

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 11/11/2012

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Chris provides the early entertainment with a showing of the *Venture Brothers Halloween Special*.

Tim notes, “A lot of those zombies were dressed as Monarch henchmen. I guess we know where they all went.”

Bruce adds, “I think I saw a Zombie Dean go by as well.”

Patrick grumbles, “We do not sniff balls!”

Paul decides that things are already getting way out of hand. He is grateful when *Ernest* turns to rooting through the treasure file and asking questions about various uncategorized items.

Matt concentrates upon his iPad, desperate to surround himself with its electronic embrace. So much more comforting than the harsh, unforgiving touch of paper.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Harwynian Falingleaf	Bruce	Elegant Elven Transmuter	11
Yoshihiro Kaijitsu	Ernest	Tien Cavalier/Samurai-In-Training	11
Jacob Frostfang	Matt	Cold-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer	11
V'lk	Chris	Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle)	2/9
Gobo Samarillian	Patrick	Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller	11
Bjorn the Unlucky	Tim	Ulfen Woodsman	11

OUR CURRENT COMPANIONS

The characters' significant companions beyond the initial group of *Ameiko Kaijitsu* (hidden heir to the Jade Throne), *Koya Mvashti* (the fortune-teller), *Sandru Vhiski* (the caravan-master) and *Shalelu Andosana* (the elven ranger) now include some additional folks:

- *Akumi*, the bonsai-kami
- *Drusisque*, the elegant elven enchantress recently escaped from entombment

- *Spivey*, the flitting butterfly-like oracle of Desna
- *Miyaro*, a kitsune of the Forest of Spirits

Harwynian in particular is taken by Drusisique, whom he sees as the most elegant and delightful new addition to the party. She has spent the last 150 years as a statue, so she is eager to learn all the new insights into arcane spellcasting that he knows. He explains that everything he knows came from a stagnant magical tradition that hasn't changed in the last 300 years. She is enchanted.

Drusisique also asks *Harwynian* why he allows his subordinates to act in such a disrespectful manner. She indicates that she has experience in handling slaves and members of the lesser races and would be happy to help out. *Harwynian* tries to introduce her to the concept that "less is more".

Jacob Frostfang gives *Sandru Vhiski* a golden astrolabe. He accompanies the gift with a long speech indicating that he wants to settle down and live a more stable life, one that he hopes *Sandru* will be a part of. *Sandru* accepts the gift. The two of them are now devoted to each other. The two of them train with each other, such that the two of them each gain a +1 Dodge bonus when they fight within 10 feet of each other. They also gain a +1 morale bonus on all CHA-based skill checks.

While the characters have been working through the *Pagoda of the Withered Blossom*, *Ameiko Kaijitsu* has been spending time speaking with and developing relationships with the local kami. It turns out that to ascend to the Jade Throne she will need to have the Blessing of the Kami, so this is time well spent. *Yoshihiro* takes advantage of her new connections to obtain an agreement from the kami to protect the characters from random ghost possession attempts during the rest of their travels through the forest. This is deeply satisfying to him and to *Bjorn the Unlucky*, though not so much to some of the others who would very much like to gain additional interesting skills and abilities from the area's spirits.

Yoshihiro plays the samisen (he's been learning from *Ameiko*); *Harwynian* suddenly joins in, singing in an eerily chick-like voice (thanks to his spirit possessor). Everyone notices that *Harwynian* has become much better at reciting complex formal poetry since he entered the forest as well.

GROVE OF LETHAL TREES

The characters continue through the Forest of Spirits. The way is quite long – the entire forest is the size of a nation. Some weeks into the journey, the caravan passes unknowingly into the midst of a grove of hangman trees. One reaches out and grabs one of the drivers!

