

Legend
of the
Five Rings™

Tales of Rokugan™



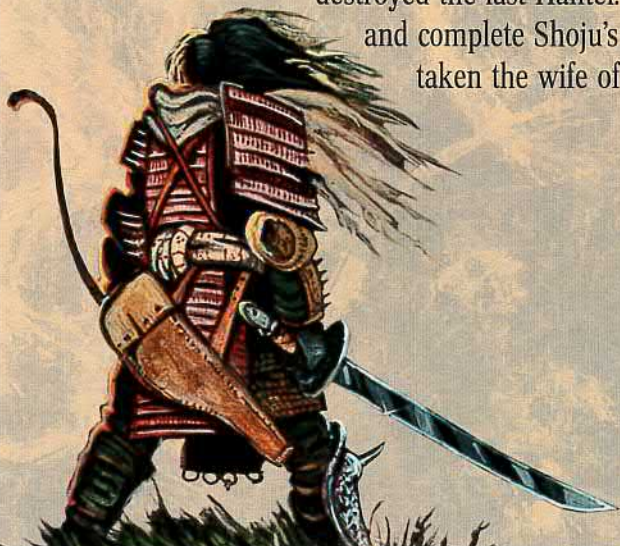


Once, long ago, the Empire was a land at peace. Cranes flew above misty seas, and the legends of heroes were sung in the courts of a regal imperial line: the line of the noble Hantei. But deep beneath the surface, an ancient prophecy waited, its darkness nearly at fruition. There are always secrets in an empire, always hidden truths and murders to be uncovered. These secrets would change Rokugan forever.

From Scorpion to Scorpion, the tales of Bayushi Shoji's coup have spread: While the Empire slumbered, Shoji uncovered the blood-splattered texts of a long-forgotten ancestor—texts that told of a dark future, and of the return of a lost god. The scrolls spoke of events that had occurred in Shoji's life, and they named each place, each point and counterpoint, of the return of the god—prophecies that Shoji believed he could see unfolding in his own time.

Shoji gathered his clan for war. According to the scrolls, the Dark God would return in the form of the last survivor of the imperial line, and so Shoji attacked the capitol of the Empire and slaughtered the Emperor and his line. One child of Hantei survived.

Shoji was killed in the siege, and the Scorpion, nearly destroyed by their enemies in the aftermath of the assault, later discovered that Shoji had not destroyed the last Hantei. They swore to avenge their fallen lord and complete Shoji's task, even though the Emperor had taken the wife of the Scorpion daimyo as his own.



Imperial Edition™

The war began in the second year of Emperor Hantei the 39th. Two years after the failure of the Scorpion coup, activity between the clans became tense. A young, inexperienced Emperor sat on the Throne, a Scorpion traitor as his bride. A wasting disease began to spread slowly across the Empire, infecting the Emperor himself. As news of the dying Emperor spread across the country, the Great Clans began to war for his throne.

Kachiko groomed Hida Kisada, convinced that he could become the next Emperor, a pawn under her control. The clans warred, and old feuds were reopened as imperial blood stained the ground. It was a time of war, and a time when old rivalries were brought to the forefront. Lion faced Crane in anticipation of the day they could end their bitter feud in conquest. From the Emperor, no word was heard.



SHADOWLANDS

TM

The shugenja known as Yogo Junzo, once a loyal member of the Scorpion Clan, turned to evil to fulfill Shōju's dying will. He opened the Black Scrolls—artifacts of an evil power—one by one, daring their taint and calling upon their might to destroy the Empire that killed his Lord . . . regardless of the consequences.

Kachiko and the rest of the hidden Scorpion desperately sought to find and destroy Junzo, but they feared they would be too late. Already, a sickly pallor had grown beneath the boy-Emperor's skin, and he whispered black ravings in the silent night. The fate that the Scorpion sought to evade was nearly upon them, and it would swallow the Empire in its hideous grip. The Scorpion were not the saviors of Rokugan; they were the sign that spurred their own destruction. In creating the last Hantei, they also brought forth the prophecy he was destined to complete.

Around them, the clans continued to war, destroying acres of land and striving to prove their worth against all others who would have the Throne. In their blindness, they did not see the danger in their aggression and war.



Forbidden Knowledge™

The years continued to pass bitterly, and the wasting disease that had affected the Emperor and his line began to spread across the Empire, fueled by the power of the Black Scrolls. The boiling plague swept the land of Rokugan, killing scores of peasants, samurai, and nobles. The time to claim the Throne grew near, and the clans marshaled their forces for a great contest of strength.

