

# Howl of the Phoenix

**„In the end, is one soul such a large price to pay?”  
The Four Winds**

## **CREDITS**

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I would like to say: thank you to:

1. My dear Marta
2. My friend Jarek for GM-ing for a long time and introducing L5R to me
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION .....	2
PART 1: Shadow in the Mountains .....	3
PART 2: Silent court .....	10
PART 3: Ceremony of sadness .....	19
PART 4: Howl of the Phoenix .....	23

# INTRODUCTION

## **What is *Howl of The Phoenix*?**

„Howl of the Phoenix” is adventure dedicated to Race for Throne. As a big fan of the Phoenix clan I tried to win some points in general race. I’ve missed opportunity to do that in Kotei season beeing one of the worst players on tournament. But when rpg contest was introduced I knew i had to try. I like old official adventures produced by AEG so I’ve used similar type of organization. So we have introduction, name of acts and other things.

„Howl of the Phoenix” isn’t one shot adventure but it might be. If You’d like to spend one night with friends playing something like that – enjoy it. But i hope that You’ll be able to continue some woofs by Yourself. It’s designed for characters on second – third rank but of course You could forgive about this and run it for more advance players. But then I suggest to boost up NPC’s to bring balance to the game.

What archetype I would suggest? It’s good to have some diplomat beacouse there will be some court tensions and someone delicate and clever personality is welcome. Beacouse the action run through Phoenix lands shugenja would be good addition to characters. And of course warrior types. They are needed too, but speak with the players that even if Phoenix is pacifistic clan – their clan daymio’s aren’t. As represantives of the great clans their mindless behavior could bring a lot of shame on their families, but diplomacy and etiquette would give different effect.

Don’t forget about current times. Khan’s gambit ended sadly for Unicorn and nowadays Elemental Council occupy capitol of empire. Remember that some players won’t cooperate so easily beacouse of clan tensions, but when the hour of the wolf will come again no one would be safe. Let them know each other if they are fresh characters – this kind of adventure is a good example of building loyalty and friendship. If they are a group of friends you could test them in a lot of ways to harden the bonds between them. Enjoy.

And the last thing. I’ve ben working with strange english dictionary so my translation wouldn’t be so clear. Excuse me. I wasn’t the autor of this usefull book.

## **The theme of *Howl of the Phoenix***

There are a few themes in this adventure. The first one is undying love. The Rokugan was witness of strong relations beetween Isawa Angai and Sezar. Their death was breath taking tragic event and lot of people will remember it forever. In this adventure Phoenix will mourn beacouse of their lost but it won’t be the only reason.

Second theme is madness of strange beeing called the Wolf. Is he really dead? What was he in the eyes of Isawa? Did he appear somewhere before? Why someone should follow his paths? And what if he’s still vengfull thing searching for vengeance?

Third is loyalty. Toturi Koshei was shamefull samurai, servant of the Wolf. What happened to him? What are his plans? His future? And what is the reaction of Dragonfly – one of their gratest friend died from the hand of Phoenix. Even if Sezar was mad he helped them a lot. What is the last gift of minor clan? What happened to the true champion of the Phoenix? And why there is a break from tradition?

And the last one – politics. Nowadays the Rokugan is full of silent storms. One spark would turn it to inferno. What is the cost of bringing peace to the Empire and true meaning of sacrifice?

## **PART 1: Shadow in the Mountains**

### **Invitation**

Few days after Moto Chagatai army's march on capital Rokugan is shattered. Unicorn clan champion broke the tradition and tried to take the throne by force. Army of the Lion and small forces of other great clans stopped his assault once and for all. Besides Phoenix clan council arrived bringing confusion because of their decisions. Beaten Moto champion is free but crippled and he needs to prepare for vengeance of young Lion daymo – Matsu Yoshino. Besides another traitor could back to home – new Mantis leader – Yoritomo Naizen.

On the border between Scorpion and Crab clans war broke out. Even if Bayushi Norachai - sama fought for his Empress the other Scorpion clan leaders didn't show up. What's more mysterious - death of imperial court head – Kaukatsu casts much more shadows on this conflict.

An initiative from wise lord Togashi Satsu bring peace on the Crane lands. But Enigmatic Dragon warned young but brave Doji Domotai about evil lurking in her clan.

And of course the throne. It's empty. After empress death there's not formal Emperor and seems that without him and shogun only magistrates could force peace in Rokugan but the main actors are great clans.

In the time of revolution Phoenix leaders didn't forget about their duty. Even if Elemental council is absent in their home some steps must be taken. Asako diplomats had made some efforts and organized unofficial court, when allied clans could decide about future of Empire. Besides the funeral of Isawa Sezaru and his wife is something important and a good disguise for main events. The invitations are sent and the figures are chosen. Everyone get instructions but not everybody would be a welcome guest.

*„Great leaders.*

*We have lost a lot. Our loved Emperor is dead and his wife is with him in Celestial heavens. The throne stands cold and empty and we suspect that evil made some moves already. From the beginning we stand together against all enemies of Empire and the day has come to stand united again. Without peace between us Rokugan is weak. We must speak with each other and discuss every important matters as friends.*

*Phoenix clan suffered a lot. We've lost our champion and death of Shiba Mirabu shattered our ranks. Isawa Sezaru is gone like his brother – Kaneka the Shogun. We mourn and cry hoping that they are living now in the realm of true heroes. Let the Rokugan remember them as true legacy of their father. In those sad times it's our true duty to remember them. The official funeral will start for a few days but we know that our sadness isn't alone. We should stand together near their graves and realize about our true enemies. The fate of Empire is on our hands .*

*Phoenix”*

**Crab:** At first the invitation brings a lot of confuse to the Crab. They don't know what expect of this. They have their own plans and now silence in Shadowlands and Scorpion treachery are much more important. Besides harsh winter and a long road are another difficulties so Hida Kuon doesn't want to send anybody. But after few hours later he changes his mind and call for a group of devoted bushi and introduce them invitation then speak „*What are your opinions? What do you think of this? It's nonsense. We don't have times for masquerade. If Phoenix want something from us he should visit Kyuden Hida. Our duty is much more important then some funerals. But we need to keep eye on Scorpion especially when the throne is empty. So i have no choice. You'll travel to the village near Zumiki-mihari on the Phoenix lands. Let no Scorpion tell lies about our conflict. Let the Rokugan know about their true moves. Don't fail me. If you'll bring shame on Crab we'll never forgive you.*” Later the same day Kuon will speak personally with player character. „*Listen. The war is coming and the evil is too silent. Remember that you'll be our ears and eyes. When you'll be dancing in those stupid ways and listening their sincere speaks remember about your brothers fighting against Empire enemies. Think about the court as a war. Alliance with Crane taught me that. If you'll find emissary from Unicorn tell him that our friendship is still strong. Now go.*” If You'd like to say something more – do it. Player character should feel important – Kuon believes he chosen the right person to send delicate information to the Unicorn. Besides he hopes that Scorpion would do something stupid – one false move ad the pincers will strike. If You think that Crab champion wouldn't pass this kind of message – forget about it.

**Crane:** Domotai is at least happy. The fruits of work at winter court sprout much more faster than she expected. Besides long alliance is important. But she still remember her mother and she's carefull with decisions. Fortunate the exchange between clans is possible now so she'll send few shugenja to Isawa school. But the Crane clan need something more „*I called for you beacouse we are invited to Phoenix clan lands. Our friends mourn the loss of their leaders and even in the time of conflicts they remember about sacred duties. It's honor to be there and I'm proud of our alliance. You'll travel to small village pointed on the map. From there You have to be as Crane should. You are our faces, our voices, hearts. Nothing is much more important than honor. Remember that. The time is right to rebuild our political might. No one would stand against us when the words cut deeper than swords. Be sure about our strength. I demand perfection*”. Let the players feel that in those times friendship is valuable thing. Let the others congratulate them and wish them luck. It's a grand promotion and some of Cranes could be jealous. Lady Domotai studied with Matsu. She's harsh but honorable woman and her speak should be like an polite order.

**Dragon:** Togashi Satsu meditate and no one should trouble him. That's why new Mirumoto daymio took the lead and he'll be talking to characters. Mareshi is confused beacouse of sudden end of war. So he'll speak short and clearly „*Phoenix prove his intensions stopping bloodshed in capital. Now he's trying to bring peace behind this sad event. In troubling times we need to aid them in their quest. Our paths were different many times but when the action is needed. we act together. Now go. Stand by their sides Help them.. I have other things to do*” Dragon playes should walk their own paths. If they wish to help Phoenix in peacefull diplomacy – fine. If not... the game would be much more interesting..

