 7 (15) ===== Rg: 6 yards ===== Resist: **Wp**
Target is trapped in this character's painting and gains the following Condition until this character is killed: "**Framed:** This character is removed from reality and cannot take Actions." This Action cannot be declared if there is already a character in the painting.

POSSESSED TSUNDUE

It was in Kamakura that Tsundue realized the fourth truth of the world. It was clear to him that the Japanese people had been confused and misled about the true nature of oni, which he believed to be gyalpo who had pledged themselves to an aspiring warlord. When the warlord was defeated, the gyalpo were imprisoned behind the Obsidian Gate, a relic that locked them away in a realm of pain and suffering.

Tsundue could feel the strength of the Obsidian Gate, but the temple was too well guarded to simply steal the gem; the Tanaka family kept a close watch on the gem, and hidden protectors lurked in the shadows. Rather than risk a direct confrontation, Tsundue and his students settled on the outskirts of Kamakura and prepared for the right moment to strike.

When the Tanaka man was killed and his daughter was whisked away by the temple's hidden guardians, Tsundue knew that the time was right. His small cult had attracted Tibetan expatriates and Japanese malcontents alike, and when it was time, Tsundue sent his students into the town to destroy the symbol of oppression that was the "Great Buddha" and retrieve the Obsidian Gate.

The plan did not go as Tsundue expected. The arrival of the Fated forced the guru to seek the assistance of a gyalpo, but instead of offering its assistance, the malevolent spirit possessed Tsundue and devoured his confused students.



POSSESSED TSUNDUE

Enforcer (8), Living, Cultist, Oni

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 4
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (12)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 9	

Skills: Evade 2, Bewitch 2, Centering 3, Convince 3, Deceive 4, Enchanting 2☹, History 3, Intimidate 1, Leadership 3, Notice 2, Prestidigitation 3☹, Pugilism 3, Toughness 3.

Blood Magic (Magical Theory): When this character casts a Spell, he may suffer 1 damage to ignore any ☐ penalties to his casting attempt. For every additional damage he suffers in this way, he may add one Margin of Success to his Spell.

Implacable: This character may add his ranks in Centering to the final total of any Horror Duel he makes.

Masochist: Each time this character suffers a Critical Effect, he gains the **Focused +1** Condition.

(1) Twisted Claws (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (13) ===== Rg: ☯ 1 yards == Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

✕ **Infect:** After succeeding, the target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.

☹ **Take a Bite:** After damaging, the target suffers 2 damage, then this character heals 2 damage.

(1) Restrain (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 4☹ (12☹) == TN: 12☹ == Rg: 2 yards == Rst: **Wp**
A Living target gains the following Condition for 1 round: "Restrained: This character's Walk and Charge Aspects are reduced by -2 (to a minimum of 1). This character suffers ☐ to its attack flips."

(0) Oni's Breath (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 4☹ (12☹) == TN: 10☹ == Rg: 2 yards == Rst: **Wp**
Target gains the following Condition for 1 minute: "**Poisoned Chi:** After this character suffers damage from a source other than the **Poison** Condition, this character gains **Poison +1.**"

ASURA

Henchman (9), Living, Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 4
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (13)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 3	<i>Initiative</i> 6 (15)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (14)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 10	

Skills: Athletics 3, Centering 3, Counter-Spelling 2, Deceive 3, History 2, Intimidate 2, Literacy 5, Notice 4, Pugilism 2, Scrutiny 2, Toughness 4.

Flickering Soul: At the start of this model's turn, it generates 3 AP, then enemy characters within ①6 may discard any number of Twist Cards. For each Twist Card discarded in this way, this character loses 1 AP (to a minimum of 0 AP, allowing it to only take (0) Actions).

Laugh Off: This character may not be pushed or moved by enemy characters.

Regeneration +2: This character heals +2 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

(1) Six-Armed Assault (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (14) ===== Rg: ③ 2 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This attack gains ④ to the attack flip.

✦ **Knockabout:** After damaging, push the target up to 5 yards in any direction.

✦ **Shadow Fist:** When damaging, this attack ignores Armor and Hard to Kill. If this attack inflicts Severe damage against a target with a shadow, the target's shadow is permanently destroyed and their maximum hand size is permanently reduced by 1.

(1) Tri-Fire Breath

Every character within ①3 may attempt a TN 13 Evade Challenge to push 3 yards away from this character. Then, every character within ①3 gains **Burning +3**.

(0) Mocking Laughter (Intimidate)

Every character within (X)5 must succeed on a TN 14 Centering Challenge or be forced to discard a card.

ASURA

When the oni freely walked the world, they did not restrict their travels to only Japan. In China they were known as "E'mo," in Arabia they were called "Jinn," and in India and Tibet, the people called them Asuras.

Unlike the oni in other lands, which were regarded as primarily evil creatures that inflicted pain and misery on others, the Asura could occasionally act in beneficial or even heroic ways.

One of the most well-known stories of the Asura involves the fearsome Ravana, a demonic commander who led an army of oni against the people of India. When things seemed their worse, Ravana's younger brother, Vibhishana, saw the evil of his Ravana's ways and turned against him, joining the humans to fight back the army of demons.

Unfortunately, the Asura summoned by Mipam Tsundue is not one of the enlightened and heroic creatures of myth. It is violent, destructive, and reveling in its newfound physical substance. Tsundue is an imperfect vessel, however, and the Asura's time in the mortal world is limited... a weakness that the Fated may be able to exploit.



INVESTIGATING OFFICER

While the Japanese military has recently been granted the ability to carry firearms and swords to defend the island nation against possible attack by the Gibbering Hordes, the same permissions have not been given to local police. Instead of swords and guns, these officers have been forced to make due with batons and whistles, neither of which is particularly useful in any sort of actual combat situation.

Which is, ultimately, the point.

The Guild's concession to the Japanese military was one of pragmatism: it simply does not have the troops needed to fully defend Japan, so allowing the military to rearm and defend their own borders was an easy choice. Even with this permission, however, the Guild still keeps control of the ammunition allotted to the military, ensuring that any rebellion can be quickly ended by simply cutting off the nation's supply lines.


Though they believe that the threat of the Gibbering Hordes will keep the military too preoccupied to launch any sort of effective rebellion, the Guild drew the line at arming local police. In their minds, a few batons and some strong words should be more than enough to handle common thugs and miscreants.

INVESTIGATING OFFICER (JAPAN)


Minion (5), Living


Might 2	Grace 2	Speed 1	Resilience 0
Charm 0	Intellect -1	Cunning 0	Tenacity 1
Defense 4 (9)	Walk 5	Height 2	Initiative 2 (7)
Willpower 3 (8)	Charge 6	Wounds 5	

Skills: Bureaucracy 2, Convince 1, Evade 2, Melee 3, Intimidate 1, Notice 2, Toughness 1.

Plain-Spoken: This character gains  to Social Duels made during Dramatic Time.

(1) Baton (Melee)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Rg:  2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. If this weapon deals Severe damage, the target suffers a Weak Critical Effect in addition to any other Critical Effects.

 **Arrest Order:** After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn:
"Arrest: This character must discard a card to perform a movement action."

(1) Blow Whistle (Intimidate)

AV: 2 (7) ===== Rg: 10 yards === Resist: **Wp**
Target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn: "Arrest: This character must discard a card to perform a movement action."


INVESTIGATING OFFICER (GUILD)

Minion (5), Living

Might 1	Grace 2	Speed 1	Resilience 0
Charm 0	Intellect -1	Cunning 0	Tenacity 1
Defense 3 (8)	Walk 5	Height 2	Initiative 2 (7)
Willpower 3 (8)	Charge 6	Wounds 5	



Skills: Bureaucracy 2, Convince 1, Evade 2, Melee 3, Intimidate 1, Notice 2, Pistol 3, Toughness 1.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.


Plain-Spoken: This character gains  to Social Duels made during Dramatic Time.



(1) Guild Sword (Melee)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg:  2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

 **Critical Strike:** When damaging the target, this attack deals +1 damage for each  in the final duel total.

(1) Collier Navy (Intimidate)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Rg:  12 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. Capacity 6, Reload 2.

 **Critical Strike:** When damaging the target, this attack deals +1 damage for each  in the final duel total.

OBSIDIAN ONI

Minion (6), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 2 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Centering 2, Heavy Melee 3, Scrutiny 2, Sorcery 4📖.

Armor +2: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +2, to a minimum of 1.

Flicker: When this character is reduced to 0 Wounds or below, it may discard a card to heal damage equal to its ranks in Centering (2). If it does not, it immediately winks out of existence (and does not count as being killed).

Obsidian Demise: If this character falls unconscious, it is killed. When this character winks out of existence, all characters within (X)2 suffer 2 damage from obsidian shrapnel. The damage dealt by this Ability cannot be healed until the shrapnel is removed (which requires ten minutes of work and a successful TN 8 Doctor Challenge; on a Margin of Failure, the patient gains **Bleeding Out +1**).

Ruthless: This character automatically succeeds at any Willpower duel it attempts during its turn.

(1) Obsidian Club (Heavy Melee)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

🔪 **Crushing Strike:** When damaging, this damage flip gains + for every 🔪 in the final duel total.

📖 **Blaze:** After damaging, the target gains **Burning +1**.

(1) Flames from the Heavens (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 4📖 (10📖) === TN: 10📖 === Rg: 8 yds === Rst: Wp

Target suffers 1/2/3🔪 damage and gains **Burning +1**.

🔪 **Scorched World:** After succeeding, the area (X)3 around the target becomes Hazardous terrain (**Burning +1/Burning +2/Burning +3**) until the start of this character's next turn.

✗ **Cursed Flames:** When damaging, instead of gaining the **Burning +1** Condition, the target gains the **Haunted +1** Condition.

OBSIDIAN ONI

Obsidian Oni are fearsome creatures with bodies of shimmering black obsidian. They claim to be the children of the volcano, which is why their heavy, spiked clubs sometimes erupt into magical flame during combat. Their stone bodies shrug off swords, arrows, and bullets with equal ease, a fact that contributes to the reckless bravado of these oni. Even when their are defeated, Obsidian Oni have the final laugh, for their obsidian bodies explode in a shower of razor-sharp shrapnel that wounds anyone unfortunate enough to be standing near them.

Those who know the old magics of the Three Kingdoms can call the Obsidian Oni into service, binding them through ritual and sacrifice to a singular purpose. Weak-willed summoners are sometimes consumed by the very oni they seek to call, though for most summoners, this risk is worth it for the prowess that Obsidian Oni possess.

Zhong Kui summoned this particular Obsidian Oni to murder everyone in Kokuyōseki-in and retrieve the Obsidian Gate for him. It is unlikely that they will succeed in doing so, but even in defeat, the oni serves his purpose of making the Obsidian Gate's barrier seem weaker than it actually is.



GUILD SOLDIER

The Guild has been a strong presence in Japan since the summer of 1853, when Commodore Perry forced the island nation to open its ports to western trade. The devastated and heavily shelled port towns were quickly repaired, and soon the occupied parts of the nation had become yet another hub in the Guild's international trade empire.

The sudden presence of the Guild and the influx of Western merchants and trade goods caused political and economic crises all throughout Japan. Numerous rebellions attempted to drive the foreign conquerors out of Japan's occupied Treaty Ports, but each time, the Guild's highly trained and well-armed soldiers emerged victorious over the rebels.

In an effort to force peace, the Guild forced the puppet government it placed in charge of Japan to issue the Haitorei Concord, an edict that prohibited anyone in Japan from owning swords, firearms, or any other form of weapon. The only people exempt from the Concord were Guild employees, who now had a legal excuse to arrest and execute anyone they wanted, simply by claiming that they had a weapon.



GUILD SOLDIER

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 2 (9)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 2, Bureaucracy 2, Centering 2, Evade 3, Long Arms 2, Melee 3, Notice 2, Pistol 3, Scrutiny 2, Toughness 1.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Gunfighter: This character may use Pistols as if they were Range /// 2.

(1) Standard Issue Sword (Melee)

AV: 4 (11) ===== Rg: /// 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

☛ **Critical Strike:** When damaging the target, this attack deals +1 damage for each ☛ in the final duel total.

(1) Peacebringer (Pistol)

AV: 5 (12) ===== Rg: /// 2 or --- 10 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This weapon gains its wielder + to Intimidate duels. Capacity 6, Reload 1.

☛ **Arrest:** After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn:
"Arrest: This character must discard a card to perform a movement action."

✕ **Aim Low:** After damaging, the target becomes **Slow**.

(2) Covering Fire (Pistol)

This character may target enemy within range and line of sight of this character's wielded Pistol and expend three rounds of ammunition. If it does so, the enemy subtracts this character's ranks in Pistol (3) from its final duel totals until the start of this character's next turn.

YAGIZA

Henchman (9), Living, Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 0	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -3	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (13)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (14)	<i>Charge</i> 8	<i>Wounds</i> 10	

Skills: Athletics 3, Carouse 3, Centering 2, Deceive 3, History 2, Intimidate 3, Literacy 5, Notice 2, Pugilism 2, Scrutiny 2, Thrown Weapons 2, Toughness 4.

Frenzied: When this character is reduced to less than half its total Wounds during Dramatic Time, it gains **+** to its attack and damage flips, falls under the control of the Fatemaster, and cannot receive the Order Action. This Frenzy lasts until the end of Dramatic Time.

Terrifying (All) 10: Enemy characters must pass a TN 10 Horror Duel when they end their turn within this character's engagement range or target this character with a harmful action.

Rush +2: This character's Charge Aspect has been increased by +2.

(1) Headbutt (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (14) ===== Rg: **2** ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This attack deals +1 damage if made as the result of a Charge attack.

✗ *Filthy Tongue Lick:* After succeeding, the target gains **Poison +5** and may discard any number of cards. For every card it discards, the target reduces the value of the **Poison** Condition it gains from this Trigger by 2.

(1) Vomit Blood (Thrown Weapons)

AV: 2 (11) ===== Rg: **9** ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/1 **1** **1** **1** **1** damage. Every character damaged by this action becomes **Dazed** until the start of this character's next turn.

(2) Shag Fest

This character may discard a Twist Card to make a 1 AP attack action with a Close Combat weapon against every enemy in its engagement range.

YAGIZA

Upon coming in contact with the Obsidian Gate, one of the Guild's soldiers was possessed by a Yagiza. These dangerous oni are violent, stubborn, and narrow-minded, traits that make them spiritual reflections of the Guild's cruel and sadistic soldiers.

In their preferred forms, Yagiza are quadrupedal oni that resemble hulking rams with six legs and tall, hunched shoulders. Their thick, shaggy pelts are infested with all manner of disease and virulence, and a mere puff of their breath is enough to putrefy flesh into gangrenous ooze.

This Yagiza, however, has forced its spirit into the body of a Guild soldier and remade it into a more pleasing shape. Clothed in mortal flesh in this way, the oni is capable of interacting with - and destroying - the world around it. Yagiza are not subtle creatures, and this one is no exception; it enjoys straight-forward combat and shows little care for tactics or even its own self-preservation.

After all, its own spirit is immortal. Even if its host body is destroyed, the spirit will surely find another before too long...