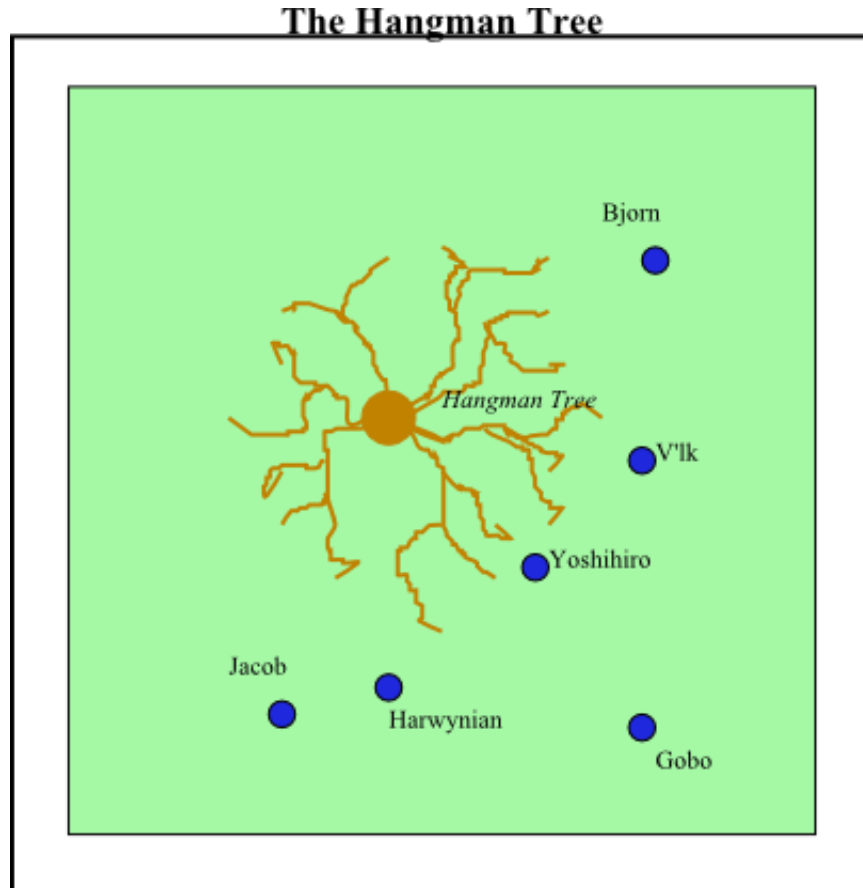


The characters send the caravan rushing off to safety as they face off against the tree to rescue the driver, *Bevilek*. As they get into position, Bjorn the Unlucky starts providing helpful information about hangman trees. The last thing that Harwynian hears is that they spread hallucinogenic spores that make their victims passive and serene.

V'lk and Yoshihiro are the only characters not affected by the hallucinogen. *V'lk* signs to Yoshihiro, “Should we help them?”

Yoshihiro responds, “We don’t have time to take a bath! We must save them!” *V'lk* rolls his eyes and shrugs.

Bjorn comments rather dreamily, “Perhaps I was wrong about those spores. This thing seems totally harmless.” Yoshihiro screams and strikes the tree with *Suishen*, hoping very much that the tree is vulnerable to fire. It only takes him a couple of chops to cut down the tree and end the threat. He notes that Bjorn and Harwynian both remain blissed out for minutes after the tree is dead.



MONSOON!

Near the end of the journey the weather turns against the characters and the caravan is overcome by a monsoon lasting some fifteen hours. The characters draw the wagons up into a circle as Harwynian casts *Mass Bear's Endurance* and *Endure Elements* and makes surprisingly helpful survival suggestions, Jacob sets up *Walls of Ice* to shield the wagons from the winds and rain, and Yoshihiro deploys the *Sashimono of Comfort* to protect the most vulnerable wagons. Bjorn and Yoshihiro demonstrate that they are both also masters of Survival. A smelly V'lk, well-protected in his cloak of scalps, congratulates Harwynian on his efforts to preserve the caravan.

By the end of the storm, the characters have avoided almost all of the damage that would have struck the caravan. Both of the “real” elves (Harwynian and Drusisique) are completely dry and flawlessly dressed. V'lk is covered in mud and rain, until Harwynian uses *Prestidigitation* on him to clean him up (Drusisique asks why the dirt-elf is covered

in filth, and why Harwynian is helping him... V'lk and Bjorn start making plans to dump a bucket of tree sap over Drusisique's head).

