

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 09/02/2012

ATTENDANCE

Matt shows up. He looks surprisingly lifelike, and explains, “I just came back from the wars. Check out my medals and battle scars!”

Georgina agrees, “I heard you got jacked by aliens out on Anderson Lane. I was really worried about you, but you really do look tremendously lifelike!”

Bruce points out, “Sometimes, those aliens do things that don’t just show up on a quick scan.”

Chris looks askance at the computer screen, “Bruce, did you start working for the Weyland Corporation recently? Are you saying those things so casually just because you’re insulated from the effects of the ‘experiment’?” Bruce nods.

Ernest walks in carrying some barbecue in one hand and a copy of the *Weyland Scientist’s Experimental Handbook*. He seems to be taking its advice very seriously.

Paul finds that he is more than normally concerned for the others. Why is it that he is the only adult in the group?

Tim and *Patrick* both decide that holiday weekends are made for spending time with family and loved ones. None of the others understand why this means they’re not at the game.

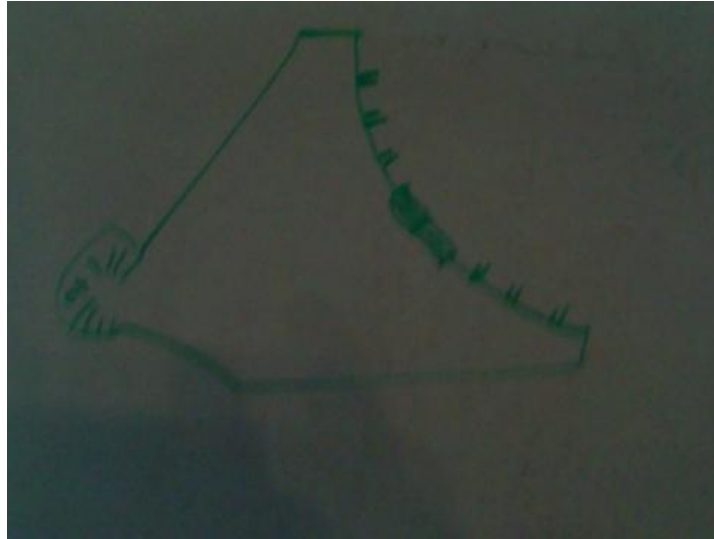
| <i>Character</i> | <i>Player</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Level</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Harwynian Fallingleaf | Bruce | Elegant Elven Transmuter | 9 |
| Yoshihiro Kaijitsu | Ernest | Tien Reckless Mounted Archer-Knight | 9 |
| Jacob Frostfang | Matt | Ale-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer | 9 |
| V’lk | Chris | Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle) | 2/7 |
| Gobo Samarillian | Patrick | Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller | 9 |
| Bjorn the Unlucky | Tim | Ulfen Woodsman | 9 |

HOBGOBLINS IN THE DXING LOTUS PAGODA

The characters stare down the web-clogged 100-foot void leading down to the first level of the House of the Withered Blossom. It is clear that someone has gone to extensive trouble to make the top 20 feet of the shaft completely smooth and thus nearly impossible to climb. *Yoshihiro* points out that the House was originally constructed to trap the Oni of the Five Storms, and that every oni out there has the ability to fly, so there is some risk that flying down will carry unseen risks. Beyond the smoothed-over 20' portion of the shaft the characters can see some small steps carved into the walls. Webs run all through the shaft.

Yoshihiro requests a coin with *Light* cast on it to test whether the top of the shaft is antimagic or trapped. He drops the coin and it falls safely down and enmeshes in the webs below. Reassured that it's as safe as anything is in their lives, the characters take advantage of their *Claws of the Ice Bear* to *Spider Climb* down to the stairs, whereupon *Harwynian* promptly falls off the stairs and ends up caught in the webbing (a preferable fate to falling 80 feet). As he struggles out of them and up to the stairs the rest of the group helpfully chants "Deshi, deshi, basara, basara!" over and over.

The characters find themselves in a wide chamber with a massive iron double door studded with spikes, with arrow slits lining the walls to the sides. A couple of twitching victims are impaled upon the spikes. As the characters move forward, arrows come at them. *V'lk* signs to the others and points up at the ceiling, "Murder holes! Very appropriate for this place!" *Yoshihiro* runs towards the door, taking three arrows in the process. *Jacob* casts a *Wall of Ice* to block up half of the arrow slits on the right side.



