

Tianxia



12 GOLDEN BUTCHERS

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DENISE
JONES

12 GOLDEN BUTCHERS

12 Golden Butchers is the first adventure for Tianxia. It requires Tianxia: Blood, Silk, and Jade to run. It is aimed at characters who have not yet mastered a Kung Fu Style. It can easily be scaled up or down in power level by altering the Skills and Kung Fu of the major threats and making a few of the skill challenges and other tests more or less difficult.

There are a number of ways this adventure can end up progressing and a few of these options put the PCs up against multiple very formidable foes, ones that

might be hard for them to deal with. The assumption of this adventure is that the PCs will encounter and defeat some of the criminal Kung Fu killers known as the 12 Golden Butchers, while leaving others to deal with another day. However, if things spiral out of control, it's conceivable the PCs could easily find themselves facing the whole organization in short order. GMs should be alert to the progression and pacing of their sessions and campaign to keep the 12 Golden Butchers a challenging but manageable threat.

PROLOGUE: A MESSAGE FROM MASTER LEI

The PCs have received a message from a Kung Fu master of note, Lei Si. Master Lei is an acquaintance of one or more of the PCs and his message is delivered through a trusted messenger. The exact nature of Master Lei's relationship to the PCs and the method of their receiving this message depends on who the characters are. Some possibilities:

- Master Lei could be a beloved friend, or close relative. If the PCs are affiliated with the Imperial Army, Navy, or some other official organization, Master Lei could be a former

tutor or comrade. They could receive the message from a retired soldier or official courier.

- Any practitioner of Storm Dragon or Crane Kung Fu could have *Studied at Master Lei's Two Thunders Academy* or perhaps their sifu is a peer of Lei. Lei's message can reach them through mutual acquaintances or other familiar methods of correspondence.
- One of the PCs might be an enemy of Master Lei, but one whom they *Share a Mutual Respect*. This gives the

adventure a very bittersweet tone. Lei's message arrives as a surprise in this case, carried by a paid courier who knows nothing of its contents.

- If a PC has sufficient reputation, Master Lei may seek them out due to their fame. In this case, the message arrives at a place the PC is known to frequent.
- If possible, the GM should try to tie as many characters to Master Lei as possible to strengthen the impact of coming events, but don't stretch the bounds of credibility so far that the players don't buy it.



IF THE PCs DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER YET...

If your heroes are strangers and the campaign is just beginning, all of them getting the same message for different reasons could be an interesting way to begin a campaign and bring them together! They are all brothers and

sisters of the Jianghu after all, and destiny could easily place them on this same path.

If any of your heroes wonder aloud about it or have even a dog's knowledge of etiquette, tell them it would be rude to refuse such a

summons without good reason. After all, even if Lei Si had a silly nose and terrible taste in teas, he still deserves the respect of a proper response to his messages.

THE MESSAGE READS

Dear Fellow Brother (or Sister) of the Jianghu

I hope this message finds you well and entreat you to consider the request contained within. There is a powerful artifact in my possession that I wish to see properly dealt with. This object is of considerable value, but it also carries a dark destiny. I have shepherded this item for some years, but it has recently become clear to me that it is no longer safe for me to keep. I have come to the difficult conclusion that I must pass this responsibility on, and after much consideration I realize you are the best candidate(s) to take up this responsibility.

If you are agreeable to at least discussing this matter, please find me at my Two Thunders Academy in Red Jade Center.



With Respect,
Lei Si

If the PCs need extra incentive, feel free to add:

I can offer a modest reward for agreeing to meet with me. Should you assent to relieving me of this burden, I may be able to offer more.

If they PCs are enemies of Master Lei try adding:

If you will agree to this meeting, I will offer you an opportunity to settle our old grievance after you have heard my offer.

Assuming the PCs decide to travel to meet

Master Lei, they can find Red Jade Center easily enough. It is a small but fairly prosperous settlement near the mountains in western Jiāngzhōu. Anyone familiar with the area or who has at least Fair (+2) Lore, knows that Red Jade is on a road that eventually intersects the Jade Road and is known, unsurprisingly, for its jade, which possesses a distinctive red hue.

ALTERING THE LANDSCAPE

While the adventure places Red Jade Center in western Jiāngzhōu near the mountains, you can put Red Jade Center wherever works best your campaign. Place by the Silk River or near the eastern

border of Jiangzhou or a day's ride from Bao Jiang--whatever fits best for how you're using the setting.

Also, if you've already established a locale that has similar sounding name in your

game, feel free to change the name of the village to make more distinct. Stone Crossing, Seven Iron Town, or anything else that sounds good.

SCENE 1: ARRIVING IN RED JADE CENTER

ASPECTS: *QUAINT LITTLE TOWN IN PERIL, EVERYONE IS NERVOUS*

The PCs can reach Red Jade Center easily enough, unless the GM wishes to throw bandits or other challenges at them along the way. In any event, when they eventually arrive in town, describe the following:

This place is not particularly large. Or populated. Or much of anything, really. The whole town is fairly unremarkable, indistinguishable from dozens of mining settlements in Jiāngzhōu. There is only one main road through town, the one you came in on. Side streets and alleys of various size stretch out on both sides, bordered by various shacks, shops, and the occasional inn.

Three buildings of note catch your attention. The first is a large teahouse and inn near the center of town. A well-worn but skillfully crafted sign identifies this as the Lucky Badger. Off to the north, beyond the main village, you can see a large compound on the top of a nearby plateau. You cannot discern its purpose, but its walls and position suggest it is well-defended. The final place is not some much a building as the remains of one. At the far end of the street is burned out skeleton of a temple, shrine, school, or some similar structure.

WELCOME TO RED JADE CENTER.

The inn is really the only place with rooms to rent in town unless the PCs camp outside town or convince a towns person to put them up. The compound is the stronghold of the 12 Golden Butchers, which will

become important later on. The burned out husk is the remains of Master Lei's Two Thunders Academy.

The townsfolk are not very numerous or cooperative. In fact, they seem skittish and afraid. However, they will answer simple questions. If the PCs are the type to get attached to certain types of NPCs, have one of that archetype greet them and tell them a bit about the place. This puts a face on the people of the village and makes it easy to have **Innocents Endangered** later in the adventure if the GM desires some extra complications or drama.

If the PCs want to grab a room at the Lucky Badger or rest up, let them. Asking about Master Lei or the burned out building will result in a lot of evasive comments about a "tragic accident". Inquiries about Master Lei will get conflicting answers. Some will claim he left town after the fire. Others will claim he died in the fire. Either way, everyone confirms that Master Lei is no longer living in Red Jade Center and there is a definite atmosphere of **Fear and Paranoia** among the townsfolk.

The only real exception to this general attitude are the Lucky Badger's owner Pao Tan, and his family. Pao is scared, but he's sick of living in fear and willing to take a chance that the PCs can help if they can be motivated to become involved. He won't publicly decry the Butchers or admit Lei Si was murdered (in truth he's not sure), but he will quietly comment to the PCs that "those accursed Butchers are behind all the evils in this town."

SCENE 2: SIFTING THROUGH THE ASHES

ASPECTS: *RUIN AND RUBBLE,*
SOMETHING LIES BENEATH

Eventually the PCs are likely going to want to check out the ruins of the Two Thunders Academy. The building has been **Gutted by Fire**, and the second floor has **Mostly Collapsed** on the first, making investigation difficult.

Investigating the ruins is a special Skill Challenge with Great Difficulty (+4) where the PCs seek to get 6 successes before 3 failures using Notice, Investigate, Lore, or other appropriate skills used to investigate crimes, mysterious fires, and the like. A success with style counts for 2 successes. Each success also grants a clue that reveals something about the situation. These clues can be found in any order that seems interesting or appropriate:

- ✿ The fire was intentionally set. It happened about a week ago.
- ✿ The damage hides that a fierce battle was fought in this place between highly skilled opponents.
- ✿ Someone died or was gravely wounded here. Even with the fire and the rubble destroying most of the evidence, there's too much blood soaked into the wood and ground to miss.
- ✿ A blackened throwing dart is found near a bloody patch beneath the rubble.
- ✿ There is a recently-dug grave hidden behind the ruins of the school. Left as, perhaps, a token of tribute is a golden medallion embossed with an image of a dancing Monkey and the number 9.

GMs are encouraged to allow characters to come up with creative uses of various skills to investigate with as long as it's interesting and makes sense. For example, a very strong character might use Physique to clear rubble so that clues can be found, or a craftsman might be able to use their Craft skill to analyze damage to the building, revealing what happened. GMs should also allow PCs to buy successes at a cost here, suggesting it if they forget. Appropriate costs could be being shocked by the brutality of the crimes committed, a sense of foreboding that distracts or haunts them, or something more concrete, like receiving a minor injury or losing a vital item while digging around the ruins.



Left to right: Bloody Wei, the BrassPig (12th Butcher)
Chang Chan, the Green Dog (11th Butcher)

OPTIONAL: CRAFTING A MYSTERY

If the GM requires a more involved mystery or the PCs are detective types interested in a more

elaborate investigations, you can run this mystery using the Bronze Rule.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO THUNDERS ACADEMY

ASPECTS: *BURNED AND BURIED, COVERED UP BY PROFESSIONALS, TRAIL IS COLD*

Great (+4): Mystery
Good (+3): Secrets
Fair (+2): Shock
Stress: 4 Mental

Clues would be revealed when stress of consequences are inflicted on the Mystery. If the mystery inflicts consequences on those who attempt to defeat it, they should be things like *Uncertain of*

the Truth or *Sense of Impeding Doom*. Something very bad happened here and if it touches the PCs emotionally, it will distract them until they come to grips with it.