The first to join the battle were the Crab, who struck against the Crane. After burning down Kakita Palace, the Crab seized control of Beiden Pass, the only trade route between the two halves of the Empire. As the other clans allied against him, Hida Kisada, the Crab daimyo, knew he had nowhere to turn. At the advice of his sage, the shugenja Kuni Yori, he signed an agreement with Rokugan's deadliest enemy: the Shadowlands Horde. The body of Hida Sukune, Kisada's son, was placed on the Terrible Standard of Fu Leng as a dark sacrifice to the Evil Lord, and the pact was sealed. The Crab had fallen, but their strength grew tenfold.

Meanwhile, the Crab armies continued to march. As Sukune moved his army southward, an army of Dragon samurai appeared. Spies soon discovered that a ronin led the Dragon army—a ronin who many had thought never to see again. His name was Toturi, and once he was the Great Lord of the Lion Clan, the Emperor's most trusted military advisor. Sukune immediately retreated to Beiden Pass and waited for the reserve army led by his brother, Yakamo.

Yakamo's army arrived two days after Sukune's retreat. In the midst of the charge, Yakamo encountered a samurai-ko with the fire of vengeance in her eyes. A duel began in the midst of the battlefield, while Toturi led the Dragon against the Crab. Yakamo not only defeated the Dragon samurai-ko, but also snapped her brother's sword and crushed her right hand.

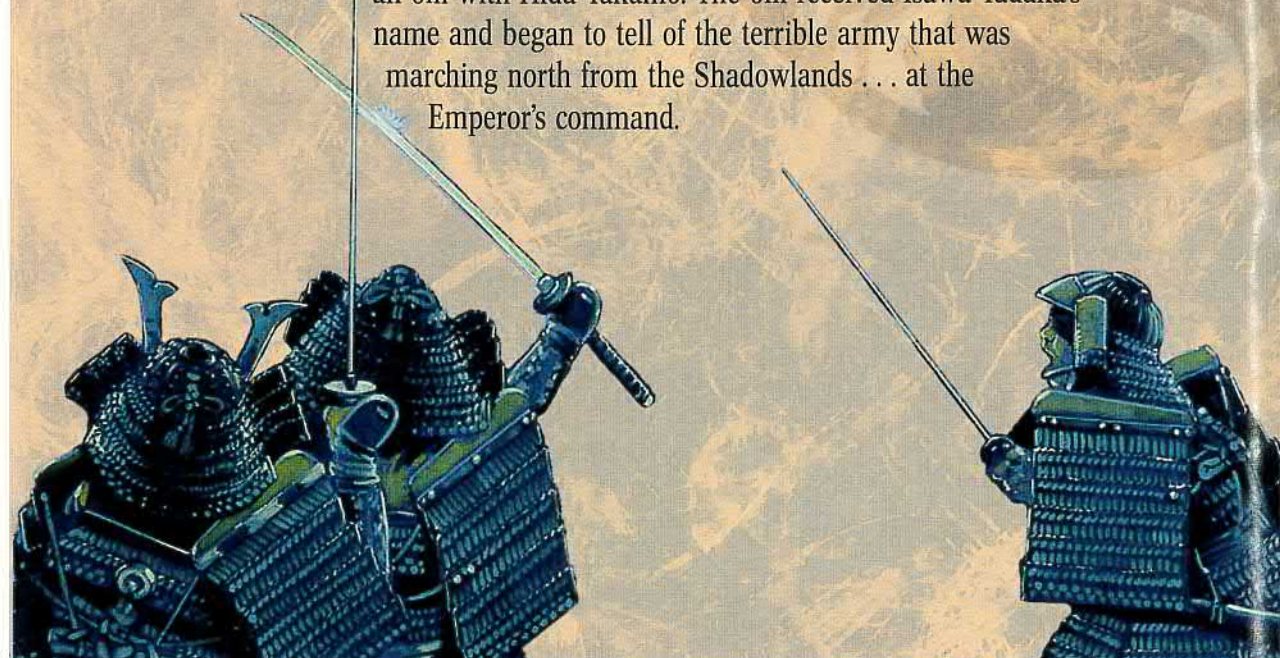


ANIMIL OF DESPAIR™

At the imperial palace, Doji Hoturi met with Bayushi Kachiko, wife of the Emperor. Using the Egg of P'an Ku, Kachiko created a magical replica of the Crane Champion, to sully his honor and lead his clan to defeat. Gathering an army of Shadowlands creatures, the False Hoturi began a campaign of dishonoring the Crane Clan.