**Lion:** Lion clan have new goal – vengeance. Young daymo starts preparations for coming invasion and Phoenix proposal is only a short unusual breake from duties. But he's much more wiser than bushi in his age and he sees forthcoming advantages in sending representatives. So while after the message he speaks withe few Lions „*I'll speak shortly so listen carefull. Many of you would like to challenge some of Shiba beacouse of their*

*unsuspected arrival. But remember my words – I know that their intension was good. Besides some of them are mourning death of Sezarú known as the Wolf and some of us mourn the loss of Shogun. For them it's only a disguise for much more important event For us Kaneka's death is a great sadness. But the great clans are gathernig to speak about the throne. I'm sure about that. It's our duty to observe their rising ambition and as a right hand of Emperror we'll strike at usurpers heart like we stroke at Khan forces. I'm sure that many of Bayushi and Asako would work together to write about Unicorn treachery. The Ikoma should cooperate as well. Our historicans will be warmly welcome and you'll to. Don't underestimate the Phoenix. Serve the Lion with honor.*“ Lion characters would feel angry beacouse of this travel. Frustration would rise when they'll get order to behave properly – don't start any conflicts – it should be clear. But soon they would break this order.

**Phoenix:** Asako Keiki is one of persons who stay behind this event. He'll send simple letters to characters with personal mons of Isawa Ochiai – it should help them to do what is right *„Children of the Phoenix. The time is right to act. Too many blood fallen on the ground and we stayed in mountains. But now it'll end. Council of Elements forced great clans to stop mindless fights. But when emperorr is dead no one is sure about peace. We belive that only diplomacy between great clans could bring order to empire. We should speak to each other and talk about the future. But for You I have a special task. You'll do everything what is possible to serve as a guide and friend to ambassadors coming to Zumiki – mihari. From there you'll be their eyes and ears in the mountains. Do everything what's nessesary to peacefully travel with them to Mamoru Kyotei Toshi. Don't let them to argue. There can't be any tensions. If we have to bring peace to Rokugan we must keep them in friendly mood. We'll talk latert in the city.*” Phoenix player should fell that he's mission is extremaly important and peace between great clans lies in his hand. He'll get a list of personalities who'll come to the silent court.

**Scorpion:** Bayushi Paneki is a busy person. The upcoming war with Crab and new mysterious black scroll confuse his mind so he'll just send emissary to characters *„Our task is undone. Our new alliance is uncomplet. We sit too long in the shadows. It's time to strike. Clans will gather on the Phoenix land. There will be disscusions, speaks and friendly smiles. But it'll be only paper mask and the Scorpion know about them everything. Then they will turn against us blaming for empty throne. And you'll admit it. And when they'll be satisfied and vitorious – act. Listen, observe speak., show our true strenght. Let them know about their mistakes. Demonstrate our loyalty and devotion to the throne. Talk to the Phoenix. Help them as hard as you can. But be carefull. Now every secret is hidden. Maby the biggest of them stand among us.*“ Paneki talked with the Yogo's. They searched for informations about the Last Wish – the legendary namurenai created by Isawa and his devoted follower... Yogo. Defender of Empire learned that such powerfull item wouldn't be destroyed completly so easily. He'd like to be sure about destruction, besides he need to know if any diary of Isawa Angai lay hidden in castles of Phoenix. For the player character there's another letter *„ Listen carefully noble samurai. Your role is important. I've prepared a special task for such talented student. You've heard about Isawa Angai – Sezarú's wife. Gather as much informations about her as You can. She might left something for us – get it and bring to Kyuden Bayushi. Be carefull – our enemies are waiting for failure.*” If You have something other task on Your mind not mentioned here, that Scorpion champion could assign – give it to the player. Every GM have his own point of wiev on the Scorpion – fell free to change any message.

**Unicorn:** Defeated Khan is marching to his homeland but Phoenix know that he'll refuse such a invitation, so Keiki won't send any letter. Unfortunelty for him someone else did it and the invitation is now in the hands of Shinjo daymio – Shono. He know about lost cause and he have to decide quickly what to do. Soon he took up steps that will change silent court forever. „ *We don't have much time.Lord Chagatai is absent so I have to take weight of Phoenix letter on myself. Even if we have lost – we are still a great clan and the future of Empire is our future. We must shake from this defeat and take serious steps to rebuild our might. And we should seek for some allies. So I send the most trusted emissaries to the Phoenix court. Be brave, do what have to be done. Let your heart stay pure. We are the children of Ki-Rin. But this land is our home. No one could take it from us. The blood and grace of Unicorn flow through our veins. Remember our heritage. Now go.*” Shinjo Shono'd like to see Unicorn as strong and trusted clan. In the past the great alliances with Crab and Crane was a true benfit for all. He wish to renew friendships but with Moto as a leaders it's almost impossible. So he send only a small group of samurais in hope that they won't shame their clan.

**Mantis:** Naizen is truly suprised. He didn's expected such letter from old enemy and rival. Enmity between Mantis and Phoenix is well known in Empire and this is almost ridiculous situation. Few days ago he argued with Isawa Ochai and now invitation with her personal seal lay on the desk. Ten minutes later he send for a group of bushi „ *You are the people of storms. You are true heritage of Yoritomo. The time has come for us to stand truly among great clans. When the future of Empire lies in our hands we should act .The time has come for us. Our rivals're dying for peace and we'll help them .We'll do what we can to bring justice to Rokugan.And when the new Emperor will sit on the throne he'll remember who realy helped him. We'll bring order and stability..Cooperate with the Phoenix. Aid our allies. Those are my words. Remember them*”. For the Mantis it's a good oportunity to stand among others and be accepted forever. Besides their fresh move against Crane is invtation to war that Naizen'd like to avoid for now. The upcoming events should decide about role of his clan in new era.

**Ronins and minor clans:** If Your players wish to play someone different they are welcome. They could deserve for invitation by helping in fight with villagers. Maby they are friends of Dragonfly and will appear with them in procession. There's a lot of ideas where you could bring them to play – it's up to You.

#### **List of the important personalities on the silent court (NPC's):**

**Crab:** **Hida Yutsuko** (Hida bushi 2 rank), **Kuni Takahashi** (Kuni shugenja 2 rank), **Kaiu Sotatsu** (Kaiu Engineer shool – 3 rank - 1 rank in Path of stone, and 2 rank in Path of war.)

**Crane:** **Doji Senzo** (Doji Courtier 3 rank), **Daidoji Denbe** (4 rank: Daidoji Yojimbo 2 rank, Harrier 2 rank), siblings **Asahina Akahito and Reicho** (2 rank Asahina Shugenja)

**Dragon:** **Mirumoto Soto** (3 rank Mirumoto bushi), **Togashi Osamu** (three Orders Tattooed Man 2 rank – Arrowroot tatoo and Cat tatoo), **Tamori Ume** (3 rank Tamori shugenja)

**Lion:** **Ikoma Tadahisa** (Ikoma Omoidasu 2 rank), **Matsu Hisako** (Matsu berserker rank 2) **Akodo Isoshi** (rank 1 Akodo bushi)

**Phoenix:** the player playing Phoenix character is a leader of 3 Shiba bushi and 3 Shiba yojimbo – all on 2 rank. Besides there's a few Asako and Isawa with him as a welcome

company. If there's no any Phoenix player leader of the group is **Asako Meisuru** (Isawa shugenja rank 3)

**Scorpion: Bayushi Tomo** (3 rank Bayushi bushi), **Bayushi Ameiko** (Bayushi courtier 3 rank), **Shosuro Yuki** (Shosuro Shinobi 2 rank)

**Dragonfly: Tonbo Miyato** (Isawa Shugenja 2 rank) and his brother **Tonbo Kageru** (Mirumoto bushi 1 rank 1) with a lot of peasants especially from Dragon lands that remember how many wonders did Sezar to them, a group of monks

The following group of samurais is absent on the list and their arrival would be a shocking surprise.

**Unicorn: Shinjo Aritomo** (Shinjo bushi 2 rank), **Iuchi Tae** (2 rank Iuchi shugenja), **Utaku Saya** (Utaku bushi 1 rank)

**Mantis: Yoritomo Eitoku** (Yoritomo Bushi School 1 rank), **Moshi Kanabe** (Moshi Shugenja 3 rank), **Tsuruchi Tomomi** (Bounty Hunter 3 rank)

## Gathering

The adventure begins when caravans with players achieve the destination of their journey. If You'd like to enlarge the game You could create pre-adventure to this events. Maby characters met somewhere earlier? And now are riding together to the village. If not – start from there.