AOBOZU

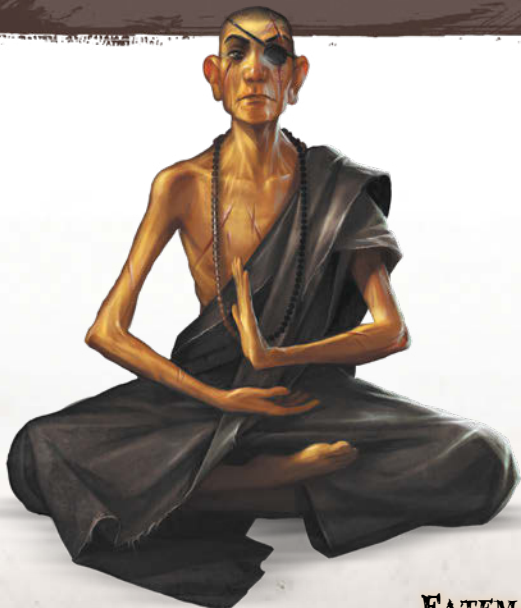
Once, Aoboza was a Shinto *kannushi*. He performed the same tasks every day, always with respect and reverence for the kami. Gradually, though, he became dissatisfied with his life and sought to find something else, something more interesting, that might add some degree of meaning to his life. He found what he was searching for in the ancient stories about Shuten-doji.

Aoboza had always assumed that the myths were nothing more than fanciful stories or, at worst, metaphors about particularly dangerous bandits who were demonized after their eventual capture and destruction. The more he investigated the stories, however, the more Aoboza began to realize that the demons whispered about in the ancient myths had actually existed. He devoured as much occult knowledge as he could find in the misguided hope of learning more, only to lose his way and become obsessed with the resurrection of Shuten-doji.

THE INFECTION CONDITION

As a character's **Infection** Condition increases, the disease she carries become progressively more and more severe until eventually her organs begin to fail and she dies. The **Infection** Condition is described in detail on page 150 of *Under Quarantine*.

If you're not using *Under Quarantine* in your game, simply use the **Infection** Condition as presented. Once per day, the character's infection can be treated with a TN 10 Doctor Challenge. On a success, the value of the character's **Infection** Condition is lowered by 1, plus 1 per Margin of Success.



AOBOZU

Enforcer (8), Living

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 0	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 0 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Athletics 2, Centering 3, Convince 1, Counter-Spelling 3, History 2, Homesteading 1, Intimidate 1, Notice 1, Scrutiny 2, Sorcery 3, Toughness 2, Wilderness 3.

Blood Magic (Magical Theory): When this character casts a Spell, he may suffer 1 damage to ignore any penalties to his casting attempt. For every additional damage he suffers in this way, he may add one Margin of Success to his Spell.

Counter-Spelling (3): Aoboza has magically shielded himself using his Counter-Spelling Skill. His Defense and Willpower are considered to be 3 higher when resisting Spells or Manifested Powers.

(1) Shuten-Doji's Wrath (Sorcery/Tenacity)

AV: 5 (13) TN: 11 Range: 10 yards
A Living target must succeed on a TN 10 Toughness Challenge. If the target fails, it suffers a Moderate Critical Effect. The TN of the Toughness Challenge is increased by +2 for each Margin of Success achieved by this character.

(2) Blood of the Mountain (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 4 (12) TN: 10 Range: 5 yds
A solid pillar of congealed blood rises from the ground at a point within range. The pillar is Height 5 and 2 yards in diameter with **Armor +5** and 8 Wounds. The pillar remains for 3 rounds, after which it collapses into congealing ooze. Living characters that end their turn within 1 yard of the pillar gain the following Condition: **"Infection +1:** At the end of the day, this character suffers +1 damage."

(0) Chains of Blood (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 4 (12) TN: 10 Rg: 10 yds Rst: **Wk**
If there is a Blood of the Mountain pillar within 5 yards of the target, the target suffers 1/2/3 damage and is pushed into base contact with the pillar.

NUPPEPPO

Enforcer (7), Undead

<i>Might</i> 4	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> -2	<i>Resilience</i> 5
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -3	<i>Cunning</i> -4	<i>Tenacity</i> -2
<i>Defense</i> 2 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 3	<i>Height</i> 4	<i>Initiative</i> -2 (5)
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (9)	<i>Charge</i> 3	<i>Wounds</i> 12	

Skills: Pugilism 2, Thrown Weapons 2, Toughness 5.

Impossible to Wound: Damage flips against this character suffer \square and may not be cheated.

Oozing Mass: This character can move through **Ht** 1 and **Ht** 2 characters. At the end of this character's turn, every character that was moved through in this manner must pass a TN 12 Evade Challenge or suffer 2 damage and gain **Poison +1**.

Regeneration +2: This character heals +2 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

Rotten Contents: When this character suffers a Critical Effect or is killed, all Living characters within (X)2 must succeed at a TN 12 Carouse Challenge or gain **Poison +2**.

Terrible Odor: Living characters within (X)3 of this character are considered to have the **Dazed** Condition.

(1) Engulfing Bulk (Pugilism)

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: \mathcal{H} 3 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.

✗ *Swallow Whole:* After damaging a target with a lower Height than this character, the target must discard a card or be immediately killed and eaten.

(2) Roll Over

This character moves up to 4 yards in any direction, then performs a (1) Close Combat attack. After resolving the attack and any Triggers, this character moves up to 3 yards in any direction.

(0) Poisonous Gas

Characters within (X)4 must make TN 16 Evade Challenges. Characters who fail gain **Poison +2**, plus an additional **Poison +1** for every Margin of Failure they generated on the Evade Challenge.

NUPPEPPO

If there are any creatures more disgusting than a Nuppeppo, it is a blessing to not know of their existence. Best described as a colossal mass of putrid, rotting flesh, a Nuppeppo is horrible both in appearance and in sheer proximity. Their rotting bodies constantly release unpleasant odors and poisonous gasses, and even the smallest cut or wound has the potential to release a squirt of caustic ooze or bubbling filth.

Because they lack legs (or indeed, any sort of skeletal system), Nuppeppo don't walk or charge so much as they just sort of ooze forward, rolling over their own putrescent mass in an unpleasant, unthinking pile of retching awfulness. Those unfortunately enough to be caught beneath a moving Nuppeppo are either crushed beneath its massive weight or swallowed up in its foul insides, often never to be seen again.

This particular Nuppeppo was constructed using the skins of victims murdered by Aobozu. In addition to the people missing from Miyazu, the crazed monk has been snatching up travelers, hikers, and anyone else he can get his hands on, all in a misguided attempt to build a new body for Shuten-doji.



JAMES WHITAKER

From a young age, James Whitaker was interested in the hidden parts of the world. He was fascinated with stories about spirits and ghosts, and as he grew older, he became increasingly more involved in New England's thriving spiritualism movement.

Once Whitaker's parents passed away and the entirety of his family's considerable fortune passed into his hands, he set about trying to become a medium himself. He traveled across New England and later Europe, visiting supposedly haunted buildings, exploring ancient graveyards, and snatching up any object associated with the "mystical" East as soon as he laid eyes upon it. While none of these endeavors were successful in attracting the attention of a spirit guide, they did make Whitaker something of a well-known person in spiritualist circles.

Finally, in 1904, Whitaker learned of a strange canister that had been discovered in a nickel mine in Japan. Anyone who touched the canister seemed to take on the statue and posture of another person... at least, until they were overwhelmed by migraines and seizures. The mining company was considering donating the troublesome canister to a museum, but Whitaker swooped in and tempted the owner to sell him the item.

As soon as Whitaker touched the canister, he felt a powerful spiritual presence settle upon him. The spirit claimed to be Lao Wai, an ancient Chinese philosopher who wished to bring peace and harmony to the world. All it needed was a partner whose actions it could guide in the mortal realm. Whitaker leapt at the opportunity, and he and his spirit guide have been traveling the world and banishing evil spirits ever since.

Or at least, that's what Whitaker thinks they've been doing. In actuality, his spirit guide is none other than Zhong Kui, a powerful demon summoner. Zhong Kui has been manipulating Whitaker for years, and now that he has learned the location of the Obsidian Gate, he has maneuvered his eager pawn into a position allowing him to finally seize control of the magical gem.

JAMES WHITAKER

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> -2	<i>Resilience</i> -2
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 2 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 3	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -1 (6)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 3	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Alchemy 1, Barter 2, Bewitch 3, Bureaucracy 2, Carouse 2, Centering 1, Deceive 1, Gambling 2, Heavy Melee 2, History 3, Literacy 2, Notice 2, Toughness 2.

Blissful Ignorance: When this character fails a Horror Duel, if it is his turn, his current action immediately fails, but he does not become **Paralyzed**. If it is not his turn, he becomes **Slow** instead of **Paralyzed**.

Imposing Mass: This character gains **+** to his disengaging strikes and to any Impose action he takes.

(1) Walking Staff (Heavy Melee)

AV: 2 (9) ===== Rg: /// 2 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage.



ZHONG KUI, THE LOYAL SERVANT

Henchman (10), Living, Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 3	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (14)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 6 (16)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 11	

Skills: Athletics 1, Barter 2, Convince 3, Counter-Spelling 3, Deceive 4, Enchanting 3, Evade 2, History 3, Intimidate 2, Leadership 3, Literacy 5, Melee 3, Notice 2, Scrutiny 2, Sorcery 5, Toughness 5.

Demon Bag: While in possession of his demon bag, this character does not suffer any penalties for casting Spells or Manifested Powers on Earth.

Terrifying (All) 10: Enemy characters must pass a TN 10 Horror Duel when they end their turn within this character's engagement range or target this character with a harmful action.

(1) Release Spirits (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 6 (16) == TN: 14 == Rg: 10 yds == Rst: Df
Target suffers 1/2 damage, ignoring Armor and Hard to Wound. Characters damaged by this action gain the **Haunted +1** Condition.

Searching Spirits: After succeeding, the target may discard two cards. If it does not, the spirits steal an item of this character's choice from the target and deposit it in this character's hand.

(1) Into the Bag (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 6 (16) == TN: 14 == Rg: 20 yds == Rst: Wk
Target is pushed 10 yards towards this character. If it ends this movement within 1 yard of this character, the target is sucked into this character's demon bag. See "Devoured by the Bag" on page 20 for more information.

(2) Release Prisoner

This character may discard a Twist Card to summon an Obsidian Oni (pg. 23) to any location within 5 yards. The Obsidian Oni obeys this character's commands and remains until destroyed.

ZHONG KUI

Centuries ago, Zhong Kui was an exorcist who was tasked with driving out the evil spirits that had possessed his lord's palace. The spirits refused to obey Zhong Kui's commands and instead mocked him for his ugly appearance and impotence. Rather than abandon his duty, Zhong Kui traveled to Japan, following the rumors of a powerful oni that possessed a magical bag it used to defend the island nation from invaders.

Feigning friendship, Zhong Kui approached the oni, got him drunk on sake, and stole the wind bag. He used his arcane knowledge to turn the winds of the bag inward and trapped the surprised Fujin within its bottomless depths. For many years, Zhong Kui traveled the world, imprisoning evil spirits within his "demon bag" and earning the acclaim of others.

Zhong Kui finally met his match when he encountered the demon king, Shuten-doji. The massive oni resisted the draw of the demon bag and infused a portion of its essence into Zhong Kui, corrupting the exorcist and transforming his soul into that of an oni. Though he struggled to accept what had happened to him, Zhong Kui eventually came to appreciate his immortality and the power that his corrupted abilities afforded him.



YAMABIKO

Yamabiko are brutal oni that are best described as an unwholesome combination of baboon and bison. They congregate in packs of upwards to a dozen creatures, each of them led by a single alpha. Competition for the position of alpha is fierce, and it's not unheard of for one Yamabiko to turn and begin savagely beating on one of its seeming allies to remind it of its place.

Like all oni, the physical form of a Yamabiko is merely a manifestation of its immortal spirit. They recover from wounds at a remarkable rate, and they can never be truly killed. That being said, their grip on reality is tenuous at best; if their spirit becomes too taxed, their physical bodies wink out of existence, leaving the oni as nothing more than a vengeful, intangible spirit.

It usually takes a great deal of time for Yamabiko to gather enough soul energy to once again manifest in the mortal realm. They find the entire process to be humiliating and degrading, and as a result, their loyalty can be purchased by anyone capable of hastening their return to reality.

To that end, many oni summoners have taken to shackling the limbs of Yamabiko with "touchstones," special weights that are attuned to the mortal realm. Though heavy, these touchstones keep the Yamabiko firmly grounded in the mortal realm, much to the detriment of their enemies.

The Yamabiko in this adventure once served Zhong Kui, until he grew tired of their challenges to his authority and condemned them to an eternity trapped in his demon bag.



YAMABIKO

Minion (6), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 4	<i>Grace</i> -2	<i>Speed</i> 4	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 6 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 7 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 8	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Athletics 3, Centering 2, Intimidate 2, Notice 3, Pugilism 2, Scrutiny 1, Toughness 2, Track 1, Wilderness 3.

Flicker: When this character is reduced to 0 Wounds or below, it may discard a card to heal damage equal to its ranks in Centering (2). If it does not, it immediately winks out of existence (and does not count as being killed).

Reckless Charge: This character may declare Charge Actions while engaged.

Regeneration +1: This character heals +1 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

Unimpeded: This character ignores penalties for terrain while taking Movement Actions.

(1) Ferocious Claws (Pugilism)

AV: 6 (12) ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/6 damage.

☞ **Breaking Bone:** After damaging, the target must discard a card or gain the **Broken Bone** Critical Effect affecting a random location (flip a card from the Fate Deck).

☜ **Drag:** After succeeding, move up to 2 yards and then push the target into physical contact with this character.

(0) Bellowing Roar (Intimidate)

AV: 4 (10) ===== Rg: 8 yds ===== Resist: **Special**
This Action is resisted by the Centering Skill. Target loses ends its **Defensive** Condition (if any) and becomes **Slow**.
✕ **Echoes:** After succeeding, every enemy within (X)8 of the target must succeed on a TN 10 Centering Challenge or become **Dazed** until the end of its next turn.

TENGU

Minion (6), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 3	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (10)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Athletics 2, Centering 2, Convince 1, Deceive 2, Enchanting 4♣, History 3, Leadership 3, Literacy 5, Martial Arts 3, Notice 2, Scrutiny 3, Stealth 3, Wilderness 1.

Fading Star: When this character takes a Walk or Charge Action, it may choose to teleport anywhere within range instead of walking there.

Flicker: When this character is reduced to 0 Wounds or below, it may discard a card to heal damage equal to its ranks in Centering (2). If it does not, it immediately winks out of existence (and does not count as being killed).

Regeneration +1: This character heals +1 damage at the beginning of its turn during Dramatic Time.

(1) Razor-Edged Talons (Martial Arts)

AV: 5 (11) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

♣ *Trickster's Mark:* After succeeding, the target must name a suit and then discard the top card of the Fate Deck. If they named the suit of the discarded card, they may draw a card. If they do not, they must discard a card.

(1) Regenerative Song (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 7♣ (13♣) == TN: 11♣ == Rg: 10 yds == Rst: Wp
A Living target gains the following Condition for 3 rounds: "**Regeneration +1:** This character heals +1 damage at the beginning of its turn during Dramatic Time."