THE OSOGEN GRASSLANDS

The characters finally enter the northern reaches of Minkai, the Osogen Grasslands. Yoshihiro takes the opportunity to give his horse *Akumu* a good galloping. He hasn't had a chance to give it a good stretching for some time. The others roll their eyes and wish Yoshihiro would choose his words slightly differently. Yoshihiro convinces *Miyaro* to come along for a ride before she leaves the caravan to return to the kami, and they ride swiftly across the plain. He bids her farewell, and says that they will always consider the kami friends of the Amataatsu.

Minkai claims the Osogen, but does not really occupy it. As the characters travel south they start to see small farms and villages with palisade fences scattered across the landscape – settlements from peasants who have fled north to flee the depredations of the oni.

Yoshihiro leads the caravan to one of the settlements and asks to speak to the headman. The armed militia at the gate confront them and demand that they leave, for they have the look of bandits.

Yoshihiro is interested, "Is the area beset by bandits?"

"The area is dangerous, there are many ronin and other dishonorable people around. They are warriors who have disobeyed the Emperor and taken up a life of violence and thievery."

The characters learn that there are numerous bandit gangs in the area, some of them made up of ronin who have fled from the southern lands.

THE GRASSLANDS SETTLEMENT

The characters elect to spend an evening in one of the settlements, trading (at a loss) for their rice and millet. Harwynian, *Gobo* and V'lk use their various spells (healing spells, *Dispel Magic*, *Break Enchantment*) to help afflicted villagers. Bjorn and Yoshihiro spend time hunting for the evening meal; the villagers are glad for the meat and offer to cook it for everyone.

Drusisique does not see eye to eye with Harwynian's altruistic behavior. She starts saying progressively more awful things ("Oh, dearest! That child is so darling, his eyes match my cloak. Could you buy him for me? Perhaps we could just take his eyes!"). Bjorn decides to start aversion therapy – whenever she says something monstrous, he will throw a tanglefoot bag at her. Harwynian starts to understand that even though he is quite fond of Drusisique, her values and his are not at all similar.

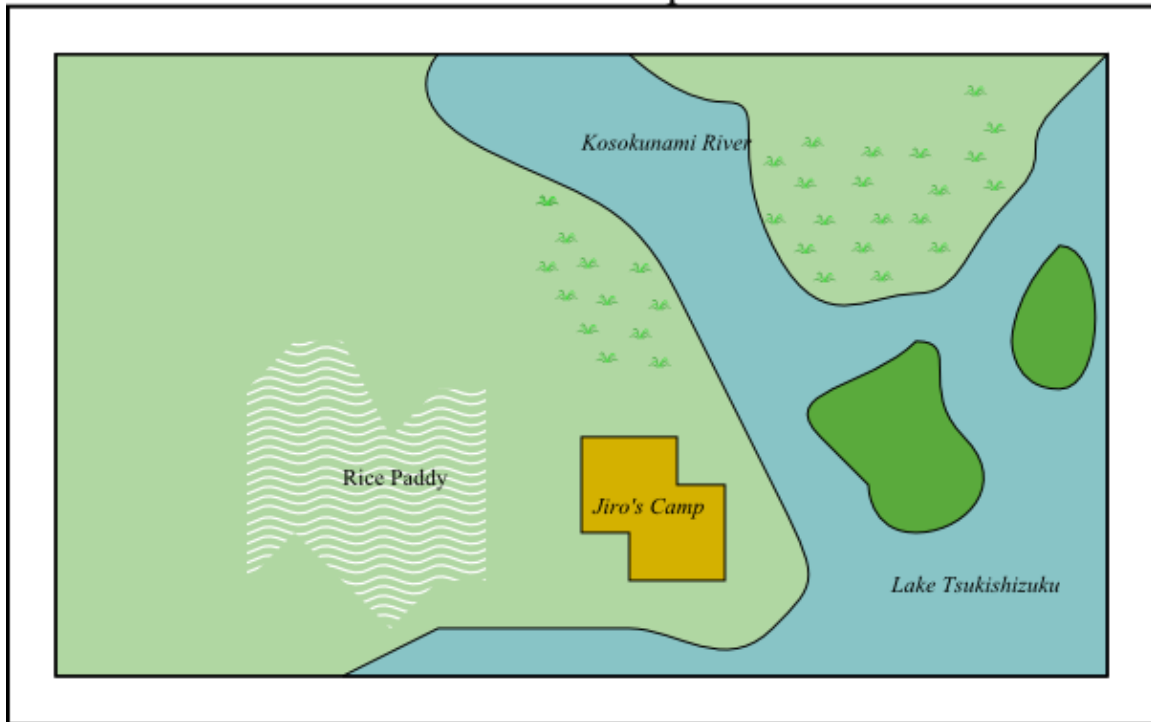
Yoshihiro offers to put on a play for the villagers in the evening. He asks Harwynian if he would be willing to sing as part of the performance. Harwynian has a spirit talking into his ear telling him that he's a great singer, so he is happy to agree. Yoshihiro spends some time reworking *The Cuckolded Cuckoo* into a musical.