*„The winter is harsh especially in the mountains. Even if You're not in the highest part of them the air is colder and You could admit that it freezes lungs. The roads are well kept and You bless the Fortunes for safe travel. Few times before you've reached the village patrols of Shiba warriors checked your travel papers, but as soon as they opened it they bowed with respect and escorted you to another province. Soon the road becomes steep and the travel changed to tiring. When the Lady Hitomi shined on the sky at first you saw a few homes. But after you took another steps a huge village appeared. Above the settlement rised Zumiki-mihari – a last descendant of Otomo wach towers now guarded by Shiba. But today you are a guests of the Phoenix clan and the inns are waiting.”*

The village is prepared for a welcome. Three inns are opened: „*White songbird*” with the finest sake and a warm meal but rather expensive. „*Yellow lantern*” known for their excellent tea and „*Hidden poem*” – a fine geisha house. Phoenix would like to mix all of guests so it'll be good to put all characters in „*White songbird*”. Remember that there's no any Mantis and Unicorn so everybody are in fine mood. Lion and Crane should sit together and drink for victories. Dragon could stick to the Scorpion – their natural allies. And there's the Crab. Crane players should feel that good relations between those two clans depends on them too. Maby it's time to invite them to the table and drink a few cups of sake. Try to make a friendly atmosphere. Invited clans won a great battle of Toshi Rano and certainly they have much to tell. Soon the door will open and Phoenix player enter. He's role is to be a host and guide so he should warmly welcome them. It would be polite to remind about purpose of the invitation. If there's no such player read the following text:

*„Suddenly a small woman enter the chamber. She's in beautifull Phoenix clan kimono with accents of water elements. Her hairs are brown and long. Some says that she's pretty but surely you have seen much more beautifull girls. She bows deply to you and speaks with soft voice „Greeting samurais. I am Asako Meisuru and it's honor to meet fameous samurais from*

*all parts of Rokugan. I'll be your guide for next few days when we'll be praying for souls of dead lovers. Isawa Sezaru was someone much more important to Empire than some of you could expect. We have a debt that should be payed. So drink for him and remember his heroic deeds. Tomorrow we'll move to Honored Treaty City. She bows again and sit in the corner with a few Shiba".*

If the player mentioned Sezaru but forget about Kaneka or said completely different speech, some of Phoenix bushi would remind Wolf's end, so the following situation could explode. Matsu Hisako one of the guests is dissappointed and little drunk. She stand slowly and speaks with anger „ *You didn't mention Lord Kaneka. He was a brother to a Wolf and the Shogun. You showed a lot of disrespect to him forgetting about his duties and honor. He died as a hero not as a madman*" The players should do something beacouse they are only guests. Besides a sake speaks through mouths of young warrior and it's shamefull for her either. Meisuru is shocked (Phoenix player should be too). Asako will bow her head and apologize for her mistake. What player would do? If there's no one brave enough Mirumoto Soto will reprimend her.

### **Shadow in the mountains**

When the night will come something unexpected happens. Players should be a little tired and soon they should go to sleep. But suddenly two personalities enters. They introduce themselves as Imperial Magistrates – Kitsuki Jubei and Togashi Keishiro. They will charge Phoenix player or Meisuru with a one questions „ *Where are the villagers responsible for attacks on traveling caravans*" For both situations (player or Meisuru) it would be schock. First of all Phoenix secured all the roads so every caravan was safe. Second – activity of patrols was much more intensive than before. Third – there was no revolutionaries on those lands. So the question is ridiculous and offending. Shiba bushi will stand behind the Meisuru or player nervous and ready to end this interrogation. If Asako is a leader she'll demand any evidence of bandit activities. On the other side Magistrates are on the edge beacouse they found a trace of Kokujin followers near this village. But for them situation become complicated because they had been speaking only with one witness of robbed caravan a few days ago. Look at your players carefully. What is their reaction? Describe this scene dramatically – Phoenix is one step before dishonor and shame. Shiba didn't knew about any danger on their lands and if Magistrate words are true the life of guests isn't completely safe. There's only a small step to violence and one of yojimbo's slowly walks to the entrance. In those uncertain times every mistake would be an end of peacefull negotiations. Let your players demonstrate their devotion for empire. They should calm this situation. If they say that there's no reason to be worried, or that surely the coopeartion of Phoenix and Magistrates would catch the enemy ar something similar – everything will be fine. On the other hand it's a good time to work together. Maby they wish to help Magistrates? If yes, the idea will be accepted with great enthusiasm and the hunt for mad monk army will start tommorow morning. But if Your players are indignatated and would blame Phoenix or Magistrates for all this confusion ... Well it's up to You. Shiba won't let anybody to draw a sword and soon a group of Shugenja could do something shamefull but necessary – in the middle of the night they'll make a powerfull ritual that would cleanse the memory of this unfortunate meeting, but sooner than they think it'll bring chaos. [ And what with those revutionaries? In fact they are near the village hiding in mountain caves. There's one of bloodspeaker with them who knew those lands very well. They charged on small caravan but one of the drivers survived. He told about this traveling Imperial Magistrates. But peasants saw the gathering of great clans and they plan to stop them tommorow ] At night gates of the village will be closed and patrols would walk with lanterns between inns.

„The morning is cold. Snow is slowly falling from the sky and a few villagers are cleaning the roads. You’ve been sleeping in comfortable rooms so you feel fresh. After bathing the meal is ready. Vegetables, coloured rice, some soup and fishes – it’s quite tasty. After meal it’s time to go.” **Important note:** If Isawa did the dirty work last night the characters don’t remember about anything and sudden attack of Kokujin army would shock them – use it. If they won’t react fast enough the mountains would be their graves. But if they are ready they won’t be surprised and they’ll get bonuses in upcoming skirmish. If the magistrates were too a victim of ritual they’ll stay in the village confused. If not – they are marching with players. „You’re walking through the mountain passage through the snow. The weather won’t change and the march would be soon much more tiring. Suddenly something happens” From the caves and under the snow a huge group of dirty peasants will attack the players. They are following the strange old shugenja with insane gaze. He’s Hioninmaru – bloodspeaker who survived the Wolf’s hunting. Now he believes the Kokujin theory and want to be part of his great plan. Now the battle starts – prepare it carefully. If it’s a surprising attack give some modifiers to villagers if not, the player should be prepared and the final result lies in their hands. It’s a brutal skirmish – use cool descriptions – blood falling of the snow which could become entire red. The villagers should be scary. In the middle of the fight they can scream at the Dragons „You too have tattoos. Why are you stay against our master?” or „My master gave them to me” – some of attackers could have a tattoo but of course without any powers. It should be shocking for everybody, especially for Dragon. Mirumoto Soto will cut such fools with brutal fury. One of the players should lead the group in the time of battle, but if no one is ready, role of commander will go to Kaiu Sotatsu or Bayushi Tomo.

### **Unexpected arrival**

Time to Mantis and Unicorn to show up. Remember that the villagers are many, and they can overrun player characters, so the sudden help would be decisive in battle. Read the following descriptions to the players:

**Unicorn:** „You’ve been riding through the Empire with great speed. But the winter falls are difficult to exclude in planing a travel. So you are late. The caravan of emissaries walked from the village few hours ago before you arrived. But there’s someone new too. Surprisingly they are Mantis. Maby the fortunes favoured you after all?

**Mantis:** „The sea storms, thunders and freezing cold welcomed You. The sailing in such weather is difficult but a son of storms won’t give up so easily. Soon the sails were shattered and you’ve lost one brave man. But now You’re here. Alone in the village – they’ve gone. Is that what Phoenix planned? Make a fool from You? But wait. There’s someone riding. A Unicorn!”

The players should be happy. They’ve met each other and even if they’ve missed caravan, together they could simply follow them. Besides they have traveling papers and no one would bother them. What’s more, rising friendship between their clans is a good opportunity to friendly chat. After small meal they should follow the main group. Soon they will find them in deadly combat „The mountains should be quiet But after an hour they are not. The scream of raging battle echo’s through passage. It seems that someone is in danger” So the cavalry arrives when needed. Mantis would be a little late but they are experienced warriors and soon the combined effort of newcomers would give a victory. Villagers will

fight to the death – they are devoted heretics, believers in Kokujin’s cause. But Hioninmaru isn’t so brave so when he’ll get a chance to run – he’ll do it.

Average villager: Air2, Earth 2, Fire2 (Agility 3), Water2, Void 1

Attack: 5k3, Damage: 2k2 – various peasant weapon, TN 10, Wound per level: 4

Alone they are no match to a samurai. But they’ll attack in huge groups –give them some bonuses – they should be a challenge. The battle is in snow and their clothes aren’t heavy armor. Give the players some penalties to rolls, don’t give them to villagers. Soon the players wouldn’t be sure about victory.

Hioninmaru: Maho blood speaker rank 1

Air 3, Earth 2, Fire 3, Water 2, Void 2

Calligraphy 3, Defense 2, Meditation 2, Spellcraft 3 (Maho), Stealth (spellcasting) 4, Knife 2

Mass battle 3 (skirmish)

Attack: 5k2, Damage: 3z1 – tanto, TN 10, Wound per level:4

He knows all maho spell on 1 rank.

There will be a huge chaos after the battle. Many of invited NPC (and players too I suspect) will demand explanation of sudden arrival. Even if newcomers helped them they are not welcome among rest. Meanwhile Isawa’s and Togashi Osamu will help seriously wounded persons – Asahina Akahito and Tonbo Kageru. The Phoenix player should be really confused when the invitations of Unicorn and Mantis would be real. There’s no forgery. If there’s Meisuru she’ll accept it with silence and the caravan moves to their destination. Let someone speak about the mission of the Wolf. No one would do such as this if Sezaru could live.

