Legend of the Five Rings™ ROLEPLAYING

READ THIS FIRST

Welcome to the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game*! If you're new to roleplaying games (RPGs), then read on for a quick introduction. If you're familiar with RPGs, read the back cover to learn about the setting then proceed to the Adventure Book and get started.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A roleplaying game (RPG) is an exciting cooperative storytelling experience. Players take on the role of a fictional character and decide what that character would think, say, do, and feel in dramatic situations! Like many games, it has rules, components, and dice to help describe and resolve those situations. Unlike most games, an RPG has no winner or loser and no opposing teams. If everyone has fun and enjoys the resulting story, then everyone wins!

WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

One player is the Game Master (GM). The Game Master portrays the setting and all the minor characters. They direct the plot of the story and controls the antagonists. This player should take the Adventure Book.

The other players are hero players. Each of them controls one player character (PC). Hero players make decisions for their PCs and react to the plot and setting created by the GM. Each hero player should choose one character folio, using the information and character background from the back cover of each folio to aid in deciding which character to play.

An Example of Play

Farrah, Gabe, Hiro, Indira, and Jax have gathered together to play the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game*. Farrah takes the role of GM. Gabe, Hiro, Indira, and Jax take the roles of the PCs. Gabe is playing Doji Ren, an adventurous Courtier of the Crane Clan. Hiro is playing Akodo Masako, a Bushi Warrior of the Lion Clan seeking glory as a soldier, and Indira is playing Togashi Yoshi, a spiritual Tattooed Monk of the Dragon Clan. Lastly, Jax is playing Isawa Aki, an ambitious shugenja of the Phoenix Clan who can call on the spirits of Rokugan for mystical aid.

The five friends are seated around Farrah's kitchen table. Gabe, Hiro, Indira, and Jax have their character folios, pencils, and some scratch paper close at hand. Farrah has a notebook, the Adventure Book, and the Rulebook, as well as a pencil. The five of them are sharing dice, which have been gathered in the middle of the table within easy reach of everyone, or are using the *Legend of the Five Rings* Dice App. Perhaps most importantly, everyone brought a snack to share as well!

We join the group in mid-session, with Ren, Masako, Yoshi, and Aki after arriving in the Crane Clan village of Tsuma for their *gempuku*, or coming of age ceremony where they will become samurai. This consists of a series of contests to determine if they are truly worthy of becoming samurai, and all are eager to bring honor to their families and clans. They have found their rooms at the House of the Laughing Carp, and have some time to explore the village before retiring for the night.

Continued within…

Farrah (GM): OK, you've sorted out the unpleasantness concerning your fellow contestant and the rooms, and it's now late afternoon. As you look outside of the inn, there are even more decorations now than when you entered the village. It's quite festive, as the Topaz Championship is a big event. What would you like to do?

Jax (Aki): I think Aki would like to visit a temple to offer thanks for the safe journey to Tsuma. Then perhaps food?

Gabe (Ren): An excellent idea! As this village is in the Crane Clan lands, and this contest is a well-known event, can I make a check to see if Ren would know of a temple here?

Farrah (GM): You bet! Your target number is 1, a pretty easy check. (Gabe gathers the dice and makes a Theology check.)

Gabe (Ren): Success! And I got an Opportunity result too. Can I spend it to say I remember a temple sure to awe everyone else? (Gabe grins at the players.)

Farrah (GM): You recall the Temple to Amaterasu, the sun goddess. It's the finest in the region, and you describe it to the others.

Hiro (Masako): Sounds about as fancy as expected for a Crane temple.

Indira (Yoshi): It sounds very impressive indeed to Yoshi, as this is the first time he's has been away from his distant homeland. Let's go!

Farrah (GM): You set out to the great temple. As you step into the thoroughfare, though, you see smoke rising from a building down the street, near the edge of the village.

Indira (Yoshi): Hey, are all the buildings here made of wood?

Farrah (GM): Indeed they are. What are you folks going to do?

Jax (Aki): My late sensei perished in a fire, and I feel we should help the locals with this.

