

YEAR 1213

SPRING 1213

SHADOW PLAY

Daidoji Akeha, Daimyo of the Daidoji and the new leader of the Harriers, determines that the time has come to confront the aspect of the threat that no others in the Empire seem to be striking at: the intelligence network of the Crane's ancient rivals, the Scorpion. She discretely moves her forces west into the Chinsei Mori, responding to reports of movement there.

The forest is alight with the flash of blades and fiery explosions as the two normally subtle forces engage in direct combat. Their private war proceeds unseen and unheard by the rest of the Empire, though those heimen unlucky enough to be near the forest cringe in their huts as the quiet night is split by the occasional clashing of blades and sudden ear-splitting detonations.

The explosive weaponry of the Daidoji, while hideously effective against enemies of flesh and blood, proves to be of varied lethality to beings comprised of Nothing but shadows. However, unbeknownst to the Daidoji, certain independent parties support the Harriers' offense, and the crystal shards lacing the bombs prove enough to even the playing field between the tenebrous ninja and their mortal opponents. The battle continuous in tentative strikes and skirmishes for the better part of a month, until the Crane win a telling victory and seize valuable information as to the placement of Spider forces among the Empire.

The Scorpion Champion, in response, directs the shadow-compromised elements of the Clan to the Mori. Whoever emerges victorious, the Scorpion will prosper.

SUMMER 1213

THE HUNT FOR THE ORACLE

The Oracles of the Elements, having given up on the futile effort giving council to the Clans, go out amongst the people of the Empire in an attempt to find one of their number who had been missing for many years. Their search continues unimpeded by such unimportant things as armies and war, for the Oracles walk with power that bows to no mortal influence.

Their search brings them to the bay where the great maelstrom marks the place of the Fire Dragon's fall, and they find what remains of their colleague in a seaside cave. The Oracle of Fire is gone, and only Ibara remains. Not an Oracle, not even a Crane, nothing remains of the once-powerful being save for the empty shell of a woman who feels compelled to come to the shoreline each morning and contemplate the boiling hole in the sea.

WINTER 1213

THE FROST DRAGON'S DISMAY

The Crab Clan offensive continues pushing further into Lion territory, driving the disorganized Spider before them. Among their recent conquests is the grand shrine to Inari, the Fortune of Rice. However, upon seizing the shrine, they find it corrupted and defiled. Infuriated, the Crab raze the building and the Kuni sanctify the ashes where the structure once stood. Naturally, rumors spread that the Crab would defy even the Fortunes in their violent campaign. Their army settles around the ruins for the Winter.