An Eye for an Eye

By Jason Flowers

Challenge

Ten years ago, two rival clans engaged in a questionably legal series of skirmishes. The conflict ended before it could escalate to all-out Clan War, but the damage was done. Samurai on both sides were dead and families mourned those they had lost. Now the player characters, traveling in the lands of one of those clans, are approached by a distressed young samurai, Mako. He tells them of his sister, Momoe, who has recently gone missing. Mako worries that his sister has gone on a quest seeking vengeance. He tells the PCs that his and Momoe’s father, Shota, was killed in that conflict a decade ago by a samurai commander of their rival clan, Tsuyoshi, who was known as The Butcher. Momoe had been fixated on their father’s killer for years, speaking of gaining justice for their family and those others that Tsuyoshi had killed.

Mako tasks them with finding Momoe and bringing her home before she too can be killed. The Butcher, Tsuyoshi, was well known for the cruelty he displayed during those raids, and Mako fears his sister will suffer a fate similar to their father’s.

Momoe’s trail will lead the samurai to a nearby settlement where she was seen recently. In addition to the sightings of Momoe, the player characters will also learn that The Butcher, Tsuyoshi, is apparently the commander at a keep just across the border into the rival clan’s holdings.

Focus

The PCs arrive at the keep and find themselves before Tsuyoshi. When they question him about Momoe he admits that the young woman had been here recently. Momoe had attempted to assassinate him but had been unsuccessful. Tsuyoshi explains to the PCs that Momoe was mistaken about who was responsible for her father’s death. Tusyoshi had been involved in the fighting when Shota died, but he was not the one responsible for his death. Tsuyoshi tells them that he was not, in fact, The Butcher who was so feared by his rival clan.

Tsuyoshi states that after he explained this to the young samurai woman, he allowed her to leave. He is not without mercy. Momoe headed further into his clan’s lands, despite his warnings, to find someone to blame. He is unsure where she is now, but recently received a report of ronin at a nearby abandoned outpost who were suspected of kidnapping people, primarily women, to sell as slaves outside of Rokugan. Perhaps she headed there.

Strike

When the PCs arrive at the abandoned outpost, they are ambushed by ronin. During the fight, or afterward if any ronin survive, they learn that these ronin are slavers in the employ of Tsuyoshi, The Butcher. From the defeated ronin or physical evidence, like fresh blood and cart tracks, the player characters are led to a nearby cave where Momoe and a few others are being held captive by more ronin and bandits. When freed, Momoe will explain that they were to be sent west out of Rokugan, but before the group can depart with the freed captives Tsuyoshi arrives with reinforcements. The Butcher has come to put an end to the samurai so his illegal trade can continue.

Having revealed his true colors, The Butcher Tsuyoshi will fight fiercely to protect his secret. It is up to the Player Characters whether they grant Momoe the vengeance she has sought or turn him in to the proper authorities.