



# BEFORE THE DAWN

Shiba Tsukimi stood upon the ceiling. To a different man, such a perspective might be perplexing, but Asako Bushiken had long since learned to adjust his sense to such a thing. "Greetings, Lady Tsukimi," he said calmly.

Tsukimi frowned, but of course it was really a smile. "Greetings, brother Bushiken. I trust the day finds you well."

"The day finds me at peace."

Bushiken replied. "I can ask for no more."

"My heart is saddened to hear that," Tsukimi said, "for it means my purpose here is disruptive. It is not peace of which we must speak."

"I speak of spiritual peace, of course," Bushiken said. "I would not presume to speak of martial peace to a legendary warrior such as yourself."

Tsukimi smiled, but it was a frown. "Do you think you could come down from there? I apologize but I find it very difficult to have a conversation in this manner."

"Of course." Bushiken said, flipping down from the handstand he had been maintaining atop a stone column for most of the morning. "How may I serve you, my lady?"

Tsukimi's smile seemed sad. "It is time," she said.

Bushiken sighed lightly. "War, then."

"War," she confirmed. "The Yobanjin are routed. The Dark Oracle seems to have lost his zest for war with the wounds he suffered. Our lands are safe now."

"And so at peace we must seek war," Bushiken said darkly.

"At peace, we must help bring peace to others," Tsukimi corrected. "Our resources are thin, however. We require your inquisitors to be marshaled in full. They must travel to the south and aid our meager forces there."

"If this brings peace, how long will it last?" Bushiken mused. "A month? A year?"

"We cannot know," Tsukimi said, "but neither can we despair."

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The candle was burned almost to the surface of the table on which it sat. All others had long since returned to their tents for sleep, some at his command, but Akodo Shigetoshi did not join them. His eyes were red and bleary, but they remained sharp as ever. He peered at the endless series of maps, the trays upon trays of stone markers indicating the different units and regiments assembled at the southern front. And he looked at the massive tome that had not left his side in over a year. It was a gaijin tome, but one that had become a part of the Lion's way of war.

Was it the exhaustion, or something else that made Shigetoshi's head swim at the thought of the war dragging on longer. He rubbed his hand across his face, then at his eyes. He struggled desperately to calculate a new strategy, a different tactic, anything that would change the tide of the battle.

"You must not despair."

Shigetoshi looked up quickly to see a young woman standing in the tent. He had not heard her enter. She was familiar to him, of course, but he was still unaccustomed to the jade hand at her wrist. "Benika," he said.

Matsu Benika, Hand of the Jade Sun, did not seem to respond to her name. "You must persevere," she cautioned him. "The Destroyers can be stopped."

"I have done everything I know to do," Shigetoshi admitted. "Our men claim ten of the beasts for every life we lose, and still their ranks are like the waves on the sea. They are without end. The Lion can defeat any foe on the battlefield, but a foe whose ranks cannot be exhausted? How can such a thing even exist?"

"You must hold on," Benika said. "There is a blade that has not yet been drawn. When it is, the tide can turn, if only the courage can be had to wield it."

"What do you mean?" Shigetoshi demanded.

Benika did not speak further.

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It was a field of mud. There were sparse bits of grass here and there, some that had not been completely destroyed by the treading feet of thousands upon thousands of ironclad monstrosities, and some that had grown since those creatures had passed on. But they were desperately few, and for the most part, the field was nothing but a vast and empty expanse of mud.

A portion of the mud shimmered and moved, then was still. Another section did the same, then another and another. Someone watching from afar might think that the mud was gently lapping as the ocean might against the shore, but the truth was far deadlier.

At the end of the mud field, a man rose and disappeared into the rocks, followed by more than a dozen others. They were barely recognizable as men, covered in mud and bits of plants. They looked as if the earth had risen and walked among the rocks.

"The Destroyers' rear line is a mile ahead," one of the men said, his voice a whisper. "Your orders, my lord?"

One of the men wiped a patch of mud from his shoulder, revealing the insignia of the Hiruma House Guard. "First we search the ruins of Kyuden Hida," he said. "Then we kill every gaijin demon we find."