## **PART 2 Silent court**

### **Pawns and figures**

The same day when the moon is on the sky players have reached their destination. *„When the night has come you’re near the gates of Honores Treaty City. This place was build centuries ago to honor peace between Lion and Phoenix clans. For a lot of years it was untouched by any force and wealthy soil brang huge rice profits. But last years broke the peace. Dragon and then Lion forces atacked this place killing and crushing everyhing on the sight. Only the retribution of Shiba Aikune – man who controlled the power of Last Wish saved the city. This story is well known for everybody. The great clans have lost their hero’s in the battle near the Tomb. Besides that day Naseru died... After caravan entered to the city something hited you – the silence. Everything here is so quiet... Of course Shiba guardsmen welcomed you warmly bowing with respect but the strange looks of villagers... It’s interesting. Some of you saw that kind of look. Fear. Peoples from there fear the raging troops of enemies. They remember last terrible wars and now when the ambassadors from Dragon and Lion arrived this feeling has returned.”*

It’s a night and almost everydody are tired. Most of them wish to sleep and today they forget about tensions. Many won’t even eat and just go to bed. Tonight there’s nothing to do. But the day isn’t over for few persons. Doji Senzo with his loyal yojimbo arranged small meeting in his own chambers with Mantis – of course players from those clans are welcome too. The topic of „friendly” conversation is Mura Sabishi Toshi and sudden arrival of Naizen’s traders.

Diplomat will call it misunderstood and he'll give a short message „You have a few days to sail away”. In fact Crane doesn't know that's Mura Sabishi toshi is almost completely taken. The choice of Mantis reaction is yours. It's a fresh conflict and everything would happen. Remember that no one have any weapons so there could be only a duel of words. From this night there might be a rivalry between them. If there's any Phoenix player he'll be summoned to Keiki. Monk would like to know everything about Magistrates – he've heard about them from his followers – there's a long list of spells that could help them to observe distant situations. Besides he'll ask about Unicorn and Mantis – what the're doing here – and any informations about official invitations will make him nervous. Keiki suspect that someone's trying to break peace, but he have dark deed on his conscience too. From now character should stay with guests as their friend, because monk will take care of diplomats as a host.

*„The morning snow fall isn't any suprise. The weather is annoying but slowly you're acostomating. You've slept well and the warm bath hepled you to feel better. Besides breakfast was very rich and tasty. After the long journey a good prepared meal is almost like a taste of heaven. In the middle of this small celebration some shugenja appeared with the company of a monk. My name is Asako Keiki – said the second one, wearing red loose kimono. I am the person responsible for Your coming and it's a great honor to meet all of the finest samurai's from great clans. You know why we're here. The funeral will begin for a week from now and will end in the village near the sea. We should use this time to think about our future and the future of empire. Phoenix belives in cooperation and peace and even if we arrived in Toshi Ranbo our intensions was noble. This is Isawa Hiroshi – the master of upcoming ceremony. The small handome man with dark eyes and long dark hairs bowed silently. When you'll have a questions about the funeral ask him whenever you'll want. Besids he knows much more about magic and those lands than I so... Keiki smiled. Today I want you to meet with me in the gardens. We have much to do. Enjoy Your visit. Oh... I must say that any fight will be interrupted by our patrols. So please, avoid any conflicts.”* He'll end and they'll walk away.

So there's a week to plan. The players shouldn't be bored so I've prepared main events and a few smaller. The rest it's up to You. Below there are main actions taken by NPC – try to unite them with character actions.

**Crab:** Kuon's emissaries are bored. There's nothing to do in this poor city – it's the first reaction. But soon this will end. Hida Yutsuko – a young brash samurai-ko will visit the western edge of village. There's a huge barrack of Shiba warriors commanded by Shiba Takeishi – the first follower of Aikune. Now after he's friend death he's in poor condition and no one can find him. So the leadership belongs to Shiba Haruo – Takeishi's younger brother. Soon Yutsuko'll find that he's worthy oponent in everyday practices – maby it's a beginning of long freindship. But Matsu Hisako won't share that opinion and there's a straight path to violence. What would character's do when they discover this enmity? If they realy love the empire they'll stop upcoming conflict. Besides it's good to have some friends in Phoenix dojo and a nice place to demonstrate their teories and skills. Maby someone will challenge Haruo to a friendly duel? Winner should be awarded – it's a prestige to win with such oponent. Kuni and Kaiu would rather study with Asako than look for troubles. They are interested in all written Crab stories and legends and if they even are know – those two'd like to see it through the Phoenix eyes. Besides Takahashi casted a few spell and now he's observing Byushi Ameiko.

**Crane:** Asahina siblings are gone. Next morning they have traveled to Kyuden Isawa to start their practices. Doji Senzo's arranging a lot of meetings. He's assuring everyone about Crane's loyalty to the Empire, and as ambassador of Crane he's trying to make some minor alliance with Dragon so everyone should often see him speaking with Tamori Ume. He agreed that starving Dragon isn't acceptable and he's sending a letters to Domotai for acceptance of rice gift. Daidoji Denbe's real mission is much more complicated. He's one of personal Kikaze's students and the sudden dismiss of harriers is unacceptable for him. He's looking for something hidden in the Phoenix land. Some secret that would give a advantage in relations between Phoenix and Crane. Foolishly, he believes that Phoenix arrival in Toshi Ranbo was their first step to the throne. He don't realize that Kumo's blood's running through his veins and soon he's actions would take a bad turn. On one night the players could see a sneaking men. He's surely carrying something – what would they do? If they will catch him he'll be shamed forever. He's carrying a stolen spell scroll from Isawa Hiroshi's room. He'll get an order to commit seppuku but he'll run planning he's vengeance. Maby he's a candidate to a Spider clan?

**Dragon:** A gift of rice from Crane is something indeed needed. Tamori Ume knows it so she'll be patiently negotiate with Doji Senzo. But deep in heart she doesn't believe in true intentions so she asked Bayushi Ameiko for help. Now Shosuro Yuki keep an eye on Crane diplomat. Mirumoto Soto found a nice company among Tonbo family. He's with them all the time – they are drinking for Sezar's life. Togashi Osamu is doing similar thing in his own way. He found a small torii in the mountains when he's meditating about life and death. He'll be absent for a few days, but when he'll return something will change. Osamu would speak with players about strange vision of a mighty duel of magic and force between a Wolf and the Phoenix. What it means? Would they search for an answer? Soon they'll get it anyway.

**Lion:** Matsu Hisako isn't foolish. Her actions was planned with the cold blood. Her drinking and sudden explosions of anger is only a game. She knows that it won't bring her glory but it's necessary. She's looking for true noble samurai's. Her behaviour is a test for players. If they've been doing the right things – reprimanded her, calmed the rising conflict in the dojo – one night she'll invite players for a tea. She'll speak of the test, she'll tell that Empire is in right hands and they have a friend in her. For now on Hisako will behave like true Lion should. If not? She'll be disappointed and she'll back to Lion lands with great sadness. Ikoma Tadahisa spends some time with the Phoenix asking for a stories. He's writing about lovers and the duty of Sezar. One day he'll find something disturbing and strange. First – there's no writings about Shiba Mirabu in the library. The only mention about him is the word „traitor”. The Lion will be shocked – what kind of crime Mirabu committed that he's erased from official history. Lurking in the scrolls and old books he'll find something much more terrible. Someone wrote a scroll – a fresh one but on old paper – that seems to be untouched. There's a history of entity known as consumer. Writer believes that he's been a dark side of the Phoenix – a thing so powerful and mad that could destroy almost entire Empire. What's more, he believes that this evil thing can't be killed and it lives forever. Destroyed he's rebirthing again and again in the bodies of powerful shugenja's. Writer of this scroll believes that last time it manifested as the Wolf in the body of the Voice of Emperor. He's believing that in the past he was the part of Isawa Tsuke's power and the other Elemental Champions including the first Isawa. Lion know that if such a blasphemy will be known to everyone, especially to Phoenix it would shake this clan and could divide it. There could rise a cult of this thing and it'll be another enemy of Rokugan like bloodspeakers. Ikoma is angry for Phoenix intervention in Toshi Ranbo, but he's not vengeful and stupid one. He cares for Empire so he's taking the scroll with him. Soon he'll burn it. This is the biggest mistake he

ever made. Akodo Isoshi is praying with the group of monks everyday. She believes that her ancestors are angry and she's a shame for them. Why? She fell in love with Shinjo Aritomo and it's a great pain to love an enemy of Lion clan. Soon an old monk will become her companion and his teachings will give her a hope. The interaction with the Lion's will be described later.

**Phoenix:** Shiba Haruo is troubled. He feels that he's not respected among Shiba and the title of commander should belong to his older brother. He knows that Takeishi is drinking a lot with new unknown companion. If player characters was friendly for him soon he'll ask them for help. He'll speak of his brother, describing him as a great warrior who's walking now a wrong path. He's blaming a new strange samurai who's drinking with him. This task should be done discreetly. They should convince older brother to shake up from the sadness. He's needed in the barracks as a mentor and leader. Players could find Takeishi in one of the most dirty inns they ever seen. He'll be sleeping on the floor in the puddle of sake. Near to him there's other drunk samurai. But their swords are still on the daisho stands – so maybe there's a hope. The truth is that they are not drunk. They are sober now but the headache is painful. Attacked they'll defend very well and it should be hard to catch them. Shiba Takeishi is a bushi on 3rd rank and the other man is... Toturi Koshei – servant of the Wolf (in fact it's Pekkles who took the role of Koshei). He's drinking since the death of his master Sezar. Besides without the Wolf Koshei's conscience reminds him about he's past crimes. The characters must reach to their true natures and help them in shaking up. This scene is very important – if they'll be able to do that Phoenix will have a silent debt to pay and one day in critical moments of player characters lives bushi from barracks could arrive with help and good word. They'll remember bringing back their true leader. Takeishi will have a debt too, but he'll pay it in other way. He's a high rank commander of clan forces and when it would be necessary he'll help against larger group of bandits, prepare some invitation or even he'll try to arrange meeting with one of the Elemental Masters. Koshei is the other thing. Pekkles will suddenly feel something disturbing and he'll vanish for a few days without any word.