Hiro (Masako): I'm already running down the street. Coming to the rescue of the Crane means glory for me and my clan!

Gabe (Ren): I'm right after the Lion! This seems like a chance for adventure, though it may mean my fine clothing could get singed. I feel like my character would incur some strife to represent worrying about that a little.

Farrah (GM): Nice suggestion, thanks Gabe! Ren suffers 1 strife. (Gabe notes the strife on their character sheet). If you gain Opportunity in a check while firefighting you can spend it to indicate you kept your robes spotless, impressing all around you. Indira, Jax, what are you two doing?

Jax (Aki): I'm sprinting off after them.

Indira (Yoshi): Me too. It's our duty as samurai to come to the aid of others. Or at least it will be once we complete our gempuku, so we'd better get in used to doing it!

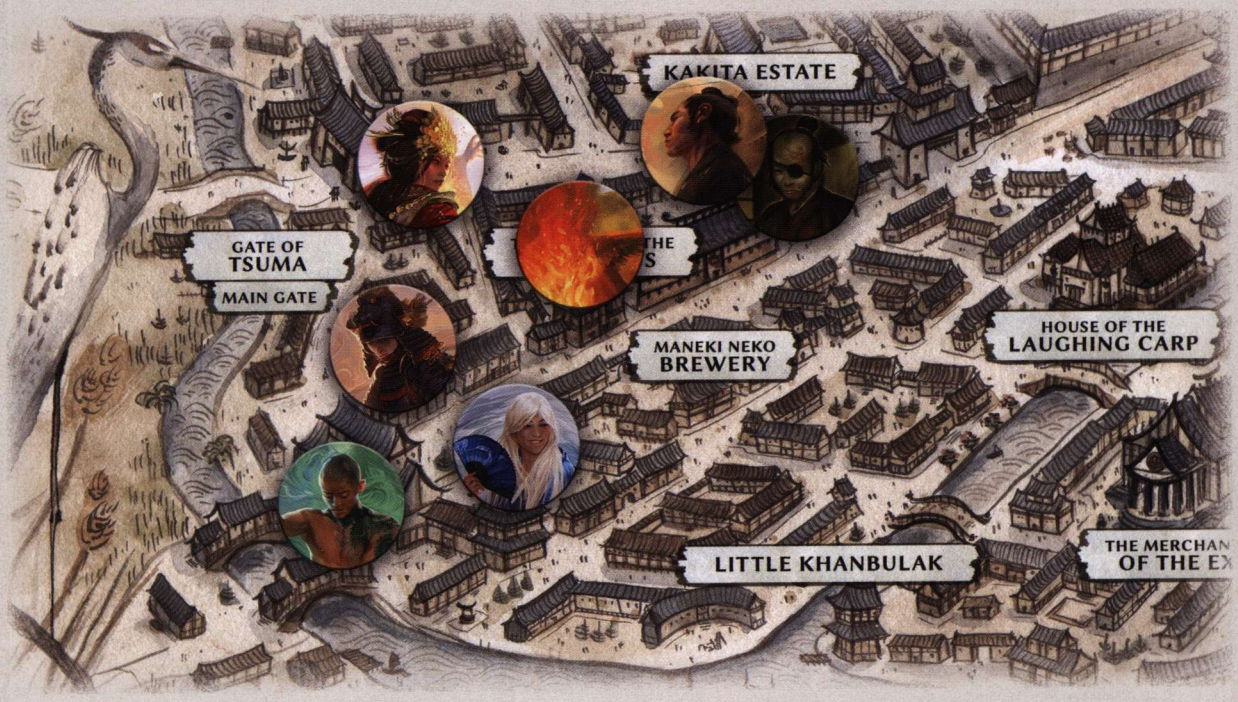
Farrah (GM): Well said! When you reach the building, you see there are small flames inside. There are several peasants using water and sand against the fire, but they don't seem to be having much success. Other peasants are just watching.

Indira (Yoshi): Can I use my Survival skills to show them better ways to douse fires?

