

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 03/31/2013

CAST OF CHARACTERS

For a change, *Bruce* shows up in person. He explains that he was suddenly overcome with a crazed desire to drive for three hours. He launches into a rousing discussion of webcam mounts and video podcasting techniques with *Ernest*, who is interested in the technology, and *Chris*, who would much prefer to discuss his recent run-in with a fine piece of cinematography titled *Nude Nuns with Big Guns*. He cautions that the film is very anti-Catholic: the priests are all drug dealers and criminals.

Patrick suggests that this might not be so anti-Catholic as Chris thinks – after all, none of the priests were pedophiles. Beyond that, the strippers employed to play nuns didn't look nearly so haggard as actual strippers.

Matt devotes himself to paying close, almost obsessive attention to his iPad.

Paul calls in frantic dismay. “There’s some kind of cult holiday going on! All the restaurants are closed! Can nobody help me?” Everyone else does their best to reassure him that there are some commercial food options still available. He shows up in good time, having visited the Taco Bell drive-through. Everyone else offers appropriate sounds of mourning. And disgust. And horror.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Harwynian Fallingleaf	Bruce	Elegant Elven Transmuter	13
Yoshihiro Kaijitsu	Ernest	Tien Cavalier/Samurai-In-Training	13
Jacob Frostfang	Matt	Cold-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer	13
V'lk	Chris	Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle)	2/11
Gobo Samarillian	Patrick	Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller	13
Bjorn the Unlucky	Tim	Ulfen Woodsman	13

HOSTAGE RESCUE FROM THE PALACE!

The characters learn that the Jade Regent has taken nine daughters of the merchants and nobles of Kasai as hostages. They are guarded by three beautiful human

women serving as wardens. The characters assume that the three wardens are anything but ordinary humans. They sketch out a plan that involves teleporting in, slaughtering the wardens, and rapidly departing with *Shadow Walk* and another *Teleport*.

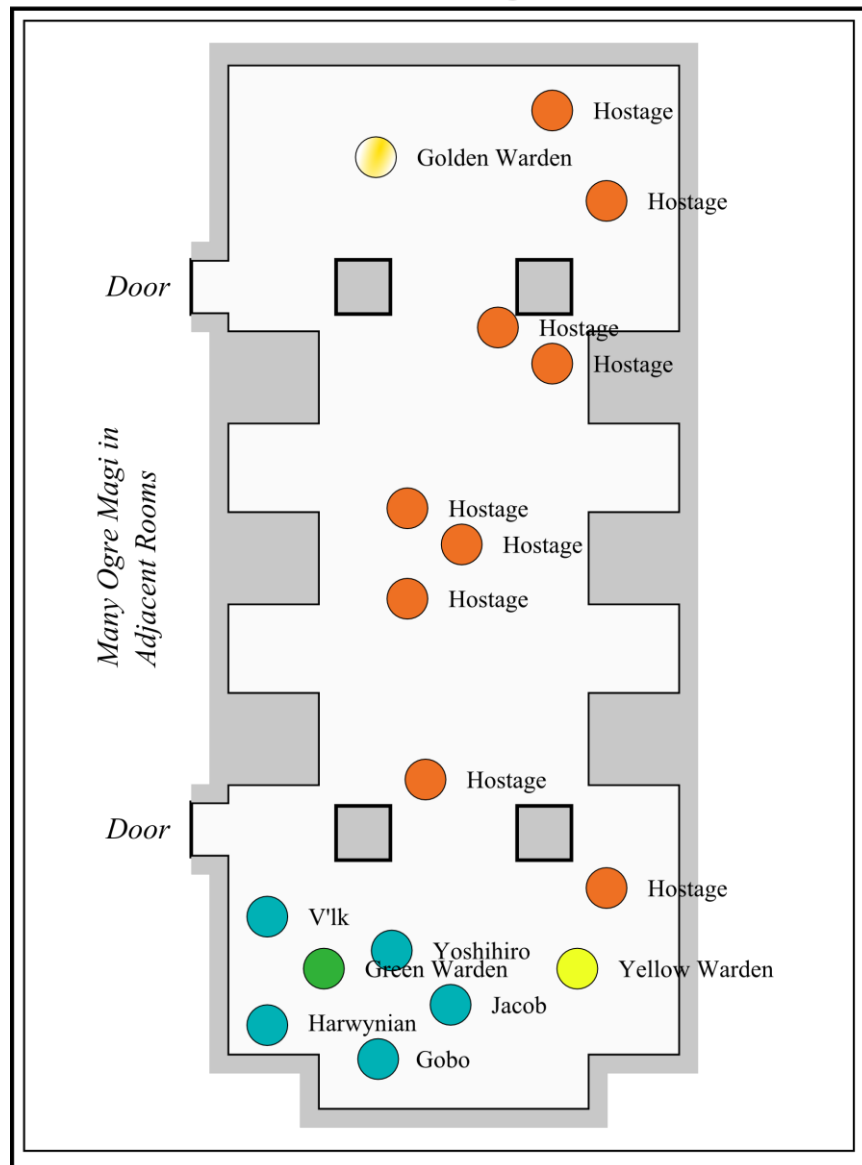
The characters appear behind one of the wardens, a woman wearing a green robe. *V'lk* strikes with *Whispering Shrike* and inflicts a biting wound – his magical cold iron blade proves able to cut through their damage resistance. *Yoshihiro* challenges the green-robed warden (giving others a +5 to hit her in melee) and *Harwynian* casts a *persistent Slow* upon her. Then *V'lk* tears into her, chopping off her hand and fatally slashing through her torso. He notes that her hand is still twitching even after she falls.

