

Legend of the Five Rings

ROLEPLAYING

Player Designed Plot Hooks

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Hook

Every day someone is found dead, horrifically strangled and smothered, their mouths appear to have been stuffed with cloth. Noble samurai, servants, the gardener... The killer shows no concern for the status of their victims.

Rising Action

Paranoia runs rampant as everyone turns on each other, accusations are thrown around with abandon! Many people in the castle have reason or motive to be the killer, and tensions run high!

Climax

The killer is actually Boroboroton, a Tsukumogami given existence 100 years ago when a sleeping samurai was brutally strangled to death by their lover. The two had been due to marry the very next day.

Now that 100 years have passed this evil spirit is finally free to roam the corridors of the castle, as a tattered, revenge fuelled futon...

Hook

The daughter of a prestigious local daimyō has gone missing and he is desperate to get her back...

Rising Action

She fell in love with a local peasant fisherman, and kept the affair secret, fearing repercussions from her Father. To complicate matters the peasant she fell in love with had large debts with a local crime boss. Together they hatched a plan...

Using the daimyō's wealth they secretly hired a band of Ronin and killed the crime boss, scattering his gang and finally escaping to sea. At the same time a crew of vigilantly pirates, known only as the "Barracuda clan", started prowling the local seas, hunting down anyone who oppresses the downtrodden...

Climax

It will be a samurai's duty to return the girl to her father if she is found but her happiness and drive in her new life certainly tug at the strings of compassion and the good deeds her crew accomplish can't be ignored, can they?

However time is of the essence, the Barracuda clan has attracted the attention of the Mantis clan, are they in the pay of her father, the daimyō or are they simply looking after business...

Submitted by Daniel Barker

Hook

The whole town is preparing for a very important ritual. It aims to importune the Earth Kami at a castle building site so they help in the construction. However, an old monk needs to stop the ritual...

Rising Action

It turns out that at the dawn of the Empire Lady Doji herself negotiated with a powerful kami who ravaged the land. She managed to put the spirit to sleep.

Nowadays local monks from a secluded shrine tend to the sleeping kami, ensuring it never wakes up. However, no-one really believes there is truth behind the legend.

The monks however believes that the ritual will awaken the sleeping kami...

Climax

Will the monks manage to stop the ritual? Will they try to use force to save the town, or is it really just a legend, misinterpreted after all these centuries?

Hook

A destitute samurai, Doro, arrives asking to meet the daimyō. He claims to have disgraced his lord, a rival daimyō, by the loss of goods to bandits. He requests the right to commit seppuku, asking the daimyō to be his second.

Rising Action

There are political ramifications to granting another lord's vassal the right to commit seppuku, and the daimyō believes the man is bluffing; looking for a payoff to go somewhere else. They doubt the man's story and they doubt the man is even samurai. They refuse to be taken for a fool and grant the man's request. A destitute samurai, Doro has no sword, so the daimyō supplies him with one, a blade of shaped bamboo.

Climax

In truth, he is samurai and very honourable. When presented with this situation, Doro accepts what he has been given, and commits seppuku as he requested. Worse, the daimyō commands their samurai to watch the man's death. When it is time for the daimyō to land final blow, they wait, goading Doro to inflict additional pain upon himself before striking. The daimyō forces an agonizing death upon Doro if no one interferes.

Hook

A tribute, to be presented to his excellency Hantei XXXVIII, has been stolen...

Rising Action

Samurai fresh from their Gempukku are dispatched on behalf of the Tortoise clan to investigate, but they slowly uncover the “true nature” of the tribute and the reasons behind its disappearance.

Climax

Who stole the tribute and why? Who orchestrated the plot in the first place?

Finally the tribute is “released” in its true form, and the young Samurai must deal with the fallout.

Submitted by Simon Bale Glass

Hook

The beloved family cat of a local daimyō, and favourite pet of the their distraught child, has gone missing. Finding the cat will earn a favour or even an potential ally!

Rising Action

Many animals and pets have also been disappearing, and cat paw-prints can be found all over the estate and local valley.

To add to the mysterious activity, despite it not being the right season, vast and delicate spider webs are slowly spreading across the dark corners of the valley, each morning the dew covered webs expand just a bit further.

A few miles away there is a small often overlooked and very overgrown shrine to a playful cat spirit, a very familiar looking cat spirit...

Climax

The child of a local peasant goes missing, they were last seen wandering into the woods looking for their loyal pet ferret.

The cat spirit has been valiantly defending the valley from an invasion of evil Kumo spider spirits. This conflict in the spirit world has spilled over and now the poor peasant child has been stolen away by the spiders...

Submitted by Thomas van den Berg

Hook

While travelling the wilderness between villages, an ancient prophecy is unearthed. It details a heroic samurai who bears a striking resemblance to one of the characters. As they ride into the village the headman begs for help finding a missing child.

Rising Action

An old monk was last seen wandering into the forest with the child following, strangely he was carrying what appeared to be a rock the size of the child's head. The rock glowed an eerie green as they both disappeared into the deep undergrowth.