If the PCs succeed they discover all the clues plus the following: a small locked scroll case hidden in the half-melted statue of the Boddhisatva in the center of the school.

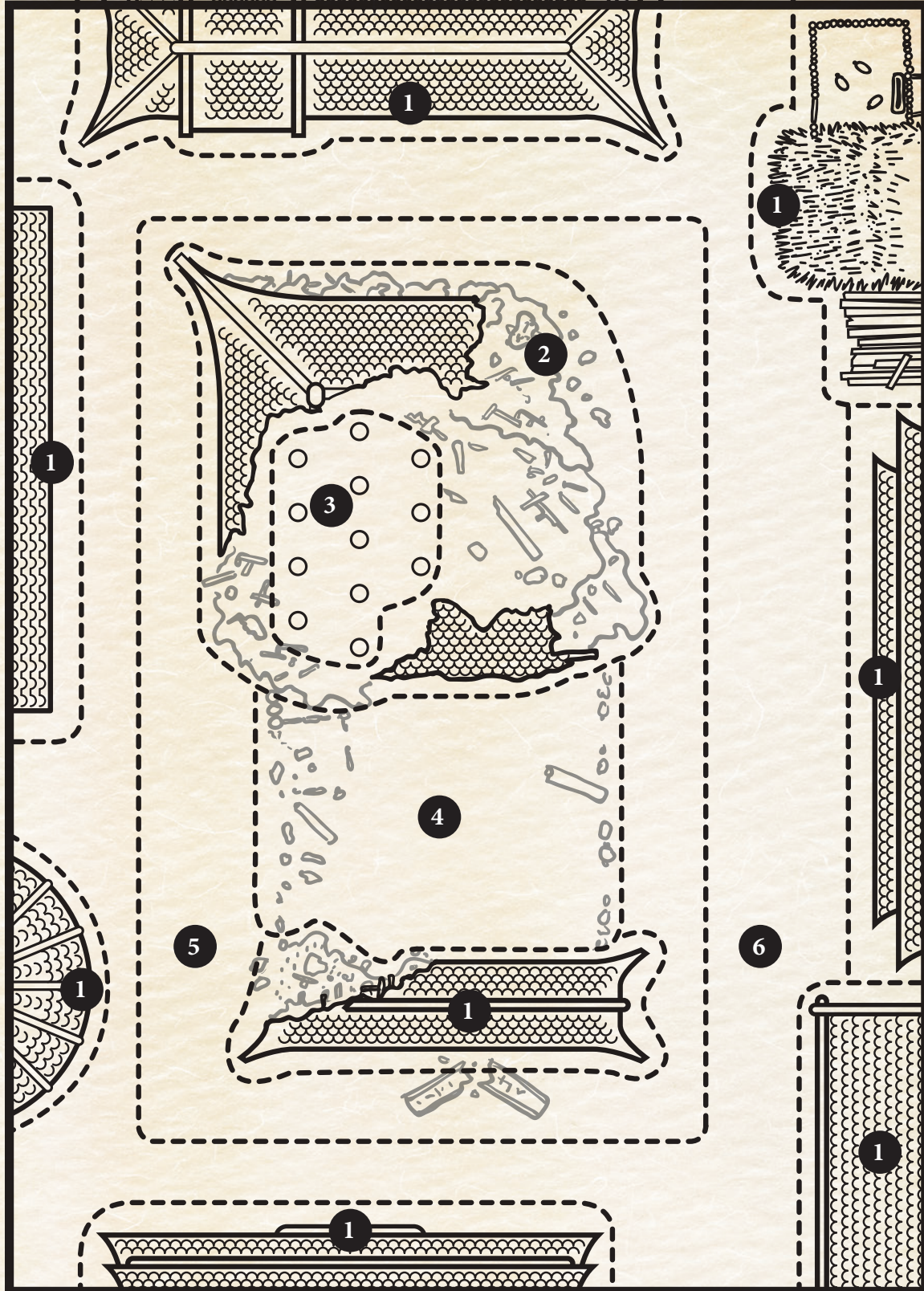
The scroll case is made of a bizarre black metal engraved with scenes of demons and monsters

fighting a vast army that is led by a great dragon. It requires a Superb (+5) Burglary test to open. It cannot be forced open. If the scroll is opened consult the entry on it later in this chapter (see Record of the Devil General, p. 17).

If the PCs discover the medallion and the grave, they will note the medallion is mostly burned and partially broken. It depicts a monkey. The gold used to make the medallion is valuable, which could imply someone wouldn't bury it except as sign of respect for the departed, or to hide evidence too dangerous to hold. Or both. If the PCs want to dig up the grave before the next scene occurs they will have just enough time. If so, they discover the battered, bloody corpse of Master Lei Si. He has been dead for days, but it is clear he was beaten and stabbed. There's a small wound to his neck that matches the throwing dart they found. It is clear Master Lei put up a fierce fight, but was eventually overpowered and beaten, likely by multiple opponents.



Left to right: Shùn Xi, the Blue Snake (6th Butcher)
Yan Mei, the Violet Dragon (5th Butcher)



- 1. Rooftop Zone
- 2. Wreckage
- 3. Freestanding Uneven Pillars
- 4. Courtyard
- 5. Thug Zone
- 6. Street Zone

SCENE 3: THIS LITTLE PIGGY

ASPECTS: *LOOKING FOR A FIGHT,
BURNED-OUT RUBBLE*

Once the PCs are ready to leave the scene they draw some unwanted attention. A stocky, sloppy looking man with leering eyes meets them surrounded by several armed thugs. This is Bloody Wei, aka the Brass Pig. He is the 12th Golden Butcher. Wei carries twin brass rods that he plays with as he talks. Around his neck a golden medallion can be seen embossed with an image of a wild boar and the number 12.

Wei confronts the PCs, demanding to know what they are doing in the ruins of Two Thunders Academy. As he talks, his men start to fan out to block the PCs way back to town. There are three thugs for every PC. Wei is rude, unpleasant, and generally acts like the obnoxious bully he is. If the PCs have discovered the scroll, he demands they hand it over and threatens them with all manner of violent ends if they refuse.

The PCs can handle this encounter however they wish. If they try to charm or intimidate Bloody Wei, he'll resist and use any slight as an excuse to "teach these fools what it means to cross the Butchers!" If any of the PCs openly mock him, he'll scream "You laugh at me? Me? **No One Laughs at Bloody Wei!**" and attack. GMs should consider spending a Fate Point to help Wei out at first, but this encounter is supposed to be stacked in the PCs favor. The area around the ruin is all the same zone, though if the fight spills out into

the town streets it may cross multiple zones.

The PCs are likely to win this fight. Whether they kill Wei and his men or simply give them a good beating is up to them. In any event, after the fight is over they hear a high-pitched giggle and joyful clapping. A young girl watches them from a nearby rooftop, dressed all in green with a gold medallion that shows a dog and the number 11. She is Chang-Chan, the Green Dog, and the 11th Butcher. She congratulates the PCs on their skill and mocks either Wei or his corpse.

The PCs can talk with Chang-Chan, but if they try to approach her she attempts to flee, laughing as she does. If they are visibly carrying evidence from the school, such as the broken medallion or Master Lei's corpse, she will inform them that those "don't belong to you" and suggests they put them back where they found them before her "big brothers and sisters" come. If they have discovered the scroll and have it in plain view she makes note of it but says nothing about it. If they ask about the medallions or picked up on the name "The Golden Butchers" Chang-Chan is coy and a bit incredulous that the PCs have not heard of them before. After they talk for a time, she tells them to "stick around" and someone will meet them soon.

If Wei manages to beat the PCs, Chang-Chan will intercede and stop the brute from killing them. In this case she says "Rat and Ox want them alive for now." Wei blusters but backs down.



SCENE 4: TALK OF THE TOWN

SCENE ASPECTS: *LOCAL GOSSIP, AFRAID TO SAY TOO MUCH, "MASTER LEI WAS A GOOD MAN"*

The PCs will eventually need to rest, either at their camp, the inn, or wherever else they are staying. Allow them ample time to discuss what is going on, plan, and roleplay. If they want to find out more about the butchers, they can attempt Provoke, Rapport, Contacts, or similar skill Tests against a Good (+3) Difficulty for each subject they wish to know about: The 12 Golden Butchers, Bloody Wei and Chang-Chan, and Master Lei. GMs wanting to spice up this scene can use the various townsfolk described in the Cast section of this adventure as NPCs.

ASKING ABOUT THE BUTCHERS

The townsfolk are a bit more apt to talk now that the PCs have shown they can take care of themselves. Success means the PCs discover that the 12 Golden Butchers are a syndicate who runs the town. There are 12 bosses and lieutenants who command over a hundred men. The syndicate takes a piece of all business in the area and nothing goes on without their approval. If the PCs succeed with style while asking about the Butchers, they learn that each Butcher carries a golden medallion marked with their rank and an animal of the Shenese Zodiac. The Butchers hold periodic challenges to allow challengers to rise in rank or replace existing Butchers.