The performance isn't great. Jacob is awful – he is off-key, forgets his lines, and stumbles over scenery, and for all of that he is still better than Bjorn. Harwynian hardly lives up to his press (though the review he writes of the performance afterwards is a work of art). The most popular character, as usual, is the gnome Gobo as "the giant standing in the distance."

HIRABOSHI JIRO'S CAMP

The characters continue south along the path of the Kosokunami River, eventually reaching the delta where it flows into Lake Tsukishizuku. There are more signs of civilization, but *Hiraboshi Jiro's Camp* near the lake shore is in very inhospitable territory. The fields are overgrown with brambles. A gang of workers is preparing a rice field. A stocky woman with a husky voice is drilling a squad of youths in archery.

Jiro's Camp



When she sees the caravan approach, the woman tells the children to put down their bows. She approaches the characters. Yoshihiro steps forward with his legendary gear all equipped. He introduces himself. The rest of the characters likewise offer introductions, even Jacob and Bjorn who are giggling in the back.

The woman introduces herself as *Habestua Hatsue*. She is very wary. “Why would you seek a meeting with Hiraboshi Jiro?”

“We have been told that he bears no love for the Jade Regent, and neither do we. We have a proposition he may find intriguing.”

“Or perhaps you are assassins!”

The characters offer some assurances to the contrary, enough to convince her. She dismisses her students and leads the characters into a rude hut with sparse furnishings, little more than a plain wooden table and a shogiban playing board, currently laid open for a game in progress.

Hatsue prepares tea, meanwhile explaining that she is a *sohei* warrior-monk from the Kyojin Mountains to the West. She is at the camp to defend the settlers and guard the borderlands against those with no honor.

Soon enough, Hiraboshi Jiro shows up. He is clearly upset with the current state of affairs under the Jade Regent, yet requires proof that the characters claims are real. Yoshihiro offers him the sword *Suishen*, which he recognizes, by way of proof. Suishen lays out the situation but Jiro remains unconvinced. He challenges the characters to a game of riddles. He asks, “a wicked daimyo brings in a peasant asks a samurai with a katana and wakizashi to show that his blade can cleave through a man. What should he do?” The characters suggest various answers along the lines of killing the daimyo and committing seppuku. Jiro suggests that there is a ruthless group of bandits lairing at the fortress of *Seinaru Heikiko* up in the mountains. They are led by a barbarian tribal leader named *Gangasum* from the *Yumogu* people. They are a dishonorable and evil people and must be slain.

The location of the fortress of Seinaru Heikiko has been lost for years, until Gangasum and his ruffians located it. It had a long and noble history before then, and is rumored to include a storeroom sealed so that only a member of an Imperial family may open it. An unbreakable blade once wielded by Hiraboshi Jiro’s grandfather is said to be inside the chamber.

Gangasum’s forces are currently two dozen experienced ruffians or less, but the longer he is successful in his depredations the more men will join to his cause. They must be stopped!

V’lk leaves the room at this point. He prepares a headband reading “TOTAL MASSACRE” in Tien for each member of the group.