Yoshihiro moves on to the yellow-clad warden. *Jacob* (in silver dragon form) places a *Wall of Ice* across the two entries to the room and flies to the other end of the chamber to engage the gold-clad warden. *Harwynian* follows up by casting *Mass Bear's Endurance* upon everyone in the group except *Jacob* (he's too far away), and one nearby hostage.

Then the yellow-clad warden acts. She becomes spider-like, growing four additional legs. Her face transforms, splitting into an awful fanged mouth. *Yoshihiro* screams, "I failed my sanity check! Aieeee!" as the yellow spider-woman bites him, injecting burning venom into his veins.

The woman with the golden torc also transforms in front of *Jacob*. He stammers out, "I don't have anything to do with those other people, I'm just a dragon who's randomly passing through." This doesn't impress her one bit – she clacks her mouthparts at him and casts a spell. Her *Hold Monster* renders him utterly paralyzed. Then she turns on her *Cloak of Displacement* to fill the area with confused, horrifying images of gold-clad spider women.

Kalai Palace Hostage Chamber



At this point, the hostages realize that something is going on. They start to panic in detail. The chamber is suddenly full of young, screaming Minkaian women in fancy gowns.

V'lk recognizes that the dragon is about to get killed, and he won't be there to see it. He runs to the other end of the chamber, in part to engage the golden spider woman and in part to be able to watch her feed upon Jacob.

Yoshihiro challenges the yellow-clad spider woman and slashes her apart with *Suishen*. The spider woman falls, cut in twain.

The spider woman with the golden torc, unaware that an *Invisible* V'lk has moved up behind her, attacks Jacob with a coup de grace. Jacob falls, both slain and poisoned. V'lk uses his *Breath of Life* to bring Jacob back up, much to his surprise. Sadly, it does nothing to fix his poisoning problems.

THE TYPHOON GUARDS ARRIVE

The commotion in the hostage chamber has alerted the ogre magi in the adjacent guardrooms. They grab up their awful tetsubo and their brilliant no-dachi and storm into the chamber.

Yoshihiro sees the danger and orders the hostage girls, "Group up and move away from the doors!" The girls comply. He bares his sword (ahem) and stands ready to receive the charging ogre magi (ahem).

For their part, the ogre magi start hammering away at the wall of ice. Harwynian stands poised to hit them with a *heightened Lightning Bolt* as soon as they break through the wall of ice.

The golden spider woman attacks Jacob again. Against his expectations, she doesn't manage to kill him again. She does manage to poison him some more. Fortunately, the poison only inflicts Wisdom damage, and he wasn't really using his Wisdom anyway. And *Gobo* steps in to *Heal* him back to full health a moment later.

The guards break through the wall, leaving Harwynian to understand that they aren't just ogre magi – there are guards of all sizes waiting to rush in. He unleashes his *Lightning Bolt*. The corridor fills with the choking smells of burnt ogre and singed oni. The first ogre mage charges directly at Harwynian. As he charges, the wall of ice freezes him and Yoshihiro strikes him with his oni-bane blade. The creature falls dead at Harwynian's feet, a testament to his commitment to the ideals of Bushido – to embrace Bushido is to embrace death, thus to embrace a course of action that will not result in your own death is to fail.

