

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 04/29/2012

ATTENDANCE

Bruce decides of a moment that he will relocate his webcam into the office. Of course! The office is a much better place! But then, he must install software, so much software! This process makes him unaccountably late to call in, though it doesn't appear to trouble him near so much as it ought to...

Chris grumbles, "I was on time, why can't everyone else be?"

Ernest agrees, noting that the relationship between this attendance section and reality is even lower than usual. Perhaps this is a function of its being written while webcam software is installing...

The video starts up.

Paul comments, "It's the Thought Police!"

Patrick corrects him, "Actually, it's just a cat."

Tim asks, "Could you make some duck noises?"

Bruce obliges. He claims he's just laughing, but the others know better.

The conversation swiftly turns to the early sewer practices of the English, specifically the tremendous improvement of moving from dumping chamber pots out onto the street to installing latrines on the London Bridge.

Patrick suggests, "But that was their remaining drinking water supply..."

Bruce admonishes him, "What! Are you one of those pansy Frenchmen who thinks that water should be transparent! Man up and drink your muddy brown water!"

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Harwynian Falingleaf	Bruce	Elegant Elven Transmuter	5
Yoshihiro Kaijitsu	Ernest	Tien Reckless Mounted Archer-Knight	5
Jacob Frostfang	Matt	Ale-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer	5
V'lk	Chris	Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle)	2/3
Gobo Samarillian	Patrick	Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller	5
Bjorn the Unlucky	Tim	Ulfen Woodsman	5

THE POWERS OF SUISHEN

The sword Suishen, which we found last session, is a +2 *Flaming Defending katana*. It provides its wielder with *Endure Elements*. In addition, three times per day it can cast: Air Walk, Daylight, Resist Energy (cold) and See Invisibility. It's the ancestral sword of the Amatatsu clan.

WE'RE TOTALLY OUT OF SPELLS

Harwynian notes that unless the characters mostly want "magical support" to mean "Harwynian runs away" they absolutely need to spend some time resting. *Bjorn the Unlucky* and *Yoshihiro Kaijutsu* both indicate an interest in interrogating the smart-mouthed sword *Suishen*, for all that the sword doesn't seem that interested in cooperating.

Suishen does put paid to several of the characters' ideas on confining *Thorborg Silverscore*. It notes, "She's an oni! She can turn invisible, adopt gaseous form, cast charm spells, what in the four lightless Hells are you going to do against that?"

Yoshihiro comments, "I thought all women could do that."

The characters ask their local captives about how much interaction there is between the castle above and Thorborg's areas in the dungeon below. It turns out that she keeps a lot of food down there, and there are often times when days pass between the upstairs visits of her trollish servants.

WHAT IS AN ONI ANYWAY?

Suishen explains that *kami* are spirits sent by the gods to watch over various natural features. They live everywhere, generally near the feature they guard: river kami live near rivers, forest kami live in forests, some kami are set to watch over special stones, and each household has its own kami. They operate in a strict hierarchy, with kami becoming more powerful as they are responsible for greater things.

Kami are strictly bound by the rules of the gods, but sometimes kami see the pleasures of mortal life and become jealous. In those cases, they can become *oni*, or evil

spirits. There are different types of oni, depending upon the pleasure they desire. When they take physical form they are driven by whatever obsession fuels their jealousy: eating, sex, murder, eating-sex-murder, and so on. The most common outside of Tien are those kami who take the shapes of ogres – though they are not perfect imitations, they still have the magical powers they had as kami.

Harwynian doesn't know much about oni, but he can connect the sword's description with the ogre magi he has heard of. For each of the major humanoid races there is a corresponding type of oni – so there are mutated-looking humans with magical powers who are oni, same for tengu and so on. The more powerful oni often take the forms of various types of giants. They tend to only take humanoid forms: oni do not take the shapes of dragons.

Yoshihiro asks if Thorborg is a human oni (a *kuwa oni*) because she takes human form. Suishen corrects him: all oni can shapechange, and she may be taking human form just for convenience. Suishen was able to identify her as an oni because it has special senses (including *Darkvision* out to 60').

The characters spend a few moments mocking Suishen, asking if it can sense scabbards out to sixty feet. Suishen ignores their barbs.

The Five Winds is an organization headed by oni who escaped from imprisonment by the gods long ago. They clearly have an interest in ruling Minkai, but Suishen doesn't know if they have a greater goal beyond that.

Whatever kind of oni she might be, Thorborg Silverscore is armed with a massive magical tetsubo, sort of an iron-bound club. When she makes people swear oaths to her on it, their heads explode if they narc her out.