Far to the north and east, in the temples of the Phoenix, the shugenja known as "The Nameless One" reported that he had sensed the power of the Shadowlands growing. Three of the Black Scrolls—guarded for a thousand years by the Scorpion Clan—had been opened. To combat them, the Phoenix would need to seek the dark magic for themselves. Isawa Tadaka was the first Master to fall in this pursuit: his eyes filled with a black fire. So began the corruption of the Phoenix Clan.

As for the Phoenix, their dark research was beginning to take its toll. One by one, their Elemental Masters were becoming tainted by the Shadowlands. To learn more about the Shadowlands, the Clan bound an oni to their service, using the same dark magic that Kuni Yori had used to bind an oni with Hida Yakamo. The oni received Isawa Tadaka's name and began to tell of the terrible army that was marching north from the Shadowlands . . . at the Emperor's command.





Bayushi Kachiko prepared Hida Kisada and the Crab armies for their attack on the Emperor's city, also persuading the Unicorn Clan to withdraw their support from Toturi's armies. Hida Kisada, however, was not waiting. Kisada loaded his army onto war barges and proceeded to sail along the coast to the imperial palace.

It was not a sick and dying Emperor upon the Throne, however. Hida Kisada was the first to discover what all of Rokugan would soon know: the Dark God Fu Leng had possessed the Emperor in his weakened state. With a roar of fury, the Great Bear unsheathed the Ancestral Sword of the Crab and charged. Fu Leng drew the Sword of the Hantei and blocked Kisada's attack. Before Kisada could react, Fu Leng drove the Imperial Sword into the Crab Champion's belly.

Meanwhile, an angered debate filled the halls of the Lion Clan. Families were divided on which direction to turn. They had sworn fealty to the Emperor, but also to his Empire. Now those two oaths were at odds: should they serve the Throne or serve the man upon it?

While the words raged on, the Lion Champion Matsu Tsuko sat silently, apparently listening. But her thoughts were distant as she remembered the empty eyes of her samurai, lying still and bleeding under the advancing tide of the western sea. "I must free my clan to act," she whispered, and with her seppuku, the Lion were released of their ancient vow.



TIME of the VOID

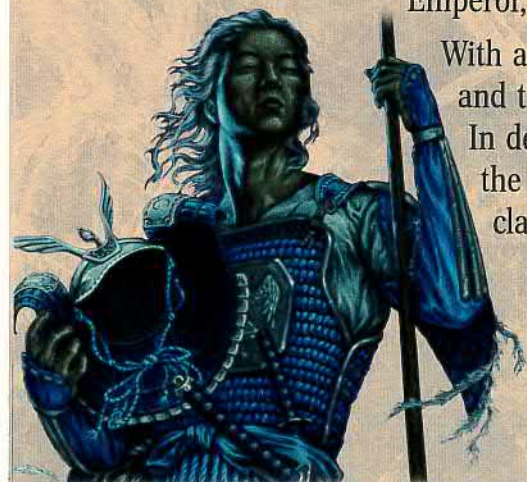
In the end, the united armies of the Seven Clans and their allies descended on the palace of Otosan Uchi to combat Fu Leng, the god who had possessed the body of Hantei the 39th, the last Hantei. The Seven Thunders, descendants of the first group that went into the Shadowlands to kill Fu Leng, entered the palace, while a tremendous war raged outside between the undead on the walls of Otosan Uchi and the other clans.

An army of Lion and tainted Crab stood at the side of Fu Leng's hordes of undead sorcerers and howling demon-oni. Tsuko's sacrifice had freed them of their oath to protect the Emperor, but still some remained loyal to the throne. Only when Black Toturi rode among them, screaming Tsuko's name, did the Lion turn and attack the gates of the Emperor's palace.

The other clans prepared for the fight, but the Mantis general knelt before them. "We will not fight," he said, "unless you proclaim that we have the right to be your equal." It was a bold move, and a gamble the clans could not afford to lose. The Mantis rose in honor and in standing: they had earned their place as a Great Clan.

Within the palace, the Seven Thunders entered by a secret gate, opened by Bayushi Kachiko. Her penalty paid, her treachery laid open, she could do nothing but aid them and hope to redeem her clan by her own honor. Inside the palace, six of the Seven Thunders fought Fu Leng. Only Mirumoto Hitomi did not advance; she stayed to do as her champion, Togashi, had bid her: she tore the still-beating heart from the Dragon Champion's broken chest and drew out the twelfth and final Black Scroll. As she opened it, the awful truth was revealed: Fu Leng was now fully in the body of the Emperor, and therefore mortal.