(1) Inspirational Teaching (Leadership)

This character may discard a card. If it does so, every friendly non-Tengu character within (X)10 may choose to either draw a card or gain **Focused +1**.

TENGU

The legends of the Three Kingdoms claim that the Tengu were once men. According to the stories, their pride in life cursed them to exist after death as demons that were bound to protect the forests and mountains they once claimed as their own.

The Tengu, for their part, dismiss such crude origins as nothing more than a tall tale told to some gullible humans many centuries earlier.

Whatever the truth, it is no secret that the Tengu have fared better than most oni in modern times, primarily due to their penchant for choosing stealth and guile over physical confrontations. In rural villages all across the Eastern world, clever Tengu have set themselves up as seemingly beneficent protectors of the mountains and forests. For modest offerings of food and the occasionally luxury item, these oni are willing to assist mortals in their trivial daily affairs by healing wounds and frightening interlopers away from secluded villages.

For all the good that they might do, Tengu are also inherently mischievous. They seemingly cannot resist tormenting mortals who think too much of themselves, and those "jokes" can often have lethal consequences for the mortal in question. The tengu trapped in the demon bag made the mistake of taunting Zhong Kui one too many times.



QUILIN

According to legend, the Quilin once roamed the Earth in great packs, trampling anything unfortunate enough to cross their path into dust. They caused widespread destruction, until eventually they crossed paths with the Buddha. Knowing that the horse-like oni did not care that they were trampling others, the Buddha instead convinced the Quilin that walking upon the ground was impure and loathsome. The Quilin were so convinced of his reasoning that they vowed to never again set foot upon the ground, and from that day forward, they raced across the sky on flaming hooves.

Regardless of the veracity of this story (even the Quilin are divided as to whether or not such an event occurred), the Quilin are capable of walking across air as easily as most creatures walk upon the ground. They have an instinctive ability to sense the impurity of a person's soul and are drawn to those who have committed shameful acts and terrible misdeeds. Whether they punish or reward these people is a matter of how well the person greets the Quilin, for they are vain creatures who enjoy being seen as divine beings.

There are stories of brave heroes taming Quilin to serve as mounts, but this is a dangerous prospect, for the treacherous heart of an oni knows no loyalty. Even the most well-trained Quilin will eventually turn upon its owner sooner or later.



QUILIN

Minion (6), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 4	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 1	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 6 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 6 (12)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 8	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Athletics 3, Centering 2, Evade 2, Literacy 5, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Scrutiny 3, Toughness 1.

Flicker: When this character is reduced to 0 Wounds or below, it may discard a card to heal damage equal to its ranks in Centering (2). If it does not, it immediately winks out of existence (and does not count as being killed).

Flight: This character is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or other characters when moving.

Regeneration +1: This character heals +1 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

(1) Horned Charge (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (10) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This attack deals +1 damage if made as the result of a Charge attack.

📖 **Flaming Hooves:** After succeeding, the target gains **Burning +1**, or **Burning +3** if it is **Prone**.

🐾 **Forceful Push:** After succeeding, the target is pushed up to 3 yards in any direction and is then knocked **Prone**.

(0) Pure Light

This character (or its controller) may discard a Twist Card. If it does so, this character (and its rider, if any) gain the following ability until the end of the next round: **"Incorporeal:** This character ignores, and is ignored by, other characters and terrain during any movement. Reduce all damage this character suffers from Ranged and Close Combat attacks by half."

SUZAKU

Henchman (9), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 4	<i>Speed</i> 3	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (14)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 4	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (14)
<i>Willpower</i> 6 (15)	<i>Charge</i> 7	<i>Wounds</i> 9	

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Athletics 1, Centering 4, Evade 3, History 2, Literacy 5, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Toughness 3, Wilderness 2.

Flicker: When this character is reduced to 0 Wounds or below, it may discard a card to heal damage equal to its ranks in Centering (4). If it does not, it immediately winks out of existence (and does not count as being killed).

Flight: This character is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or other characters when moving.

Regeneration +2: This character heals +2 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

Saracenar's Plight: Reduce the damage this character suffers from the **Burning** Condition to 0.

(1) Fiery Beak (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (14) ===== Range: 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage and gains **Burning +1**.
✖ *Eternal Flames:* After succeeding, the target permanently gains the following Ability: "*Scorched Soul:* This character does not end its **Burning** Condition at the end of its turn (it still suffers damage from the **Burning** Condition normally)."

(1) Wing Strike (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (14) ===== Range: 4 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/3 damage and gains **Burning +3**.
📖 *Tossed Up:* After succeeding, place the target anywhere within 2 yards of this character. The target becomes **Prone**.

(2) Windstorm

Every character in front of this character and within 10 yards must succeed on a TN 14 Athletics Challenge or be pushed 5 yards away from this character, plus an additional 5 yards per Margin of Failure. Flying characters suffer a \square to this Challenge.

SUZAKU

The so-called "Vermilion Bird of the South" is an ancient creature with a checkered past. It assumed control of the fledgling nation of Qin during the Warring States period, devouring its so-called subjects and serving as the impetus behind their rapid expansion and increased aggression against their neighbors. Eventually, Suzaku was imprisoned within a stone egg by an unnamed *fangshi*.

Although briefly awakened by Zhuge Liang to assist the combined forces of Wu and Shu Han during the Battle of Red Cliffs, Suzaku was quickly returned to its slumber, and gradually, the flaming oni-bird faded into myth.

Centuries later, the Cult of the Burning Man tracked the stone egg to a curio shop in Sendai, Japan. They succeeded in awakening Suzaku but underestimated its power: the Vermilion Bird incinerated them and much of the surrounding city. Its rampage was only halted when James Whitaker appeared and unknowingly banished Suzaku to the depths of Zhong Kui's demon bag.

The Vermilion Bird has been frantically struggling against the unseen bars of its new prison ever since.



FUJIN

Fujin is a rarity among the oni, in that it doesn't hold any particular malice for humanity. It will still brutally murder any humans that do not pay it the respect it believes that it deserves, of course, but once that respect is given, Fujin tends to become protective of "his" people. This relative benevolence led to Fujin (and his rival, Raijin) becoming enshrined by the Japanese people as a god.

Unfortunately, Fujin ran afoul of Zhong Kui and, having misjudged the demon summoner's power, wound up trapped inside his own wind bag. Fujin has tried to escape from his prison multiple times, but each time, Zhong Kui has easily captured his spirit and tossed it back into the depths of the repurposed wind bag, now known as the demon bag.

This succession of one failure after another has destroyed Fujin's hope and left him depressed and despondent. He devours any oni that dares to disturb him, adding their power to his own, but even that has become perfunctory in his mind. What good is power if he cannot escape the confines of his current prison?



FUJIN

Henchman (9), Spirit, Oni

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (13)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 4	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (14)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 9	

Skills: Athletics 3, Centering 3, Convince 1, Enchanting 5, History 2, Intimidate 3, Literacy 5, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Scrutiny 2, Sorcery 3, Toughness 3.

Bring It!: This character increases its Defense by an amount equal to the number of enemy characters in its engagement range (to a maximum bonus of +3).

Middle of the Storm: ⚔ attacks that target characters within 4 of this character (including this character) suffer 1 to the attack flip.

Regeneration +2: This character heals 2 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

(1) Pummeling Fists (Pugilism)

AV: 6 (15) ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

✎ *Wind Flick:* After succeeding, push the target 20 yards away from this character, ignoring other characters. The target and any characters they pass through during this movement become **Prone**. For every 5 yards (or fraction thereof) of this push that is prevented due to intervening objects (but not characters), the target suffers +1 damage.

☞ *Overhead Kick:* After resolving, move up to three yards in any direction and take this action again targeting a different character in range. This attack gains + to its attack flip, deals +1 damage, cannot declare Triggers, and, if successful, knocks the target Prone and pushes them 3 yards away from this character.

(1) Windburst (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 4 (13) == TN: 9 == Rg: 10 yds == Rst: Df

Target is pushed 3 yards in any direction. This action gains + when targeting flying characters.

✎ *Gale-Force:* After succeeding, every creature within (X)3 of the target (other than you) is pushed 2 yards in the same direction as the target.

ZHONG KUI, THE DEMON QUELLER

Master (10), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 3	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (14)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 6 (16)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 11	

Skills: Athletics 1, Barter 2, Convince 3, Counter-Spelling 3, Deceive 4, Enchanting 3, Evade 2, History 3, Intimidate 2, Leadership 3, Literacy 5, Melee 3, Notice 2, Scrutiny 2, Sorcery 5, Toughness 5.

Df (☞) Inner Rebellion: After resolving, the attacker suffers damage equal to the value of their **Haunted** Condition.

Merciless: This character gains ☠ to attacks against **Prone** characters. If such an attack inflicts a Critical Effect, increase the severity of the Critical Effect by one step (from Weak to Moderate or from Moderate to Severe).

Terrifying (All) 10: Enemy characters must pass a TN 10 Horror Duel when they end their turn within this character's engagement range or target this character with a harmful action.

(1) Ancient Sword (Melee)

AV: 5 (15) ===== Range: ☞ 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage, ignoring Armor, and gains **Haunted +1**.

☞ **Invite Corruption:** After damaging, the target must discard a card or permanently transform into a Yamabiko (pg. 25) under this character's control. The Yamabiko may not act on the round it is transformed.

(1) Swooping Oni (Leadership)

AV: 2 (12) ===== Range: 20 yds ===== Resist: **Df**
A winged oni materializes and slashes the target for 1/2/4 damage. The target is then yanked upwards into the air and dropped a number of yards equal to the amount by which this action exceeded the target's final duel total. If the target falls at least 3 yards, they become **Prone** and suffer 2/4/6 damage, +1 damage per 2 yards fallen above 3, rounded down. This Action can only be declared once per turn.

(0) Command Demon (Intimidate)

AV: 5 (15) ===== Range: 10 yards ===== Resist: **Wp**
Target oni or character with the **Haunted** Condition immediately performs a 1 AP Action of this character's choice. The target cannot be forced to attack itself, but it can be forced to divulge information or otherwise betray its allies.

☞ **Essence Flare:** Every character within (0)4 of the target must succeed on a TN 12 Centering Challenge or gain **Haunted +1**.

ZHONG KUI, THE DEMON QUELLER

Though the power of his demon bag has been thwarted by Fujin's influence, Zhong Kui is by no means helpless. He is quite proficient in the use of the ancient sword that rests on his hip, which is capable of cutting not only the flesh but also the spirit. Even the slightest wound exposes his victim's soul, allowing Zhong Kui to rip it free of its mortal tethers and replace it with that of an oni, which immediately seizes control of its new vessel.

In addition to his martial prowess, the Demon Queller still possesses the forceful personality and fearsome reputation needed to push around lesser oni. Through sheer willpower, he has forced a number of small, chiropteran oni into his service.

With a swift gesture of his hand, he can force these disembodied spirits into existence for a few short moments of time, just long enough for the flickering oni to grab an enemy and yank them into the air. When the oni disappears a few seconds later, their "passenger" tumbles back down to the hard ground below.



YOKAI

What Yokai lack in intelligence, they make up in sheer brutality. Considered among the lowest of the oni, these simian creatures love nothing more than a blood-drenched frenzy during which they might demonstrate their considerable fighting skills. Wielding magical kama imbued with soul-rending curses, Yokai leap into each new battle with unbridled fury, relishing each new opportunity to hack their enemies apart.

Despite their martial prowess, Yokai are simple and fickle creatures. They do not have the willpower to remain very long in the mortal realm, and they are usually too impatient to force their souls into one mortal host after another in search of a host suitable for long-term possession.

As a result, Yokai are more or less resigned to only making short jaunts onto Earth. They strive to make great use of their time, often causing as much death and destruction as possible before finally fading back into the Beyond, content that their efforts will no doubt be noticed by their fellow oni.



YOKAI

Minion (5), Oni, Spirit

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 0	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> -2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 3 (8)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Athletics 2, Centering 1, Enchanting 2, Literacy 5, Melee 3, Notice 2.

Ephemeral Warrior: After this character suffers damage from a single source, it may teleport up to two yards in any direction.

Flicker: When this character is reduced to 0 Wounds or below, it may discard a card to heal damage equal to its ranks in Centering (1). If it does not, it immediately winks out of existence (and does not count as being killed).

Frenzied Charge: This character gains **+** to any attacks it generates due to the Charge action.

Regeneration +1: This character heals 1 damage at the start of its turn during Dramatic Time.

(1) Paired Kama (Melee)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Range: ∞ 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This action gains **+** to the attack flip.

✕ **Soul Burn:** When damaging, this character may choose to gain **++** to its damage flip. If it does so, this character suffers 2 damage after resolving this action.

(0) Corrupting Essence (Enchanting)

This character may discard a card. If it does so, until the start of its next turn, every time this character makes a successful attack that damages a Living enemy, the enemy gains the **Haunted +1** Condition and this character heals 1 damage.

SPECKLED CRAWLER SWARM

Minion (Variable Rank Value), Living, Swampfiend

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 3	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (Varies)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (Varies)	<i>Charge</i> 7	<i>Wounds</i> Special	

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Athletics 3, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Stealth 3, Wilderness 2.

Aquatic: This character's speed is not reduced while swimming. It can take the Charge action while underwater.

Collective Focus: This character has the following Condition: "**Rank Value +8:** Treat this character's Rank Value as equal to the value of this Condition. This character does not add its Rank Value to its Defense."

Multiple Bodies: This character does not have Wounds; when this character would suffer damage, instead reduce its **Rank Value** Condition by 1, unless the attack dealt ☠ or (X) damage, in which case its **Rank Value** is reduced by the full amount of damage dealt. When the **Rank Value** Condition reaches 0, the Crawler Swarm disbands.

Unimpeded: This character ignores penalties for terrain while taking Movement Actions.

(1) Clawing Arms (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (Varies) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This action gains + to its attack flip.

☞ *Wave After Wave:* After succeeding, take this action again against any target in range.

✕ *Weakness Exposed:* When damaging, increase the damage of this attack by an amount equal to the target's **Poison** Condition, then lower the value of the target's **Poison** Condition by 2.

SPECKLED CRAWLER SWARM

Speckled Crawlers, like most Crawlers, occupy the lowest level of the Hordes' food pyramid. They are the most plentiful species, partially because of their incredible ability to adapt to their environment. Upon arriving on Earth, the Crawlers took to the land, carving out small lairs for themselves in tunnels, under bridges, and in just about every other dark and unseen place they encountered.

Though not particularly strong on their own, it is rare to only encounter a single Speckled Crawler. Like all species of Crawlers, they are pack hunters, and few of their victims are ever truly prepared for their savage and unrelenting nature.

Typically, Speckled Crawlers wait for prey to come into range of their clawed hands, at which point they swarm forward in a pack, relying upon strength of numbers to overwhelm their prey. If one or more of their own perishes in the assault, so much the better; Crawlers are not shy about consuming the bodies of their own fallen when given the opportunity.



BARBED CRAWLER SWARM

Minion (Variable Rank Value), Living, Swampfiend

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (Varies)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (Varies)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> Special	

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Athletics 3, Notice 2, Pugilism 2, Stealth 3, Thrown Weapons 3, Wilderness 2.

Aquatic: This character's speed is not reduced while swimming. It can take the Charge action while underwater.

