

YEAR 1209

SPRING 1209

THE SIEGE OF SHIRO USAGI

The Hiruma scouts are quick to report back to the heart of Crab territory on the state of the Empire. With Kanpeki gone, the Spider forces occupying the various ruined fortresses of Rokugan are separate, weakened by their lack of forced cooperation. It is an opportunity that the Clan of Hida cannot pass up.

With the lumber seized by force from the Kitsune Mori and other forests, the Kaiu siege engineers construct and mobilize their war engines. The studded wheels of towers that threaten to split the sky tear into the Imperial roads, leaving a trail of devastation behind the advancing army. Though the advance of the Crab is both ponderous and quite conspicuous, the Spider forces do not move to halt their advance. The disparate Oni Lords and Tainted generals instead watch eagerly to see where the Crab point the devastating point of their offensive, interested in seeing which one of their rivals' holdings will soon be up for the taking.

The spearhead of the army ends up headed straight for the heart of the lands of the former Hare Clan, where lies Shiro Usagi, now owned by a powerful member of the Order of the Dark Lotus, Kokujin Gunjao. Throughout the spring, the Kokujin rallies the forces "loyal" to him, his initial bravado at the chance to be the first to engage the legendary onslaught of the Crab fading away to blind panic as the full strength of the approaching forces becomes known to him.

By the first days of summer, Shiro Usagi is aflame once again. Not a single monk or goblin remains alive within the lands of the Hare, and the war machine of the Crab marches grimly forward.

SUMMER 1209

SECRETS IN THE MOUNTAINS

While traveling among the remnants of the Empire, the Shadow-branded agents of Bayushi Nitoshi capture agents of the Dragon Clan sent in secret to the courts of what Clans still have the means to hold them. The Kitsuki samurai are tight-lipped as to their purpose, even under torture, but what information they do extract tells the Scorpion Clan Champion that the Dragon are doing what they have always done. Wait, watch, and plot. In particular, they seemed to be watching for something specific, though what that something was remains elusive, as the agents' methodology seemed to change with every Clan they visited. Not unusual in and of itself, but it does draw into question what they are waiting for as well.

The Kitsuki agents are certainly not telling. After they were drained of what information they would divulge, their identities were given to the Goju. The agents would return to the Dragon Clan, to see what additional information could be gleaned.