ASKING ABOUT BLOODY WEI AND CHANG-CHAN

If the PCs made a real show of trashing Bloody Wei and his men, the townsfolk will be even more friendly, noting that Wei more than any of the other Butchers was cruel and abusive to them for no reason. They will also suggest that he's the weakest of the group and warn the PCs that "even that little Green Dog is more dangerous." No one knows much about the 11th Butcher, but they will confirm she's a relatively recent recruit. If they succeed with style when investigating this topic, the townsfolk note despite her youthful rebellious nature Chang-Chan *Idolizes Golden Rat*, the leader of the Butchers.

ASKING ABOUT MASTER LEI

The townsfolk will also open up some about Master Lei. They confirm he was a stern teacher but one who cared for his students and refused to be intimidated by the Golden Butchers. For some time it seemed Lei and the Butchers agreed to largely leave each other alone, but something changed recently. No one knows exactly what, but they suspect the Butchers were behind the burning of the school. If a character succeeds with style when trying to investigate Master Lei, they learn that the townsfolk found Lei's body and buried him near his school, leaving the medallion they found as sign of respect. They believe Lei may have killed or severely injured one of the Butchers, but they aren't sure.

No one knows anything about the scroll. If the PCs have found it. Once the PCs have gotten to ask any questions they want of the townspeople and rest up some, they will move on to the next scene.

FAULTLESS WU SAYS: RETURNING TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME.

If your heroes did not find the scroll hidden the school at first or wish to go back to the school and poke around? Let them! Don't be afraid to give them *A Feeling that You've Missed Something* to invoke if they need a little help. It is the scroll's destiny to find its way to the heroes, though sometimes

destiny needs a little help.

On the other hand, if they do not find the scroll? Leave it be! It is not important to this tale that the heroes have the scroll...only that the Butchers believe they have it.

Also, don't forget while the heroes mill about town asking questions and drinking tea, their

opponents are not idle! Members of the 12 Golden Butchers could come to town to scout out these newcomers. This will happen soon enough anyway, but some ambitious or curious villain might get a jump on things.



Left to right: Ban, the Golden Rat (1st Butcher)
Bo Cai, the Silver Ox (2nd Butcher)
Fang, the Crimson Tiger (3rd Butcher)
Whisper Ming, the White Rabbit (4th Butcher)

SCENE 5: THE ROOSTER CROWS

SCENE ASPECTS: *GETTING FULL AT THE INN, A "FRIENDLY" MEETING, TENSION IN THE AIR*

The next morning, word of yesterday's festivities have gotten back to the Butchers, who decide to send someone far more competent than Bloody Wei to confront the PCs. Lao Bo, the Red Rooster and 9th Butcher arrives wherever the PCs are staying with several of his men in tow. Lao is better mannered if no less arrogant, introducing himself and inquiring what "business" the PCs have in town. If they mention Master Lei, Lao Bo gives an exaggerated and insincere look of sadness and says it was "a true tragedy" what happened to the school. He also suggest that Master Lei ran off in shame after the fire broke out, implying that Lei was the cause of the blaze and a coward. Lao Bo tries to use his Good (+3) Provoke on the PCs with his statements by maligning Lei; how they react is up to them.

Lao Bo is there to gather intelligence on the PCs and report back to Golden Rat. If Wei or Chang-Chan saw the scroll and were able to inform Golden Rat, then he is also looking for it. He won't inquire about it directly, he's too skilled a gambler to tip his hand, but a skilled PC might drag that information from him with a successful mental combat.

PATH A: IF THE PCs PICK A FIGHT

If the PCs push for a battle, Lao Bo will be happy to oblige. He has two thugs for every PC with him when he comes to meet them who will join in the battle. He'll also show that he's far wiser than Bloody Wei; he brought even more help. Elder Tong, the Black Goat and Bei Kai, the Bronze Horse, the 8th and 9th Butchers respectively, wait nearby. After one turn of combat, they will arrive on the scene to aid Lao Bo.

During the fight, Lao Bo will use his throwing dart at least once. A Fair (+2) Notice or Investigate Overcome action will confirm these are the same type of weapon found in the ruins of the school.

If the PCs are defeated, the Butchers won't kill them. If they have the scroll on them, Lao Bo will take it from them and leave them bloodied and beaten. However, he has orders not to kill them yet and he is not so foolish to cross Golden Rat's explicit instructions. If they were exceptionally insulting or rude in their dealing with Lao and his allies, he might kill a bystander who was friendly to the PCs or ***Burn the Place Down*** around them but he will leave them alive.

If the PCs win, they can do with the Butchers what they will. Killing them will earn the ire of the other Butchers in a way dispatching poor stupid Bloody Wei did not, but it is their call. Holding them prisoner guarantees a visit from the other Butchers. So does letting them go, but the meeting in the next scene will vary in tone based on their actions.

PATH B: IF THE PCs DON'T FIGHT

If the PCs avoid a fight, Lao Bo wishes them a good day and leaves. Unless the PCs have somehow convinced him they know nothing of Master Lei or the scroll he had hidden he will advise the other Butchers that it is best to ambush and kill the PCs and be done with them. However, he will leave peacefully for now, tipping his hat with a wink and a smile.

IN ANY EVENT

Golden Rat will make one attempt at a relatively peaceful resolution in the next scene. How peaceful depends on what happens here, but either way, the PCs will meet the leader of the Butchers.

FAULTLESS WU SAYS: MIND WHERE YOU FIGHT

If a fight breaks out here, or anywhere else during this story, be mindful of your surroundings. A battle in the Lucky Badger Inn means *Tables and Chairs Everywhere* and *Panicking Patrons and Staff*. A fight at a campsite outside of town will naturally include *Dense Foliage* and *Rocky Uneven Ground*. One does not need to be the Great General Ma to understand the utility of such things!

SCENE 6: KING RAT

SCENE ASPECTS: *TENSE NEGOTIATIONS, THEY'VE GOT US SURROUNDED*

How the next scene plays out depends heavily on what happened in Scene 5: The Rooster Crows. If the PCs started a fight with Lao Bo, then the Butchers will stop playing around and show up in force to intimidate them and if necessary beat them down. If so far the PCs have generally kept their cool and shown restraint, the 1st Butcher, Golden Rat Ban will show up with Lao Bo, Chang Chan, Yan Mei (Red Rooster, Green Dog, and Violet Dragon) and a dozen thugs and tries to generally keep things “friendly.” If Bloody Wei is alive, he’s here too, glowering angrily at the PCs but cowed by the presence of his superiors. If the PCs have been combative every step of the way, Golden Rat Ban will show up with a score of thugs and every Butcher who hasn’t been recently killed or severely wounded except for possibly Whisper Ming, who may be in disguise and waiting for an opportunity to assist his comrades.

PATH A: IF THE PCs HAVE BEEN TROUBLE

If the PCs have been constantly combative, Golden Rat Ban will be civil, but will chastise the PCs for being needlessly violent and will advise them they should consider leaving town. He won’t ask for the scroll even if he knows the PCs have it; his purpose here is to drive these newcomers out of town and for the townsfolk to see them go. He wants everyone to know that strangers can’t come into his town and cause trouble, no matter how good their Kung Fu is. If Lao Bo grabbed the scroll last scene,

he certainly won’t mention it and will seek only to kick the characters out of town.

The PCs are outnumbered and probably outclassed here —and should consider leaving town, at least temporarily. If they still insist on fighting? The Butchers will throw some of their number at the PCs at first: one Butcher for each PC. There is no specific Butchers who must be used here. Instead select opponents who will provide the most entertaining challenge and give the PCs a tough but winnable fight. If they win, the remaining Butchers close in to take them down, but at least they had an opportunity to thin their ranks.

If they are taken out, they’ll be knocked out and their bodies searched. If they have the scroll on them, then the Butchers will attempt to dispose of them in one of the following optional scenes. If not, they will be taken to the Butcher’s compound for torture and interrogation until they reveal its location. If the PCs start losing and seek to flee, the Butchers will seek to stop them as long as they have the scroll. If actions allowing the PCs to escape require success at a cost, that cost should include losing the scroll—the Butchers won’t give up pursuit as long as the PCs possess it.

Note that while he won’t ask for the scroll in this situation, Golden Rat will agree to discuss it if the PCs bring it up and will agree to terms similar to those discussed in the next section, including selling out his companions for it. PCs looking for a way out of a bad spot might use Notice or Empathy to determine that the leader of the Butchers *really* wants the scroll (an Overcome action against his Will). It’s not that he’s worried about not being able to overwhelm the PCs

and take the scroll necessarily, its more than he's not positive he can and he'd rather have a sure thing than even a very good chance at victory.

PATH B: IF THE PCs HAVE BEEN REASONABLE

If the PCs have avoided fighting except in self-defense (so beating Wei doesn't count), Ban will be very friendly. He will complement the PCs in any appropriate way, praising their skills, charm, fighting skills, or anything else he might have heard about them. He'll also after exchanging pleasantries offer to be direct about his desires "as a sign of respect." He knows Master Lei Si had a scroll that contained certain "valuable knowledge" and he would very much like to acquire it. If the PCs ask him directly about Lei Si's death, he will claim it was unintentional and regrettable and that he only wished to acquire the scroll and that Lei Si "misunderstood" him. He now repeats his offer to the PCs, offering a *Small Fortune* for the scroll as well as guaranteeing the PCs safe passage from town.