With a mighty blow, Toturi defeated the Dark One, and the Empire was freed of his Taint forever. In deference to his victory, Toturi was placed on the Throne and named Emperor over all of the clans of the Empire.



Jade Edition™


Two years had passed since the Day of Thunder. Two years of rebuilding, of healing past wounds and reforging broken alliances. Two years of peace.

Under the reign of Emperor Toturi, the lands of Rokugan were reborn. The clans thrived, and although tension was still great between old enemies, there was order.

But on the morning of the second anniversary of Toturi's coronation, that order descended once more into chaos. The Emperor had vanished, his chambers were covered in blood, and the Scorpion stood accused of treason and lies. The new Tao, legacy of the wise traveler Shinsei, held no answers to the questions posed by Toturi's bloody chambers. The Empire clung to a fragile hope of rescue, but the Jade Throne stood empty in a silent audience hall. Now all that remained in the Empire was the illusion of peace. Soon the Great Clans would again contest their claims to rule, and with no power to stay their hand, war's dark shadow would fall upon Rokugan once more.

With no word and no explanation, the Naga turned as one to attack the Dragon, accusing them of black magic and dark secrets. With their retreat, the Crab were trapped deep in the Shadowlands, at the ruins of the once-great Hiruma palace. Even the efforts of the Unicorn magistrates, the last bastion of law outside of Otosan Uchi, might not be enough to quell the rising tide of revolution. The Scorpion had been exiled, the Phoenix remained silent in their cold mountains, and, in the palaces of the Dragon, Hitomi began a dangerous quest for answers that could lead to the Empire's destruction.





The Hidden Emperor™

The peace of Toturi's Empire faded, and the armies of the Great Clans again marched to battle.

Racing from their far-northern lands, the brave magistrates of the Unicorn sought to restore the law through domination. Rumors of bloody sacrifice echoed in the northern mountains, and the resolute attacks of the mysterious Naga drew ever closer to the palace of the Dragon. The Mantis, youngest of the Great Clans, rose from their ocean fortresses to capture Toturi's throne. Sworn to defend the Empire despite all oaths of honor, the armies of the Crane took up the banner of their young general and marched toward the golden city of Otosan Uchi. Allying with the Unicorn, the Crane desperately waged war against Yoritomo and sought to destroy his hold on Beiden Pass—all of the Crane, that is, save the Daidoji legion. Uji, leader of the Daidoji troops, disobeyed his lord and marched northward to engage the Lion who long ago slaughtered his clan. The wounds of the Clan War had not healed, and the voices of ancestors rang out, urging the Daidoji general to avenge their souls at last.

From the mountains of the Dragon to the bitter wastes of the Shadowlands, wars raged and armies marched. The Unicorn declared martial law and marched an army into Lion lands to enforce their will. The Jade Champion, once dedicated to destroying blood magic within the Empire, had been corrupted by his clan's need. To save the Lion from destruction, he sacrificed his name to the most powerful of oni lords. Though the heart of the Lion lands and soldiers paid a heavy price, the Unicorn were defeated.

Leaderless, the Crab struggled to raise the force to defend against invasion, while their kin slowly died in lost Hiruma Castle. The forces of the undead gathered behind the voice of Kuni Yori, the Crab who had fallen to the Taint and used its powerful magic to corrupt his clan.

One by one, the Clans fell to ruin.



The Dark Journey Home™

Winter had fallen upon the fields of the Jade Empire, and blood stained the soft, white snow. Outside of the palace of Otosan Uchi, armies marched again—but this time, out of the palace and toward the lands of the Seven Great Clans.

The Mantis led the Alliance openly now, guiding the fates of the smaller clans with an iron fist. The Scorpion defeated their attempt to marshal the Scorpion lands, and the Crane drove them north. Loathe to attack even the lightly defended provinces of the Lion, the Eighth Clan marched north toward the empty Shiba palaces.

Another army also entered Phoenix lands, however: the family of the Agasha, torn between their devotion to Hitomi and their fear of her “new beginning.” Although some loyal shugenja refused to leave their champion, the family broke its ties with the Dragon and swore fealty to Tsukune and the Phoenix Clan. The Dragon’s heart bled, but Hitomi continued her search for knowledge, convinced that to fail would be to condemn the future of Rokugan to a thousand years of Shadow.