**Scorpion:** Shosuro Yuki have a simple task. He's following a Doji diplomat – simple? Not at all. Scorpion knows that Crane's trying to become a friend of Dragon by sending them a rice. Even if it's hard to admit it, coming alliance isn't welcome in Scorpion court. But the will of lord Satsu is the will of Dragon so Yuki prepared a new plan. He'll be sure that Crane have noble intentions and the rice will flow to the mountains, so the Scorpion won't have to send his food supplies needed in war with Crab. He'll send a letter to Bayushi Paneki with this information and he's suggesting that Dragon could send a small amount of rice to Kyuden Bayushi. It means that Crane will feed Scorpion troops and if that information would get to Hida Kuon he might turn his forces to Crane's provinces. Bayushi Ameiko is busy person. She's spending some time with Asako Keiki. She have a lot of questions about Phoenix intentions – she need to be sure that new alliance with them is worthy. She don't know that Kuni casted a spell and she's observed. Unfortunately for Crab she's only a mask for true Scorpion actions. Bayushi Tomo have a problem. He've been challenged by Utaku Saya to a duel to the death. One of his ancestors was Bayushi Otado – son of a Scorpion opium baron in City of Lies in the era of Scorpion Coup. His clan and family was responsible for many incidents in the city and one of them was a former Unicorn samurai-ko known as Fade – a bandit terrorizing Scorpion forests. Young Utaku Saya is a descendant of Fade and she's been waiting for vengeance a long time. She's been watching Scorpion bushi precisely and after a few words with Ikoma Tadahisa she's sure that Tomo is from Bayushi family she's been seeking. Bayushi Tomo doesn't want to kill her (he's very good dueler and he'll surely win with young Utaku). He's idealistic honorable samurai believing in bushido – yes yes, he's

walking the path of Bayushi Yojiro. So soon he'll turn to players for help. They should persuade her that mortal duel isn't welcome and needed, besides any death is a disrespect for Phoenix customs.

**Unicorn:** Utaku Saya need a vengeance. Anyone who'll step on he way will suffer. She made a promise to her sensei that she'll avenge her family. But deep in heart she's scared. She saw a dueling Tomo in Ryoko Owari when she was smaller and he was the fastest warrior she ever seen. She know that her death is coming and she'd like to avoid it somehow. When players would try to stand on their way she won't run so easily. But after few hours she'll come to them admitting that maby they are right and she'll reveal source of her vengeance. Next day she'll speak with Tomo and he'll promise her that he'll appear in her dojo for a year from today to give her a chance to avenge her ancestor. Iuchi Tae became a close friend to Moshi Kanabe. They'll be speaking day by day about the future of their clans alliance. Sometimes Kuni Takahashi will talk to them in the garden. Nobody knows what is the topic of conversation beacouse they won't speak with someone else. Any attempts of joining to them would be interrupted by silent bow and disapearence of Crab. They are truly speaking about throne and wars. Kuni seek for alliance with Mantis and Unicorn against the Scorpion and maby Crane. Mantis shugenja agreed same as Iuchi but the final decision has to be made by champions. The frontlines are creating and new alliance is much more deadly than anybody would expect. Shinjo Aritomo thinks in different way. He'd like to back to times when everything was much more clear. He's a lord Shono devoted follower and he don't think about Moto as his brothers. He'd like to see them all vanishing to the Burning Sands because he belives that only Shinjo should lead his clan. So he'll speak with the Crane diplomat. He'll give all the informations about Iuchi's work but when the time will come lord Shono should get help from old friends. Doji Senzo'll send new message to Domotai but without the last agreement. He'd just like to see entire Unicorn wiped out... and the civil war inside Khan's men is something indeed desired. So the Shinjo become a traitor and seems that he's death is sure.

**Mantis:** While Moshi Kanabe is speaking to the others Yoritomo Eitoku and Tsuruchi Tomomi have their own goals. Eitoku is a merchant so he's task is to trade. He's searching for a few traders willing to cooperate with Mantis clan. He's assuring that everything is legal and ... it truly is. He get a papers signed by Yoritomo Naizen and Tamori Nakamuro allowing to create a small traiding company on both clans lands. Those papers were written a few days after last war between two clans so it's time to trade. Some Shiba would be disgusted with such „friendship” and they'll burn new Mantis stand. Offenced Eitoku will demand a punishment for guilty arsonists and it's a beginning of a new conflict. Asako Keiki need a delicate solution so after a few words with Shiba Takeishi he'll summon players and ask for help. The investigation begins.... everyone could be an firestarter so it's up to You. While all this mess Tsuruchi Tomomi discovered something terrible but it will cost him a life.

Special players tasks:

**Crab:** Passing the message isn't so easy. If Shinjo would take it, it never will arrive to Khan, and Chagatai would be disappointed. What's with alliance between Mantis, Crab and Unicorn then?

**Crane and Lion:** Crane player have a lot of free time. He have an oportunity to become true hero. There are a lot of glorious tasks that could bring a new friendships to the Clan. Lion

have almost the same duties. Besides he can observe others from close by cooperating with them.

**Dragon:** I can't say much about Dragon players. They'll should do what they want but they should remember that the first and most important task is to help Phoenix with peace. And through helping in local conflicts and problems player is doing the right thing.

**Phoenix:** Phoenix player have a lot of problems. A lot of minor shameful situations disturb peace on those lands. But he should stay with other players in role of advisor and guard. And first of all he's a voice of his clan now. Every coming conflict and problem cast a shadow on his clan. It's not easy task and You should be sure that he's sweating when every new gossip will appear.

**Scorpion:** Finding any informations about Angai is simple – she was a good wife and a powerful shugenja – every one will speak similar words. Let the player begin an investigation – prepare some false informations and empty legends. In the end he shouldn't get anything about Angai or her diary because she didn't wrote any. But if he was really good in his searchings give him a reward. He can sneak into one of her rooms in this city and find one small piece of paper with unknown word „kuroiban“. I'm sure that soon he'll find this organization within ranks of his clan... what he'll do? What they'll do when someone would start to ask questions? It's a good beginning of new story.

**Unicorn and Mantis:** The interaction between them and the rest of the group is a challenge. They have no specific tasks. Searching alliances or staying with themselves is always some choice. But when they could be accepted by others after Toshi Ranbo's battle and called a friends it's the biggest success and reward for their playing. Besides it's time for a major events where they could play main role.

### **Fires over tori**

It's the time for main events and pumping up the action. Between those events try to run those minor described before or use Your ideas. Let's start from the beginning when all are invited to the garden. There will be prepared a theater. The actors will speak of last battle, describing it as unfortunate curse of ambition of one men. Then the story will introduce life and death of true heroes – Kaneka and Sezar. At the end they'll inscenize power of love that destroyed thing calling themselves a Wolf. After that one of them will read a poem about Naseru and Asako Keiki will appear. He'll introduce another ceremony master – Isawa Sayuri. *„After young artist ended a poem suddenly Asako Keiki appears with new unknown shugenja. My name is Isawa Sayuri – she said with a warm smile – I am Isawa Hiroshi's cousin and second ceremony master. I'll be praying for soul of Sezar while Hiroshi'll do the same for Angai. He's busy person and his preparations are indeed exhausting. So if You have any problems or questions please ... speak with me. But now I must go to the shrine so from tomorrow I'll be able to help you in any task. Then she walked away“*. Time for monk speech. He have a strong believe that Empire should be a peaceful place living under the wings of Phoenix. So any dirty politic and treachery is unacceptable. He'll tell about peace and cooperation reminding true nature of this gathering. After that he'll vanish.