V'lk casts *Invisibility* upon himself and moves towards the door. *Harwynian* uses his *Protection from Arrows* scroll and follows (though he doesn't know it) while Jacob covers even more of the arrow slits on the left side of the doors with a second *Wall of Ice*. The whole chamber starts to assume a somewhat refrigerator-like climate. *Harwynian* comments, "Looks like someone misses the Crown of the World a bit too much." Jacob chooses to not dignify this with a response.

For their part, the hobgoblins use boiling oil from the murder holes above to melt holes through several sections of ice wall. Yoshihiro counters by sending a *Cone of Blinding* against the open loopholes. He is gratified by the frustrated hobgoblin howling from the other side of the wall. He reaches the spiked door and inspects the victims: both are Tien humans and seem close to death. One is male, one female, and both of them are fairly youthful.

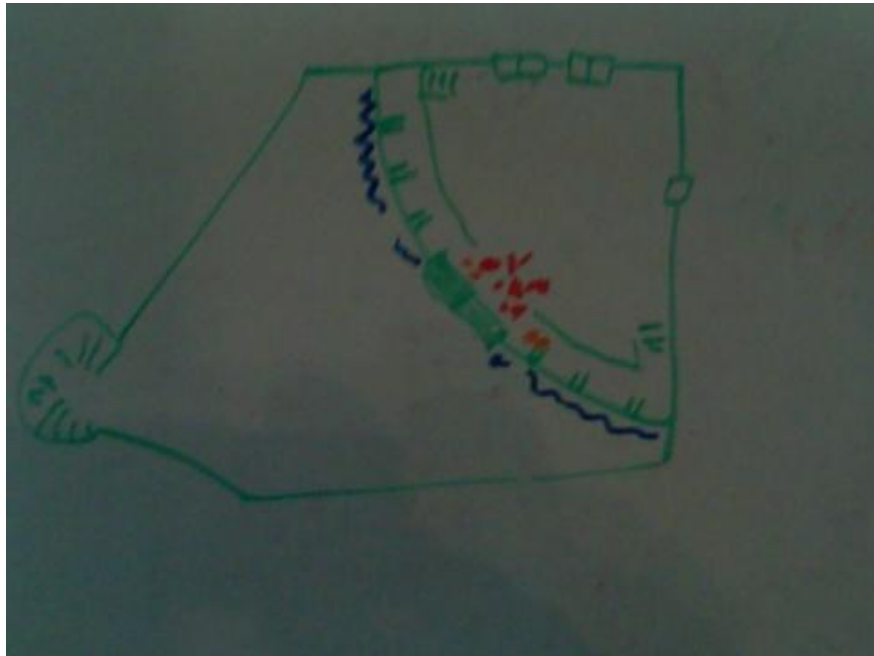
Harwynian notices with his keen elven eyesight that the hobgoblins are using a fire to heat their oil. He sends a *Firefall* through the murder holes above, wreaking unknown havoc upon the hobgoblins and their now-flaming oil with a blinding explosion. Yoshihiro looks over his shoulder to see rays of light spearing down from the murder holes above through the frigid mist flowing off the walls of ice and is struck by the sublime beauty of the moment.

One hobgoblin manages to retain enough vision to shoot *Harwynian*. His arrow flies true... and is stopped by *Harwynian's Protection from Arrows*.

V'lk and Harwynian hear a hobgoblin officer yelling, “Get the boiling oil up to the doors!” Yoshihiro pulls out a *Cure Light Wounds* potion and feeds it to one of the Tien victims, helping her off the spikes. V'lk does the same for the man. Jacob attempts to force the door, concerned because he just heard from Harwynian that the hobgoblins are preparing to drop boiling oil on the characters. He determines that the door is solidly barred, enough that Harwynian’s *Knock* spell will not be helpful. Harwynian yells out for everyone to gather around him so he can teleport them through the door. In the meantime, he invokes his magical ~~bondage object~~ amulet to launch another *Firefall* through the arrow slits.

Two hobgoblins manage to recover from blindness sufficiently to pour boiling (and flaming) oil down over the doorway. Yoshihiro puts himself between the oil and the young woman he just rescued. He gains a Fate point! V'lk is hit by an oil splash as well, and avoids it with his fire resistance.

The characters close with Harwynian. He casts *Dimension Door* and brings them all to the other side of the door. The characters appear in a broad courtyard and immediately realize that they’ve only been fighting four hobgoblins this whole time. Jacob curses, “Only four of them? They really are well organized!”