INTO THE FURNACES

After an eight-hour rest to regain spells, the characters return to the chamber divided by a flowing stream and cross it using a *Moon Bridge*. Keeping mindful of Suishen's advice, Yoshihiro invokes *See Invisible* on himself.

The characters proceed into the sweltering furnace chamber. A hot iron furnace burns on one side of the room. An untidy pile of coal lies underneath the coal chute on

the other side of the room. Three crude beds are arrayed inside, along with two trolls wearing heavy fur coats and caps.

Harwynian leads by casting *Haste* on most of the characters. *V'lk* drinks a potion of *Blur* and moves to attack the trolls. *Gobo Samarillian* casts *Bless*. Yoshihiro moves in against the trolls, discovering that they're not nearly as surprised as he might have hoped. As he moves into the room, one of the trolls lashes out and bites him fiercely in the shoulder.

The trolls strike out at Yoshihiro and *V'lk*. *V'lk* takes a bite, but only a half-hearted one.

Jacob Frostfang attempts to cast *Shield* but loses his spell in the face of a foul-smelling trollish howl. He tries slipping past the creature and gets bitten for his troubles. *Bjorn* swings and *Asvig Longthews* flings an axe, but neither connects.

V'lk snakes his way between the trolls and stabs one from behind, using his shadow powers to add his Oracle levels in to his Rogue levels for backstab damage. He inflicts a bloody, nasty wound upon the creature.

Gobo lines up a troll with his *Ring of the Ram* and attempts to shove it into the furnace. He manages to wound it, but doesn't quite manage to stuff it into the 3' furnace door.

Yoshihiro advances upon the trolls with *Suishen*. His first strike ends one troll, leaving the body conveniently next to the furnace. His second strike wounds the second.

The surviving troll storms and rages upon *V'lk*, striking him three times. His shadow powers help him avoid one strike, but the other two hit him hard.

Harwynian casts *Bull's Strength* upon *Jacob*. Infused with magical strength, *Jacob* slams into the remaining troll and critically wounds it. *Asvig* follows up with another thrown axe and hits the troll right in its skull, dropping it.

The characters chop the troll bodies up and deposit them into the furnace. *V'lk* makes certain to grab one of their caps before it ends up burning.

Noting the third bed, Yoshihiro cautions the others, "There are three beds here, so there's got to be another troll around here somewhere." *Bjorn* examines a nearby pile of bones and concludes that they're deer bones, specifically reindeer bones. The characters search the area and find the trolls' treasure underneath the coal:

- 17 golden arm rings (worth 25 gold each)
- A sack of amethysts (50 of them, worth 30 gold each)
- A pile of human teeth

Harwynian comments, “We’re going into business, boys! We’re selling amethysts and arm rings!”

Bjorn protests, “You’re forgetting the human teeth! Those can be quite valuable!” Nobody says anything. Then he persuades Gobo to summon water into the furnace to extinguish it so he can search it for treasure. This takes a while, but sadly doesn’t turn up much of anything.

Jacob investigates a hogshead barrel in the corner of the room. He finds that it contains cheap ale. The characters tap the barrel and toast themselves for their famous victory.

CHAMBER OF MARTIAL MONKS

V’lk listens at the next door. He hears something that sounds like a vacuum cleaner. The characters get into position and open the door. The chamber beyond is quite different from the crudity of the furnace room. It is a grand audience chamber decorated in the Tien style. Three monks, apparently of mixed Tien and Ulfen heritage, sit upon reed mats before a central porcelain bowl containing pure water. Tapestries hanging from the ceiling are embroidered with Tien characters for various martial virtues.

As soon as the characters enter the three monks fluidly leap to the columns along the walls and climb up to the roof. The shadows cast by the flaming braziers around the walls make it very difficult to see them. Yoshihiro attempts to parley with them, but they’re clearly having none of it.

Harwynian casts *Darkvision* on V’lk to help him see the monks in the shadows. He is completely unaware that V’lk has darkvision anyway. Characters gain Fate points as a consequence.

The monks ignore some initial volleys from the characters. They respond by flinging thunderstones down at the group. Harwynian is deafened by the blasts.

Jacob (giving thanks that he doesn’t look like a spellcaster) launches a *Scorching Ray* at one monk, hitting him square on and burning him horribly. Asvig Longthews

follows up with an axe right to the chest, knocking the monk off his perch. The monk lands heavily and stops moving.

V'lk spots another of the monks and flings a knife at him.

Yoshihiro casts *Daylight* using Suishen and bathes the room in bright light. He quickdraws his bow and spots the monk V'lk hit with a knife. He shoots the monk. Then Jacob hits him with a starknife, knocking him from the ceiling and ending him. Gobo spots another one and casts *Hold Person* on him, freezing him in place.