The Crane stood divided by betrayal and divisive loyalty. Daidoji Uji had sworn to have the head of the Lion maho-tsukai, Kitsu Okura, in retribution for centuries of suffering and bloodshed between Lion and Crane. Furious at his lieutenant’s insubordination, Doji Kuwanan continued toward the Emperor’s palace and the Mantis armies.

And the Empire was rocked by greater news: the return of Toturi. With black eyes and a strange harshness, the Emperor seized his throne again, and his edicts were covered in blood and unwarranted wrath. He declared the Tao a falsehood, its sacred texts Kolat lies. The secret society of the Kolat, forced into the light, fled from the wrath of the mad Emperor. He commanded the Unicorn—now standing at his right hand—to make war upon the Lion: the Lion’s fall into dark magic, no matter how justified, must be purged.

The Unicorn bowed to obey.

And from the Shadowlands, even darker news: the death of one of the Thunders



The Siege of Sleeping Mountain™

High on its mountain precipice, the last fortress of the enigmatic Dragon Clan rested, its high walls covered in torches to ward away darkness. Two generals prepared to fight for an ivory throne, spreading blood across the shattered peaks. Hitomi, rightful champion of her clan, had been twisted by dark powers, unable to control the corruption of the artifact known as the Obsidian Hand. In the last fading hours of the night, she struggled to unlock the ancient secrets that had been trapped within the chamber of crystal far beneath the palace's walls.

Outside, guided by the prophecies of the New Tao and the mystic empathy of the Naga, the army of the Brotherhood waited for the day's new light to sever the bonds of darkness. Togashi Hoshi, their leader, stared into the morning fog, knowing that his struggle for the throne might destroy the clan he hoped to save.

Below the palace, an ancient horn of bone and shell trumpeted a warning, its voice sounding of betrayal and despair. The Naga, strange serpent-people of myth, had stepped forth from their legends, abandoning their sacred forests to attack the Lady of the Dragons. Their voices spoke as one, joined soul to soul by the power of the Akasha, a mystical bond shared by all members of their race. Warned by the Akasha, the Naga knew of Mirumoto Hitomi's quest to open the chamber of crystal, and they were fighting to destroy her, hoping to eliminate the power of the Living Darkness before it could break free of its prison.

From the hills and rugged mountain passes, the army of the Emperor rode through the night, prepared to stop the Naga from destroying the Dragon Clan at any cost.



Honor Bound™

After the Siege of Sleeping Mountain was broken, the eyes of the Empire turned to darker matters. The Naga fled through the countryside, using powerful magic to tear holes in the fabric of the world. Standing on the edge of the Shadowlands, they committed their greatest blasphemy: they stole the body of a Hero. Enraged, the Champion of the Crab vowed to slaughter all of the serpent-people, burning their forests and leaving their lands blackened with ash. Yet, attacked by a greater enemy, the rest of the Hiruma turned to continue their age-old war with the Shadowlands, fighting by the side of the Lion, once their enemies.

To the south, deep in the heart of the Shadowlands, a strange, white fire raged across the heavens, screaming with the voices of a hundred souls. An ancient troll city, unguarded and long ago fallen to ruin, stood at a dark portal. Within, a voice howled eternally in rage and agony. The Shadow moved there, gathering its armies for the destruction of the Empire.

Forced away from Otosan Uchi, the Mantis attacked the Phoenix with renewed strength. Bitter enemies, they struggled for dominance over the southern lands of the Phoenix only miles from the Emperor's palace.

As the other clans made war, the Unicorn turned from battle. As one, they raced to their homeland, forgetting ties of loyalty and the duties of the law. The voice of the First Shinjo—not heard for eight hundred years—called them home for a reckoning. Their kami had returned, and she had seen that the man on the Throne was not a descendant of her brother, Hantei. Shinjo would destroy the Usurper to avenge the Hantei . . . or destroy the Empire itself. The Emperor's last ally had been stolen from him by the machinations of the Shadow, and the final days of the Jade Empire drew near.

Alone on his throne of jade, the Emperor did nothing. Long, silent vigils and strange meditations punctuated with bursts of fury betrayed the Emperor's disintegrating mind. To him, everyone was a traitor, every action suspect.