Three hobgoblins run in and attack. They aren't the prettiest creatures the characters have ever seen. One clobbers Yoshihiro with a morningstar. Another hits Harwynian twice, leaving him gasping and spitting up blood. Yoshihiro steps back away from his hobgoblin and shoots the creature full of arrows. The hobgoblin falls. Yoshihiro sends one more arrow at a nearby hobgoblin, inflicting only a light wound.

V'lk, still *Invisible*, moves up behind the hobgoblin that almost murdered Harwynian and almost murders him in turn. Jacob flanks with V'lk and finishes the job. He tells the elf, "I just cannot bear to see a task half-done." V'lk makes grumbly gestures about who might be stealing whose kills on the grounds of "completeness."

Freed of immediate threat and totally unaware of the exchange going on behind him, Harwynian shoots the next nearest hobgoblin with a *Magic Missile*, inflicting a light wound. Yoshihiro follows up by downing him with a flight of arrows. The hobgoblin, that is: Harwynian has already absorbed quite enough punishment.

The remaining hobgoblin is blinded and disoriented. He swings wildly with his morningstar, only to run afoul of V'lk and his battery of strikes. V'lk ends him.

THE INNER COURTYARD

Having killed four of *Munascaru's* guard, the characters remove the strong iron bar from the door and let the two freed Tien in. V'lk pulls out his healing wand and patches up Harwynian and Yoshihiro. Yoshihiro reassures the rescued folks, learning that that their names are *Chien Lu* and *Tieu Wei*. They explain that they were captured by the hobgoblins out in the forest and brought here to serve as slaves. They think there are still dozens of hobgoblins in the House of the Withered Blossom. They were impaled upon the doors because the hobgoblins are sick and twisted monsters (at least from the point of view of the Tien).

Yoshihiro asks the two Tien to draw a map of the House, as much as they know. They are able to sketch out several areas, including some doors leading to trapped chambers intended only to stop intruders: the hobgoblins never go into those areas. The hobgoblins also have a couple of hill giants available on staff. The two Tien are not

aware of the specific details of the hill giants' employment package, or how it might compare to the characters' own compensation scheme.



Buto Putotsu is the lead hobgoblin in the area. He is known as the Swine Shogun and constantly sings the praises of pigs and boars, animals that can provide for every hobgoblin need.

STORMING THE HOBGOBLIN CITADEL

The slaves tell the characters that the next area is riddled with pit traps and watched by hobgoblins. The way out is barred. And because the locals are hobgoblins, it's a safe bet that they're ready and waiting for the characters to arrive.

Given these problems, the characters assemble a clever plan: Jacob will turn Harwynian *Invisible*. Harwynian will dispense *Bull's Strength* and *Cat's Grace* among the group, then cast *Knock* on the door and finally use his *Beast Shape* power to fly over the pit traps to reach the door. Everyone else will use a variety of stealth and flight powers to avoid the traps and the sentries and power in right after him. Yoshihiro hands Chien Lu and Tieu Wei some of the hobgoblins' gear and instructs them to use them to get rid of any rats they find. The two Tien explain that they are mere Commoners, so

their ability to use the hobgoblins' weapons and armor is limited at best. Yoshihiro just asks that they do their best.

The hobgoblins recognize that something is wrong as soon as the door opens. They fire into the room by sound alone, managing to hit V'lk (strapped to Yoshihiro) by complete chance. Jacob flies up to the archery positions and breathes flame on the hobgoblins up there. Down below, Harwynian finds himself apparently alone (but invisible) in a room. He sees the flare of Jacob's flame breath to the left and flies towards it. He spots two hobgoblin archers (slightly charred) and Jacob. He lands and changes back to elf shape.

The two hobgoblins open fire on Jacob, who avoids their arrows thanks to his *Blur*. V'lk and Yoshihiro (both *Invisible*) move in to support Jacob. At the same time, two huge, brutal giants stomp stupidly down the stairs looking for intruders to squash. V'lk thinks, "These giants are very stupid... I can take advantage of this!" He casts a *Major Image* of awful-looking, venomous spiders crawling all over the first giant's back. He hopes to inspire the second giant to club his comrade. He is successful beyond his dreams: the second giant clubs his friend hard enough to make the first giant spit teeth. The wounded giant is confused and runs into the melee, howling "Why? Why, Solomon Grundy? Why you hit Bobo?"

Jacob faces down the hobgoblins and slashes one with his greatsword. Harwynian moves up behind him (carefully) and casts *Protection from Evil* on him. In an act of extreme trust, Jacob accepts the spell ("Hey, all my friends are invisible! So something invisible casting a spell on me must be good!"). The two hobgoblins strike back at him and poke him full of holes. Two more hobgoblins come running in. Jacob is the only visible foe, so they engage him.