Collective Focus: This character has the following Condition: "**Rank Value +8:** Treat this character's Rank Value as equal to the value of this Condition. This character does not add its Rank Value to its Defense."

Multiple Bodies: This character does not have Wounds; when this character would suffer damage, instead reduce its **Rank Value** Condition by 1, unless the attack dealt ☠ or (X) damage, in which case its **Rank Value** is reduced by the full amount of damage dealt. When the **Rank Value** Condition reaches 0, the Crawler Swarm disbands.

Unimpeded: This character ignores penalties for terrain while taking Movement Actions.

(1) Toothy Maws (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (Varies) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage.

(1) Poisoned Barbs (Thrown Weapons)

AV: 4 (Varies) ===== Rg: 12 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. If this attack dealt Weak or Moderate damage, the target gains **Poison +1**. If it dealt Severe damage, the target gains **Poison +2**.

✗ **Hobble:** After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition for the remainder of Dramatic Time:
"**Hobbled:** This character may only declare one Movement General Action per turn and may not declare the Run Action."

BARBED CRAWLER SWARM

The most notable difference between Speckled Crawlers and Barbed Crawlers is the ability of the latter to fire jagged bone spines from their bodies. The barbs are only loosely attached to their bodies, and it's not uncommon to find discarded spines littering the shores of their seaside nests. By rapidly expanding a series of air bladder-like organs within their spines, Barbed Crawlers can expel their spines outward at high speed and surprising precision.

While an individual Barbed Crawler is certainly dangerous in its own right, these creatures are, by nature, pack hunters. Their bone spines are relatively lightweight and fragile, and the tissue lining their hollow interiors is highly toxic; if a spine snaps off in a creature's body, this tissue tears and floods the creature's bloodstream with potent toxins. The Barbed Crawlers are themselves immune to this poison, though mutations with particularly virulent strains are poisoned tissue are not unhead of (much to the short-lived discomfort of the other Barbed Crawlers hunting alongside such toxic mutants).



STRIPED SKULKER

Minion (6), Living, Swampfiend

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 3	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 7	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Acrobatics 2, Athletics 3, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Stealth 5, Toughness 1, Wilderness 2.

Aquatic: This character's speed is not reduced while swimming. It can take the Charge action while underwater.

Perfect Camouflage: Each time this character takes a Pass Action, it gains + to Stealth Challenges and to Defense flips against Ranged Combat attacks until the end of the next turn.

Unimpeded: This character ignores penalties for terrain while taking Movement Actions.

(1) Poisonous Jaws (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (11) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage and gains **Poison +2**.
This attack gains +2 AV when taken as part of a disengaging strike.

☞ *Wave After Wave:* After succeeding, take this action again against any target in range.

✕ *Infect:* After succeeding, the target gains the **Poisoned +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.

(1) Fade Into Surroundings (Stealth)

This character may discard a card to become invisible until the start of its next turn. While invisible, this character cannot be seen, and anyone attempting to target it is considered to be Blind for the duration of that action. Any attempts to detect this character by visual means fail completely, but this character still makes sound, displaces air as it walks, leaves footprints, etc. and thus may be detected by these means (albeit at a ☐☐ to any Notice duels).

STRIPED SKULKER

The various Skulker species of the Gibbering Hordes embody stealth. Their skin pigmentation constantly changes to match their surroundings, making them very difficult to see until it is too late. They try to stick to dark places, slinking from shadow to shadow as they creep up on their unsuspecting prey. Worse yet, their incredibly sharp teeth contain a potent venom, making them effective against even larger prey.

As if their natural camouflage did not make them dangerous enough, Striped Skulkers are also quite cunning. Since arriving on Earth, they have learned to hide the remains of their victims to avoid detection, often creating nests of piled bones and rotting meat. Thus far, the easiest way to detect these nests is by their foul odor, but it is only a matter of time before the Skulkers realize this and adapt their tactics appropriately.

When confronted with military forces, Striped Skulkers tend to ignore rank and file troops in favor of seeking out and eliminating the enemy leadership. They don't always get this right (sometimes they end up devouring medics or other non-combatants in the mistaken belief that they are the ones commanding the others), but no matter where they strike, their sudden appearance and primal ferocity is usually enough to disrupt even the best-laid plans.



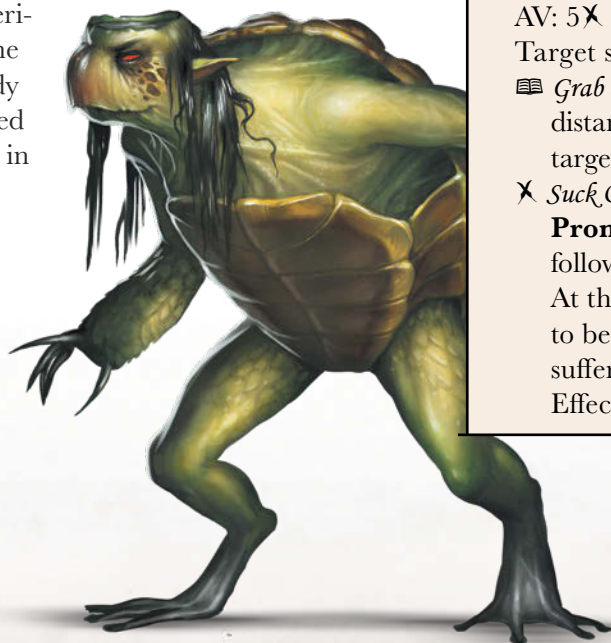
KAPPA

Kappa are turtle-like creatures that can sometimes be found in the shallow waters of Pacific Ocean. For the most part, they try to avoid interacting with humans, particularly in the last century as seaside towns greatly expanded their borders and firearms became more common. When spotted at a distance, Kappa are most often confused with particularly large turtles, though a few truthful stories of Kappa encounters have been passed down through the ages.

Perhaps the most notable feature of a Kappa is the bowl on the top of its head. When the Kappa is not in the water, it keeps this bowl filled, ensuring that the Kappa can draw strength from the ocean's boundless depths. If the water is spilled or otherwise emptied, it causes a great deal of pain for the creatures, equivalent to something between a splitting migraine and slamming a hammer down upon one's finger. Needless to say, Kappas are very diligent about keeping their bowls filled at all times.

While they primarily subsist on fish and other seafood, Kappas have a particular fondness for cucumbers and human babies, both of which are the very height of cuisine in their estimation. An offer of cucumbers or babies is often enough to overcome a Kappa's natural skepticism, and the creatures have been known to stray far from their beaches in search of such tempting fare.

Many of the stories revolving around Kappa mention their most dreaded means of attack: sucking out someone's innards from their rear end. This grisly attack is just as unpleasant to watch as it is to experience and may be one reason why nobody seems all that excited to seek out Kappa in the wild.



KAPPA

Minion (5), Living, Swampfiend

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 3 (8)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 4	<i>Initiative</i> 0 (5)
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (7)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 2, Evade 2, Notice 1, Pugilism 3✕, Toughness 1, Wilderness 2.

Aquatic: This character's speed is not reduced while swimming. It can take the Charge action while underwater.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Kappa Water: While the bowl on this character's head is filled with water, this character heals 1 damage at the start of each of its turns during Dramatic Time. If this character becomes **Prone**, the water spills out of its head-bowl and this character becomes **Dazed** until it is refilled (which requires 1 AP and a source of water within arm's reach).

(1) Claws and Beak (Pugilism)

AV: 5✕ (10✕) === Range: // 2 ==== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

📖 **Grab and Throw:** After succeeding, throw the target a distance up to your Might in yards (2 yards), then the target becomes **Prone**.

✕ **Suck Out Innards:** After damaging, if the target is **Prone**, it must discard two cards or gain the following Lasting Critical Effect: "**Seeping Wound:** At the start of her turn, the character can choose to become **Slow**. If she does not become **Slow**, she suffers 2 damage that generates a Weak Critical Effect."




FATED CHARACTERS

The following fourteen characters were specially designed to be used with *The Obsidian Gate*. Each Faction has two characters that can be played during the adventure, save for the Guild and the Court of Two, who only have a single character each. As *The Obsidian Gate* progresses, these characters will advance in predetermined ways.

If a character possesses the ability to cast Spells or Manifested Powers, they most likely have a corresponding Magical Theory that modifies those abilities. If no Magical Theory is listed, the character is assumed to have a Unique Magical Theory (which has no benefits or drawbacks).

When advancing characters in their predetermined Pursuit, it is suggested that these pregenerated characters stay within their Pursuits, but ultimately it is up to the Fatemaster as to how each character advances.

This adventure takes place on Earth. Because Earth is an inherently less magical place than Malifaux, it is more difficult for characters to channel magic on this side of the Breach. For the entirety of this adventure, characters receive a  on their attempts to cast Spells or Manifested Powers. The easiest way to bypass this penalty is with the Focus action.

Finally, remember that if a character dies, they cannot be played in subsequent Acts of the adventure! If a character dies early or midway through an adventure, their player can choose another available character and re-join the adventure at a point that seems suitable to the Fatemaster.

CHARACTER FACTIONS

The following pregenerated characters are broken into eight different *The Other Side* factions. At the end of the worldwide event, the faction that is played the most will have one of its characters turned into an adjunct in *The Other Side*.

The following list gives players a brief breakdown of the various factions and their characters:

ABYSSINIA

Abyssinia relies upon Soulstone-powered technology to expand their nation's borders and influence. Featuring elite units that eschew that use of magic, Abyssinia is one of the few nations that has remained strong despite the Guild's trade embargoes.

Characters: Aida Omari, Zesiro Selassie

THE KING'S EMPIRE

The British Empire has recently thrown off the yoke of Guild oppression to take its own place on the world stage. With a military that relies upon spycraft and long-range firearms, its agents are both highly skilled and devoted to both king and country.

Characters: Kimber Daniels, Dr. John Watson

THE CULT OF THE BURNING MAN

The strange entity known as the Burning Man appeared in the skies above Earth two years ago. Since that time, it has drifted across the skies, spreading chaos in its wake and infusing the damaged and deranged with awesome magical power.

Characters: Hu Heng, El

THE GIBBERING HORDES

Wrenched from their home in the oceans of Malifaux, the amphibious monsters that make up the Gibbering Hordes were thrust onto the surface of Earth by the Burning Man. They have since retreated to the world's oceans, where they are breeding new generations of flesh-starved horrors.

Characters: Abel Negasi, Vh'udraa

THE THREE KINGDOMS

After the collapse of the first Breach, the nations of China, Japan, and Vietnam bound their royal houses together with marriages and treaties. Their bid for power failed, and they have spent the past fifty years either occupied by, or forcibly bound to, the Guild as tributary states.

Characters: Nakazawa Sadao, Shinkai Shige

KIMON

The creatures known as oni have been imprisoned in the Beyond for centuries. They strain against the boundaries of their prison, seeking to escape so that they might drown the world in blood.

Characters: Nakajima Aiko, Takemaru Kazuya

THE COURT OF TWO

The Court of Two is a secretive group of Malifaux expatriates who seek to manipulate the spreading war for their own benefit, using carefully-placed doppelgangers and legions of enslaved murder-ghosts.

Characters: Fan Luoyang

THE GUILD

The Guild is as much a multinational organization as an empire in its own right. The Guild seized control of the Three Kingdoms fifty years ago, but now, its grip is loosening and rebellion and revolt have replaced frightened obedience across the world.

Characters: Karlheinz Bennewitz

AIDA OMARI

Fated, Living, Guard 1

<i>Might</i> -2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 4	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> -1
<i>Defense</i> 5	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +3
<i>Willpower</i> 2	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Barter 1, Bureaucracy 2, Convince 1, Doctor 1, Evade 3, Explosives 1, Intimidate 3, Melee 2, Notice 3, Thrown Weapons 2, Toughness 1.

Iron Tank (Guard): When Aida fails a Close Combat duel (such as Melee) during Dramatic Time, she may draw a card.

Flick of the Wrist: Aida may use Grace in place of Might when making a Melee or Pugilism attack.

Lasting Challenge: When Aida succeeds on the Impose action, it lasts until the end of Dramatic Time or until she takes the Impose action again (in which case the previous Impose action lasts until the start of her next turn).

Stand Ground: Aida does not need to discard a card to take the Defensive Stance action.

Languages: English, Amharic.

(1) Shock Baton (Melee)

AV: +5 ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/2 damage and becomes **Dazed** until the end of its next turn. On Severe damage, the target must also attempt an Unconsciousness Challenge (TN 8 + the amount by which the attack exceeded the target's Defense).

(1) Percussion Grenade (Thrown Weapons)

AV: +4 ===== Rg: 12 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage, ignoring Armor. If this weapon misses the target but does not generate a Margin of Failure, the attack hits the target but suffers 1/1 to its damage flip. Grenades are destroyed after they are used.

📖 *I Had an Extra:* After succeeding, you find an additional item identical to the one you just threw in your gear.

AIDA OMARI

Aida is a shining example of an Abyssinian success story. Born into a family of poor peddlers, she joined the military at a young age and began steadily working her way up the ranks. She was never the strongest or most cunning of her classmates, and her blunt nature tended to rub her peers the wrong way, but nobody could deny that Aida was smart. She resisted numerous attempts to transfer her into engineering units, for her goal, ever since she was a child, was to protect the Emperor as one of the elite Mehal Sefari.

To that end, Aida has recently secured a position among the Imperial Guard. Her latest mission - the protection of an Abyssinian noble at a manufacturing convention - was without incident, and as a reward for her service, she's been given a bit of shore leave to enjoy Japan. Aida would prefer to just move directly to her next assignment, but she knows that any insistence to do so would simply be seen as difficulty in following orders. She's decided to visit some of the local temples in the hopes of having a good story to tell her commanding officer if she asks Aida about what she did on her break.

Gear: Shock Baton, 2 Percussion Grenades.

Destiny: "If you refuse the hero's call, your every breath will be as your last, but fear the shadow cast by no man. The sisters will show the way, and you will unshackle the prisoner."

Twist Deck: Tomes (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Crows (3, 7, 11), Masks (2, 6, 10)

THE IMPOSE ACTION

(1) Impose: The character draws attention to herself, forcing an opponent that can hear or see her to favor her over other targets. The character makes an Intimidate Challenge that is resisted by the target's Centering Skill.

If the Imposing character succeeds, the target suffers a 1, plus an additional 1 per Margin of Success, to any attack that doesn't include an Imposing character as a target. This penalty lasts until the start of the Imposing character's next turn.

ZESIRO SELASSIE

Zesiro spent much of his childhood in his father's bookshop, reading various books on clockworks and pneumatics. As he grew older, he spent many hours assembling pocket watches and, later, small mechanical rodents.

It was a foregone conclusion that Zesiro would attend the Abyssinian academies. He graduated at the top of his class, but rather than enroll in the military, he took a position with a private company, Mishima Manufacturing, and moved to Japan.

Though the culture shock was quite severe, Zesiro is starting to appreciate the customs of his home. He just finished speaking at a manufacturing convention in Kamakura and is taking a few days to enjoy the sights.

Gear: Heavy Wrench, Mobile Toolkit (pg. 35), Redati-5 (pg. 35).