Harwynian, ever elegant, does not permit even the slightest flutter to his robes as the ogre mage collapses in front of him. Two more ogre magi storm in and strike at him. He evades one of them with his *Haste* but takes a hit from the other. His *Stoneskin* stops

half of the impact, his *Great Heroism* absorbs the rest. Harwynian remains impeccably elegant, his robes not even tinged by a single spatter of blood.

The other guards storm in, surrounding Yoshihiro. Their accuracy is improved by the singing coming from the guardroom beyond. Yoshihiro understands immediately, “They have bards! Bards! We need a Cloudkill, stat!” Guards of various description mob him, cutting and chopping from every direction.

V’lk suddenly appears, tearing into the golden torc-bearing spider woman from surprise. His magical blade shreds her defenses and leaves her poisoned. As she dies, she hisses, “I am a spider woman, thus immune to poison!” V’lk thinks this is just completely unfair. Unfair or not, it doesn’t save her.

Yoshihiro moves to a defensive stance and strikes at one of the smaller (human-sized) guards. The creature falls stricken as his companions continue to press the samurai. Yoshihiro cries out, “Guys! Little help?”

Jacob reflects that the last time he spent this much time on the floor there was a woman involved. He decides that he’s incredibly tired of being kicked around, so he invokes *Snow Shroud* and flies into the thick of the fight. The Typhoon Commander swings his great naginata at him, but misses his strike due to a gust of snow.

Harwynian decides that things are getting a bit out of hand. He casts a *persistent Slow* across the onrushing swarm of guards. The Typhoon Commander slows down, as do several of his comrades. Gobo follows up with a *Chain Lightning* on everyone.

One of the guards growls out, “Drop your weapons or I will kill these hostages!” To show that he means it, he cuts down one of the women. Then the Typhoon Commander and a distinctly gorilla-like demeanor smash down upon Harwynian. Harwynian takes the injury with good humor and style, giving thanks that his *Stoneskin* is keeping him from dying instantly.

The ogre mage who had been bringing up the rear notices that Harwynian is not actually carrying a weapon. He storms right past the elf to Gobo, bellowing, “Hrrraugh! Free gnome!”

V'lk moves up and casts a *Major Image*. Harwynian appears to shout out, "Those hostages are meaningless to me, because I am an elf! And I breathe fire!" Harwynian appears to gush out flames that engulf and incinerate all of the hostages, plus Gobo. To say that this takes Harwynian by surprise is an understatement. Behind the illusion, all the women fall down in a dead faint.

Jacob thinks, "Harwynian killed all the hostages? I completely believe that. But where did he learn to breathe fire?"

Yoshihiro moves to action, chopping down two of the smaller (human-sized) guards. Jacob turns his attention to the gorilla-like ogre mage, tearing the creature to shreds with teeth, claws, wings, tail and whatnot. The others see the dragon envelop the ogre. Nothing but bloody fragments remain after the dragon raises its wings.

Harwynian decides that he's tired of being in the strike zone of so many guards. He uses his new wand to *Dimension Door* away from the center of the conflict. He appears in the corridor outside the hostage room. There are three geishas singing songs of encouragement to the guards down one corridor. And then the doors at the end of the corridor slam open and four more Typhoon Guards storm forth, led by a monstrous Typhoon Commander. A Typhoon Guard with bloodshot eyes rumbles, "A lone elf! Let's have some fun!"

Gobo (for all that he looks burned to death) casts *Mass Cure Moderate Wounds* on everyone. Everyone rejoices!

The guard who previously killed a hostage moves over to strike Jacob. His strike is slowed and off-balance and does not connect. The Typhoon Commander also strikes. His attack is true, chopping into the dragon's flank and drawing freezing ichor. The blood sprays across the commander's face, leaving gruesome frostbite wounds. Yoshihiro challenges the Typhoon Commander and cuts him down!

V'lk stabs one of the ogre magi, sending it to the ground.

Harwynian moves up to the three singing geishas and sings to them in traditional meter:

Come with me! / And you'll be / Drawn to safety!

Take my hand! / You'll understand / My master plan!
An arcane flight! / Into the night! / All shall be right!

Then he casts *Teleport* on himself and all three of them. The geishas are *Horumi*, *Tomiko* and *Wakani*. All three of them clearly believe Harwynian, as they allow themselves to be teleported to a safe location. It turns out that Harumi is one of the hostages, the daughter of the noble who had hosted the characters in town.

Seeing Harwynian off to safety, Jacob swiftly casts another *Wall of Ice* to seal off the chamber. The reinforcements start hammering upon the wall as their few surviving compatriots face Jacob and Yoshihiro. V'lk casts *Breath of Life* to bring the "slain" hostage back to health.

