

YEAR 1201

SUMMER 1201

THE BATTLE OF THE FIRST SEAL

Tetsuo, Abbot of the Order of the Spider, forsakes his former clan and takes the Order with him. He marches a band of warrior monks to the Shinomen Mori, anticipating Kanpeki's first move. His maneuver is discovered by Imperial spies and the Emperor summons forces of the Crab and Phoenix to intercept them. Led by Kuni Renyu and Isawa Norimichi, they answer the call to defend the First Seal. The forces meet and, inevitably, an argument breaks out between the Abbot and Renyu. Suddenly, Daigotsu Endo and his undead forces ambush the squabbling armies, intent on their target. Norimichi is slain and the Seal is burned to ash. The effect unleashes Jigoku's fury. The shattered forces of the Empire and their unlikely allies stagger out of the Marsh, where the shadows are already growing deeper and more ominous. Throughout the Empire, no one finds rest in the night. They awaken in their beds, driven screaming from the peace of sleep by an unknowable terror.

In the morning, the Jade Sun does not rise. It is eclipsed by the cold face of the Obsidian Moon for the entire day. Shugenja, monks, and diviners across the Empire associate this event with dark omens of times yet to come to the Empire.

A NEW BARGAIN?

With the First Seal broken, Daigotsu Kanpeki brings the Son of Heaven a new ultimatum: He will accept the Iweco family as a minor clan in his Empire, provided Seiken commits seppuku.

The Emperor refuses the ironic request and double-downs against the Son of Hell. He orders the Lion Clan to end its feud with the Scorpion to deal with the Spider. The leadership of the Lion Clan accepts the order with zeal, but many in the Matsu family believe that the Scorpion Clan should be destroyed alongside them.

BATTLE OF SEIKITSU PASS

A forward contingent of Kanpeki's forces invade Rokugan from a hidden pass in the Western Steppes. Led by Kanpeki himself, the Spider forces blaze through southern Unicorn provinces, overrunning the peaceful Ide lands with ease. Warned of his arrival, the Lion Clan rally to the Unicorn's aid. Akodo Dairuko marches her forces towards Duzaki Pass to intercept him. Meanwhile, Daigotsu Endo's contingent in the Shinomen Mori, strike at Ryoko Owari Toshi. Spider forces occupy the city and spare its depraved populace on Kanpeki's order. Unicorn and Scorpion forces respond by diverting troops there from Seikitsu Pass. This is a divisive tactic, however. The main bulk of the Spider army, led by Daigotsu Ookami, are now clear to move without prying eyes. They march on the now ill-defended Seikitsu Pass and crush the Rokugani forces there. The Unicorn Lands are overrun the following Autumn.

FALL 1201

DARK PRINCE RISES

Iweko Shibatsu marries Susumu Neya and is officially granted lordship over the remainder of the Spider Clan loyal to his brother. Despite pleas in court for him to change the Clan's name, Shibatsu rebuffs the suggestion, citing that the name keeps the Emperor's enemies sufficiently irritated. He inverts the colors on the Spider Clan mon and orders a new legion formed. The army is recruited from a mix of qualified ronin and turncoat refugees.

THE SCORPION GAMBIT

The Goju and Ninube begin their infiltration of the Scorpion Clan's ninja schools by reviving the practice of shadow branding among the Shosuro and Soshi families. Upon realizing the infiltration, Bayushi Nitoshi orders half of his clan into exile while publicly denouncing them as traitors. These "traitors" resume the Clan's exile into the Burning Sands. They begin to build a powerbase in the city of Medinaat al Salaam. Meanwhile, the Scorpion that remain in the Empire declare their loyalty to the "True Hantei Dynasty", and the Nothing-corrupted elements of their Clan join their brethren in the shadows.

WINTER 1201

ASSAULT ON THE LION

Seizing full advantage of his forces' unnatural stamina, Daigotsu Kanpeki marches his undead troops through Lion Territory. The winter snow stifles communication lines, leaving the Lion unable to coordinate a counter-offensive. Kaeru Toshi and Shiro Sano Ken Hayai are razed to the ground by Spring. Kyuden Ikoma also burns, but the library archives are spirited to Shiro Matsu before an ill fate befalls them.