But he made a few mistakes. First of all as a friend of Shiba Yoma and high ranked priest he get a personal seal of Isawa Ochiai. He didn't saw her, but he believes that she knows about this. The one who gave it to him was Sayuri – his connection in Kyuden Isawa. She had

to officially request for invitations acceptance and permission for a silent court. But Elemental Masters traveled to Toshi Ranbo at this time so she has simply stolen Ochiai's seal. Of course Keiki knows nothing about that so he believes that Masters support his actions. When he send a letters to champions he had missed Mantis and Unicorn. But Sayuri wrote her own invitations and send them to missing clans. Second thing is a mountain tori. Keiki believed that action taken by Mirabu was necessary. Shiba Mirabu stopped Wolf's wrath paying the highest prize. Besides in the eyes of Asako saving pure Isawa Nomi from blind fury was act of true heroism. Mirabu committed seppuku after he saw how much damage he done in the village where they fought. Phoenix clan was shocked by his attack. First of all Mirabu violated ancient rule telling that Shiba should defend Isawa forever and drawing a sword on Sezaru was something unexcusable. Besides committing seppuku with Isawa Last Wish destroyed blade forever and only a small shard survived. From this piece Angai made a knife and killed his husband. Mirabu was a traitor in the eyes of many. But not in Keiki's eyes and his followers. They see his actions as act of honor and heroism. Stopping a madman was something needed and when Elemental Council wasn't brave enough the true Champion sacrificed himself. In those sad times Keiki knew that his devotion to the Phoenix was much more stronger then it seems and that's why when everybody erased him from the halls of Shiba Keiki remembered him forever. In few days he worked as hard as he could to prepare a small shrine hidden in mountains. Then he dedicated it to Mirabu's soul and with help of few persons he raised a small tori. He collaborated with Naoya's servant and soon he placed a few personal scrolls of „traitor” under the tori. This place was a small secret of a few samurais and monks. Until now. On the third day Togashi Osamu will back from the mountains with a new discovery – a lovely place to meditate and a small shrine dedicated to former Phoenix Champion – Shiba Mirabu. He'll speak about this in one of the inns so everybody would listen. Many are suprised... and others are angry. Those words will come to ear of Keiki who'll be scarried and nervous. He'll quickly speak with Isawa Sayuri and ask her for help. Bad for him – Sayuri will yell and argue that the traitor should be forgotten forever and she'll personally burn the tori. After hour she's leading a large group of angry Phoenix samurais (A few from Shiba family) ready to destroy last token of Mirabu's remembrance. Keiki is shattered. First time Sayuri revealed her true nature and now he's confused. In the act of panic he'll gather all characters and will beg them on his knees for help. He'll ask for stopping marching Sayuri and saving shrine. What the players will do? They shouldn't stand between divided Phoenix but Keiki is near nervous break. Below You have a few ideas how players could behave against angry crowd. But whatever they'll do it won't be easy.

**Crab and Lion:** Lion player can speak of great things that Mirabu've done. He was a leader of Shiba fighting against Iuchiban and his followers and together with sane Sezaru he had cleaned entire cities from bloodspeakers. He was brilliant and true hero. Besides he died as samurai who understood his blames so there's no one equal to judge his intensions. On the other side Crab would just stand near the tori and stop everyone who'll try to destroy it. Crabs have strange reasons....

**Crane and Scorpion:** The diplomats and deadly courtiers have their own weapons. Crane could speak of great alliance with Phoenix and as pacifist he don't believe that gathered peoples indeed would like to destroy a piece of history, because Mirabu will be seen as a hero in Crane clan. Scorpion would speak that he didn't know that Phonix is a group of vengfull ignorants and that if they'd like to, they could take the body of champion to Scorpion's garden – then he'll become a true traitor of entire Empire (it would shame a few Shiba especially).

**Dragon:** Dragon would speak about true wisdom and pacifism. If the Phoenix can't be in peace with themselves and their ancestor how could they bring peace in Empire?

**Phoenix:** It's interesting... where is the player? With the other characters? Or he's standing with a torch near tori? It's a good test for his honor. Carefully watch his actions and let the others judge him.

**Unicorn and Mantis:** It should be hard for them to stand against crowd. They should feel that any false move will cost them a life and they are not welcome here. Standing aside isn't stupid idea. But sometimes courage is needed and maby it's time for it?

It the players stand against Sayuri she'll become cold. Her next order is to destroy tori without any mercy – players should feel that there's something wrong. She's not the same nice person from the garden. Suddenly Isawa Hiroshi comes for help. He'll stand with the players and say that indeed there's no one among crowd as pure as it seems. And if there's some greater hero then Mirabu was, let step up with the torch. Everybody will lower their heads and back to the city – even Sayuri. Hiroshi will thanks players and invite them for a cup of sake. He's a nice person but soon she'll get back to his work. **(If You have annoying player in Your group who'll step up with torch suddenly the wind will blow from nowhere and the fire will expire – it's a true sign that he souldn't bother this sacred place. If Your player doesn't understand it – give him another warning – let his heart suddenly stop beating for a few moments. If he's still stubborn – kill him).**

### **Two bodies.**

Asako Keiki is disturbed by Sayuri behaviour. He suspect that she's the writer of Unicorn and Mantis invitations but he'll keep it for himself. After all ceremonies he'll tell about everything to Elemental Council. He don't realize how it will suprise them.. But there's something much more dark and deadly in the shadows. Ikoma Tadahisa spend fourth night with stolen scroll carefully. But not as he wished to. Isawa Sayuri saw them and she new that time has come to strike. And it's time to present her history. Isawa Sayuri always was a strange person. Her birth happend in dark hour and many omens told that she'll be cursed. But when she was a bit older there was nothing disturbing in her. So her family send her to shugenja shool when everything happened. In the day of her gempukku she was possessed by the spirit known as consumer. Soon she realized that she's not alone and the inner voice was something dark and evil. At first she was scarred but soon she found a few ways to control the voices. But she was in mistake. The consumer – was silent and waiting to get a chance to take a complete dominance. He gave a small amount of power to the girl but it was enough for her sensei. He saw a great potential in Sayuri and when she was invited to Kyuden Isawa to demonstrate her skills in front of Elemental Council consumer saw young boy called Sezaru – much more talented then Sayuri and he abandoned the girl. But the strong will and self discipline of Toturi Kaede's son dominated evil beeing for some time. Inside young one consumer found something more then desire for destruction – purpose. He understood that with abilities of Sezaru and a hidden power within him together they become a true manifestation of Phoenix. So he cooperated with him. Soon consumer met other siblings of young boy, he fought a greater evil than himself, he fell fear fighting with Iuchiban and joy of victory. Then love. And the consumer realized that he's not the same simple monster. He became a real Wolf. The Hunter. But still the dark side of his mind was much more powerfull and wrathfull. And when power of Sezaru rised he rised within him too. Soon he took control over Sezaru's body and the nightmare begins. But the death of Mirabu and then sacrifice of

Isawa Angai was a real shock for creature. He was divided forever. His good side – much more weaker – begone and so far her fate is unknown. But what's with Sayuri? She was shamed in front of all Council, abandoned, broken. Until the day when the Wolf died she was a priest near Kyuden Isawa. She became humble follower of Asako Keiki (but he didn't tell her about Mirabu's shrine, because she belonged to Isawa family and Keiki knew about a Shiba oath) and his friend. But the consumer – much more powerfull – searched for a new body after explosion in Toshi Ranbo. And he found her again. Small, useless – perfect host. Simply he took controll over her body taking the darkest ideas of her mind. Using her knowledge and conections he began a vengfull plan. He'd like to punish all the Empire for everything – not only for a Naseru's death. But he 's carefull now and he play his own games. Frustrated by founding of Mirabu tori he realized that group of players are much more stronger then he tought. He wished to gather some infomations about them becouse his failure made him suspicious. So he went to the room of Ikoma for a friendly chat (he knew that historican should know something about players) but the room was empty so he started his searchings and... he found a scroll. It wasn't his work. He understood that this is a warning for Empire. He know who wrote it – his good side. But he doesn't know who is he now. Then Ikoma showed up. Frustrated and angry, consumer burned his body within a few moments. In the meantime Tsuruchi archer went to Ikoma's room to discuss some not impotant things. He saw Sayuri's atack so he took a bow. Arrow almost pierced her chest but in the explosion of fury she turn her to Tsuruchi. Two bodies fell on the floor and she vanished. The third observer of this conflict was Koshei. He felt that evil lurking in Sezaru appeared again somewhere. And when he saw Sayuri he understood that it might be him – the Wolf. Koshei screamed for guards and soon the players should gather too. There's an Ikoma body almost burned to the ashes. Second men is Tsuruchi bowman killed by his own arrow. It seems that they didn't killed each other but the situation is strange. There's no sign of Toturi Koshei who took the stolen scroll from the floor. Asako Keiki is shocked again but this time he knows what to do. He immediately promotes characters to his magistrates and ask them for help. He's cold and distant for Sayuri when she appear with her cousin Hiroshi. Hiroshi is worried and confused and he'll stand with the characters asking them for help too. If they'll agree he'll help them in many ways. So from now on the investigation begines. First of all Sayuri can't be catched. Now it's time to show more NPC of Your creation, false traces, some legends, gaki – it should be mysterious and strange. Maby put Hioninmaru hiding within the city. Do what you want but remember that it should be fun. Sayuri will help players giving them advices about ghosts, spirits, and shugenja's responsible for this murder (a lot of Agasha for example). Hiroshi'll tell them that the spirits in the place of murder are strangely silent but what he knows is that some powerfull spells taken life of those two. Of course players should deal with violent reactions of Mantis and Lion. Besides meantime Sayuri burns Mantis stand for a distraction so it should be a big mess. The investigation should take a long time and the day before great ceremony this situation appear. *„You are indeed tired. All your work seems fruitless. Tommorrow ceremony begins and the author of crimes is still untouchable. The moon shines on the sky and You want to drink something strong when suddenly You hear some voice”*. In the gardens near some shrine Isawa Hiroshi will speak with known monk – one who was often walking with Akodo Isoshi. Hiroshi is scared and he whisper something. Older monk will loudly say *„I can not help you my friend. I am a simple monk not a sage. You have a terrible price to pay. But Your curse could be a gift. Be calm. I suspect that soon You'll find answers. Listen carefully now. I know how you feel because i have fetl that same confusion and pain in my life. I was lost but i found the right path with a help of a friend. You have them too. Soon they will help You – I'm sure about this”*. So Isawa Hiroshi is hiding something but for now he won't listen to anyone. But when players would like to speak with monk he'll say that soon all their problems will be clear and he's tired, besides tommorrow ceremony begins.