The PCs want to take this offer they can, it's their choice. Sure, it's not the most heroic end, but they are severely outnumbered and could always return later to seek justice for Master Lei Si and free the town from the tyranny of the Butchers. Of course, by then the Butchers will have likely used the secrets of the scroll to grow their Kung Fu abilities but nobody said being a hero of the Jianghu was easy.

Of course that offer is only one of many ways this encounter can go. Golden Rat and his Butchers want the scroll and he's willing to give up a lot to get it. Some possibilities for alternate deals follow.

PATH B. 1: SEEKING JUSTICE

If the PCs indicate they might consider the offer if they can also get justice for Master Lei Si's death, Ban will consider this for a moment and then cheerfully sell out those of his group who committed the actual murder of Master Lei: Lao Bo the Red Rooster, Elder Tong, and Bloody Wei the Brass Pig. He will explain the fourth killer, Pearl Monkey, was killed in the fight, and that his subordinates defied his orders and that he regrets the death of Master Lei. He's lying, but he has Great (+4) Deceive and his *Manipulative Mastermind* and *Ruthless Practicality* to back this up and there's no evidence to prove his connection. The two Butchers will balk at being sold out and move to defend themselves. As long as the PCs hand over the scroll, the other Butchers will abandon them to their fate at the hands of the PCs.

Alternatively, Ban might propose this deal himself if the PCs seem very dangerous or connected. He has no desire to create a bitter enemy or accidentally kill some important luminary, at least not until he's retrieved the scroll and absorbed its lessons.

PATH B. 2: JOIN THE BUTCHERS

Golden Rat will also offer the PCs membership in the Butchers if they'll turn over the scroll. He will explain he can always use good fighters and will explain he'll need to replace some members after this whole thing. When he says this Bloody Wei will note they've only lost one Butcher recently, Pearl Monkey. In response to this, Golden Rat will quickly lash out and kill the lowliest Butcher unless the PCs for some reason want to stop him (which is honestly, pretty unlikely). He will explain Wei was a "mistake and

YOU CANNOT SURRENDER WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE

There is always a chance the heroes never found the scroll hidden in Master Lei's school. If this is the case, they have far less to bargain with Golden Rat Ban. You may either give them another chance to find the scroll, or let

them deal with the problem of how to avoid a deadly fight by turning over something they do not possess. Of course they could simply fight the Butchers and win, eliminating any need to worry about the undiscovered scroll. In

the end, the scroll is a Macguffin; its major significance is to drive the conflict between the PCs and the Butcher by its existence and not its discovery.

constant disappointment” and hope his replacement fares better. He’ll say that “regrettably” the PCs will have to fight any other Butchers they wish to replace if they join, but he’ll offer up any of them desired in exchange for the scroll as long as the fights are one on one and nominally fair.

PATH B. 3: WE’LL FIGHT YOU FOR IT

Golden Rat will also accept a challenge to fight for the scroll, realizing that such a victory would swell his organization’s reputation as well as be easy enough to back out on if they lose. He will insist on an even number of Butchers against the PCs and will set the battle for three days, during which time he will seek to hinder the PCs or stack the deck in his favor. If things go this route, the GM should pick opponents for the PCs who are challenging and somewhat more powerful than they are; the Butchers aren’t all that interested in a fair fight. However, if the PCs also express a desire for justice for Master Lei, he will “sweeten the pot” by offering up his killers as combatants: Lao Bo, Elder Tong, and Bloody Wei, rounding out the rest of his fighter with other Butchers.

Alternatively, the PCs might decide to jump Golden Rat and his current entourage. If so, they’re got a tough

fight they likely won’t win. But if they do, they will have taken down the leader of the 12 Golden Butchers and several other important members. The fallout for this is discussed in one of the next optional scenes. A true survivor, Golden Rat will not hesitate to leave his fellow Butchers to fight and even die if things look uncertain. His behavior actually increases the chance such a reckless attack will work, but it leaves him to deal with later.

PATH B. 4: WE’RE GETTING NOWHERE...

If none of these options are acceptable for the PCs, the scene will end with Golden Rat expressing his extreme disappointment that they couldn’t work something out. Then he’ll head back to his compound and make plans to send his forces to slaughter the PCs and take what he desires. At this point he’ll also probably try to use Whisper Ming to deal with the PCs and take the scroll if that’s an option, but he’ll wait until after he’s left and things have died down.

WHAT’S NEXT?

There are numerous “alternate endings” for this adventure based on the actions of the PCs up to this point. They will be dealt with in a number of optional scenes that follow.

FAULTLESS WU SAYS: THE LONG ROAD TO VICTORY

If you wish this tale to take a more complex turn, have your heroes spend more time interacting with the village and its overlords, the 12 Golden Butchers. The heroes can spend weeks, even

months, in Red Jade Center helping fight off bandits, having minor skirmishes with various Butchers, and seeking to improve things for the town even as their foes try to tighten their hold on the area.

They may get to know their enemy, finding both common interests and deadly differences. Thus a simple adventure could become an entire campaign of heroism and struggle!

SCENE 7: MANY PATHS

SCENE ASPECTS: *SEE VARIOUS PATHS*

The next resolution scene of this adventure depends heavily on what happened last scene and how the PCs fared. There is no single Scene 7, but many different and distinct ones.

PATH A: ON THE ROAD AGAIN

ASPECTS: *FIND PLACE FOR AN AMBUSH, THICK FORESTS, WINDING PATHS*

If the PCs were driven out of town, they need to decide if they're staying gone or going back. Either way, the Butchers will send some of their number after them to ambush them and hopefully recover the scroll. Provided they survive this attack, this isn't a bad thing overall—they will have an opportunity to thin the Butcher's ranks before returning to confront the remaining villains. GMs should pick appropriate members of the Butchers to pursue the heroes but it should be at least 1 Butcher per PC or Silver Ox or Red Tiger (both Masters) plus one or two lower-ranked Butchers to assist them.

If the PCs lose, they will be left for dead and the scroll taken if they have it. If they win, the Butchers will not pursue them and decide to cut their losses. If the PCs decide to return to deal with the remaining villains that's up to them.

PATH B: DEATH TO THE BUTCHERS!

ASPECTS: *MEET THE NEW BOSS..., "WE'RE SAVED...NOW WHAT?", WANDERING THUGS*

Without some serious help, it's unlikely the PCs will be able to defeat all the Butchers. There's simply a lot of them and the best among them are very dangerous. However, it's not impossible, especially if they jumped Golden Rat and a reduced entourage while negotiating. If they manage to beat their foes, they have broken the villains for now. This is true even if most of the Butchers flee or escape. Of course there's always a chance any survivors among the 12 Golden Butchers will return one day to take revenge.

If the Butchers are gone, the town asks the PCs to stay as their protectors and new "bosses". They offer to grant tribute similar to what the Butchers took, though they hope the PCs will either refuse or take much less than their predecessors demanded. This result can make the PCs a lot of money and fame, but it ties them to one place and probably raises some ethical dilemmas. If the PCs reject this offer and move on, they will be hailed as heroes in Red Jade Center and perhaps given a modest reward.

PATH C: END OF THE LINE

ASPECTS: *A BLOODY SPECTACLE, GAPING ONLOOKERS, PATH TO ESCAPE*

If the PCs were defeated last scene and the Butchers found the scroll, they are dragged to the center of town to be executed. As they are beaten, the Butchers will leave a handful of thugs and only one or two their own to carry out this task. The Butchers seek to kill the PCs in plain view of all, showing the townsfolk that even though the PCs have caused them some trouble there is only one fate for those who cross the Butchers. Forcing the townsfolk to gather and making a few speeches about the power of the 12 Golden Butchers will allow the scene to change and the PCs to recover their stress, thus when the Butchers turn to murder them they can stand up and give their foes a real fight.

Who the Butchers leave behind depends somewhat on how badly the PCs are hurt. If they mostly burned through their severe and moderate consequences, then they are in serious danger of quickly losing a fight. In this case, have them fight Shùn Xī, the Blue Snake and Bei Kai, the Bronze Horse. Both are dangerous fighters, but the PCs are likely about at their level and should have numbers on their side. Alternatively, if the PCs have fewer consequences and can last a bit longer, set them up against Fang, the Red Tiger and perhaps some goons. She's only one Butcher, but she's a Master and a dangerous one at that.

Alternatively, if the PCs injured some Butchers in the last scene they can have an immediate rematch here.

This likely makes this fight easier and makes sense as the wounded Butchers would no doubt volunteer to finish off those who hurt them.

If the PCs win, they likely need to retreat for a time to heal up and plan. They might even need to leave town for quite a while and come back when they're stronger. That's fine, it will make for an exciting future adventure.

PCs who were captured and being taken the Golden Butcher Compound should be given a similar chance to escape before they're tortured and eventually killed. The basic idea of such a scene is the same, only the locale is different. If the PCs can defeat the Butchers sent to torture them, let them find a relatively easy way to escape so they can heal up and regroup. After all, it's no fun to win your freedom through a dramatic battle only to get overwhelmed by goons on your way out.