The monk can be tracked to a cave entrance in the hills above the village. A ritual is in progress, the child bound and gagged, the green rock's light filling the chamber with grotesque shadows that attack any intruders.

Climax

A clue to disturbing or ending the vile ritual can be found in the prophecy... Will the samurai detailed in the scriptures words have the honour and courage to confront his destiny? The shadows will stop at nothing to protect the old monk and see the ritual completion- ending with the child's sacrifice.

Submitted by Ian Houlihan

Hook

A blight has decimated all plant life in the province. Crops wither and turn black, fodder poisons the animals that eat it and forests die and rapidly decay. A famine ensues.

Rising Action

Dozens of people are dying every day. The blight is centred on a temple. However all the monks have been dead for weeks. Records held at the temple indicate that this site was maintained to seal something terrible in the earth. The wards are failing and this evil influence is seeping out into the province.

Climax

Without firewood or shugenja to properly dispose of the bodies hundreds of zombies simultaneously rise up throughout the province. The evil must be resealed before the temple and the province are completely overrun.

Submitted by Dan Abrahmsen

Hook

After being late with their taxes on several occasions over the last few years, a village has now missed their most recent payment.

Rising Action

An otokodate of deserters has been claiming to be tax collectors, exploiting the village.

Dealing with the otokodate is simple enough, they are holed up in a ruined shrine on the outskirts of the village. However during the confrontation a vengeful ghost appears out of the ruined walls, attacking anyone and everyone.

Climax

The ghost is known to the village, they call it the Man in the Wall. One of the village elders used maho to murder a rival in a love triangle, the body was buried the within the foundations of a local shrine. The vengeful spirit, not knowing who murdered it, takes it's revenge on the entire village!

Submitted by Marcus Orlander

Hook

A Kuni Witch Hunter has not reported in some time. He was sent to the north western Crab lands on an assignment but now his daimyō needs him found!

Rising Action

Local peasants and farmers will energetically talk of a heroic shugenja and his loyal hunting dog saving their village from creatures of the Shadowlands. However they will then gloomily report that after a week evil returned as the howls of a great beast could be heard and giant paw prints can were found.

Climax

Deep in a distant cave lies a decaying corpse with faded red hair and cracked kabuki face paint. The great beast stalking the land is the poor hunting dog, corrupted and grown to massive size. The cave entrance is littered with the remains of shadowlands creatures, despite its corruption the dog still fights the darkness! The dog is not overtly hostile to humans but will aggressively guard the remains of its master, the creatures internal struggle with the corrupting darkness is clearly visible...

Submitted by Marcus Orlander

Hook

Four criminals scheduled for execution have escaped their prison, taking to the wind and passing undetected through the lands.

Rising Action

Each Criminal holds a piece of information leading to a great treasure. Only when all four clues are put together will the truth be revealed. Are these fugitives working together or are they working against each other? Who gets the pay-day?

Climax

Once the criminals are apprehended and their secrets uncovered they can be thrown back in their cells to await execution.

Only then with duty fulfilled can the full extent of their knowledge can be explored, recovered and... Utilised.

Submitted by Justin Motsinger

Hook

An evil ghost from the Toshigoku plagues a remote town, whose lord is especially harsh when it comes to all lower castes. Curiously, the spirit kills only samurai.

Rising Action

All the victims mistreated peasants. Moreover, there is a darker secret... The Perfect Land Sect has deep roots in the peasant community and even some samurai have supposedly joined the cult.

The local peasants are resentful to their masters and they treat the onryo (Toshigoku spirit) as a hero.

Climax

The daimyō's son is the spirit, or rather he pretends to be one to help the peasants. He is a member of the sect and he hopes to depose his father. After all defending the peasants is a Samurai's duty! If the Daimyō were to find out, he might not believe his son could betray him, rival lords might see him as weak... The wrong words spoken at the wrong time might cause the province to descend into chaos!

Submitted by Janek Sielicki

Hook

In the middle of winter a local Magistrate goes missing. One of her yoriki makes it back, badly frostbitten and wounded. Before collapsing they mutter about strange wolves besieging a village.

Rising Action

Years ago a Fox Spirit named Himei, under the guise of a beautiful maiden, married a local lord. However, the lord made a pact with a wolf-spirit called Muuto, who was chasing Himei for her crimes in Chikushu-do, the realm of animal spirits. Each year, the lord was obliged to make a special offering of food in a nearby forest shrine.

This year, because of unusually harsh winter, he decided not to make the offering. The pact was broken and wolves attacked, killing the oath breaker and then besieging the village to get to the Kitsune Fox-Wife.

Climax

Will the pact be honoured and Himei returned to her realm? The Kitsune certainly doesn't want to be taken back, leaving her daughter alone. She will work her magic and try to create allies and gain help if none is forthcoming!

Submitted by Janek Sielicki

Hook

A high-ranking daimyō has suddenly begun protesting he can no longer host an important winter court, even though the winds of winter have started blowing.

Rising Action

Visitors to the lord's castle and the surrounding town are quickly given excuses and ushered out almost as soon as they arrive.