Suddenly some player can see another sneaking shadow – Toturi Koshei. Only a person close to Isawa Sezarū could see that the Isawa Hiroshi have Sezarū's habits unseen to average person. He's confused now and don't know who is who. Now the players have opportunity to ask a few questions. First of all old monk will be surprised and worried by Koshei behaviour. It seems that they know each other because Koshei appear from the shadow and bow silently. He looks like a small beaten child who'll soon start crying. Asked he'll panic but monk will convince him to tell the truth. Koshei will tell that he sensed a known power – almost the same when he met Sezarū for the first time. And he was suspecting that creature called the Wolf still lives in the body of Isawa Sayuri. But today he saw Hiroshi behaving like old Isawa Sezarū and he doesn't know what to do with it. He'll keep an eye on them both but he needs players help to do that. If some thing evil as Wolf still exists Empire is in danger.

**Truth: There's no consumer. This creature doesn't exist. Isawa Sayuri's past is much more difficult. She was cursed but in other way. She met Isawa Sezarū indeed and then her dark identity appeared. Young boy didn't control his powers and one day attacked by jealous girl used his abilities instinctively. Void magic shattered her mind and divided dark side from the good. Her positive character dominated and she understood her guilt. Soon she became a simple gardener with a big magic potential. One of Elemental Masters saw her abilities and soon she again started to learn. In the meantime she met Asako Keiki and they become a friends. She was promoted in Isawa School and sometimes she served Council directly. Then Sezarū gone mad. Sayuri's dark side awoken again but hidden. She didn't realized that in every midnight it was taking control and gathered knowledge which might help him to gain her body forever. Sezarū's madness was connected with her dark identity in unknown ways. And when Wolf died in battle the cursed was unleashed. Sezarū's magic instinctively was stopping her dark side but after his death it was free. Sayuri wasn't the same person and her plan began. But before that, good Sayuri made a last effort to defend herself. She created a view of consumer – evil lurking in the clan hoping that someone would identify her as this evil and destroy. Her dark side didn't remember this last effort so she was truly surprised by the letter. Now the scroll is in players hands and they don't know that they are in great danger. Dark Isawa want to bring as much chaos and subtle evil as she can, before someone would catch her. Soon she was asked for help by Keiki and she saw a new way to let great clans fight against each other again.**

**And Yes. Isawa Hiroshi is a Wolf. How it might be possible? When Last wish exploded it didn't killed creature. It has cleared him from evil and vengfull thoughts. Confused and „newly born” Wolf searched for a new body. Soon he saw a young priest – Isawa Hiroshi – innocent and peacefull person that fit to new childish Wolf. Hiroshi felt that something dived into his soul and he think that he's possessed by some evil. Scared and confused he's praying in the shrines for forgiveness. But Wolf is something as Wish was – a small powerfull child hidden within worried men. For now.**

## **PART 3: Ceremony of sadness**

### **First steps**

Next morning player characters should be worried. There's something evil here in the body of Isawa Sayuri or Hiroshi's. Besides murderer is still unknown but surely they're suspecting one of those two now. Saying that ceremony masters are evil incarnated will bring chaos and fear. They should remain silent for now. „*When You waked up the small meal was*

*ready. It's early morning but it seems that a lot of new peoples came to the city. They gathered near the gates and from there ceremony begin. Hiroshi and Sayuri lead the procession praying to fortunes and ancestors for a place of lovers in the heavens. After them goes Asako Keiki with new samurai. Some of you recognize Shiba Danjuro – advisor of the Shogun and his personal assistant. He's carrying Kaneka's daisho with his helmet. After him walks the Tonbo family – some whisper that they will give something important at the end of ceremony. Then diplomats from great clans are silently walking side by side. After them samurais from the Phoenix clan and a huge number of villagers. The travel is long and tiring. After few hours you feel exhausted and you wish for a small break. Soon you hear a terrible roar of falling waters. When you're coming near the mountain lake Shiba Danjuro stops and points at the huge waterfall. It's here – he says and jump to the lake. It's not so deep and he slowly starts to walk. Everyone is silent when he place shogun's daisho and his helmet on the rock under the waterfall. A few tears falls from is eyes when he's coming back. He was a great men of honor. There's no other like him. I hope he'll guide us in the future like he did it in his life. Then he'll place a lantern to the lake praying to the fortunes. After that Keiki, diplomats and the others placed own lanterns and soon entire lake shine and slowly waves of waters delicate shakes them. The sadness is great and no one speak word. Soon Hiroshi walks away and the caravan moves on. After you're gone a helpfull monk from the city kneels before lake and pray. He's Heigai – known as Akodo Ginawa – a friend and teacher of Kaneka. Soon a few shadows comes and join to him. They are advisors and his friends. Great Masakazu pour out his best sake, Naoharu drops his lucky coin, Sachina put her beloved fan and the others done the same. After a few hours they all gone... In the midnight some samurai come.. Seems that it's ronin because he don't have a great clan mon. Only a sun on his armor. He stops for a moment near the waterfall and speaks a prayer to his ancestor. Then he walk away hoping that his teaching would bring peace to the Empire. But he stops for a moment ... no.. it's only wind. He start to walk again. But if he'd turn around he'd seen a great Water Dragon swimming around the Shogun daisho. It seems that even this mighty creature came to visit his friend for a last time”.*

### **Disturbing gift**

When the night has come it's time for a break. It's one of the village where Sezaru blessed croops and even today everyone remembers that day. The inns are empty waiting for guests. Today it seems that there's no much to do. But it's only distraction. When everybody would be clean and ready for a meal it's time to reveal the nature of Tonbo gift. „*When You've finished eating and everybody drank few cups of sake Tonbo Kageru have spoken: Dragonfly clan remember Sezaru well. He was the person who helped us a lot. He reconstructed our castle and lands in one day. Some of you call it Kyuden Sezaru now and we're proud of this name. Sezaru was a noble person. He could forgive Toturi Koshei as we did and now the enemy of our clan is our close friend – he pointed at fresh and shaved Koshei. It seems that he prepared himself for the ceremony, but You know that he's still nervous. The Wolf – Tonbo continued – was the one who hunted for a bloodspeakers and destroyed the most unstoppable enemy of us all – Iuchiban. He fought side by side his siblings against Daigotsu and helped a lot of villagers. He was indeed a true person not a monster many of You remember. And today we have to pay the debt. It's our duty. Isawa Sezaru studied within our libraries and learned a lot. But he wasn't selfish and he gave us a gift. A gift we want to share with all of You. This – he pointed on the huge book – are the writings of Sezaru about bloodspeakers and methods he used to fight with them. Besides he placed his few ideas about spellcrafting and he'd written a formula of some spells he found. We know that everyone should have ability to defend themselves from blood magic. But today when Empire is divided we have to know that this*

*book will be placed in right hands. So we're giving it to the masters of knowledge – the Phoenix. Use it well.”* Everybody will whisper now and some of diplomats will look at the book with envy. Sayuri will put her hands on the book but Tonbo will speak again „*Not so fast Sayuri. We remember that second founders of Dragonfly too have their successes in fighting the Iuchiban. So we copied this book and we're giving it to you – he'll give a copy Tamori Ume – besides Sayuri san i don't think that You're right person to carry such knowledge. Take it Hiroshi and take care of that. Let it serve well. But giving it to the both clans we're offending the other clans. We have one condition for everyone. Those writings should be copied by every person chosen by the champion. So if someone with great clan seal would ask for copy – it should be copied by him. It's time to share our knowledge because it's time to stand united in those dark times. Asako Keiki was right. Empire can't be shattered because it will fall. Let this book unite us for a moment enough to take a look on ourselves. No one is pure but we can live in peace.*” Hiroshi will be shocked and he don't know what to do. Sayuri seems to be angry and she'll go to her room. Then the great discussion begins. Isawa are arguing with everybody. They won't to share such a gift with average persons. Besides as collectors of items such as this they'll take enough care. Even intervention of Crane diplomat won't help and there's a new trouble. Everybody are arguing but sudden scream of Shinjo Aritomo will stop everything. He is strangling Doji Senzo „You traitor. You didn't wrote everything”. Aritomo observed Senzo for a long time and he understand that Crane played with him. He know that he's dead and shamed so he want to take Crane with him to his grave. Some Shiba yojimbo will strike his hand with wakizashi and bleeding Unicorn will run away. Keiki will ask players to bring him back. It's not so hard because fresh snow fell and his trace is visible. Shinjo will be hidden in the nearest garden bleeding to the death. He'll warn to stay away from him because he's already cheated and he won't listen another lies. He'll tell about his speak with Senzo and Unicorn plans about alliance. He'll say that he believes in peaceful Empire and Keiki's speeches gave him a hope. But now he won't be a fool. What players will do? Especialy Crane? It's time for them to bring peace. What's the behaviour of other Clans?