PATH D: TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

ASPECTS: *TROUBLE IN THE FUTURE, POWER IN EVIL HANDS*

If the PCs sold the scroll, they are allowed to leave in peace. The villagers will think little of them, but they won't go out of their way to spread word of their actions either. No, the real danger with this option is what happens once the 12 Golden Butchers have had time to learn the secrets of the scroll (see Record of the Devil General, p. 17). This adventure is over, though the threat is just beginning.

PATH E: JUSTICE FOR MASTER LEI

ASPECTS: *MASTER LEI CAN REST..., JUSTICE AT A COST*

If the PCs trade the scroll for Master Lei's killers they are praised for bringing Lei's killers to justice by the town and are told they've helped eliminate some of the more sadistic and aggressive of the Butchers. However, this solution won't end the threat of 12 Golden Butchers, and they will continue to run the area and will likely return as even larger threats later.

One possible complication here is that Master Lei almost certainly wanted the PCs to help protect the scroll. So they may have avenged his death, but they

failed in honoring what he sought their aid for. Still, it's up to them if they feel that's a fair trade.

PATH F: JOINING UP

ASPECTS: *FUTURE WITH THE BUTCHERS, IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM...*

Joining the Butchers starts a whole new campaign arc with numerous new NPCs to interact with. This is beyond the scope of this adventure, but it will certainly involve the scroll and the 12 Golden Butchers, which are described in detail in this adventure. Will the PCs be corrupted by their new life, or will they find some way to redeem the organization and depose or convert its wicked leaders?

PATH G: DUELING THE BUTCHERS

ASPECTS: *A MATTER OF SKILL AND HONOR, A BATTLE TO REMEMBER*

If the PCs agree to a duel for the scroll, it all depends on what happens in that fight. Pick foes among the Butchers who will give the PCs a good fight and pick a cinematic location to have the fight such as inside a *Burning Ring of Fire*, or at *Abandoned Mountain Shrine* nearby. The Golden Butchers will be happy to hold the contest at their compound, though this option clearly makes it harder for the PCs since their foes clearly know about various *Hidden Traps* and other hazards.

If they win, the 12 Golden Butchers will let them leave in peace and let them keep the scroll for now. Even though they're bad guys, they don't want to risk being labeled as liars by the Jianghu; such a misstep could bring every wandering warrior in the province to "teach them a lesson."

Of course, they will also immediately begin plotting to steal or win it back later, but that's an adventure for another time. Still, various members of the Butchers will now be popping up later in the campaign to cause trouble for the PCs until the organization is ultimately dealt with.

PATH H: THEY'LL BE BACK...

ASPECTS: *WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME..., DEFENSIBLE POSITIONS*

If nothing was resolved last scene, the 12 Golden Butchers will regroup at their compound and then come back a few days later to kill the PCs and take the scroll. This really won't be much of a secret and the PCs can discover this plan from a bragging Butcher, one of the villains' goons, or a concerned townsfolk who overheard this plan. At this point, GMs should give the PCs one more chance to contact the Butchers and explore one of the options last scene to resolve matters. If they refuse, they'll need to either flee or fight a fierce battle against a large number of foes. The PCs should also be given at least a few chances to Create Advantages or set up obstacles that can help them in the coming battle. They're outnumbered and likely a bit outclassed, so let them have time to prepare.

If the PCs insist on fighting the Butchers when they come, have the bad guys attack in waves to give them a chance, with scene and possibly even session breaks to help them recover. If they can defeat enough of the Butchers, Golden Rat might give up.

Don't hand them victory, but give them a fighting chance. Note that this isn't just for the benefit of the PCs, the Butchers have spent too long building their organization to risk everything on one mass attack. Their caution might give the PCs a chance to pull out a win if they are bold, lucky, and skilled.

PATH I-???: EVERYTHING ELSE

ASPECTS: ???

The arrival of the PCs in town has really shaken things up and as players often come up with plans and ideas far beyond the ability to predict, the situation can get even stranger. Perhaps a charming PC seduces Silver Ox and creates a schism in the Butchers. Maybe the young Butcher Chang Chan can be redeemed and will spy on her companions for the PCs, allowing them to turn the tables. Despite it not being the most tactically sound idea ever, the PCs might even decide to assault the Golden Butchers' compound and burn it to ground. There are numerous possibilities that can cause things to resolve differently.

GMs are encouraged to throw in their own twists as well, especially if they are planning to make the 12 Golden Butchers a short campaign instead of an adventure. The townsfolk can become more involved or other adventures can be folded into the mix using Red Jade Center as a base and the 12 Golden Butchers as "season" antagonists while other threats provide the "villain of the week."



Left to right: Bei Kai, the Bronze Horse (7th Butcher)
Elder Tong, the Black Goat (8th Butcher)

EPILOGUE: LOOSE ENDS

ASPECTS: *IT'S NOT OVER, THE SHADOW OF THE BUTCHERS*

There are a ton of ways this adventure ends and nearly all of them leave loose ends. Most of these unresolved issues are intentional, to allow GMs to springboard off this adventure into others, but some players might want a bit more resolution or structure going forward. Consider the following issues:

- ✿ Who has the scroll? If it's the Butchers, either the PCs will have to eventually get it back or the villains will one day return more powerful than ever.
- ✿ What about the town? If the PCs leave town without completely defeating the Butchers, the organization will continue to run things in Red Jade Center until someone stops them.
- ✿ Did anyone ever discover Whisper Ming? If this Butcher was in disguise during the adventure, did he ever act or strike? Or do the PCs still think

he's a harmless NPC? If so, his betrayal may come some day, though only when it benefits him and his comrades.

- ✿ Is anyone left to reform the Butchers? If the PCs manage to defeat the 12 Golden Butchers, is there anyone left to put them back together some day? Whoever that might be would greatly inform this new version of the organization: Chang Chan would found a greatly different group than Fang or Lao Bo.
- ✿ If the Butchers were not defeated, where will they pop up next? In most of the optional endings to this adventure the Butchers survive in one form or another, regardless of who gets the scroll. How, where, and when will they next appear to threaten the PCs?
- ✿ What about the scroll? The scroll Master Lei kept hidden is a powerful but dangerous item that can bring great power but at a terrible cost. How will the PCs handle this burden going forward?

MILESTONES

GMs should consider how exactly they want to award milestones but resolving this adventure is likely *at least* a significant milestone and a couple of minor ones. If the adventure grew from the first encounter with a larger group to a protracted battle with the whole organization, it could be easily be a major milestone instead, with various significant and minor ones along the way.

It's even possible the adventure is only worth a minor milestone, but that's an unusual occurrence. If the PCs slip into town, find the scroll, beat up Bloody Wei and then hightail it out of town and never look back? Well, that's likely only a minor milestone and a very short adventure. Don't worry if this happens, the GM still has the rest of the Butchers and a soul corrupting scroll of forbidden knowledge to use to keep their PCs' lives interesting.

RECORD OF THE DEVIL GENERAL

Inside the locked scroll case that Master Lei gave his life to protect is the infamous Record of the Devil General. Written on flayed human skin, this scroll reveals the secret battle sutras of a demonic army supposedly banished by the first Emperor of Shénzhōu long ago. Thought to give great power to those who could master them, they also poison the soul of all who learn them.

If any heroes seek to study the scroll, use the guidelines under Corrupt Chi, Tainted Kung Fu, and Other Threats, from *Tianxia: Blood, Silk & Jade*, page 131.

RECORD OF THE DEVIL GENERAL

ASPECTS: *DEMON BATTLE*
SUTRAS, CURSED TEXT,
POISONS THE SOUL

Superb (+5): *Corrupt*
Great (+4): *Lies*
Good (+3): *Secrets*

Stress: *Mental 4*

STUNTS:

Terrible Revelations (If the scroll defends against an attempt to study it with style, it can inflict 2 mental stress instead of taking a boost)

Demon Dreams (Spend 1 Fate Point to make a Corrupt attack with a+2 Weapon Rating which causes mental damage and takes the form of a terrible hellish dream the next time the target sleeps. The target defends with their Will or Chi, whichever is greater)

Devil's Bargain (If a Defend action ties, grant a 2 shift success to your opponent in exchange for inflicting a 2 shift effect on them as well).

Note: Each attempt at studying the scroll takes at least a day, making it hard to find time

during this adventure to do so in most cases. The scroll will usually concede if it starts losing in exchange for giving up various Lost Techniques and other secrets. The scroll has at least the Feast of the Golden Vampire, Heart of Hell, and a very painful version of the Enflame Chi Lost Techniques (see Tianxia: Blood, Silk, and Jade, p. 99-100) to give up before it is considered mastered. The costs of learning these Techniques must be paid normally. At the GMs discretion, even after it is mastered the scroll may occasionally attempt to attack a character who studied it unless they have voluntarily taken up a life of corruption and evil.

Other Effects: Once mastered, the user gains a bonus aspect

of *Lessons of the Devil General* and they receive a free invocation with each session. Any attempts to use Create an Advantage to add invocations to *Lessons of the Devil General* gain a +2 bonus. This aspect can cover a number of situations, but it should always be related to violence, suffering, fear, or torment. A character who masters the scroll is also considered to have reached a Minor Milestone, but must rename an aspect to reflect that the scroll has revealed to them many dark and terrible truths. This doesn't mean the character is now evil or corrupt, but they will never look at the world the same again.