The last two guards stuck in the chamber with the characters growl and close upon Yoshihiro. He explodes into a whirl of blades and death, slashing their throats and dropping both of them.

Recognizing that most of the downed defenders are slowly regenerating, the characters commence slaughtering them. To buy time, Jacob drops an ongoing series of *Walls of Ice* on the door. The sounds of the guards trying to break through become fainter and fainter behind the thickening layers of ice.

With time a factor, V'lk starts his *Shadow Walk* and commences touching the hostages and Gobo to bring them along. Gobo grabs whatever loot he can manage in the few seconds he has left:

- *Minor Cloak of Displacement*
- *Necklace of Adaptation*
- A Jeweled Spider Pendant on a mithril necklace (worth 1000 gold)

The characters cast their *Shadow Walk* and *Teleport* and make good their escape.

HOW GOES THE REBELLION?

With the rescue of the captive daughters, the characters now have 14 Rebellion Points. This is enough to allow the rebellion to succeed, but not to assure unity of the nation afterward. The characters' current Rebellion Points came from a variety of deeds:

Recovering the Amatatsu Seal	1
Defeating Gangasum's bandits at Seinaru Heikiko	1
Hiring a ninja clan	1
Rescuing Osayumi	1
Obtaining the Blessings of the Emperor	1
Securing a Food Supply	3
Rescuing Hatsue	2
Rescuing the Hostage Daughters	4

Other actions that could provide additional Rebellion Points include finding the seals of the other Royal houses (the characters have only the Amatatsu Seal) or destroying the *shinobi fuhansen* (ninja coin). The other seals are held by the sovereign dragon *Taekono*; his fiery breath is also the key to destroying the shinobi fuhansen. The problem is that he is honor-bound to serve the occupant of the Jade Throne for the next hundred years (no matter how horrible the current occupant of the throne might be).

The characters decide to follow an alternative plan: they will work through rumor and innuendo, employing their allied ninja clan and the geishas to spread several stories demoralizing to the Jade Regent and his allies. Some of these rumors the characters have Harwynian write down as handbills and political cartoons that can be distributed through the city of Kasai.

- The *Raven Prince* has lost control of his ninjas
- The Raven Prince cannot beat Harwynian in a fair fight
- *Renshii Meida* the Jade Regent's concubine is pregnant with the Royal baby
- The Jade Regent *Soto Takahiro* has spent time with many women of low honor, preferring their company to that of his concubine Renshii
- The Jade Regent slew the last Emperor and dropped his body down the Well of Demons
- Annamuramon is an Oni of the Five Winds
- Annamuramon is not just an advisor to the Jade Regent – the Jade Regent is beholden to him.

- The Jade Regent is in league with the Oni of the Five Winds – all of the Typhoon Guards are oni.

As a final touch, the characters stage a performance of *The Cuckolded Cuckoo* to infuriate the Raven Prince (who is a kenku).

THE KEY FIGURES OF THE REGENCY

The Jade Regent is a former member of the Imperial guard named *Soto Takahiro*. He was known as a cruel man before he ascended to the Regency. He is huge, standing almost seven feet tall. His ally the Raven Prince is a master assassin, said to be without peer in his arts. His only vice is that he seeks a challenge worthy of his skills. Annamuramon is officially an advisor to the Jade Regent. Renshii Maeda is the consort to the Jade Regent and helped him to betray the Emperor.

<i>Regency Leader</i>	<i>Teamwork</i>
Annamuramon	50
Soto Takahiro	50
Raven Prince	32
Renshii Meida	40

FRUIT OF THE WHISPERING CAMPAIGN

The stories of Renshii Meida's pregnancy infuriates Annamuramon, who fears that he will be supplanted as the Jade Regent's key advisor – this reduces his Teamwork score by 10 to 40. This also reduces her Teamwork score by 10.

Having stories of his indiscretions made public infuriates Soto Takahiro, reducing his Teamwork by 10. News of a potential new royal heir reduces his Teamwork by 5 additional. And the incredible fight with Renshii Meida drops her Teamwork by another 15.

The stories directed towards the Raven Prince drop his Teamwork score by 20, but also cause him to be lured out into a direct encounter with the characters.