Yoshihiro comes visible suddenly, his bow in hand. He shoots down the wounded hobgoblin with a spray of arrows. Jacob finds himself still the subject of far too much attention, so he steps back and casts *Invisibility* to avoid getting pounded into mush. Harwynian drops his *Invisibility* and casts a persistent *Slow* on the hobgoblins and one of the giants.

For their part, the hobgoblins rush Yoshihiro. They rush him very... very... slowly. Yoshihiro draws out *Suishen* and slashes a hobgoblin. The spider-covered giant clobbers Harwynian, and a second later V'lk stabs the creature to death.

Jacob swings at a hobgoblin and manages an excellent strike that sends the hobgoblin staggering past V'lk, who slits his throat. This leaves only one giant and one hobgoblin on the field. Both of them are threatening Harwynian, a fact that the elf finds deeply discomfiting. Harwynian shocks everyone else when he pulls out *Miyako's Fan* and uses it to elegantly blow the giant away. Then he dodges underneath the hobgoblin's morningstar and moves to a safer location.

Yoshihiro catches the hobgoblin in a vulnerable position and slashes right through his spine. The hobgoblin chokes up blood. V'lk moves in and cuts his vitals out. The hobgoblin folds and dies.

The giant struggles against the *Forceful Hand* effect of Harwynian's fan, but fails to make any progress. Jacob moves in on the giant with his greatsword and slashes at it, delivering a minor wound. Harwynian zaps the giant with a *Ray of Enfeeblement*, softening the creature up a bit for Yoshihiro, who uses *Suishen* to leave a second bloody slash across the giant's leg.

The giant strikes out at Yoshihiro, suggesting that it might have something against Tien-looking people. Yoshihiro takes a solid club strike to the side of the head, leaving him bewildered and bloodied. Then V'lk moves in past the giant's defenses and stabs him through the heart. The giant falls.

While V'lk does his best to heal the injured characters, the others take a look around. The room is carved with grotesque carvings of sex, gluttony and oppression. The bodies of a half dozen humans have been flayed, seared and hung up on the walls as grisly ornaments. It appears that the hobgoblins have resided here and have had a lot of time to redecorate to their own somewhat depraved tastes.

THE VILLAGE OF HOBGOBLINS

Towards the south end of the chamber the characters find a small metal grille. Looking through it, V'lk is able to see that it looks down upon a cavern some sixty feet

below. The cavern includes piles of stacked offal and rubbish that serves to support a distasteful sort of fungus that the characters guess serves as fodder for the hobgoblins' pigs (and possibly as food for the hobgoblins as well). There are several ramshackle and abandoned-looking huts through the cavern – probably housing once occupied by the many hobgoblins that are now dead. The characters are able to see a few pigs and hobgoblins moving around. A near-ruined stone keep sits across the cavern. A stone bridge extends from the roof of the keep over to the opposite side of the cavern and the passage further into the caverns. It is clear that moving deeper into the House will require passing through the village and past the keep.

Listening carefully, V'lk is able to distinguish the sound of breaking bones. Then he finds himself possessed by *Kusata Yuka*, the spirit of unending misery. Kusata Yuka was a monk who was tortured to death here; her body is still pinned to the wall, and she causes her host to sob when her body is in view. She also urges her host on to slay her killer. While the character is pursuing this goal, she grants the monk Still Mind class ability (+2 on saves against enchantment spells and effects).

The characters hatch a plan to shoot at the hobgoblins from the overlook at the top of the cavern. The path to the characters' post requires the hobgoblins to travel up a 60' ladder, so the characters are quite confident that they will be able to operate with impunity. Harwynian casts *Cat's Grace*, *Fire Arrow*, *Protection from Arrows*, and *Bull's Strength* all on Yoshihiro. There are initially six hobgoblins visible as targets. Two of them go down quickly. At that point the hobgoblins start displaying some tactics and start shooting back. Three hobgoblins take cover as they loose arrows up at the characters. One hobgoblin in samurai armor starts climbing up the ladder.

Harwynian peeks out over the lip of the overlook, finds some fire, and lands a *Firefall* into the village. The local hobgoblins manage to avoid the damage part of the effect fairly well, though not the blindness. Yoshihiro also ends up blinded, which is less positive.