Those who are already corrupt or evil can learn the Scroll's secrets with greater ease, but they will abandon all humanity by doing so. Such individuals would become akin to demons in human skin, spreading death and corruption wherever they go. Of course, few twisted enough to desire the scroll's secrets care about these costs, leaving it to the brave and virtuous to stop them.

If a PC ever masters the Record of the Devil General by taking it out, they will have gained frightening and dangerous knowledge. They will have also made themselves a target for various individuals who either seek the lessons of the scroll or seek to eliminate any who may be corrupted by it. In either case, mastering the Record of the Devil General is a dangerous undertaking.

FAULTLESS WU SAYS: VICTORY AT A COST

Always be mindful that the heroes can succeed at anything if they are willing to pay the cost (see Fate Core p. 189). If they wish to open the scroll in the start of this story but do not have the skill, perhaps unseen forces

allow it to be opened in exchange for the consequence that *A Dark Destiny* looms over the one who opens it. Maybe they force a bit more information from a reluctant townspeople but that person later sells them out to the Butchers.

Victory can be bought as well as earned, but the cost is often something one does not wish to pay.

TIANXIA ADVENTURE

CAST

12 GOLDEN BUTCHERS

The 12 Golden Butchers are highly skilled killers and thieves who spent ten years growing themselves from a handful of local bandits to a powerful criminal organization. They have taken over several villages in Jiāngzhōu and have dozens of spies, thugs, and other agents who help them maintain their interests. The Butchers' chief source of income is money extorted from those they "protect," but they also dabble in slavery, assassination, and any number of other criminal enterprises. They have professional but cool relations with other criminal groups such as the Blue Carp Brotherhood contingent on them not exceeding their current size and ambitions.

Each Butcher wears a **Golden Medallion** that notes his number and a corresponding animal in the Shen Zodiac. These ranks roughly correspond to how skilled each Butcher is, though they are universally dangerous. Whenever a Butcher is replaced or killed, his replacement receives the medallion as the badge of his rank in the gang. Each Butcher also favors a color, one which his subordinates wear to show which Butcher they follow. While the Butchers might not dress themselves in head to toe in these hues, they always display their color prominently. Butchers often refer to themselves and each other by their title, so Ban is Golden Rat, Bo Cai is Silver Ox, etc...

To keep the gang strong, members are allowed

to challenge each other for rank. Subordinates can challenge a Butcher to replace them and each Butcher can challenge any above him to advance. To keep the group from descending into chaos or destroying itself, their founder and leader, Golden Rat has set a few rules regarding challenges: challenges can only occur on the last day of each month, all challenges must be open, and all contests must be "fair," meaning no spies, assassins, or poisons are allowed. Challenges need not be to the death, though many die in these battles.

If a Butcher is killed by an outsider, one of two things occurs. The killer might be invited to join the gang, either replacing the dead Butcher or a lower ranked member who has already replaced the deceased. Or they may be hunted down and brutally killed as an example to those who dare cross the fabled 12 Golden Butchers.



Left to right: Lao Bo, the Red Rooster (10th Butcher)
Wandering Yu, the Pearl Monkey (9th Butcher)

12 ISN'T A MAGIC NUMBER

While the name has a certain flair, it is possible there are not 12 Golden Butcher. There might be six, or ten, even twenty. Or perhaps there are 12 Golden Butchers but only some are present when the heroes come to Red Jade Center. This have two effects. One, it makes the tale easier to manage and likely somewhat shorter. Two, it

means your heroes may one day have a chance to trounce another group of Butchers when they come to seek revenge for the defeat of their comrades!

However, also remember that the 12 Golden Butchers and the conflicts they create with the heroes are the adventure. You can lose the town, the scroll, even fail

to avenge the death of Master Lei , and as long as these villains remain you will still have a tale of when the heroes fought the terrible 12 Golden Butchers. Feel free to make any changes to the Butchers and their lineup to better suit the needs of your group and campaign. There are many tales of the 12 Golden Butchers...tell yours.

MEET THE BUTCHERS

The following statistics represent the Butchers involved who are active at the time of this adventure. Note that whenever a character has a Kung Fu Technique that has different bonuses or effects, such as one's that allow a character to pick one of two Skills to use, the mechanically best options are already chosen.

Also, some of the Butchers have one or two aspects that can easily be replaced and substituted for other aspects without disrupting their role in

the Butchers or the adventure. These aspects can be changed or tweaked to allow the characters to contrast or compliment the PCs, campaign themes and aspects, and other elements of an individual game. These aspects are presented in parenthesis. Note that greatly changing some aspects might change the personality somewhat, since there's a big different between *Loyal to Her Superiors* and *Loyal Up to a Point*. Such changes are fine, just be aware of the difference..

BAN, THE GOLDEN RAT (1ST BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *FIRST AMONG BUTCHERS, MARKED FOR DEATH, "I AM THE LAST MAN STANDING...", MANIPULATIVE MASTERMIND, RUTHLESS PRACTICALITY*

SKILLS:

Superb (+5): Fight

Great (+4): , Deceive, Will

Good (+3): Athletics, Contacts, Stealth

Fair (+2): Burglary, Notice, Physique, Resources

Average (+1): *Chi*, Drive, Lore, Provoke, Shoot

STRESS:

4 Physical Boxes, 4 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 2

KUNG FU STYLE:
STONE RAT (TREATED AS STONE SNAKE MECHANICALLY)
(MASTER)

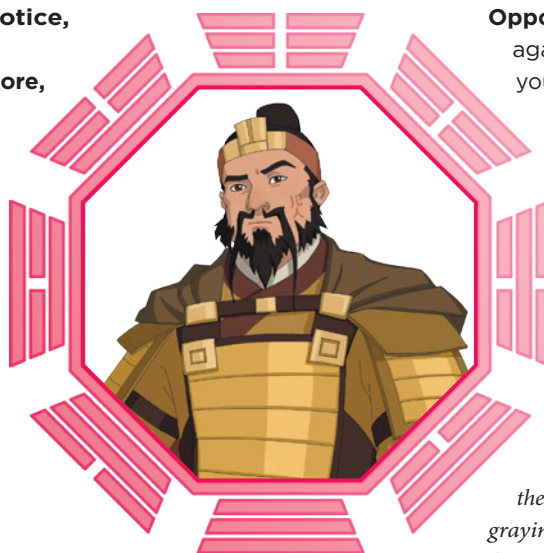
STONE RAT (STONE SNAKE) FORM

Mountain Does Not Fall: You get a +2 bonus to defend against attempts to create an advantage based on unbalancing, pushing, tripping, or knocking over the defender. If a technique from an opponent instead allows them to create such an advantage with free invocations, one less free invocation is granted though the advantage is still created.

Rat Boxing (Lost Technique): When invoking an Advantage based on confined spaces or close quarters fighting, gain a +3 bonus instead of the regular +2.

Serpent Bites the Hand: If you gain shifts on a defense, you can sacrifice your action next turn to immediately inflict an attack on your opponent using the shift value of your defense as your attack result.

Serpent Retreats to Cave: Spend 1 Fate Point to gain +1 defense and 4 Armor Rating against a Fight or Shoot attack you are



aware of. If the defense is a tie, you do not grant a boost to the attacker.

Serpent Strikes First: Use Fight to determine turn order instead of Notice in combat.

Serpent Strikes Twice: +2 bonus to Deceive rolls to create an advantage based on disorientation, distraction, or unbalancing against opponents you have already inflicted stress on this combat.

Stone Resists the Blow: You gain 2 Armor against any physical

attack you are aware of.

Stone Weathers the Storm: If you defend with style, you may remove your physical 1 stress box or convert another physical stress box to 1 lower instead of taking a boost.

STUNTS:

Cult of Personality (May use Will instead of Rapport to inspire loyalty, or trust)

Opportunist (+2 Weapon Rating against opponents who missed you on their last physical attack)

Will to Survive (Use Will instead of Physique to determine physical stress)

Ban, the Golden Rat, is the mastermind behind the 12 Golden Butchers and one of its most dangerous members. A former soldier, he turned to banditry during lean times and never looked back. He began the Butchers a decade ago and has led them since. A middle-aged man with graying hair, his somewhat handsome features are marred by a criminal brand on his left cheek that marks him as a condemned criminal. He wears it and the past it signifies with pride.

*Ban holds power through a strong personality, formidable fighting skills, and playing his subordinates off one another. He is rarely challenged. Those who do challenge him end up in shallow graves or missing pieces. Ban is a master of a relatively obscure style of Kung Fu, Rat Boxing, which is well suited to close quarters, back alleys, and narrow corridors. Whenever possible, he will try to face opponents in **Confining Spaces** where they cannot easily maneuver. His favored weapon is a short, thick bladed saber.*

BO CAI, THE SILVER OX (2ND BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *SECOND BUTCHER, ALWAYS LOOKING FOR AN ANGLE, DEADLY BEAUTY, SURPRISINGLY STRONG, WHATEVER IT TAKES TO WIN*

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Athletics, Fight

Good (+3): *Chi*, Physique

Fair (+2): Deceive, Notice, Provoke, Rapport, Will

Average (+1): Burglary, Contacts, Drive, Stealth, Resources

STRESS:

4 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 2

KUNG FU STYLE: IRON DRAGON (MASTER)

IRON DRAGON FORM

Dragon Rules the Fields:

When you succeed with style on an attack, gain a boost—with a +3 bonus instead of the usual +2—without reducing the value of your attack.