Destiny: "Once you rise from the ashes, you will not be deceived by the ghosts of the tower, but the witch grows weary of your follies. You will watch as they fall one by one to the ground, and it will be the feast of ages."

Twist Deck: Tomes (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Crows (2, 6, 10)

SUBORDINATE CHARACTERS

Subordinate characters do not generate an Initiative value during Dramatic Time and do not act unless they receive the (1) Order Action from their controller. If a subordinate character does not receive the (1) Order Action, it does not get a turn that round. A subordinate character may only take one turn per round.

On its turn, the ordering character controls the subordinate character. During its turn, the subordinate character may flip (but not cheat) cards as if it were a Fated character; at all other times, the subordinate character uses its Rank Value in place of card flips.

(1) Order: The character commands a subordinate character under her control. After this character completes her turn, the ordered subordinate character immediately takes its turn.

ZESIRO SELASSIE

Fated, Living, Engineer 1

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> 3	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 4	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +1
<i>Willpower</i> 2	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Artefacting 3, Bureaucracy 2, Convince 1, Engineering 2, Evade 2, History 1, Literacy 1, Lockpicking 2, Mathematics 1, Melee 2, Notice 1, Printing 1.

Interchangeable Parts (Engineer): When Zesiro fails an Artefacting or Engineering duel, he may draw a card.

Complex Machinery: Zesiro gains +1 to any Crafting or Engineering duels made as part of an Ongoing Challenge. When he creates a Construct, he gains +1 Construct Point per completed step in Engineer, and its cost is reduced by a similar amount (minimum 1 scrip).

I've Got Your Back: At the start of Zesiro's turn during Dramatic Time, he may choose a friendly character within 1 yard. Until the start of Zesiro's next turn, that character gains Armor +1 (without any reduction to their Defense) whenever they are within 1 yard of him.

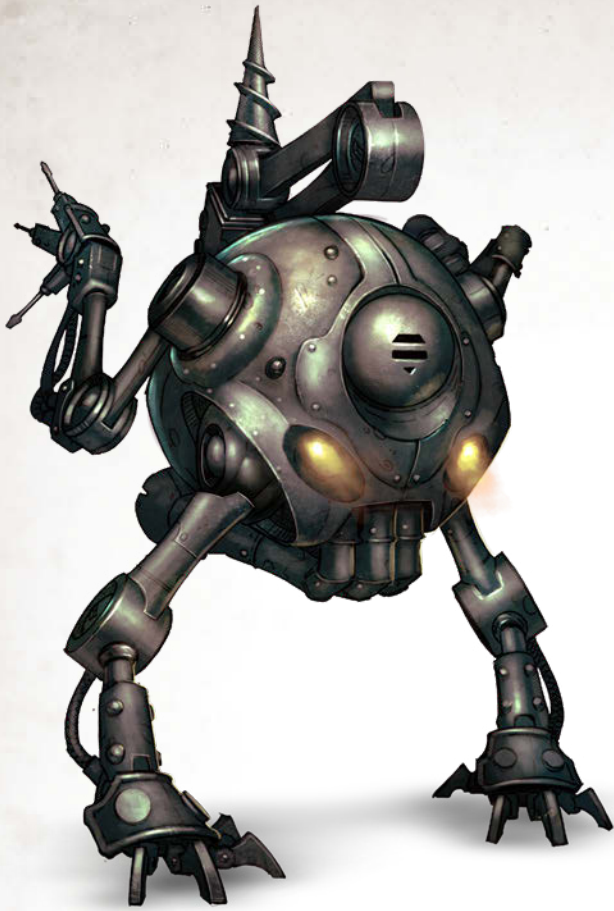
Languages: English, Amharic, Japanese.

(1) Heavy Wrench (Melee)

AV: +4 ===== Rg: /// 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. If this weapon deals Severe damage, the target suffers a Weak Critical Effect in addition to any other Critical Effects.

(2) Mechanical Engineering (Artefacting/Engineering)

AV: +5 ===== TN: 10 /// ===== Range: 1 yard
Target inanimate Construct is animated as a subordinate character under Zesiro's control for one day. At the end of this duration, the construct deactivates but may be later reanimated. Zesiro may deactivate his subordinate Construct within 1 yard as a (1) Action. He may only control one Construct at a time with this action (his Mobile Toolkit does not need to be animated and does not count toward this limit).



REDATI-5

Minion (5), Construct

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -5	<i>Cunning</i> -5	<i>Tenacity</i> -5
<i>Defense</i> 2 (7)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 1	<i>Initiative</i> +1
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (7)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Pneumatic 2, Toughness 2.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

(1) Cutting Blades (Pneumatic)

AV: +4 ===== Rg: /// 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage.

MOBILE TOOLKIT

Peon (3), Construct

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -5	<i>Cunning</i> -5	<i>Tenacity</i> -5
<i>Defense</i> 2 (5)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 1	<i>Initiative</i> +1
<i>Willpower</i> 3 (6)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Centering 1, Pneumatic 2.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Flick of the Wrist: This character may use Grace in place of Might when making a Melee or Pugilism attack.

Willing Servant: Zesiro may use the (1) Order Action as a (0) Action when commanding this character. If he uses the Order Action to command any other Constructs, this character may be commanded as well.

(1) Hidden Blade (Pneumatic)

AV: +4 ===== Rg: /// 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage.

(0) The Right Tool

Zesiro may discard a card to give a different Construct within 1 yard of this character one of the following Conditions until the end of the target's next turn:

- **Metal Plating:** If this character has Armor +2 or lower, it gains Armor +1.
- **Enhanced Targeting:** Choose a Close Combat or Ranged Combat Skill. This character gains + to attacks using the chosen Skill.
- **Sharpened:** This character gains + to its Close Combat damage flips. After damaging another character, end this Condition.

KIMBER DANIELS

Kimber's still not entirely sure how she became a globe-trotting spy in the service of King Edward VII. It could have been when Margaret Belle, the Empire's greatest spy, stumbled into her father's animal clinic, full of bullet holes and in immediate need of surgery. Or perhaps it was when Kimber agreed to deliver a letter to a suspicious man while Margaret was recovering. Or maybe when she stabbed the Chinese woman who was strangling Margaret when Kimber returned from her errand. Or when the animal clinic burned down and she was forced to flee with Margaret.

In the end, it probably doesn't matter. Kimber's parents died that night, but she found a friend and mentor in Margaret, who saw the girl's desperate need for order and arranged for her to be placed in one of England's best boarding schools. Every few months, Margaret would drop in to check on her and bring her a few sweets and gifts from abroad.

It's probably not surprising that Kimber ended up following in Margaret's footsteps. She's still a low-level agent, primarily tasked with surveillance and code-breaking, but she's determined to live up to her mentor's expectations. The only problem, really, is Kimber's lack of focus; she finds it difficult to sit still, and if she spends too much time on any one thing, her attention begins to waver as her mind drifts elsewhere.

At the moment, she's on assignment in Kamakura, Japan, keeping tabs on a dangerous cult, the Satori no Michi. They seem overly interested in Kotoku-in, a Buddhist temple, so Kimber has been visiting the temple daily in the hopes of encountering them.

Gear: Barbed Whip, Duster (Protected (♣)), US&E Collier Hold Out Pistol, 30 Bullets, ¥100 (about 10 scrip).

Destiny: "If you choose to see no evil in the chiming of the hour, she will sit alone amongst your misery, but everything rots away in the end. The reflection in the water shows the truth, and the crime that you hide will destroy you."

Twist Deck: Tomes (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Crows (3, 7, 11), Masks (2, 6, 10)

KIMBER DANIELS

Fated, Living, Collaborator 1

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> -3
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +3
<i>Willpower</i> 2	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Bewitch 1, Carouse 1, Deceive 1, Flexible 3, Husbandry 1, Literacy 2, Notice 2, Pistol 2, Scrutiny 1, Stealth 3, Toughness 1.

Team Tactics (Collaborator): When Kimber fails a Social duel (such as Bewitch or Deceive), she may draw a card.

Preparations: After flipping Initiative, Kimber may discard a card to reflip her Initiative.

Set 'em Up: After damaging an opponent with an attack, Kimber may discard a card to give the opponent the following Condition until the start of her next turn: "**In Position:** Enemies attacking this character add the suit of the card discarded when this Condition was applied to their final duel totals."

Languages: English, Japanese, Russian.

(1) Barbed Whip (Flexible)

AV: +5 ===== Rg: ♣ 3 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage. If this weapon inflicts Severe damage, it causes a Weak Critical Effect in addition to any other Critical Effects.

♣ **Critical Strike:** When damaging, deal 1 additional damage for each ♣ in the final duel total.

📖 **Whipping Frenzy:** After succeeding, make another Flexible weapon attack against the same target. This attack may not declare Triggers.

(1) US&E Collier Hold Out (Pistol)

AV: +4 ===== Rg: ♣ 2 or ♠ 6 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/3 damage. You gain ♠ on any attempts to hide this weapon. This weapon may not declare Triggers. Capacity 6, Reload 2.

DR. JOHN H. WATSON

Fated, Living, Sawbones 1

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 1	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +2
<i>Willpower</i> 4	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Athletics 1, Bewitch 1, Centering 2, Doctor 3, Evade 1, Literacy 2, Notice 3, Pistol 2, Scrutiny 3, Toughness 1.

Trust Me, I'm a Doctor (Sawbones): When John fails an Expertise duel (such as Doctor, Gambling, or Notice) during Dramatic Time, he may draw a card.

Doctor Trigger: John gains the following Trigger on all Doctor duels:

☛ *Take Two of These and Call Me in the Morning:* After succeeding, if you are performing First Aid, the target heals +1 damage per ☛ in the final duel total.

Everyman: When this character's current Wounds are below 0, his attacks that deal damage deal +1 damage. If his current Wounds are below -10, this bonus increases to +2 damage.

Patient Files: Damage flips made against characters with the **Under My Care** Condition applied by this character suffer ☐.

Under My Care: John may spend five minutes performing a medical check-up on a Living character (that may be himself). The target gains the **Under My Care** Condition (to a max of 3 characters with that Condition).

Languages: English, German, Japanese.

(1) Awkward Punch (Pugilism)

AV: +0 ===== Rg: ☛ 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 0/1/2 damage.

(1) B&D Pocket (Pistol)

AV: +3 ===== Rg: ☛ 6 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage. You gain ☛ on any attempts to hide this weapon. Capacity 4, Reload 2.

DR. JOHN H. WATSON

Dr. John Watson has had a long and illustrious life. As a young man, he studied in London, earned his medical degree, and joined the British military as an assistant surgeon. Unfortunately, his military career came to an abrupt end when he was shot in the leg. While recovering, he contracted typhoid fever and was sent back to London, his health ruined.

After drifting for a time, John was introduced to his eventual roommate by a mutual friend. For almost a decade, John chronicled the adventures of his crime-solving roommate, until the fateful day when his friend disappeared over the edge of a waterfall while locked in mortal combat with his nemesis.

John's writing career continued for a little while longer, right up until the death of his wife. With a heavy heart, the aging doctor decided to put his life in London behind him. He tidied up his affairs, emptied his bank account, and began traveling around the world, searching for the peace and calm that he could no longer find in England.

When he received word that portals had opened above London, allowing terrible monsters to destroy his home, John volunteered as a medic for the British army. A dozen battlefields and hundreds of soldiers later, he's found himself in Kamakura, Japan, tending to wounded British soldiers in a local hospital.

Gear: B&D Pocket Pistol, 30 bullets, Duster (Protected (☛)), Doctor's Bag (☛ to Doctor Challenges), ¥20 (about 2 scrip).

Destiny: "When you've traded away your beloved, you will return with the balm for all ills, and the forgotten shall be recalled. The halo slips around your throat like a noose, and you will kiss the crown."

Twist Deck: Masks (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Tomes (3, 7, 11), Crows (2, 6, 10)

THE UNDER MY CARE CONDITION

"**Under My Care:** When this character is healed by the character that applied this Condition, this character heals +1 damage."

HU HENG

Hu Heng grew up traveling the rural areas of China with his father, a wandering swordsman in the final days of when people like that could find work. It was a hard life, and Heng grew up hungry and reed-thin.

Then the Burning Man came to China. The world lit up in a rainbow of flames as the Burning Man cut a wound in the sky, ripping open the world like a zipper behind him. Heng felt raw, uncontrolled magic work its way beneath his skin and curl around his bones. His father, twisted beyond reason into a monstrous form, disappeared howling into the hills, but Heng continued to stare up into the nothingness between dimensions.

In that gaping abyss, he saw a great statue shattering and unleashing doom upon the world. Heng wasted no time in traveling to Japan; he would find the statue and protect it, becoming the hero his father never was.

Gear: Hunting Knife, ¥80 (about 8 scrip).

Destiny: “As the bell tolls for judgment, you will shatter the stone, but there are dragons here. The chime of your blunder will ring through the village, and you will burn the oldest page.”

Twist Deck: Crows (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Tomes (2, 6, 10)

MAGICAL SHIELDING

The Counter-Spelling Skill can be used for Magical Shielding. Protecting a character with Magical Shielding is a (1) Action. It has no range, but it does require line of sight from the shielding character to the protected character. The shielding character can only protect one character at a time in this way.

The shielding character may end the Magical Shielding as a (0) Action. It automatically ends if the protected character moves out of line of sight of the shielding character.

A character protected with Magical Shielding adds the shielding character's ranks in Counter-Spelling to the final duel total of any Defense or Willpower duel she makes to resist a Spell or Manifested Power.

HU HENG


Fated, Living, Mage 1

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -2	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +0
<i>Willpower</i> 3	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Athletics 1, Counter-Spelling 2, Enchanting 2, Evade 1, Forgery 1, Literacy 1, Melee 2, Scrutiny 1, Sorcery 3, Stealth 2, Track 1, Wilderness 1.

Focused Efforts (Mage): When Heng fails to cast a Manifested Power, he may draw a card.

The Burning Man's Influence (Magical Theory):

Heng ignores the  penalty for casting Spells or Manifested Powers on Earth. When Heng casts a Spell or Manifested Power, he may discard a card before performing the duel to add its suit to his final duel total. At the start of every session, he must succeed on a TN 12 Willpower Challenge or gain the **Crazy +1** Condition.

Arcane Shield: During Dramatic Time, if Heng has not yet taken his turn during the current round, he reduces all damage he suffers by 1, to a minimum of 0.



Unequaled Accuracy (Sorcery): Heng does not randomize his target when firing into an engagement with Sorcery.

Languages: English, Japanese, Mandarin.



(1) Hunting Knife (Melee)

AV: +4 ===== Rg:  1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage

(1) Fire Blast (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: +5 ===== TN: 7  ===== Rg:  7 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage and gains **Burning +1**.
✕ *Arcing Energies:* After succeeding, another character within 2 yards of the target gains **Burning +1**.

(1) Roasting Flesh (Enchanting/Cunning)


AV: +4 ===== TN: 8  ===== Rg: 5 yards ===== Resist: **Wp**
For 1 minute, a Living target begins to emit a stench that imposes  to any Close Combat attacks made against her by Living characters.

El*Fated, Living, Forgotten 1*

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> -3	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> -1
<i>Defense</i> 5	<i>Walk</i> 3	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -2
<i>Willpower</i> 2	<i>Charge</i> 3	<i>Wounds</i> 5	



Skills: Doctor 2, Evade 3, Flexible 1, Notice 1, Pick Pocket 3, Pistol 2, Scrutiny 3, Stealth 3.