SEINARU HEIKIKO

Hiraboshi Jiro proposes sending his men to assault Gangasum’s scouts and outriders around Seinaru Heikiko while the characters attack the fortress proper. If they are able to return with his grandfather’s ancestral blade *Eljuapo*, that will prove their good intentions.



The fortress is a combination of stone and wooden structures built into the sheer rock walls. The wooden structures appear to have been recently repaired: the bandits are quite industrious. There are two small sentry posts built into the cliffs, one to the east and one to the west.

The characters will attack at night, using *Dimension Door* to reach the inner fortifications and *Passwall* to pierce through them. The characters see that there are some windows on the inner fortifications. Harwynian casts *Protection from Arrows* on himself, changes into a bird, and does some aerial recon to pick out useful details. He determines that the inner rock walls are dotted with arrow slits, and that there are two rooms on the upper level of the inner structure – a dormitory and a storeroom.

Zzzapf! Zzzapf! The characters arrive inside the storeroom in two waves. They hear snoring warriors through the door. V'lk opens the door and decides which ones to murder first. He starts at one end of the room and works his way through them. By the time bandits start to wake up, there are only four of them left. Yoshihiro charges in to slaughter them, fortified with *Bull's Strength* from Harwynian. V'lk beats him to the punch, slashing almost completely through one bandit.

The bandits rage and attack with kukris, inflicting relatively minimal harm. Gobo steps in and casts *Hold Person* on one of the bandits. The bandit resists, but only to be hammered by Bjorn's *Nine-fold Spirit Sword*. The characters chop the bandits into reddish bits, but not before the characters discover that the bandits have the Rage power Animal Rage and can make bite attacks! The idea of being attacked by crazed naked berserkers who are willing to bite their foes is even more disturbing.

THERE ARE MORE!

The characters swiftly understand that there are more bandits down the stairs in (probably) a larger ballroom-like chamber. Those bandits are forewarned that something is wrong, and they are preparing themselves with armor and actual weapons before they attack. The characters get into position and wait.

Five bandits move down the hall, clad in light armor and armed with spears. Yoshihiro leads off by shooting three arrows at the cape-wearing bandit. The bandit is critically wounded, pierced through by all three arrows!

Jacob follows up by engulfing all five bandits in an icy gale. The cloak-wearer is frozen solid and two other bandits are crusted in bloody ice. A bandit wearing a headsman's cowl unlimbers his bow and shoots Jacob twice. Bjorn emerges from behind the curtain he had been hiding behind and unleashes a dizzying maze of sword and shield strikes.

V'lk casts *Greater Invisibility* and vanishes. He creeps towards the bandits.

Two bandits fly into a rage and stab Jacob through with spears, leaving him desperately injured. Another stabs Bjorn, leaving him moderately hurt. Gobo swiftly heals Jacob to keep him standing.

Harwynian moves in with a *Magic Circle against Evil*, protecting V'lk and Jacob. Jacob launches another *Dragon's Breath*, catching all the bandits in a line of freezing air. V'lk and Bjorn dive to safety (both of them have Evasion and very good Reflex saves). Another bandit is frozen solid.

V'lk appears in front of the two bandits facing Jacob. He stabs the first cleanly through the heart. The bandit drops like a stone. He slashes the second bandit with a long cut through his throat. The bandit expels a final spray of blood and expires. V'lk gives a creepy giggle and steps forward to position himself to attack Gangasum.

Gangasum turns to Bjorn and slashes with his scimitar three times. He cuts Bjorn through the side, along the left leg, and on the right arm. Bjorn counts himself lucky to still be standing. He spits at Gangasum, just in time for Harwynian to cast *Distintegrate* on him. The spell doesn't quite live up to its name, but it does leave the bandit lord critically injured with skin burning away and flesh smoking. Bjorn decides that he needs to spit on things more often.

Yoshihiro ends it with an arrow right in through Gangasum's eyeball and out through the other side of his skull. Gangasum falls.

As the characters exult in their victory the door to the hall flies open. A young Tian-min man with a long, dark beard accompanied by a weretiger strides into the hall. The man wears lamellar armor and carries a wooden shield and a scimitar. The characters gasp, "He's a druid!" Next time, a Tier One foe!

THE END OF THE SESSION