Dragon Rules the Heavens: Gain a +2 bonus to Athletics rolls involving entering zones or preventing others from doing so.

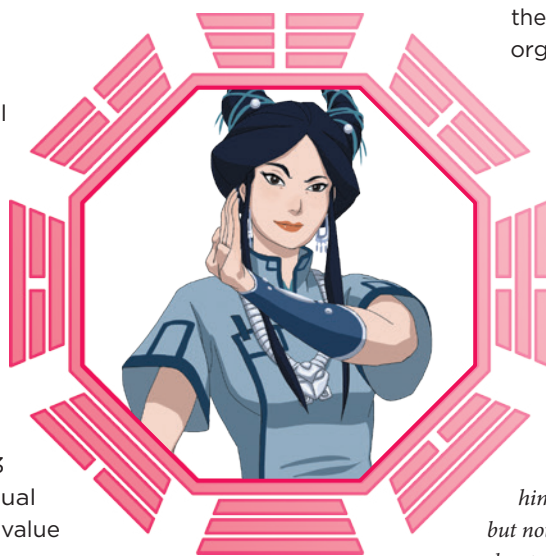
Dragon Sleeps in Mist: When you succeed with style on a defense, you may reduce the result by 1 to gain 2 Armor Rating against the next attack in the scene that strikes you in addition to the normal boost.

Iron Cleaves the Stone: Ignore 2

points of Armor when making an attack to inflict physical stress.

Flesh Breaks on Iron: When you defend against a Fight attack with style, you may inflict 2 shift hit instead of taking a boost on your attacker.

Iron Body, Iron Mind: +2 bonus to create an advantages relating to resisting or coping with pain, intimidation, or fear.



STUNTS:

Deadly Reputation (+2 to Create an Advantage Deceive or Provoke actions based on her ruthless reputation)

Opportunistic Fighter (When invoking Always Looking for an Angle or Whatever it Takes to Win in physical combat, gain a +3 bonus instead of the usual +2)

Second in Command (+1 bonus to Resource actions that involve the 12 Golden Butchers and their organization)

Bo Cai has risen up the ranks of the Butchers faster than any other fighter in their ten year history. She is an incredibly talented fighter whose lithe form and notable beauty hide surprising physical power. She took her current position from Black Ox, a mountain of a man who had crushed numerous challengers. Rumor has it she dosed his wine with a mild soporific which slowed him just enough to grant her victory, but nothing has ever been proven. In truth, she started the rumor herself so that those who think to challenge her will think twice. She will use any tool at her disposal to win a conflict or advance herself; this makes her valuable to the Butchers and Golden Rat, but makes her impossible to fully trust.

Scales and Teeth Like Iron: Spend 1 Fate point; for the remainder of the scene, any attacker who creates a consequence on you with physical stress does not get a free invocation for creating the consequence. In addition, you gain +1 Weapons Rating to all your Fight attacks.

FANG, THE CRIMSON TIGER (3RD BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *CHIEF BUTCHER ENFORCER, CONTENT WITH THE STATUS QUO, A BODY LIKE STONE, FIERCE FIGHTER, UNSWERVINGLY LOYAL TO SUPERIORS*

SKILLS:

Superb (+5): Physique

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Athletics, Chi

Fair (+2): Notice, Provoke, Rapport

Average (+1): Burglary, Craft, Stealth, Will

STRESS:

4 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental Boxes, one additional mild consequence

JIANGHU RANK: 2

**KUNG FU STYLE:
STONE TIGER
(MASTER)**

STONE TIGER FORM

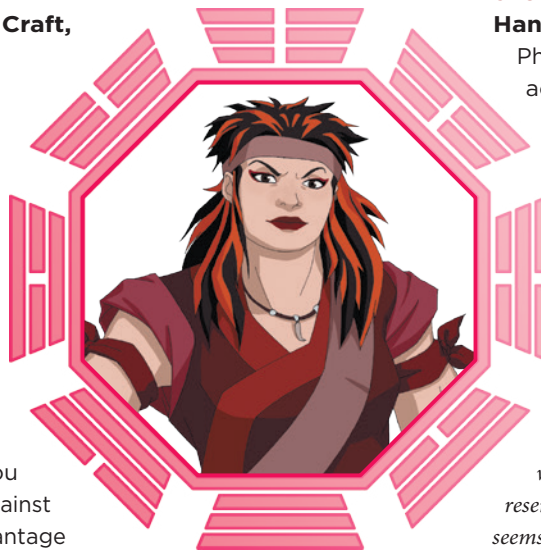
Mountain Does Not Fall: You get a +2 bonus to defend against attempts to create an advantage based on unbalancing, pushing, tripping, or knocking over the defender. If a technique from an opponent instead allows them to create such an advantage with free invocations, oneless free invocation is granted though the advantage is still created.

Stone Resists the Blow: You gain 2 Armor against any physical

attack you are aware of.

Stone Weathers the Storm: If you defend with style, you may remove your physical 1 stress box or convert another physical stress box to 1 lower instead of taking a boost.

Tiger Comes Down from the Mountain: Spend 1 Fate Point to use the shifts from your last Fight or Athletics defense roll as a bonus to your next Fight attack



(minimum +3 bonus). This attack also reduces any Armor Rating the defender has by 2.

Tiger Moves With Purpose: Move at least 1 zone and make an attack using Athletics or make an Athletics attack on a target that just moved into your zone

on their last action. Add 2 shifts to any stress you deal with this attack.

Tiger Rends the Flesh: When you tie on an attack using Fight for defense you can inflict a 2 point shift physical attack instead of taking a boost.

Tiger Rules the Jungle: You may use Physique instead of Will to defend against Provoke attacks.

STUNTS:

Hands of Stone (+2 bonus to Physique Create an Advantages actions based on raw striking power)

Mighty (+2 to Physique Overcome actions), Intimidating Fighter (Use Fight instead of Provoke to make mental attacks based on intimidation and fear)

Fang, the Crimson Tiger, is a tall, incredibly muscular woman who dyes her hair in streaks to better resemble her namesake. Her hard body seems as if carved from stone. She favors breaking opponents with her hands and feet rather than using weapons. She is not stupid, but realized long ago that she has no real skill at the more nuanced parts of running a criminal organization. This understanding of her limitations, mixed with a true loyalty and respect for Golden Rat and Silver Ox, means she's perfectly content being third highest among the Butchers and the gang's chief enforcer.

WHISPER MING, THE WHITE RABBIT (4TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *DECEPTIVE BUTCHER ASSASSIN, TOO CLEVER FOR HIS OWN GOOD, "ANYTHING CAN KILL", AVOIDS DIRECT BATTLE, MASTER OF DISGUISE*

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Deceive

Good (+3): Fight, Notice

Fair (+2): Burglary, *Chi*, Stealth, Athletics

Average (+1): Drive, Craft, Lore, Physique, Will

STRESS:

3 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE:
FOREST SERPENT

FOREST SERPENT FORM

Forest Hides the Beast:

A tie on a Fight- or Athletics- based defense action grants no boost to your attacker.

Forest Opens Its Paths: If you use Athletics to overcome an obstacle with style, you may turn the obstacle into an advantage with a free invocation instead of taking a boost.

Leaves Like Razors: When invoking a situation aspect or environment-based advantage in a Fight attack, you add +2 Weapon Rating to that attack.

Serpent Strikes First: Apply a +2 bonus to Notice when determining Turn Order.

Serpent Strikes Twice: +2 bonus to Deceive rolls to create an advantage based on disorientation, distraction, or unbalancing against opponents you have already inflicted stress on this combat.

Boundless Arsenal Meditation (Lost Technique): Invoke an

invoking an aspect. Multiple invocations may be stacked to create a more potent Weapon Rating, with a maximum of the user's Jianghu Rank +1.

STUNTS:

"Anything is a Weapon" (+2 bonus to Create an Advantage based on improvised weaponry), **Unassuming** (+2 bonus to Deceive when appearing harmless or humble) **Sneaky Bastard** (if attacking a target who is unaware of him or his true abilities, he can ignore 2 Ranks of Armor and does not need to reduce his shifts by 1 to gain a boosts when succeeding with Style)

Short and stocky, Whisper Ming is surprisingly quick despite his girth. He seems very pleasant and charming, like a friendly innkeeper or cheerful monk. However, he's a cold-blooded killer who is often called upon to perform contract assassinations and eliminate those who trouble the gang. He specializes in catching targets unawares and then striking them down before they can realize what has happened. He has mastered the use of various mundane objects or easily concealed weapons. His biggest weakness is that due to a mix of arrogance and cowardice, he always wants to fool or surprise a target and will avoid direct confrontations, even if they are the wisest course.



Aspect or Created Advantage based on a mundane object to create a Weapon Rating +1 effect that lasts for the rest of the scene or until the Aspect is removed. This effect occurs instead of the usual bonus for

THE MYSTERIOUS 4TH BUTCHER

Whisper Ming is intended to be used as an infiltrator, spy, plant, or wild card in encounters with the Golden Butchers. He prefers to infiltrate a group as an ally or pose as a humble noncombatant until such time his intervention is needed to assist the Butchers. He could take the role

of a humble peasant, helpful shopkeeper, or traveling monk that offers advice and assistance to the PCs in an attempt to gain their trust. His exact role in this adventure is left to individual GMs to decide—they will know best how to employ this villain to challenge the PCs without making

Ming's deception seem forced or arbitrary.