# BEFORE THE DAWN

## - New Rules and Wordings -

Most of the cards in *Before the Dawn* are going to be compatible with the rules changes in the upcoming L5R base set, **Emperor Edition**, and will be legal for play in that environment. Because of this, the rules and wording for some existing effects has changed slightly. Cards printed prior to *Before the Dawn* follow the previous **Celestial Edition** rules, using the rulebook and all rulesheets prior to this one.

## - Mandatory targeting in the constraint block -

Starting with cards printed in *Before the Dawn*, an action's mandatory targeting requirements (if any) will be printed in the constraints block, between the two colons. Any targeting in the effects block of these cards is not mandatory, and it is carried out as effects resolve. However, targeting in Ranged Attacks from these cards is still required, and carried out with required targeting. So, performing choices and constraint block targeting both happen in the "explicit performing and required targeting" step of the action, in the order they are printed, before costs are paid.

For example, if a *Before the Dawn* card had the action "**Battle:** Target an enemy Personality and pay 2 Gold: Gain 1 Honor: You may target one of his attachments. Bow the targeted cards," the Personality targeting would be mandatory, and happen before paying costs. But the attachment targeting is not mandatory: It takes place during effect resolution, after you gain the Honor, and the targeted Personality doesn't have to have an attachment for the action to be taken legally.

Targeting in the constraint block can be made optional using the phrase "you may" - for example "Target a Samurai, and you may target a Shugenja." This kind of optional targeting happens in the required targeting step, but is not required in order to legally take the action.

We made this change to make it clearer what is and isn't required in an action. Now, all requirements of performing, targeting, conditions and costs can be found in an action's constraints block.

## - Terrains -

Starting with cards printed in *Before the Dawn*, Terrains put themselves into play through a printed ability ("**Battle:** Put this card into play at the current battlefield") instead of through a rulebook effect, and their effects come from continuous traits or ongoing effects of the entering-play ability. One consequence is that some of the effects on new Terrains do not come from a Battle action any more; for example, the continuous effects of the new Terrain, *The Killing Grounds*, come from its trait, and so cannot be negated by *Hand of the Jade Dragon* or similar effects.

The new Terrains do not follow rulebook rules about entering play, or rulebook rules about the duration of their effects, because these things are explicitly printed on the card. Terrains still follow the rules about not being legally playable if a Terrain already is in play at the battlefield, and still are discarded during a battle's Final Steps.

We made these changes so that Terrains would follow the rules on Strategy cards more closely.

## - "As a Focus Effect" -

Starting with cards printed in *Before the Dawn*, the "Focus Effect:" shorthand is replaced by the phrase "As a Focus Effect," in some cards' traits. The new phrase means the same thing: the text after "As a Focus Effect," is followed only if the card is in the focused cards area of a duel, during the "Focus Effects resolve" step of the duel. We made this change to avoid confusion between Focus Effects and boldfaced action designators.

## - Having Reconnaissance -

As a new rule, a player has Reconnaissance at a particular battlefield if he or she has targeted the battlefield's province this turn with a Recon action. It is also possible for an effect to grant Reconnaissance directly to a player at a battlefield. Having Reconnaissance is a condition for certain other actions and effects. This new rule shortens the wording of conditions that depend on Recon actions having been taken.

## - Entering-play costs -

Effects that put a card into play now explicitly say whether its costs are to be paid or not. However, the default **Celestial Edition** rule that costs must be paid is still in effect.

## - Notes on Specific Cards -

**A Champion in Court:** Substituting one Personality for another in a duel means that the new Personality takes over the role of challenger or challenged and is considered involved in the duel, while the old Personality leaves that role and is no longer involved in the duel.

**Brothers in Battle:** Both the Force bonus and ability are dependent on being in an army with the others. If the ability is used, lost because the condition was not met, and then gained again because the condition was met, it is still considered to have been used that turn.

**Shamate Keep:** The trait effectively means that your Paragons have a Personal Honor equal to their base PH when they are dishonorable.

**Yoritomo Tarao:** The rules by default only allow targeting of a card in play, so the only card out of play that can be targeted by this action is a card in your hand (because the mentioning of the hand as an out-of-play location overcomes the default rule).

## - The Imperial Assembly -

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