Ignorant (Forgotten): When El fails a duel she has no Skill ranks in, she may draw a card.

Face in the Crowd: Ranged attacks made against El suffer a  while she is within 3 yards of one or more other characters (friend or foe).

Reset Fate: At the end of Dramatic Time, before she discards any unwanted Twist Cards, El may reshuffle her Twist discard pile back into her Twist Deck.


Stealth Trigger: El gains the following Trigger on all Stealth duels:

✕ *Stalker:* After succeeding, you gain the following Condition for the next minute: "**Getting Closer:** This character may end this Condition when making a Melee attack against a target that does not know she is present to gain   to the attack flip."



Unimportant: El gains a  to any duel made to avoid being noticed in a group. When she makes a Stealth Challenge, she may add half her completed Forgotten steps (+1 total), to her final duel total.

Languages: English.

(1) Carriage Driving Whip (Flexible)

AV: +4 ===== Rg:  2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.

(1) B&D Pocket (Pistol)

AV: +5 ===== Rg:  6 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage. You gain  on any attempts to hide this weapon. Capacity 4, Reload 2.


El

El can't remember much about her life. It's hazy and indistinct, like a photo album with all of the pictures cut out. She remembers that she is British, and that for a time she cared for a small child, though she cannot remember whether the child was her own. She is certain that her name once began with the letter "L," but the rest of it has faded from her mind.

The only point in her life that burns bright in her mind is when she first saw the Burning Man. The flaming figure stands out in her mind like a lantern on a foggy day, bright and distinct when the rest of her memories are blurry and vague. El remembers standing on a bridge and staring up at the glowing figure as fire rained down from the heavens around it, and then nothing else.

Few of the memories that El has made since that day have stuck, either. She has trouble remembering names, and though she recalls taking a boat to Japan, she doesn't quite remember just why she came. Perhaps it was in search of a way to repair her shattered memory? Meditation *was* said to calm the mind and allow for greater introspection...

Since arriving in Japan, El has begun to notice some worrying side effects to her condition. Other people seem to forget about her when she is around, even while in the middle of conversation. She's legitimately worried that she might be fading out of existence, one memory at a time. Somehow, it all ties back to the Burning Man... but is the flaming figure the cause of her slipping memories or the solution?

Gear: Carriage Driving Whip, B&D Pocket Pistol, 20 bullets, Mysterious Parasol ( to Training Skills, i.e. Acrobatics, Athletics, Carouse, Centering, Evade, Pick Pocket, Stealth, and Toughness).

Destiny: "Once you witness your golden sunset, your eyes will be open unto the abyss, as the jester dances where he will. Denying the battle will win the war, and it cackles from the locket."

Twist Deck: Crows (1, 5, 9, 13), Masks (4, 8, 12), Rams (3, 7, 11), Tones (2, 6, 10)

ABEL NEGASI

The son of a politician, Abel Negasi is a patriot who enrolled in the Abyssinian navy to protect the world from the horrors of the Gibbering Hordes. His ship was deployed to the war-torn Philippines in the hopes of reclaiming land from the foul fishmen, but there were simply too many of them; the pelagic nightmares attacked Abel's ship, flooded onto the deck, and overwhelmed him. By the time the creatures had been driven off, Abel had lost his right arm.

The ship was not prepared to perform a full limb transplant - they did not have any combat-class prosthetics on board - but Abel convinced them to fit him with a surgical-class prosthetic arm in order to get him back to fighting status as quickly as possible.

It proved to be a wise decision. As his ship attempted to dock in Kaosiung City, Taiwan, they found the entire port swarming with more fishmen. Abel fought like a demon, punching the monsters into paste after his sidearm ran out of ammunition. The surgical limb was not designed for such abuse, however, and when he punched a large, centipede-like creature, the disabled siphons in his arm unexpectedly kicked in and siphoned a full pint of its blood into Abel's bloodstream. Once the battle was won, Abel collapsed and had to undergo a synthetic blood transfusion to replace his poisoned blood.

Since then, Abel has been recovering in Kamakura, Japan. He has become concerned that the monster's blood changed something inside him, for his dreams have been filled with visions of a chained, aquatic goddess and haunting, whale-like songs. He has taken to visiting the town's temples in the hopes of finding some measure of peace for his troubled mind.

Gear: Augmented Right Arm (Full Limb, Enhanced Fist), Armored Boots (Protected (♣)) Steel Skull Plating (Protected (♣)).

Destiny: "As the crimson writhes upon the belly of the fallen, he will shade your tired eyes, and you will leave your mark in many woes. You will hold the myth of life in your hands, and the eyes in the darkness change you."

Twist Deck: Tomes (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Crows (2, 6, 10)

ABEL NEGASI

Fated, Living, Augmented 1

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> -1
<i>Defense</i> 2	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -1
<i>Willpower</i> 3	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Artefacting 2, Athletics 2, Centering 1, Convince 1, Evade 2, Leadership 2, Pugilism 3, Thrown Weapons 2, Toughness 3, Wilderness 1.

End of the Line (Augmented): When Abel fails a Might duel (such as Athletics or Pugilism), he may draw a card.

Armor +2: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +2, to a minimum of 1.

More Machine Than Man (Synthetic Transfusion): Abel's blood has been replaced with a synthetic substitute. He is immune to the Bleeding Out Condition, and when he is the recipient of First Aid, the character making the flip may use Alchemy instead of Doctor.

Mostly Blind: Abel gains a ♣ on Close Combat attacks but suffers a ☐ on Ranged Combat attacks. This bonus has already been factored into his attack below.

Languages: English, Amharic.

(1) Needle-Laden Pneumatic Fist (Pugilism)

AV: +5 ===== Rg: ♣ 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/4/5 damage. This weapon gains ♣ on the attack flip and ignores one ☐ on the damage flip.

☞ **TKO:** After damaging, the target must make a TN 10 Unconsciousness Challenge. The TN of this Challenge is increased by +1 if this attack dealt Moderate damage and by +2 if Severe.

☞ **Venipuncture:** After damaging a Living target, heal 1 damage.

VH'UDRAA

Fated, Living, Copycat 1

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 3	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> -1
<i>Defense</i> 2	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +0
<i>Willpower</i> 3	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Bewitch 3, Centering 1, Counter-Spelling 1, Deceive 3, Heavy Melee 1, Leadership 1, Literacy 2, Music 3, Notice 1, Prestidigitation 1, Stealth 1, Toughness 1.

Feigning Competence (Copycat): When Vh'udraa fails a Skill Duel involving a Skill that was copied with the Imitation action, she may draw a card.

Df (♥) Trip Over Something: If Vh'udraa fails and is not Prone, she becomes **Prone** and the attack is considered to have missed her unless the attacker achieved a Margin of Success.

Bewitch Trigger: Vh'udraa gains the following Trigger on all Bewitch duels:

♥ *Captivating Illusion:* After succeeding, the target believes you are a moderate- to high-ranking member of an organization with which they are friendly.

Mimicry: Vh'udraa gains ♥ on any Deceive Challenges that involve mimicking another character's voice.

Music Trigger: Vh'udraa gains the following Trigger on all Music duels:

♥ *Gentle Lullaby:* After succeeding, every character within (X)8 that can hear you becomes **Dazed** for as long as you continue singing.

Languages: Deep Speak, Broken English, Broken Japanese.

(1) Coral Staff (Heavy Melee)

AV: +3 ===== Rg: ♣ 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage.

(1) Imitation

Vh'udraa may discard a card to choose a Skill belonging to a target within 6 yards. If she does so, so long as she acts in a manner that is in keeping with the target's personality (i.e., assertive, cowardly, etc.), she may use the target's rank in the Skill in place of her own (max of 3 ranks above her rank in the Skill). This bonus lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first, or until she takes this action again.

VH'UDRAA

Vh'udraa is not human. Until a year and a half ago, she was a young siren studying sworn in apprenticeship to her pod's Stormsiren. Her life was a delicate dance between ambushing prey and avoiding fiercer predators, but in her dreams, she heard the voice of her goddess, Meridion, singing to her of vengeance.

Then the great portal opened and pulled Vh'udraa into a world of bright light and suffocating air. She fled into the dark depths of the foreign ocean, seeking the song of her goddess. Just as she was about to lose hope, Vh'udraa caught an echo of an emerald song, not one belonging to her goddess, but another imprisoned creature of great sorrow and anger.

The song filled Vh'udraa's heart with fear, but despite this, she was curious. Did the humans also worship one of the fallen gods? Had the ancient war spilled out into this strange land?

Fearful of the surface yet desperate for some connection to her former life, Vh'udraa spent weeks preparing a magical song, snatching the notes out of the foreign currents of the strange ocean, just as she had learned from her Stormsiren many years earlier. When the strange, lonely moon was at its full height, Vh'udraa sang the ancient songs and wept as her beautiful, finned body warped into one matching the grotesque humans that walked in the dry places of this new world.

After some initial awkwardness (walking on her new legs was difficult, and the concept of clothing took some time to fully grasp), Vh'udraa was eventually able to make her way past the beach. The song grew more distinct as she made her way toward its source, and gradually, she realized that the things held at bay by the song were predators, not allies.

Gear: ¥90 (stolen, about 9 scrip).

Destiny: "After the first has been last and the last has been first, your shame will be as beaten as the hooves, for not all treasures glimmer in the light. The chime of your blunder will ring through the village, and you will die."

Twist Deck: Masks (1, 5, 9, 13), Tomes (4, 8, 12), Crows (3, 7, 11), Rams (2, 6, 10)

CPL. NAKAZAWA SADA0

Nakazawa Sadao was never a particularly bright child. His grew up in the gutter with his father, a burglar, and was directly responsible for his father being sent to prison after he failed to serve as an effective lookout. Realizing that the boy was a bit on the slow side, Sadao was adopted by the magistrate and put on the straight and narrow path.

For a time, Sadao hoped to become a singer or perhaps an actor, but that dream came to an end when he was conscripted into the Japanese army at the age of sixteen. Though initially disappointed to have his plans ruined, Sadao ended up flourishing in the structured environment of the military. He was terrible at formulating anything approaching a feasible battle strategy, and the concept of advanced tactics utterly eluded him, but he was a likeable person and that carried him far.

Sadao advanced quickly through the ranks, more as a result of nepotism and charm than any real merit on his part. As more and more reports of murderous fish-monsters began to surface in the coastal regions of China and the Philippines, the military stepped up patrols along Japan's beaches and coastal towns. As a rising star (at least on paper), Sadao was placed in command of a small group of soldiers stationed in the Kamakura region.

As a tourist destination, the military wanted someone who could put tourists (and the citizenry) at ease, and Sadao was, surprisingly, that person. He's made it a point to patrol the temples with one of the handful of subordinate soldiers at his disposal, if only to reassure everyone that the Japanese military will keep them safe from harm. For Sadao, that's more than an empty platitude: it's a statement of fact.

Gear: Military Katana (Folded Steel), Collier Navy Pistol, 30 bullets, ¥10 (about 1 scrip).

Destiny: "After you bleed the coal from the bones, he will trust your falsehoods, and time waits for no man but you. You will step through the looking glass, and you will deal with the devil."

Twist Deck: Rams (1, 5, 9, 13), Crows (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Tones (2, 6, 10)

CORPORAL NAKAZAWA SADA0

Fated, Living, Commander 1

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 3	<i>Intellect</i> -3	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +3
<i>Willpower</i> 2	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 1, Bewitch 1, Bureaucracy 1, Carouse 1, Husbandry 1, Leadership 3, Lockpicking 1, Melee 2, Music 2, Notice 2, Pistol 2, Toughness 2.

A Few Good Men (Commander): When one of Sadao's subordinate characters is killed or rendered unconscious while within 6 yards of him, he may draw a card.

Idiot: When Sadao fails a Social Skill Challenge, he generates no Margins of Failure, and unless he was outright threatening, the character he was interacting with does not take offense to anything he might have said or realize that he was attempting to manipulate them.

Reinforcements: At the start of each session, after the Prologue, Sadao may make a TN 8 Leadership Challenge to gain a single subordinate Soldier (pg. 43), to a max of 1 Soldier. The Soldier remains under his control indefinitely.

Languages: English, Japanese.

(1) Military Katana (Melee)

AV: +1 ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This weapon gains **4** to the damage flip.

(1) Collier Navy (Pistol)

AV: +4 ===== Rg: 12 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. Capacity 6, Reload 2.
Arrest Order: After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn:
"Arrest: This character must discard a card to perform a movement action."

SOLDIER

Minion (5), Living

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (9)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Athletics 1, Bureaucracy 1, Evade 3, Long Arms 3, Melee 3, Notice 2, Stealth 1, Toughness 1.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

From the Hip: When making a Long Arms attack, this character may substitute Grace for Intellect when calculating her Acting Value.

(1) Standard Issue Sword (Melee)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: *///* 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) US&E Carbine (Long Arms)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Rg: *☛* 12 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. Capacity 2, Reload 2.

☛ *Critical Strike:* When damaging the target, this attack deals +1 damage for each ☛ in the final duel total.



SUBORDINATE CHARACTERS

Subordinate characters do not generate an Initiative value during Dramatic Time and do not act unless they receive the (1) Order Action from their controller. If a subordinate character does not receive the (1) Order Action, it does not get a turn that round. A subordinate character may only take one turn per round.

On its turn, the ordering character controls the subordinate character. During its turn, the subordinate character may flip (but not cheat) cards as if it were a Fated character; at all other times, the subordinate character uses its Rank Value in place of card flips.

(1) Order: The character commands a subordinate character under her control. After this character completes her turn, the ordered subordinate character immediately takes its turn.

SHINKAI SHIGE

Shige was raised in Kyoto by her mother, an apothecary who had the misfortune of giving birth to a child out of wedlock. One day when Shige was seven, she bothered her mother with so many questions that the older woman accidentally mixed the wrong chemicals together. The poisonous vapors killed her mother, but not permanently: an hour later, she climbed back to her feet and began cleaning up the mess.

For the next fifteen years, Shige worked patiently alongside her undead mother, learning the family business and dealing with customers so that her mother could remain in the back. At first, Shige was pleased to know that her mother would always be there with her, but as the years passed, her mother's attention became increasingly smothering. Whenever she spoke too long with an attractive customer or spent too long away at the market, her mother would sling vile, hurtful accusations her way.

While most children in such a situation could at least hope to outlive their parents, no such option existed for Shige. Her mother would never grow old and pass ownership of their apothecary store to her, nor would she perish and leave Shige her inheritance. Her only hope of escape was marriage, but how could she ever explain her mother's condition to a suitor?

Eventually, it simply became too much for Shige. She spent days gathering up and hiding a variety of chemicals, and when her mother finally became distracted with a large order, Shige fled to Kamakura in the hopes of starting a life free from her mother. She's still nervous and frightened, but temples have always calmed her. Perhaps the monks at Kokuyōseki-in will be able to give her with some guidance and wisdom as she begins her terrifying new life.

Gear: Alchemy Toolkit (🔮 to Alchemy duels), 2 Flaming Bottles, Small Knife, ¥60 (about 6 scrip).

