

YEAR 1210

SPRING 1210

RUMBLES FROM THE EAST

In the quiet eastern reaches of the Empire, rebellion brews. Many of the citizens of the Empire who have lost their homes receive word from anonymous sources that there is hope for revenge, as a new army is forming at the Castle of the Emerald Champion.

Those who make the journey find that the area around the former Champion's estate has been converted into a sprawling military camp, where samurai and ashigaru alike train in the various arts of warfare. Using the lull in combat brought on by Kanpeki's departure, unknown elements have lured enough people with promises of hope and victory that they number a Legion or more.

It is unusual to see peasant warriors and those of the samurai caste training together, but whoever is at the head of the force offers their knowledge to all without regard to social class. Those who find this intolerable are invited to leave, while those who can accept it find that their education is enhanced for having a wide range of experiences to draw upon from their comrades in arms. While the caste barrier still very much exists, skill in combat is no longer one such divider.

As the force grows in strength and the lull in Spider activity continues, rumour in the Castle turns towards conquest. There is still much of the coastline ravaged by demons from the fall of the Mantis, and the people cry out for liberation...

FALL 1210

A NEW WARLORD

Having carved a large fief from her days of conquest, Yoritomo Aranai retires from public life in the Colonies. She leaves her land to a ronin named Arashi whom she met only a few years prior. Arashi is a man quick of temper and with a shattered arm that never healed correctly. The rumor mills regard him as a young lover or the retired Warlord and courts within the Second City believe his grab for power cannot last. Still, he holds himself with supreme confidence and his martial skills are second-to-none.

Wholly in spite of his apparent weakness, Arashi is quick to garner respect and marshals Aranai's forces to the banner he dubs the Mantis Clan. None question his assumption of the Yoritomo name and one of his first acts is to decry Yoritomo Ichido's Mantis Clan as false, a *pale shadow that only mimics the glory of true heroes*. Arashi also openly scoffs at any notion of loyalty to the Emperor, much to the fright of Colonial Courts. The following Winter, Arashi seizes control of the Second City, wresting the last bastion of Otomo power from Sukihime. Some courtiers fear he is actually a double-agent for the Spider Clan.