Strangely, there is a constant procession of carts to and from the castle. Carts carrying rocks, hot on the way in, cold on the way out.

Climax

The daimyō's only daughter had a servant she desired but who rebuffed her advances. In anger she lashed out, killing the servant. To hide her crime she fed the body to the flames, and told slanderous lies to cover up the disappearance. Since then the flames used to heat the castle have burned cold.

As winter embraces the land its now clear even heated rocks won't keep the castle warm and inhabitable. Perhaps the daughter can perform an act of atonement, but with the cold winds already blowing, time is running out...

Submitted by Jason Moscatello

Hook

Something is mildly amiss in the immaculate gardens of the estate of Otomo Noroka, and the head gardener is loosing his mind, after all, it is his lord's annual garden party in less than a week and literally "EVERYONE will be there".

Rising Action

Something is clearly amiss, but only slightly so. The tiniest of issues keep disturbing the garden every time the gardener has made it "perfect". The kami in the area are as disturbed as the fish ("clearly they're unhappy, can't you see their faces!") and about as expressive about it. But there is no time, the party must go on...

Climax

During the party events take a turn, pots break, fires set things alight and everything is just going mad, the guests are terrified and the gardener is forlorn.

Small amounts of the opposite elements for each of the Kami in the garden have been rubbed or thrown into those areas. Untraceable before but visible now because they have been scattered in large quantities. The only other person who had access to the garden is the gardener's apprentice, a young boy who the gardener treats very badly...

Submitted by Finbarr Goode Begley

Hook

A letter has arrived, Sensei is going to be visiting. The letter claims that Sensei isn't arriving for three days, so that can't have been them lurking in the alley way last night? Can it?

Rising Action

Things have only become more strange over the past few days... Repeated challenges to duels of honour by random samurai and ronin...Each offering a sincere apology after witnessing my stance. Also I'm certain that it IS Sensei I keep seeing out of the corner of my eye!

Climax

On the third day Sensei finally approached, accompanied by a servant. He is dying, consumption or some form of wasting disease.

He challenged me to a duel. A duel to the death. He wanted an honourable warrior's end. How could I refuse?

Afterwards, as I stood numb and staring the servant handed me a final letter from Sensei, his final wish.

Now I am the Sensei, I will be shaping the minds, bodies, and spirits of future duellists.

Submitted by Gary Flanagan

Hook

A village is under siege from shadowlands forces.

One of the defenders, a young samurai-ko is struggling with strange dreams about a man she has never met before. The dreams are unsettling, and start to break her concentration with her spear.

One of the defenders, a young man, is battling strange dreams about a samurai-ko he has never met before, dreams that make him lose the needed concentration to use his bow.

Rising Action

They are dreaming about each other, but they never seem to meet. During the battles around the village if one is present, the other is not. Being able to harness both their skills in one conflict would help shore up the defences!

Climax

Both samurai are dead. They died defending the same the village decades ago. With their last breath they shouted out to the kami to let them defend the village together into death. But the kami's gifts are not so simple. Each ghostly samurai will only fight for half a day before being replaced by the other. They don't remember, but they suffer...

Submitted by Andre Bigler

Hook

A criminal who tried to hijack a shipment of coin-minting dies, is still at large. Although they were unsuccessful, they did kill one of the shipment's samurai guards before escaping.

Rising Action

The criminal has fled to a small island village, their hometown, and is hiding out in a cave on the far side of the island. Their family is bringing them food and water. The family members do their best to cover for the fugitive when official samurai come snooping around but shortly after their arrival, a hurricane starts to move in, trapping samurai and criminal alike on the island.

Climax

The only safe place when the storm hits will be inside the cave. The small population makes their way to there, but soon realise that someone was left behind in the chaos, a young child. The storm is about to hit full force.

Knowing that her life is forfeit anyway, the criminal offers to go out in search of the child. Should they be detained instead? Do the samurai offer to go out and search themselves? Is the criminal genuine in their desire to find the child or is this a ruse to escape?

Submitted by Chloe Bear

Hook

A small isolated fishing town is plagued by pirates, always attacking when the local samurai are away at their daimyō's court.

Rising Action

A traitor within the town, an infiltrator from a rival clan, is lighting a beacon whenever the samurai leave.

Climax

The pirates favour neither clan and are unaware they are being manipulated by this traitor...

Submitted by Corey Radloff

Hook

An angry river spirit has kidnapped several peasant children. The spirit has been driven mad and angry because the water is being polluted by a steel smelting facility up river.

Rising Action

However he's not immune to the plight of children so he summons a Kuni Shugenja to exercise the spirit. The shugenja will be there in two days. Two days to find a way to change the foreman's mind, rescue the children and purify the spirit.

Climax

The foreman is embezzling from the mill, running an underhanded business out the back door. The workers are unhappy and don't need much to riot, shutting down the smelter. If pressured the foreman is no slouch and has his own enforcers.

The water kami resides in a polluted pool close to the steel mill, the children are being kept prisoner under the dark waters...

Submitted by Corey Radloff