Destiny: “When you wake from the dream of ancestors, the melody will be lost within the gutters, and there will be naught but ashes upon your tongue. He tightens the strings and tugs at the rivets, and you will call upon the crow.”

Twist Deck: Crows (1, 5, 9, 13), Tomes (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Rams (2, 6, 10)

SHINKAI SHIGE

Fated, Living, Chemist 1

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 1	<i>Intellect</i> 3	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> -2
<i>Defense</i> 4	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +1
<i>Willpower</i> 3	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Alchemy 3, Barter 2, Centering 1, Convince 1, Deceive 1, Doctor 3, Evade 2, Melee 2, Notice 2, Scrutiny 1, Thrown Weapons 2.

Chemicals! (Chemist): When Shige fails a Crafting duel (such as Alchemy), she may draw a card.

Alchemy Trigger: Shige gains the following Triggers on all Alchemy duels:

📖 *...And It Burns!*: After creating an alchemical item, you gain a Flaming Bottle (Thrown Weapons, 1/1 🍀/1 🍀🍀 damage, everyone damaged gains **Burning +2**).

Doctor Trigger: Shige gains the following Triggers on all Doctor duels:

📖 *It's Not Lupus*: After succeeding, gain 1 additional Margin of Success.
 ✕ *Antidote*: After succeeding, if you are performing First Aid, remove the **Poison** Condition from the target.

Languages: English, Japanese.

(1) Small Knife (Melee)

AV: +2 ===== Rg: 🍀 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
 Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

✕ *Infect*: After succeeding, the target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.

(1) Flask of Formaldehyde (Thrown Weapons)

AV: +5 ===== Rg: 🍀 1 or 🍀 9 ===== Resist: **Df**
 Target suffers 1/1 🍀/1 🍀🍀 damage. Every character damaged by this action gains **Poison +1**. Shige must be holding an Alchemy toolkit to use this action.

✕ *Infect*: After succeeding, the target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.

NAKAJIMA AIKO

Fated, Living, Ghoul 1



<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +3
<i>Willpower</i> 3	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Bewitch 2, Centering 1, Convince 1, Culinary 3, Explosives 1, Evade 1, Homesteading 1, Music 1, Notice 2, Pugilism 3, Stealth 1, Toughness 1.

You Are What You Eat (Ghoul): When Aiko fails a Close Combat duel (such as Pugilism) during Dramatic Time, she may draw a card.

Honest: Aiko gains  to all Convince and Leadership duels.




Culinary Trigger: Aiko gains the following Trigger on all Culinary duels:

 *Loosen Your Belts:* After creating food or drink, anyone partaking gains the following Condition until the end of the day: "**Stuffed:** The character that applied this Condition gains a  on Bewitch and Convince duels made against this character."

Razor-Sharp Teeth: Aiko's natural attacks (Pugilism, Martial Arts, and Grappling) have had their damage increased by +1.

Languages: English, Japanese.

(1) Unleashed Fury (Pugilism)

AV: +4 ===== Rg:  1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/4/5 damage, ignoring 1 point of Armor.
 *Cowed:* After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next turn: "**Cowed:** This character suffers  on all attack flips against the character that applied this Condition."

(2) Grim Feast

Aiko may devour the corpse of a Living or Undead character of Minion rank or higher to gain the **Well Fed +1** Condition for 1 hour.

NAKAJIMA AIKO

Aiko has always believed herself to be cursed. Her mother perished in childbirth, leaving her father, a nickel miner at Mt. Oeyama, to care for her alone. Ever since she was little, Aiko assumed that the long hours he worked in the mines were to avoid having to spend much time in her presence, so she always made sure that dinner was ready when he returned home.

Seven months ago, her father returned home with an unexpected surprise: a strange mask that he and another worker had unearthed from the depths of the mine. Despite its age, it was in good condition, and her father was excited at the prospect of selling it to a collector or museum for a large sum of money.

That night, Aiko felt a strange compulsion to pick up the mask and don it. The next thing she knew, she was kneeling over his body and shoveling his flesh into her mouth. Worse yet, her teeth had somehow sharpened into knife-like daggers that continually cut her tongue and cheeks.

Fearing retribution and horrified at what she had done, Aiko fled from her home. She has come to believe that she is possessed by an oni and hopes that the monks at the Kokuyōseki-in will be able to purify her soul and free her from the corruption in her soul.

Gear: Creepy oni mask, ¥100 (about 10 scrip).

Destiny: "After the echoes of your laughter die, she strikes with daggers battered from your shield, and you will leave her hanging. The halo slips around your throat like a noose, and you cannot remove the red."

Twist Deck: Tomes (1, 5, 9, 13), Crows (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Rams (2, 6, 10)

THE WELL FED CONDITION

"**Well Fed +1:** This character gains +1 to her Physical Aspects, to a maximum Aspect value of 4. The value of this Condition cannot exceed +3."

Whenever a character gains the **Well Fed** Condition, the entire Condition's duration refreshes.

TAKAMARU KAZUYA

When Kazuya was a child, he would spend hours looking over the detailed maps his father made of Japan and the surrounding waters. In places that were not fully explored, his father would draw a fearsome monster and write the words "Here there be monsters."

Kazuya was always fascinated by those monsters. Were they all sea serpents, or could some of them become humanoid, like the stories of tengu and kitsune that heard from his grandfather? If a monster could turn itself into a human, he wondered, could a human turn himself into a monster?

Kazuya answered that question himself as he grew into a man. At first, he and his friends just got up to the normal types of teenage mischief: peeking through the windows of brothels, taunting homeless people, and stealing small items from street vendors. Things escalated, however, and soon Kazuya was running with a gang of thieves, and then a gang of thugs. After each successful heist or major crime, Kazuya would get a tattoo of an oni to celebrate.

The tattoos eventually caught the attention of a masked man who invited Kazuya to join the Satori no Michi, a gang (or cult, really) of oni-worshipping madmen who lived out in the mountains and hung on the words of a foreign priest. Normally, Kazuya would have had a good laugh at the idea that oni were actually real, but then he overheard their plans to open a gateway hidden within the temple of Kokuyōseki-in and unleash an army of violent oni.

The cultists might be crazy, but maybe not. Either way, Kazuya intends to keep them from bringing their fictional (?) monsters into his world.

Gear: Oni Tattoos (♣ to Intimidate duels), Greaves (Protected (♣)), Bracers (Protected (♣)).

Destiny: "After the reaper has come for innocence, you will be reborn of flesh and redemption, and you will upset the delicate balance of lies. You will carry the seed of a thousand-fold damnations, and the willful earns his due."

Twist Deck: Crows (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Masks (3, 7, 11), Tomes (2, 6, 10)

TAKAMARU KAZUYA

Fated, Living, Criminal 1

<i>Might</i> 4	<i>Grace</i> -2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +0
<i>Willpower</i> 4	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 1, Carouse 1, Centering 1, Deceive 1, Evade 2, Gambling 1, Intimidate 3, Melee 3, Notice 1, Thrown Weapons 1, Toughness 2, Track 1, Wilderness 1.

Opportunist (Criminal): When Kazuya fails a Training duel (such as Athletics, Carouse, Centering, Evade, or Toughness), he may draw a card.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Back to the Wall: When Kazuya is within 1 yard of a wall or other solid object at least as tall as he is, he gains +1 Defense.

Friends in Low Places: Kazuya gains ♣ to Barter, Bewitch, and Leadership Challenges made against bandits, gang members, criminals, and other lawless types.

Improvise: Kazuya may discard a card to create a shiv. The shiv lasts indefinitely until it is used, at which point it breaks at the end of Dramatic Time.

Languages: English, Japanese.

(1) Shiv (Melee or Thrown Weapons)

AV: +7 (Melee) ===== Rg: ♣ 1 ===== Resist: **Df**

AV: -1 (Thrown) ===== Rg: ♣ 6 ===== Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 1/2/4 damage, +1 if the target is engaged with at least one other friendly character. Concealable.

♣ *Bloody Mess (Melee only):* After killing the target, draw a Twist Card and then discard a Twist Card.

♣♣ *In the Neck:* After damaging, the target gains the **Bleeding Out** Condition.


FAN LUOYANG


Fated, Living, Ghost Eater 1

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 0	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 2	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +0
<i>Willpower</i> 4	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Alchemy 1, Bureaucracy 1, Centering 1, Convince 1, Deceive 1, Doctor 1, Enchanting 1, History 2, Literacy 2, Melee 2, Necromancy 3, Notice 1, Scrutiny 1, Toughness 1.


Darkest Magic (Ghost Eater): When Fan fails a Magical duel (such as Enchanting or Necromancy) during Dramatic Time, she may draw a card.

Cynic: Fan gains  on any duel made to resist deception (including Deceive and Pick Pocket Challenges, as well as the Trick Action).




Harvest Chi: When a Living or Spirit character of at least Minion rank or higher is killed within  of Fan, she may harvest its soul to gain the following Condition: **"Chi +1:** This character adds +1 to the final duel total of any Spell or Manifested Power she casts (max +3). After resolving a Spell or Manifested Power, Fan lowers the value of this Condition by exactly 1." Souls harvested in this way do not recharge Soulstones.


Languages: English, Japanese, Mandarin, Tibetan.

(1) Wooden Cane (Melee)

AV: +1 ===== Rg:  2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/2/4 damage. If this weapon inflicts Severe damage, the target suffers a Weak Critical Effect in addition to any other Critical Effects it would suffer.

(1) Spirit Barrage (Necromancy/Tenacity)

AV: +5 ===== Rg:  12 or  1 == Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. When declaring this Action, Fan may lower her Chi Condition by up to 3 points (to a minimum of 0). For every point of Chi lowered in this way, this attack gains  to its Attack and Damage flips.

 **Fray Life:** After succeeding, target Living character within 3 yards suffers 1 damage.

FAN LUOYANG

Fan Luoyang was a small girl when the first Breach collapsed in 1797. She lived through the horrors of the Black Powder War and was forced to watch as the Three Kingdoms were humbled and broken by the Guild. Fifty years later, as an old woman, her homeland was humbled again in a second war that reduced China to nothing more than an occupied nation in the iron grip of the Guild of Mercantilers.

Despite her bitterness, Fan was just one person; there was nothing she could do to stop the relentless wheel of history from rolling over everything she loved. Her children each perished, one by one, leaving her all alone in the world... that is, until the man with the mask came to her home.

He called himself "Jiangshi," but Fan knew what he was: a dark sorcerer, one who fed upon the souls of peasants such as herself to sustain his unnatural life. Where the rest of her village hid, Fan strode confidently toward the man, a broom held before her like a weapon, and demanded that he leave their village. Amused by her spirit, he invited her to travel at his side and learn his ways. In return for her company, he promised to teach her the secret to eternal life.

It has been fifty years since that day. Fan is over a hundred and twenty years old, but her appearance is that of a woman half her age. She has learned how to sustain her life by feeding on the souls of others, and decades of doing so has turned her heart cold. At the behest of the Court of Two, an elusive organization that seeks to manipulate the unfolding war for its own benefit, she has traveled to Kamakura to investigate rumors of a shrine maiden who recently became possessed by an oni. Imagine the power to be gained by devouring the spirit of such a mighty creature!

Gear: Wooden Cane, Reliquary (Once per day, a character without **Chi** may meditate upon the Reliquary as a (0) Action to gain **Chi +1**), 10 scrip.

Destiny: "After the echoes of your laughter die, an exception will corrupt the rule, for the stars illuminate your path. You will step through the looking glass, and you take the last step."

Twist Deck: Crows (1, 5, 9, 13), Masks (4, 8, 12), Tomes (3, 7, 11), Rams (2, 6, 10)

KARLHEINZ BENNEWITZ

Karlheinz is an old man. He's been a Guild sniper for the better part of five decades, and during his life, he's been all across the world, putting bullets into the heads of good and evil people alike. Despite his age and his slowing reflexes, Karlheinz's aim is still as sharp as ever.

Since the outbreak of war across the world, Karlheinz has felt his age slowly catching up with him. He's been in more than two dozen countries in the past six months, and he's lost track of how many fishmen and insane cultists he's sent on to the next life with a well-placed bullet. For some reason, that's started to bother him. It's been keeping him awake at night.

The Guild is the only life that Karlheinz has known. His family were servants to a Prussian noble, but he refused to live such a demeaning life. Instead, he signed up with the Guild on his sixteenth birthday and never looked back. He never saw his parents after that, never knew what happened to them. That's been keeping him awake at night, as well.

Two weeks ago, Karlheinz was crouched on top of an apartment building in Tokyo, peering through his scope into the windows of a distant building. His orders were to assassinate an Ottoman dignitary who was suspected of funding Three Kingdom rebels, but when his target came into view, the man was holding a young girl - his daughter, presumably - in his arms.

Karlheinz didn't take the shot. Instead, he returned to the Guild's Japanese enclave and claimed that his hands had started to shake due to lack of sleep. They put him on medical leave, and he's been searching for an answer to his troubled heart ever since. That search is what brought him to the temple of Kokuyōseki-in.

Gear: Guild Sword, Collier Lightning 1902 Rifle, 60 bullets, Red Duster (Protected (♣)), Trail Gloves (Protected (♣)), ¥20 (about 2 scrip).

Destiny: "As the watcher awaits your cry of vengeance, your relic will rush and gleam, for the coldest court will bow to their king. The mute man must cry out for the wolf, and you will cleave the sky in vain."

Twist Deck: Crows (1, 5, 9, 13), Rams (4, 8, 12), Tomes (3, 7, 11), Masks (2, 6, 10)

KARLHEINZ BENNEWITZ

Fated, Living, Marksman 1

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> -2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 3	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> +1
<i>Willpower</i> 4	<i>Charge</i> 3	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 1, Bureaucracy 1, Carouse 2, Convince 2, Evade 1, Intimidate 2, Long Arms 3, Melee 1, Notice 3, Stealth 1, Toughness 1.

Ranging In (Ranging In): When Karlheinz fails a Ranged Combat duel (such as Long Arms) during Dramatic Time, he may draw a card.

Sniper's Patience: When Karlheinz makes a Long Arms attack as a result of the Wait Action, he gains ♣ to his attack flip. When he takes the Wait Action, he counts as being Focused (with a value equal to the amount of AP spent on the Wait Action) for the purposes of determining the range of weapons with the Rifle special rule (such as the Collier Lightning 1902).

Unrelenting: At the start of Karlheinz's turn during Dramatic Time, if he is not **Slow** or **Paralyzed**, he may choose to become Slow. If he does so, he heals 1 damage.

Languages: English, German.

(1) Guild Sword (Melee)

AV: +2 ===== Rg: ♣ 2 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Collier Lightning 1902 (Long Arms)

AV: +5 ===== Rg: ♣ 18 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 3/3/4 damage. The range of this weapon is increased by +10 yards for every ♣ it gains from the **Focused** Condition. Capacity 12, Reload 2.

✕ **Punch Through:** After damaging, deal 1/2/4 damage to a second character within 3 yards of the original target and behind them, relative to this character's position. This second damage flip cannot be cheated.

(0) Take Aim

Until the start of his next turn, Karlheinz increases the range of his ♣ weapons by +4 yards.