<i>Regency Leader</i>	<i>Teamwork</i>
Annamuramon	40
Soto Takahiro	35

<i>Regency Leader</i>	<i>Teamwork</i>
Raven Prince	12
Renshii Meida	15

THE CUCKOLDED CUCKOO

The characters stage their favorite play *The Cuckolded Cuckoo* with an audience mostly made up of ninjas. V'lk's part is played by a *Major Image* he casts. V'lk lurks in the background, watching for an assassination attempt upon the image. He is rewarded just before the curtain as the image is suddenly stabbed through by a sai. V'lk is masterful in manipulating the image: it collapses and rolls onto its back, silently begging for mercy. All the while, V'lk is sneaking up behind the Raven Prince. While the image begs for mercy from the tengu ninja, V'lk stabs him three times from behind. The Raven Prince falls, gulled by magic and gutted by harsh steel.

As the scene on stage closes, the stage manager drops three black feathers from the top of the curtain. They flutter gently to the ground.

- Potion of *Haste*
- Two doses of *Dragon Bile* poison
- Three doses of *Nightmare Vapor*
- *Padded Armor +4*
- *Tsuruhachi the Silent Crane*, a named adamantite exotic sai with all manner of ninja- and assassin-oriented powers
- *A poisoned sand tube* (for use with the nightmare vapor)
- Six masterwork shuriken
- *A Belt of Incredible Dexterity +6*
- *A Cape of the Mountebank*
- *A Ring of Protection +3*
- A pouch full of brass coins with a crowned raven stamped upon them.

DIVISION OF THE SPOILS

The characters divide up some of the nicer items they secured through the session. Yoshihiro get the *Belt of Incredible Dexterity* +6. Jacob gets the *Ring of Protection* +3, but hands over his *Ring of Protection* +2 to Harwynian, who also gets the *Cape of the Mountebank*. He hands his *Ring of Protection* +1 and *Cloak of Resistance* +1 in to the party treasury. Gobo gets the *Cloak of Displacement* (minor).

With nobody in the group able to use it, the characters give *Tsuruhachi the Silent Crane* to Hatsue.

DISCREDITING THE CONCUBINE

The concubine of the Regent, Renshii Meida is a seer who claims to be the last survivor of the ancient Renshii family. The historical Renshii date back to the original life of Annamuramon and sided with him. Most of them were executed for their role in the rebellion. Those who survived did so by marrying into other families and changing their names. She claims that she spoke to the spirits and learned that she is the last remnant of the Renshii.

The characters use V'lk's *Alter Self* trick to enter the Hall of Records to investigate Renshii Meida's origins and any possible survivors of the Renshii family. They hope to find information to discredit her. They learn that her original family name is *Eigo* – a commoner name. From there, it is difficult to confirm or deny anything – there has, after all, been 500 years of history during which time any Renshii survivors have been trying to obscure their identity.

The characters decide to forge a 500-year-old document claiming that Renshii Maeda's claimed ancestor was not a true member of the Renshii family, but instead the bastard offspring of a Renshii and a foreign prostitute. Harwynian writes the document, aided by V'lk and Gobo. It turns out that Linguistics is the skill used for forgery – truly fortunate that all three of them have the skill.

Some days after the characters send out the document, they find that she has asked them for an opportunity to meet in secret. She requires a sworn oath from the

honorable members of the party to assure her safety – in particular, she wants Yoshihiro's oath. The other characters decide that it is completely reasonable for them to speak for him.

The characters arrange a meeting in a teahouse. She is sitting at a low table, dressed as a geisha. A pleasant cat fountain tinkles in the background. She lowers her eyes as the characters approach, but they have no illusions about her ability to be deceitful and ambitious. The stories of how she betrayed the Emperor are well-known.

“I do not know why you have done what you have done, why you destroyed my reputation and standing, and the chances my child might have of sitting upon the throne. But perhaps there is some way we can come to an arrangement, something mutually beneficial. Annamuramon and Takahiro no longer trust me. I believe that even if your efforts to seize the Jade Throne fail both my life and that of my child are in jeopardy. What would my aid in your quest for the throne be worth to you? Perhaps the Empress could take my child as a ward?”

The characters suggest that she might be allowed to go into exile. Gobo thinks that her child will be due in three months. They negotiate. The terms of their deal are that she will withhold healing from her erstwhile allies should the contest come to a battle. In exchange the characters will have her child fostered with a family allied with the Amatatsu. She will submit to a life in exile. And if the characters are not satisfied with the outcome of her cooperation then the deal is null and void.

THE END OF THE SESSION

The session ends with the royal family in turmoil, the hostages rescued, the Raven Prince undone and the Regent's concubine turned.