**Crab:** Crab is disgusted. He looks at this with hate. Phoenix is too selfish for him and young Shinjo is stupid. Besides alliance with the Crane seems shaken. Crab would like to have a righteous Empire and as soon as war with Scorpion isn't ended Crab won't agree with great clans.

**Crane:** Senzo's treachery is known to everybody. He's searching for a champion in upcoming duel (he'll do everything to challenge Unicorn) but unfortunately there's no one by his side and the last chance for him is Crane player.

**Dragon:** Dragon ambassadors won't do anything. They agree with Tonbo and everybody who will come to the Dragon clan mountains seeking knowledge with permission of clan champion will get a copy of the book. What's more Dragon scholars will prepare a copy for new Jade champion.

**Lion:** Lion is angry. First of all Crane lost his face and now he have to stand by his side and that's shameful. Second - the young Unicorn behaved like barbarian and he should take his life but he just run away and it's disgusting. Akodo Isoshi will sneak from inn – she have to speak with Shinjo.

**Phoenix:** Isawa are arguing with Asako, Shiba looks confused and Agasha desires a book. Phoenix clan is divided and no one could bring a peace in this storm of chaotic souls. Only

players could bring stability but it's uneasy. Only a peaceful speak with Isawa and convincing them that this book is truly a gift for all great clans would help.

**Scorpion:** Scorpion will attack the Phoenix and Crab. They'll be blaming them for this chaos and selfishness. Besides Bayushi diplomats will point at Crab as the traitor. They'll be charging him for war and all the mess. The main charge „Where were you when Khan arrived?”

**Dragonfly:** Tonbo family will be shocked. They gave a book to everyone but they didn't expect such reactions. They are watching the players carefully. If players will bring the peace today the price will be high.

**Unicorn:** Two other Unicorns demand explanations. They didn't know that Shinjo told about their plans. Now they are angry because their work is destroyed. They'll stay behind the Mantis praying for some solution.

**Mantis:** Mantis stay with the Unicorn. They doesn't want any book or anything. They are watching Senzo fall with smiles and satisfaction. But maybe for the first time they would like to have a sacred peace. First of all it seems that they are accepted as the great clan among the others. They are not the main villain this time and suddenly they will stand with the players helping them bringing the order.

Young samurai-ko from Akodo family know what to do. She'll speak with Shinjo about her true feelings hoping that he'll understand them. Besides she is astonished by Crane letter. She thought that Doji want to bring peace with the Phoenix but Senzo's action was something opposing that idea. But she know that there won't be any compromises without examples. Shinjo would be shocked but he'll agree that her feelings might change this situation. They'll back to the inn telling that they'll get married soon. Some of peoples would be shocked especially Lion will stand against this idea but Crab, Dragon and Mantis will dring for that immediately. Everybody will calm down and it's a good oportunity to act. From now there's time for players ideas how to reconcile everyone. Mantis will talk with Unicorn and Crab. From now on they will loudly speak that alliance of those clans is possible. Senzo is shamed but he'll stand this failure with honor. He'll aplogize Unicorn clan for this misunderstood but he'll say that they should remember about Khan's actions. And Crane will gladly accept ofer of alliance but it's a long way to do that. First of all Crane clan will wait for Lion's vengeance. Matsu Yoshino took an oath that he'll attack Unicorn lands for a year and Crane won't stand on his way, so with respect to the Lion Unicorn should wait. Keiki will say that another upcoming conflict is another step to destruction. Matsu Hisako will say that it's a matter of honor and it's unavoidable. Everyone will admit it and Lion march is sadly accepted. Bayushi will say that the same matter is between Scorpion and Crab and no one will surrender. So the two wars are coming but Keiki will whsiper to the players that maby they have some solution how to stabilize situation? In fact they can. Naseru is dead, tests of champions and tournament for the Shogun begins – everybody should work together to assure future of Empire. Besides there's another part of ceremony. If the players will convince everyone about the peace and cooperation – Tonbo have a suprise for them. You should try to become every clan member and look at their words in clan view. If it's convincing – good job. If not? Well. Who said that's easy task.

**Last prayer**

*„Morning is sunny. Warm air is something unusual in the Phoenix mountains so you feel fresh. The journey to the sea cliffs isn't as tiring as yesterday so soon You listen ocean waves breaking on the rocks. The view is breath taking. A beautiful blue waters with small kobunes shaking with every wave. And there's a tori. Red, builded from the sacred wood from Phoenix lands. You can feel something powerful but quiet here. Seems that everybody feel that because everyone is silent now. Hiroshi will smile and pray for a while. Then he'll say: They are here. Sezaru and Angai. Watching us. Blessing with their love. I can feel them. Their breaths... Suprizingly you can feel a blow of warm air on Your skin. Hiroshi will speak again: All the waves, the air, the earth, the fire of their love and the void that gathered us today. It's unbelievable. Can you feel this? You feel light. Like a bird, fish... like everything. United with the world. Peacefull. And in one moment everything is over. They are gone.”* Everybody are confused but happy. They know that both characters of tragedy are happy and together forever. Everyone will go back the to village where the final act begins.

## **PART 4: Howl of the Phoenix**

In the midnight Toturi Koshei wakes up players and gathers them near the road. He'll say that Isawa Hiroshi is gone and Sayuri probably went to search for him. Koshei know that something bad might happen so he'd like to visit the tori first. All the players should go with him prepared for everything. The truth is that Hiroshi read Sezaru's writings all the night and then Wolf wake up. He saw a lot of the ideas as his own but they are scarry and destructive. He gone to the tori for some answers about himself. He don't believe that he was such a monster and he's lost within himself. Sayuri wanted the book so much that she planned a murder. But when she sneaked to Hiroshi's room she saw him walking to the tori form the window so she fallowed him. But he wasn't there. In act of fury she broke the tori with powerfull magic. An then players came up. Sayuri won't be acting now – she doesn't have time for this. She'll scream that they are guilty for her failures and that the book should belong to her. And then the fight begins. Isawa Sayuri doesn't have any statistics in this adventure because the last fight could be a good storytelling fun. She is a powerfull Isawa shugenja on fourth rank and have an arsenal of offensive spells that could destroy entire village. So if You'd like to create her remember that she should be fast, deadly and powerfull. She sensed coming players so she's prepared. She has casted a few defensive spells on herself and now she have adventage against players. The fight should be long and when players would be winning she'll cast a heart of inferno on Koshei. He don't have any oportunity to run so his death is sure. But something will dispell coming fireball. *„Suddenly some shadow came up chanting a spell. But when he comes closer You don't believe it. The tall person flying through the air is wearing a mask similar to Sezaru's. So the Koshei was right. The Wolf is still here”* The wolf created a mask again but it doesn't have any special abilities. Hiroshi's body is now fully taken by the power of creature. He felt that noble souls are in danger so he went to help them. He was hiding from the world but the time has come to show up again. He'll help players but he's still weaker then ever. He'll defend them with his magic so the players would strike Sayuri and kill her tormented soul once and for all. Before her death her good side will wake up and she'll thank for everything. But now the real problem appear. The Wolf will ask players about himself. Who am I? Who was I? What is my role to play in this world? Who created me? Why everything is so unclear? What will happen to the Empire? Where is Naseru? Players should understand that the creature is lost and nd a help. There are a few endings.

1. If someone would like o kill Hiroshi the Wolf will explode with sudden power and he'll remind himself his true identity. The players and the Empire are in danger from now.

2. Players could assure him that the true heroes are still here. Then Tonbo will appear and will say that the Empire is in right hands. He observed players and as long as they'll live Rokugan would be safe. The wolf will walk away forever happy and Hiroshi will be free from the creature.
3. Players won't convince Wolf completely. So he'll walk away saying that he have to learn a lot. He'll be helping poor peoples and maby someday he'll become a true hero.
4. The rest is up to You. Maby You have some other idea? Use it and have fun!

So we're at the end of the story. Tonbo family would be greatfull for their devotion to peace and the price is clear – the players can study in the Tonbo dojo and learn from their libraries. It means that they could become Isawa shugenja or Mirumoto bushi on third rank. Everybody will travel homes but maby there's now true friendship between player characters and it's a good start for a new adventure. Soon the championships begin so...

*„The snow is falling from the sky again. There's no one here near repaired tori. Even kobunes sailed away and everything is calm and quiet. But the two shadows came up from the snow. The pair of beautifull wolfes. The first one is white with clear blue eyes and his companion is amazingly dark. They sat near the tori howling to the sky. Maby in this life they'll be happy forever.“*