Additional hobgoblins come rushing out of the huts and the kitchen area, including four more armored samurai hobgoblins. Harwynian casts an *Ice Storm* in the midst of them, flattening about a dozen hobgoblins. The warrior on the ladder pokes his

head up over the edge of the overlook only to be bull rushed into oblivion by a *Blurred, Flying* Jacob. The warrior falls to the ground and sustains 6d6 damage. He is badly hurt, and his situation gets worse after V'lk sends an arrow into him.

The hobgoblin warrior impresses everyone when he gets back up and starts climbing again. He is clearly less afraid of death than he is of failure. His approach is covered by a half-dozen wildly inaccurate hobgoblin archers. He starts climbing, only to have Jacob cast *Grease* on the ladder and send him falling to the ground again. Once again he gets up and starts climbing. V'lk shoots him once more and sends him down. The characters all salute the fallen hobgoblin for his persistence.

Four more hobgoblins take to the ladder. Three of them run afoul of the *Grease* and fall. Jacob flies down to them and engulfs them in a *Cone of Cold*. Two are nearly frozen through, though they're not stopped. The fourth reaches the top of the ladders to be hit by a *Scorching Ray* from Harwynian, leaving him lightly wounded. V'lk takes out the worst wounded of them with a well-placed arrow.

Yoshihiro recovers from blindness and shoots down the hobgoblin at the top of the ladder with a spray of flaming arrows. At this point, the hobgoblin archers and other rabble turn around and head for the bridges. Jacob swoops down upon them with his icy breath, freezing several of the fleeing hobgoblins in their tracks. In contrast, the two hobgoblin samurai are unwilling to give up: they make it up to the overlook, where the characters take them apart.

The characters pick their way through the smoldering battlefield, selecting out the best gear and a half-dozen potions of *Cure Serious Wounds* which they distribute among the characters.

THE HOBGOBLIN KITCHEN

The hobgoblin kitchen includes a blazing fire and the heavy smells of blood, sweat and misery. The food prepared was mostly pork, rat and fungus with the occasional expired slave. The meat is crudely sliced and smoked above the firepit, then prepared with rusting utensils. For all of their tactical sophistication, the hobgoblins

clearly have not developed the concept of the “cookbook” beyond its most rudimentary form.

STORM THE BRIDGE! CONFRONT THE SWINE SHOGUN!

The characters determine that everyone in the group is able to fly somehow, either by transforming into a bird, by *Wind Walking*, or through an actual *Fly* spell. They use this trick to bypass the keep and reach the bridge directly.

The characters land upon the bridge and are immediately confronted by the *Swine Shogun* Buto Putotsu, who hurries from the keep to defend the bridge. He is a massive hobgoblin with an enormous belly, armed with a mighty greataxe and a piglet. He wears armor fashioned from pigskin. Three of his warriors guard his flanks. The four of them charge out of the keep and rush the characters.

Yoshihiro promptly challenges him, “I am Yoshihiro Kaijutsu! I challenge you to honorable combat!” Buto Putotsu answers him with a roared pig call. Yoshihiro’s leading strike is strong and true, but only wounds him lightly. Buto’s return strikes nearly cut Yoshihiro in half. His three bodyguards assault V’lk, inflicting devastating enough damage to prompt him to turn *Invisible*.

The situation seems truly lost. Yoshihiro ignores Harwynian’s whining cries that it is time to *Dimension Door* to safety. He orders the craven transmuter, “Haste! Give us Haste now!” Harwynian complies.

The characters launch into action. Yoshihiro stands back up, covered in gore. Heroic music plays in the background. As their blades clash, Jacob throws a Hold Person at the Swine Shogun. He freezes in place for just a second, and the samurai instinctively lunges at the provided opening. Yoshihiro’s blade takes his head cleanly off. The body slumps to the floor as the head tumbles through the air to the floor of the cave far below.

Seeing their master cut down in such dramatic fashion is enough to persuade the three bodyguards to immediately surrender and provide the characters with a guided tour of the hobgoblin lair. There are two hill giants and some swine who change their dubious fealty quickly. From the Swine Shogun’s felled corpse we loot:

- *Belt of Giant Strength* +4, which goes to Jacob
- *Jingasa of the Fortunate Soldier*, which goes to V'lk (a jingasa is a samurai hat)
- *o-yori* +2, which goes to Yoshihiro
- *cloak of resistance* +1 made from piglet skins, which goes to Jacob
- *thundering greataxe* +1
- gold-hilted dagger
- masterwork composite longbow +4 STR
- bronze rice bowl
- carved horn box with 6 spinels
- libation cup made of horn

THE END OF THE SESSION

The session ends with the characters surveying their new pocket empire. Too bad it's still full of (surviving) hobgoblins.