Farrah (GM): Good thinking. Your target number is 2. (Indira gathers the dice and rolls). Success! You do indeed offer some tips and they seem to be helping, at least in keeping the flames from spreading.

Hiro (Masako): I want to get more people to help. Command check, right?

HOW TO USE THE MAPS AND CHARACTER TOKENS



The maps and character tokens included in the *Legend of the Five Rings Beginner Game* can be used as optional game aids to enhance your narrative play experience. The character tokens can be used to represent the approximate locations of the heroes and other characters in important and exciting scenes of the adventure, by placing them directly onto the map. You can also draw your own maps, improvise using soda cans, books, and other objects that might be on hand, or forgo maps entirely, depending on which option suits your group's play style the best.

Farrah (GM): Correct, target number 1. (Hiro gathers and rolls the dice). Nice! You easily get many more peasants to run up and actively aid the effort.

Indira (Yoshi): I'm simply going to grab a bucket and pitch in directly. Lead by example!

Farrah (GM): Always a good motto. You can make a Fitness check to exert yourself and really make a difference, if you'd like? Target number will be 2.

Indira (Yoshi): (Indira assembles the dice and rolls). Rats. I failed, but I got two Opportunity. What if my actions don't help that much, but I do get some more people to pitch in?

Gabe (Ren): Like me. I should be helping, as this is my clan's village, but manual labor is so wrong for Ren! Farrah, same Fitness check?

Farrah (GM): Yep. (Gabe also assembles and rolls the dice). And the Courtier succeeds! But with no Opportunity—those robes are in really bad shape. (Gabe winces and sighs audibly to the group.)

Jax (Aki): Is anyone injured? I want to help if so.

Farrah (GM): There are a few burn victims; your target number is 2 to aid them with a Medicine check. (Jax rolls the dice). You apply some needed first aid, just as the flames go out—nice work everyone! A wizened peasant covered with soot emerges from the building, then bows deeply with long speeches of gratitude. She says this is the House of the Red Lotus tea house, and claims dignitaries visit Tsuma just for their favorite blends. Not everyone is happy, though, and you think you spot someone in the crowds looking very angrily in your direction. The figure disappears down an alleyway, but you get the feeling you'll be seeing them again...

Welcome to the Emerald Empire

In Rokugan, it is said that honor is stronger than steel. While even the finest blade can bend and break or twist under the heat of the forge, the Emerald Empire's society has been folded in the forges of politics and war for more than a thousand years, and it has not yet broken. The society of Rokugan follows a divinely ordered pattern set down by the eight Kami, who shared their celestial blessings with the mortal realm. Rokugan is a land of strict social stratification, where an improper look at the wrong time can mean death.

This is an era of sudden change and upheaval, however. Mortal schemes, natural calamities, and celestial turmoil alike have disrupted the political, military, and spiritual equilibrium of the land. Long-simmering rivalries and fresh betrayals ripple through the courts and on the battlefield. The Chrysanthemum Throne is beset by threats from without and within, and the honor of the seven Great Clans—the families descended from the heroes of legend and sworn to rule their lands in the Emperor's name—shall be put to the test.

YOUR STORY SO FAR...

The recent untimely and mysterious death of the Emerald Champion, Doji Satsume of the Crane Clan, has thrown the Emerald Empire into turmoil. Each of the Great Clans suspiciously eyes the others and wonders whether the death was no tragic accident, but a dishonorable act of murder.

In these times of strife, a group of youths approaches the village of Tsuma for the Topaz Championship and their *gempuku*, the coming-of-age ceremony that will mark them as fully fledged samurai. Each contestant has come from a different clan and dreams of being the highest-scoring contestant in the tournament, earning the title of Topaz Champion. Despite being pitted against one another, they are all united in their desire to succeed and bring honor to their clan and family.

Not everyone in Tsuma has honorable motives for the contest, however. Personal vendettas, supernatural visitations, and deadly sabotage may undermine the following days—unless the new arrivals stay true to the Code of Bushidō and act as the honorable samurai they seek to become.