Ambition's Debt™

Months passed in war and blood, as earthquakes, famine, and other devastating plagues shattered Rokugan, bringing starvation and fear. The fallen Kitsu, once masters of the spirit world, found the Land of the Dead barred from them. Something had denied passage to Jigoku and was destroying the souls of the dead one by one. The Kitsu Tombs, once a source of wisdom and a place for the telling of Rokugan's rich history, were now silent and darkened. Restless and angry spirits screamed in pain, cut off from the peace of the Land of the Dead by the Shadow's hand. The Empire's past was dying.

In the Naga forests, a new army arose, one led by a legend. Hida Yakamo, whose life had been destroyed in a terrible battle against the Shadowlands, had risen once more. He had become one with the great soul of the Naga, and his eyes spoke of worlds beyond the Empire. He raised his hand of jade and called to the sunless sky. In some lands of the Empire, the peasants worshipped him as a new-born kami. He led the armies of the Lion and Crab, striking out toward the Shadowlands. But he alone could not stop the invading Shadow. It slipped beyond the armies, hid within the courts of Otosan Uchi, and tore at the Emperor's mind.

In the fields of Otosan Uchi, Shinjo's armies gathered, comprised of Scorpion and Phoenix troops, as well as Unicorn. To the north, even the mighty Mantis armies paused in their siege of Isawa lands, and the Crane sued for peace between the feuding Doji and Daidoji factions. The Shadow's movements became more clear, and the clans raced to defeat the Darkness before it was too late.

Unafraid, Toturi raised his hand and spoke, ignoring the terror and fire in the city of the Jade Throne: "The law proclaims it, my blood demands it, and those who deny me betray their oaths to the Empire." With that, he lifted his hands to the heavens. "I am your Emperor." As he spoke, the sky turned as red as blood. The Sun, burning in the far-distant heavens, grew weak and pale, and then the Darkness swallowed her whole.

To the north, in the Shrine of the Three Sisters, an obsidian sword's blow decided the course of the future as Hitomi's plans came to fruition. As Hitomi struck, Takao, leader of the Brotherhood, claimed his place with a mighty blow, shattering the Moon's avatar and forcing the Moon to face Hitomi . . . and die. Now the Moon had shattered, his plans destroyed . . . but his minions of Shadow were released, at last free.

Chaos descended, and the sky was covered in blood.



Fire & Shadow™

Blood rains from the heavens as the elements despair.

The Dark Moto are on the move, and their general speaks with the words of Thunder. The Burning Words, prophecy of the Moto's fall, have found their voice. The Unicorn face their greatest threat: themselves. Their bloody battles at the Emperor's command have weakened them, and their chances against this new threat are slim.

The Crane civil war has ended, and Daidoji Uji stands before his champion with new fire in his eyes. The Crane are reborn, but their unity might have come too late.

In the Lion lands, Kitsuo Motso stands against the blood and fury that has swallowed his family, leading the last of the Kitsuo back toward honor and glory. Yet in his struggle to save his clan, he must question his champion's right to lead and risk his own honor. The Shadow has seized the honor of his clan and broken their spirit, but Motso swears that, whatever happens, he will never retreat.

The Scorpion return to their lands, following a new Bayushi daimyo. They gather their weapons of whispers and lies, prepared to make the greatest sacrifice of all. If they succeed, they will change the course of destiny. And, as Hitomi ascends to fill the void left by the fallen Moon, her Dragon followers climb down from their mountain. They arm themselves with crystal, carrying the secrets Hitomi bled to discover.

Though bloodied by the Mantis assault, the Phoenix make the most daring move of all: with their magic, they have seized Toturi, and they weave a dangerous spell that will free his mind of the Shadow . . . or destroy him.

The Emperor fights against the Shadow within his very soul. His eyes grow pale, and his mind turns to darkness as the Phoenix fight to save his life. He murmurs of battles past, and his eyes light with fire; then the Shadow rises, and his eyes flicker into ash.

Far to the south, a fallen Lion named Hiroru stumbles from the Shadowlands, bearing a man whose face shines with the light of a thousand stars . . . but his face is ashen, and his gi is stained with blood.

The Darkness has come.

Goju, the first creature of the Shadow and as powerful as a kami, has returned. It is the Time of Blood, the fall of the Empire, and the final days of Rokugan.

Will you be there for the final battles?





*Legend of the Five Rings, Tales of Rokugan,
Scorpion Clan Coup, Imperial Edition,
Shadowlands, Forbidden Knowledge,
Annihilation of Despair, Crimson & Jade, Time of the Void,
Jade Edition, The Hidden Emperor,
The Dark Journey Home,
The Siege of Sleeping Mountain,
Honor Bound, Ambition's Debt, and Fire & Shadow*
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