ADVANCED PURSUIT - POSSESSED

During the worldwide campaign, players determine which character sheet they should use based on how many ranks of the Possessed Advanced Pursuit their Fated character has gained.

If they have no ranks in this Pursuit, they use the character sheet for the current Act.

If they have one rank in this Pursuit, they use the character sheet and apply the first step of this Advanced Pursuit to that character.

If they have two ranks in this Advanced Pursuit, they use the character sheet and apply two steps of this Pursuit to the character, and so on.

Example: During Act I, Kimber Daniels (Collaborator 1) is adventuring with Hu Heng (Mage 1) and Shinkai Shige (Chemist 1). Kimber becomes possessed by an oni during the adventure. At the start of Act 2, Hu Heng and Shinkai Shige advance to Mage 2 and Chemist 2, respectively. Kimber, however, remains as she is (Collaborator 1) and instead gains the Possessed Talent described below.

At the start of Act III, Hu Heng (Mage 2) becomes Mage 3, while Shinkai Shige goes from Chemist 2 to Chemist 3. Kimber advances as well, though since her advancement was stunted, she's still one Act behind: she goes from Collaborator 1 to Collaborator 2, meaning that she uses her character sheet from Act I, though she still possesses the Possessed Talent from this Advanced Pursuit.

If Kimber had become further possessed during Act II (she just keeps licking that darn Obsidian Gate), at the start of Act III, she would instead pick up another rank of Possessed instead of advancing (making her a Collaborator 1 with the Borrowed Time and Body Warping Talents who is adventuring alongside a Mage 3 and a Chemist 3).

REQUIREMENTS

To become Possessed, the character must have become possessed by an oni, most likely as a result of coming into contact with the Obsidian Gate.

Alternatively, the Fatemaster can decide that a character whose **Haunted** Condition has reached a value of +13 or higher might become possessed by one of the malevolent spirits haunting them - an disembodied oni - instead of being forced to kill themselves. This is a great way to show that not all spirits capable of haunting a character are necessarily ghosts.

ADVANCEMENT

At each rank, a Possessed gains the Talent listed below:

STEP	TALENT
1	Borrowed Time
2	Body Warping
3	The Fate of Mortals
4	Drowning in Darkness
5	Body Transformation
6	Apotheosis

—  —
“GET OUT OF MY HEAD! GET OUT! YOU
DON'T OWN ME!”

— ASAMI TANAKA, POSSESSED —
—  —

BORROWED TIME

At the end of each session (not including the one in which this Advanced Pursuit was first gained), this character must make a TN Centering Challenge (TN 8 + twice the number of completed steps she possesses in this Advanced Pursuit) to stave off the advances of the oni in her soul. If the character underwent any sort of purification ritual (meditating in a purified location, tying sacred ropes around her body, praying in a chapel, etc.), she gains a **+** to this Challenge.

On a success, she remains in command of her body for another session. On a failure, the oni claims more of her soul; the character must advance one step in this Advanced Pursuit instead of her chosen Pursuit.

If there's any benefit to knowing that her soul will eventually be devoured by an oni, it's that the character doesn't tend to waste much time.

On her turn during Dramatic Time, this character may suffer 1 damage to become **Fast**. If this damage would cause the character to suffer a Critical Effect, it instead increases the TN of the Centering Challenge she makes at the end of the current session by +1.

BODY WARPING

The oni within the character's soul begins to warp her body to suit its depraved desires. The character chooses one of the options listed below.

At the start of her first turn during Dramatic Time, the character's body warps and twists, rendering her **Slow** for that turn as this ability manifests itself. The change lasts until the end of Dramatic Time, at which point the character reverts back to normal.

- **Prehensile Hair:** The character's hair twists into unnaturally strong tendrils that flail and choke anyone near her. The benefits of this warping depend upon the length of the character's hair: If her hair is shoulder-length or longer (or if the character has a lengthy beard), she gains **+** on Grapple attacks. In addition, if her hair is waist-length, enemies within **12** of her are considered to be **Dazed**; this range increases to **14** if her hair is ankle-length.
- **Sharp Claws:** The character increases her unarmed damage (typically Pugilism, Martial Arts, or Grappling, though this also includes the melee attacks of characters shapeshifted into Beasts, but not attacks from pneumatic limbs) by +1.

- **Third Eye:** The character's forehead opens to reveal a third, demonic eye. The character gains **+** to Notice Challenges and can see the future: At the start of her turn, she may look at the top three cards of the Fate Deck, discard any non-Joker cards she wishes, and put the rest back on top of the Fate Deck in any order.
- **Unnatural Strength:** The character's skin turns blue and her muscles bulge. The character's Might Aspect increases by +2.
- **Stomach Maw:** A massive, fanged maw opens on the character's abdomen. Any armor (or bindings) the character was wearing that cover her abdomen (generally anything heavier than a duster) are devoured by the maw and destroyed. The character gains the following action:

STOMACH MAW (PUGILISM)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Stomach Maw	1	2/4/5
Special: This action cannot only declare the Swallow Whole Trigger. ✗ Swallow Whole: After damaging a target with a lower Height than this character, the target must discard a card or be immediately killed and eaten.		

THE FATE OF MORTALS

Oni are inherently violent creatures who feed on the souls of mortal creatures. As this character loses more of her soul to the oni possessing her, she begins to take on some of their qualities.


This character no longer receives any benefit from natural healing. When a Living character is killed within **18** of this character, this character may devour their soul to heal 2 damage and gain a cumulative +1 bonus to all Centering Challenges she makes for the rest of this session.

Souls harvested with this Talent do not recharge nearby Soulstones, do not provide any **Chi** to characters with the Harvest Chi Talent, and cannot be contacted via the Séance Talent of Mediums.

DROWNING IN DARKNESS

Oni are inherently magical creatures, and some of that magic seeps out into the souls they possess.




This character no longer becomes **Slow** at the start of her first turn as a result of her Body Warping Talent.

Additionally, she ignores the  penalty for casting Spells or Manifested Powers on Earth, and at the end of each round of Dramatic Time, she draws a Twist card and then discards a Twist card.

BODY TRANSFORMATION

The extent of how much the oni can warp the character's body increases, transforming her into a monster during times of stress. The character chooses either one of the options listed below or one of the options listed in the Body Warping Talent that she does not already possess.

At the start of her first turn during Dramatic Time, the character's body warps and twists as this ability manifests itself (alongside her Body Warping Talent). The change lasts until the end of Dramatic Time, at which point the character reverts back to normal.

- **Extra Arms:** Two additional pairs of clawed arms sprout from the character's back. When she makes a natural attack (typically Pugilism, Martial Arts, or Grappling, though this also includes the melee attacks of characters shapeshifted into Beasts, but not attacks from pneumatic limbs), she gains  to her attack and damage flips.
- **Serpent Tail:** The character's legs transform into a serpentine tail. If the character has one or more pneumatic legs, they are destroyed by the transformation (which will make it difficult for her to walk when she reverts back to normal). The character's Speed increases by 2, and if she takes the Run Action, she may make a free 1 AP Close Combat attack against a legal target at the end of her movement.
- **The Great Eye:** The character's face becomes a giant, slit-pupiled yellow eye. Other characters that begin their turn within  of this character become **Slow**.
- **Vengeful Karma:** Horns burst from the character's head, and strange tattoos rise up from beneath this character's skin. After this character suffers damage from an attacker, every character within  of this character suffers 1 damage.

APOTHEOSIS

The oni finally seizes complete control of the character's soul. The character becomes a Fatemaster character, and the transformations from her Body Warping and Body Transformation Talents become permanent. The oni most likely flees in an attempt to accomplish whatever dark goals made it cross over to the mortal realm in the first place.



CONDITIONS

Conditions are ongoing effects that characters can receive in a variety of ways. Conditions can have many different effects, some good, some bad, and some that are downright crippling.

Conditions stack if the Condition is presented with a value, such as **Poison +1**. When this is the case, all values of the same Condition that affect a character are added together into a single condition.

If a Condition has a value, that Condition ends if the value of the Condition ever reaches 0.

Conditions that are not presented with a value do not stack. For instance, if a character who has the **Slow** Condition gains the **Slow** Condition from another source, the additional **Slow** does not apply; the character does not become "extra" **Slow**.

COMMON CONDITIONS

Here is a list of some of the most common Conditions in Through the Breach.

BLEEDING OUT


When a character gains this Condition, it is applied with a certain value. If the effect that applies this Condition does not list a specific value, the character simply gains the **Bleeding Out +1** Condition.

At the end of a character's turn, if she has the **Bleeding Out** Condition, the value of that Condition increases by exactly 1. If a character ever reaches **Bleeding Out +10**, she dies.

Any character may attempt to remove this Condition with a (2) Doctor + Intellect Challenge against a TN of 15. If the character is attempting to remove her own **Bleeding Out** Condition, the TN is increased to 20.

The **Bleeding Out** Condition can only affect Living characters. If a non-Living character receives this Condition, it ends with no effect.

BLIND

Characters with this Condition suffer  to any action that normally requires sight, such as most attack actions.

BURNING

When a character gains this Condition, it is applied with a certain value. At the end of her turn, a character with the **Burning** Condition suffers an amount of damage equal to the value of her **Burning** Condition. Then, the character ends this Condition.

Any character within 1 yard of a character with the **Burning** Condition (including the character herself) may take a (1) AP Action to reduce the value of the **Burning** Condition by exactly 1.

CRAZY





When a character gains this Condition, it is applied with a certain value. A character with the **Crazy** Condition subtracts the value of the Condition from the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. She may also hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

At the start of each day, the character may attempt a TN 15 Centering Challenge, ignoring any penalties from the **Crazy** Condition, to lower the value of her **Crazy** Condition by exactly 1.

DAZED

A character with this Condition has the TN of every action she attempts increased by +2.

DEFENSIVE





When a character gains this Condition, it is applied with a certain value. Until the start of this character's next turn, she gains  to her Defense Challenges for each value of this Condition (to a maximum of  at **Defensive +3**).

FAST

A character with this Condition generates one additional General AP on her turn during Dramatic Time. If it is already the character's turn when she gains the **Fast** Condition, she immediately gains one General AP. This Condition lasts until the end of the character's turn.

Fast and **Slow** cancel each other out; if a character has both **Fast** and **Slow** at the same time, both Conditions are immediately removed (after the new Condition takes effect, if it is the character's turn).

FOCUSED

When a character gains this Condition, it is applied with a certain value. A character with the **Focused** Condition may choose to end the Condition when declaring an action to gain  to the action for each value of the Condition (to a maximum of  at **Focused +3**).

If the character does not voluntarily end her **Focused** Condition before the end of her turn, her **Focused** Condition ends at that time.

HAUNTED

The character is haunted by vengeful spirits. Every evening at sunset, the value of this Condition increases by +1.

Additionally, at the end of any day in which a character entered a haunted building or otherwise came into contact with hostile spirits (including any Haunted character at the sinister step or higher), she must pass a TN 10 Counter-Spelling + Tenacity or Necromancy + Tenacity Challenge or gain the **Haunted +1** Condition.

A Haunted character can be treated once per day. This requires an hour of purification, prayer, and magical chanting, at the end of which one character may attempt a TN 12 Centering Challenge. On a success, the Haunted character lowers the value of this Condition by -1, plus -1 per Margin of Success.

A Haunted character suffers certain symptoms, as noted below. These symptoms are cumulative; as the ghosts haunting the character become more insistent, the effects of their haunting become increasingly severe.

HAUNTED VALUE AND SYMPTOMS

1-4: Creepy. The spirits haunting the character occasionally move objects around her and sometimes whisper creepy things directly into her ear. The character and everyone else within a3 of her suffer a -1 penalty to their Willpower Aspects.

5-8: Sinister. The spirits haunting the character become more violent. This generally manifests in the form of the character being shoved into dangerous areas or sharp objects flying through the air towards her, but other minor telekinetic effects (such as locking doors as the character flees from an enemy) are possible. Once per Dramatic Time, or once per day during Narrative Time, the spirits may push the character up to 3 yards in a direction of the Fatemaster's choice. Pushing characters into open flames, off balconies, or in front of oncoming trains are all favorites of the spirits.

9-12: Malevolent. Things start to get weird around the haunted character. Threatening words scratch themselves into the walls, ghostly figures appear behind her in mirrors, and chairs instantly stack themselves atop tables when nobody is watching. These constant manifestations from beyond the grave are as disturbing as they are distracting, and as a result, the character suffers a - to all Willpower duels.

13+: Possession. At the final stage of the haunting, the spirits tormenting the character possess her body. The character loses all control over her actions, and if she is a Fated character, she becomes a Fatemaster character. It is technically possible for a possessed character to recover from this point, but the spirits possessing her generally do everything in their power to prevent this from happening. Mostly they just focus on destroying everything the character holds dear before forcing her to take her own life.

INTOXICATED

A character with this Condition suffers ☐ to all Willpower duels. This Condition lasts for 10 minutes. If a character with the **Intoxicated** Condition would gain the **Intoxicated** Condition again, she instead gains the **Poison +1** Condition.

Only Living characters can gain this Condition.

PARALYZED

A character with this Condition generates no AP and can declare no Actions on her turn during Dramatic Time. If it is already the character's turn when she gains the **Paralyzed** Condition, her turn immediately ends. Unless otherwise noted, the **Paralyzed** Condition lasts until the end of the character's turn.

POISON

When a character gains this Condition, it is applied with a certain value. At the end of her turn, a character with the **Poison** Condition suffers 1 damage, then the value of her **Poison** Condition is lowered by exactly 1.

This Condition generally only affects Living characters.

PRONE CHARACTERS

Prone isn't actually a Condition, but during the course of an adventure, it's possible that one or more characters will get knocked off their feet or otherwise find themselves on the ground.

A Prone character gains + to her Defense flips against Projectile (☛) attacks but gains ☐ to her Defense flips against Melee (☚) attacks.

SLOW

A character with this Condition generates one less General AP on her turn during Dramatic Time, to a minimum of 1 AP. If it is already the character's turn when she gains the **Slow** Condition, she immediately loses one General AP (if any). This Condition lasts until the end of the character's turn.

USELESS LIMB

When this Condition affects an arm, the character suffers ☐☐ to any Challenges that would require the use of that arm.

If this Condition affects a leg, the character reduces her Walk Aspect by 2 (to a minimum of 1), cannot declare the Run or Charge Actions, and suffers ☐☐ to any Challenges that require the use of that leg.

D Penny readful



Wyrd



BEYOND THE BEYOND

...

In a sleepy seaside town along the coast of Japan, an ancient evil stirs. There, guarded by the monks that have sworn to protect it, sits a great obsidian Buddha statue. Resting in the center of its forehead is a faintly glowing gem, and behind it a dark mystery. Hidden in the shadows, a doomsday cult awaits for the most opportune time to release the ancient evil that hides behind the Obsidian Gate. Do you have what it takes to stop these fanatics from fulfilling their dark delusions?

...

The Obsidian Gate is a four act Penny Dreadful adventure for the *Through the Breach* roleplaying game that brings the Fated back to Earth to stop an oni-worshipping cult and the immortal spirits they have summoned from another plane of existence. This adventure requires the *Core Rules* to play.

Wyrd

WYRD-GAMES.NET

© 2005-2019 Wyrd Miniatures, LLC
WYR30209-E