The wounded monk slow-falls to the ground and engages the characters directly. He is stabbed through with Asvig's spear for his trouble. The characters cut him to ribbons.

WOMAN NINJA ENTERS THE SCENE

Unbeknownst to the characters, a female ninja creeps into the chamber under an *Invisibility* effect. Even without magic she has truly superhuman stealth, so it is no question that the characters do not see her despite Yoshihiro's ongoing *detect invisibility* effect from the sword. She flings three shuriken at Yoshihiro, and it is only his amazing fortune that allows him to deflect one with Suishen. The shuriken start fires wherever they hit. She takes cover again immediately after.

Jacob decides that he needs to be drunk to see her. He takes a long, healthful draught of fortified wine, "Beergoggles go!" Then he casts *Enlarge Person* on himself. And *False Life*.

V'lk spots her up on the ceiling and flings a dagger at her. Obviously his other senses are compensating for his loss of speech, like a reverse Daredevil.

Yoshihiro casts *Air Walk* and moves to search for Thorborg overhead; he's unable to detect her.

Harwynian moves up to be closer to the other characters and casts *Haste* on Yoshihiro, V'lk, Jacob, Asvig and himself.

Bjorn manages to spot the attacker up in the rafters. She is dressed like a sexy ninja, but he doesn't let that stop him: he throws his magical starknife at her.

The ninja fires a blowgun dart at Jacob. She hits him in a nerve cluster, doing an amazing amount of damage. A moment later he starts feeling the effects of *deathblade*

poison. V'lk gestures at him, "Deathblade? You're screwed!" Then he casts *Delay Poison* to make the screwing last longer.

Jacob ignores him and strikes back at her, scoring a moderate hit.

Yoshihiro runs across the ceiling, doing his best to flank the ninja and strike with Suishen. He shouts out a samurai's challenge! Suishen strikes true, wounding her badly. Yoshihiro cries out, "Yield" in Tien, but she clearly plans to fight to the death.

Harwynian finally spots her and hits her with a volley of *Magic Missiles*.

The woman ninja attempts to vanish with a ninja trick! She turns *invisible* and moves away, but Yoshihiro strikes her with Suishen, cutting her in half. Two pieces of a ninja rain down from the rafters.

- Three *Amulets of Natural Armor +1*
- Two poison vials (deathblade and black lotus)
- *Deadly Kiss* (see below)
- Three *Earthfire Shuriken* (see below)
- *Shozoku of the Night Wind* (see below)
- A blowgun, some darts and other assorted mundane equipment

The *Deadly Kiss* is a +1 dagger with a blue metal blade. If you are carrying poison on your person, you can apply it to the blade with a swift action with no chance of poisoning yourself.

Earthfire shuriken are +1 *Flaming Burst* shuriken etched with an image of a volcano. Anyone hit with one must make a DC 15 reflex save or catch on fire and take an additional 1d6 damage per round.

The *Shozoku of the Night Wind* grants a +2 armor bonus, a +5 competence bonus to Stealth, and can be used 1/day to become *Invisible* if the wearer is in less than normal light. It has some additional abilities if the wearer is a ninja.

Harwynian gets one of the *Amulets of Natural Armor* and the *Shozoku of the Night Wind*. Yoshihiro notes, "Up till now, Harwynian was just another of these generic elf scribe magician sorts. But now, he's a *ninja* scribe!" The femininity of the outfit is strangely appropriate on his elven frame. Bjorn looks uncomfortable as he discovers he finds Harwynian strangely attractive now.

V'lk picks up the *Deadly Kiss* and the poison. Bjorn and Jacob pick up the other two *Amulets of Natural Armor*. V'lk also collects scalps from the monks. Jacob is horrified, until he notices that V'lk already has a large number of scalps in his bag. Then he is *more* horrified.

Yoshihiro spends some time meditating at the porcelain bowl, doing his level best to ignore the fact that Bjorn and Gobo are acting like drunken fraternity brothers. Bjorn cries out, "I pee in the bowl!" Yoshihiro groans.

Jacob starts investigating the doors around the room. He finds several monks' chambers, including the female ninja's chamber. It turns out that she has some nice items:

- several disguises in a small chest
- a screen worth 200 gold decorated in the Tien style
- an ornate blowgun fashioned from jade and lapis lazuli
- 150 gold in Tien coins
- a writ signed by Sven Blood-Eagle, the jarl of Kalsgard. It gives the bearer the authority to command any of the jarl's huscarls within two miles of Kalsgard for up to twelve hours

One of the cells includes a small shrine to the Yama King, ruler of the underworld. He is the patron of all oni.

One of the cells suggests that while nobody was living in it, someone had been passing through. V'lk searches it and finds a secret door in the back. The characters decide to wait out the hour before proceeding on, to allow Harwynian and Gobo to regain their hearing. The other characters are forced to listen to Suishen tell long, rambling stories about onis and their ways. In particular, Suishen recites parts of the *Tayagama*, a cycle of 100 poems about a hero's war against the oni. It tells the tale of a whimsical and shy farm-boy named *Taiago* who blunders his way into a string of victories against an army of oni. He is helped in his quest by a diminutive old man named *Tekki* who is the guardian kami of a bonsai tree.

IT'S A HAND? OH GOD, IT'S A HAND!

The characters proceed into the rough-hewn corridor behind the secret door. Along the passage they find a small room with decorations suggesting a magician's quarters: magical circle on the floor, stuffed and mounted stirge on the wall, and so on. Yoshihiro pokes around the room and finds nobody inside, but he does hear a rustling from under the bed.

He flings the bed over in a single great motion, uncovering a giant hand! A giant rotting hand! It stands unsteadily upon rotting fingers, its necrotic flesh blistered and discolored. It raises itself up, demonstrating that it is actually almost five feet across at the palm. V'lk and Yoshihiro move to engage it. Jacob howls, "How big was that bed?"

V'lk hammers the thing with his morningstar. The strike breaks open several vile pustules. He only barely manages to avoid being sprayed by the most appalling liquid he has ever seen.

Gobo calls down the power of the interstellar void upon it. Harwynian follows on with some *Magic Missiles*. The hand looks like it is in bad shape. Bjorn steps in with his flail, but (fortunately) does not manage to break its leathery hide. Finally, Yoshihiro dumps holy water on it and turns it into a bubbling mass of pestilence.

The magicians examine the remains and conclude that the thing was probably a giant variation of the crawling hand, a magical construct magicians (necromancers especially) create as an assassination tool. The circle on the floor is clearly an outline for a protective circle, useful for summoning. The brazier includes evidence that strips of dried flesh have been burnt in it.

Harwynian examines the documents and finds that they involve research into planar bindings and hellwasps. He tucks them into his bag.

Gobo locates a secret compartment in the headboard of the bed. V'lk opens it for him, revealing three arcane scrolls, all of them *Magic Circle against Evil*, along with a vial of powdered silver. Harwynian takes two of them, and Jacob takes the third.

The characters decide that the occupant is probably the half-orc necromancer who was rumored to live in the complex.

THE HALF-SOMETHING NECROMANCER

The characters continue on down the corridor. Gobo casts *Hide from Undead* on them, just in case. After a while, the corridor descends down stairs. V'lk leads the way, pausing to point out a tripwire trap linked to a small bell. He disarms the trap and Yoshihiro takes the bell.

At the base of the stairs the characters find a corridor, ending in a large door bound in heavy iron and secured with a giant lock. There are seven figures in the corridor. One of them appears to not be dead – probably the half-orc necromancer who had been rumored to live in the area. The others look like undeads.

The characters debate what the other half of the necromancer's ancestry might have been, as it doesn't look like it was human. V'lk leads the way. Harwynian casts *Protection from Evil* on him. Then V'lk moves out to attack the necromancer with *Deadly Kiss*. His strike shears off the necromancer's magical protections. He looks quite discomfited that his ranks of undead warriors are totally ignoring the party.

Yoshihiro joins the fray, careful not to touch any of the undead, giving the necromancer a nice glaive hit. The necromancer responds by stepping back and hitting Yoshihiro with an *Acid Ray*. Gobo responds by casting *Hold Person* at the necromancer, who shrugs it off.

Jacob comes in with a *True Strike*, tearing through the necromancer but not striking him down. The necromancer responds with a swing at V'lk, buttressed by his *Arcane Strike* abilities. V'lk evades and counterattacks, but is again unable to pierce the necromancer's defenses.

The necromancer slips past V'lk and casts *Acid Hands* at V'lk and Jacob, catching Jacob in the spray. Jacob ignores a zombie to attack the necromancer again.

The zombies start to become aware of the characters. They immediately become more of a problem, so Yoshihiro swings his glaive with determination to turn them back into less of a problem. The zombies slowly move into position, swinging with strength but not much skill. The characters split between chopping down zombies and continuing to strike the necromancer.

Things are looking bad for the necromancer, so he pulls out a magical smoke grenade and flings it to the ground. He vanishes in a puff of smoke!

Jacob cries out, “Oh no! Where did the necromancer go!” He steps into the smoke, finds the magical rope, climbs it, and attempts to stab the necromancer in his little hidey hole. V’lk follows Jacob up. Between the two of them, they cut the necromancer down. A moment later, Yoshihiro finishes cleaning up the last of the zombies.

After the characters kick the necromancer’s body out of his extradimensional space they loot his body, coming up with:

- *A Potion of Eagle’s Splendor*
- *A Scroll of Animate Dead*
- *A Wand of Command Undead* (11 charges)
- A masterwork heavy crossbow
- A masterwork heavy pick

Gobo comments, “He wasn’t a necromancer at all!”

Harwynian agrees, “Yeah, he was just some guy who happened into a lot of necro-gear!”

THE GREAT DOOR

The characters turn to breaching the massive door at the end of the corridor. As Yoshihiro moves to break it down he triggers a *Flame Strike* that blankets the entire party. Nobody dies, but everyone ends up feeling quite a bit more scorched.

The door opens, revealing a fantastic treasure trove of gold, silver, precious stones, and rare goods never seen on this side of the world. V’lk gestures to Yoshihiro to not move any further until the wounded party members are healed. Yoshihiro mimics stomping forward like a big ol’ spaz in a passive-aggressive critique of how the rest of the party has shown restraint lately.

Several characters cast *Detect Magic* and spot nothing magical within the hoard. Yoshihiro moves inside cautiously and prods some of the treasure with Suishen. The sword agrees, “It looks like money.”

- 3 chests full of gold and silver brooches and arm rings (50 lb each)
- 5 crates of copper bars (200 lbs each)
- 1 crate with 26 silver trade bars (200 lbs)
- 23 gilded drinking horns, decorated with images of various beasts

- 1 drinking horn made from an aurochs horn, decorated with citrines
- Coffers containing gold, silver and copper coins (120 lbs)
- 1 chest containing a masterwork chain shirt, masterwork heavy wooden shield, +1 *Longsword*, dagger, masterwork throwing axe, 2 more throwing axes, a climber's kit, a cold weather outfit, 50 feet of rope, a pocket flask of whiskey, a sextant, a pair of smoked goggles, a set of snowshoes, a wolfskin, 2 potions of *Cure Light Wounds*, 10 tindertwigs

The characters make the obvious conclusion that the one chest is clearly one guy's equipment. Bjorn indicates that he would like to trade the magical longsword for his morningstar. Other than that, the characters leave the gear alone. Harwynian estimates that all the rest of the treasure is (obviously) worth thousands of gold pieces if the characters can come up with a way to cart it off. Alternately, it could be the treasury that Asvig Longthews uses to take control of the castle.

The characters leave the loot behind for now.

The next chamber is a storeroom with a variety of sacks and chests. There is a faint charnel reek that persuades Yoshihiro to cast *See Invisible*. He sees nothing suspicious. Jacob casts a full range of defensive spells and picks through some of the chests, finding only foodstuffs of various types.

The characters leave and head down a long corridor to another door. They pass two statues of Tien Xa warriors in demonic masks placed in alcoves. As the characters reach the door the statues animate and move to the attack!

Jacob moves to attack a statue! His strike glances off its stone exterior. Harwynian sends a telekinetic strike at another, no damage at all. Looking at them, he concludes that they are likely to have the same immunity to magic as many constructs. Despite the fact that they appear to be bronze, they look like they are likely constructed of stone – suggesting that they will be immune to any spell that is affected by spell resistance, but probably have vulnerability to *Transmute Stone to Mud* and similar spells.

Asvig flings an axe, again inflicting a wound. In return, the statues raise their katanas and slash Yoshihiro badly. Jacob avoids the second statue's strike.

Yoshihiro moves to a defensive stance and faces off against one statue.

Bjorn strikes a statue with his flail and shield, discovering to his horror that the statues are hard enough to inflict damage upon his weapons. Jacob strikes another one and almost shatters his blade in the process.

The characters pull back towards the stairs, with Yoshihiro and Jacob trailing behind. Yoshihiro strikes one of the statues and observes that as a minor artifact, Suishen is mostly immune to the statues' ability to damage weapons.

The battle turns into a grim struggle of attrition between the statues, the characters' failing weapons, and the characters' healing magic. Eventually, the characters manage to destroy the two of them.

The characters retreat back to the storeroom to allow Harwynian, Gobo and V'lk to use *Mending* to fix Jacob's broken greatsword while the others search the place. The search turns up some spices, wine and imported sake that could be worth something. Its value is immediately degraded as it is loaded into the characters' bellies.

THE END OF THE SESSION

The characters are recuperating (briefly) in the storeroom. Next session – carrying the attack to Thorborg Silverscore!