Not every GM will want to employ Ming in such a way. If this is the case, he can be used as a more direct combatant who uses seemingly harmless items and deception to engage an opponent.

YAN MEI, THE VIOLET DRAGON (5TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: BUTCHER
BOOKKEEPER, AMBITIOUS
PRIDE, ALLEGED ARISTOCRAT,
SINISTER SCHOLAR,
ABHORS A FAIR FIGHT

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Lore

Good (+3): *Chi*, Fight, Will

Fair (+2): Contacts, Craft, Rapport,
Empathy

Average (+1): Athletics, Deceive,
Physique, Resources

STRESS:

3 Physical Boxes, 4 Mental
Boxes

Jianghu Rank: 1

**KUNG FU STYLE: IRON
PHOENIX AND GHOST
DRAGON**

*IRON PHOENIX FORM
GHOST DRAGON FORM*

Dragon Rules the

Heavens: Use *Chi*
instead of Athletics in
rolls involving entering
zones or preventing others
from doing so.

Dragon Sleeps in Mist: When you
succeed with style on a defense,
you may reduce the result by 1
to gain 2 Armor Rating against
the next attack in the scene that
strikes you in addition to the
normal boost.

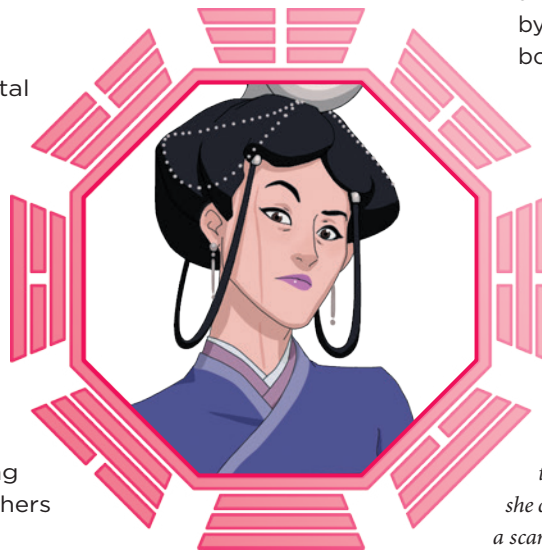
Ghost Strikes the Spirit: Ignore
1 point of Armor when making
Fight attacks and add +1
Weapon Rating to any Fight

attack against opponents with a
lower *Chi* skill than the attacker.

Phoenix Beats its Wings: If you
defend with style, you may gain
an *Off Balance* advantage on the
target, with a free invocation
instead of a boost.

Phoenix Calls to Heaven: You may
use *Chi* instead of Physique to
determine extra stress boxes and
consequences.

Storm Shakes the Foundation:



When creating an advantage,
you may trade free invocations
to remove free invocations from
another character's advantage.

Storm Flows Around Mountain:

If a target uses Full Defense
in combat against you, gain a
+2 bonus to your next attack
against them. You gain this bonus

regardless of whether their Full
Defense succeeds or not.

STUNTS:

Herbs & Potions (May use Lore
instead of Craft to create
medicines, drugs, and poisons)

Mistress of the Chain Whip (+2
bonus using chain whip or similar
weapon to entangle or disarm
an opponent)

Skilled Assistance (If invoking
an aspect or advantage for use
by another character, gain a +3
bonus instead of the usual +2)

*Yan Mei, is a middle-aged woman
of fairly comely appearance who
claims to be of noble birth, though
this is unconfirmed. Works as
the Golden Rat's chief minister
and bookkeeper, though she is a
skilled and deadly killer as well.
She keeps her chain whip always
close at hand and is adept at using
it to disarm, entangle, and cut. For
those rare times she cannot carry
this weapon, she wears a weighted sash
she can wield with similar skill. She sports
a scar that runs from her temple down her
cheek and neck, courtesy of a failed attempt
to usurp Bo's status as 2nd Butcher.*

*A learned woman, Yan Mei is knowledgeable
on a number of topics. She is particularly
knowledgeable about tactics, poisons,
medicine, and drugs. She is often called on
to heal her fellow Butcher's wounds as well
as devise means of destroying their enemies.
Other than Golden Rat himself, no one
knows so much about the Golden Butchers
as Yan Mei.*

SHÙN XĪ, THE BLUE SNAKE (6TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *SWIFT BUTCHER*
ASSASSIN, DEAD INSIDE, "YOU
NEVER DRAW ANOTHER
BREATH...", A KILLER WITHOUT
MERCY, SHADOWY CIPHER

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Deceive, *Chi*

Fair (+2): Athletics, Contacts,
Lore, Notice

Average (+1): Empathy, Physique,
Stealth, Will

STRESS:

3 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental
Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE:
LIGHTNING SERPENT

LIGHTNING

SERPENT FORM

Lightning Splits the Tree:

When you succeed with style on a Fight attack, you may remove an invocation on an existing advantage affecting you instead of taking a boost.

Lightning Strikes Without Pause:

Gain a +2 bonus to Fight used when determining turn order.

Serpent Strikes First: Use Fight to determine turn order instead of Notice in combat.

Serpent Strikes Twice: +2 bonus to Deceive rolls to create an advantage based on disorientation, distraction, or unbalancing against

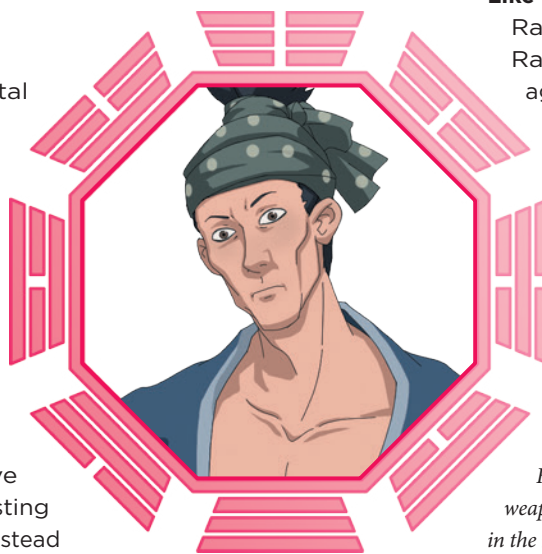
opponents you have already inflicted stress on this combat.

STUNTS:

Burst of Speed (May invoke a Chi Armor or Form invocation for a +2 bonus to determining turn order)

Eyes Without Light (2 Armor Rating against attempts to inspire mercy or compassion in you)

Like the Viper (Gain a +1 Weapon Rating and ignore 1 Armor Rating with Fight Attacks against targets you act before in a turn),



Fast and deadly, Shùn Xī, the Blue Snake, strikes so swiftly many of his victims barely have time to draw a breath before he snuffs out their life. Wiry and thin, with a long face and dead eyes, little is known about his past, save that he is rumored to have once studied to be a monk.

He uses emei piercers as his preferred weapon—slender metal spikes with a ring in the middle—that he can use to deliver a flurry of deadly blows.

BEI KAI, THE BRONZE HORSE (7TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *BRUISER BUTCHER, INFATUATED WITH SILVER OX, ARSENAL OF KICKS, PRIDEFUL FIGHTER, MORE FOLLOWER THAN LEADER*

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Athletics

Good (+3): Fight, Physique

Fair (+2): Notice, Provoke, Rapport

Average (+1): Chi, Contacts, Drive, Resources, Stealth

STRESS:

4 Physical Boxes, 2 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE:
LIGHTNING TIGER

LIGHTNING TIGER FORM

Lightning Crosses the

Sky: When you succeed with style on a Fight attack, you may move 1 zone in addition to gaining a boost. If someone or something tries to stop this movement, gain a +2 to rolls to overcome.

Lightning Splits the Tree: When you succeed with style on a Fight attack, you may remove an invocation on an existing advantage affecting you instead of taking a boost.

Tiger Moves With Purpose: Move at least 1 zone and make an attack using Athletics or make an Athletics attack on a target that just moved into your zone on their last action. Add 2 shifts to

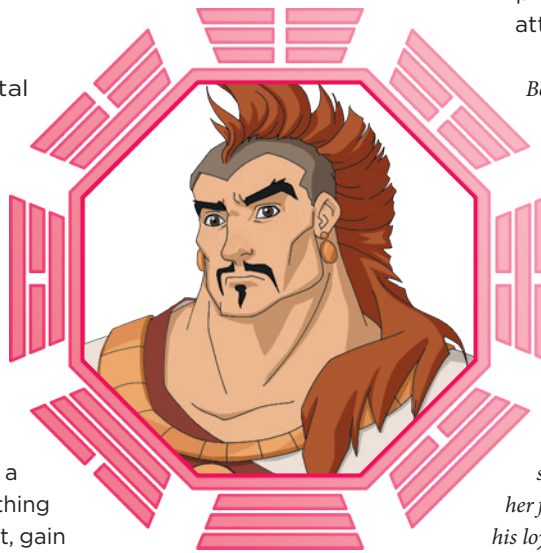
any stress you deal with this attack.

STUNTS:

Feet of Fury (if invoking your Arsenal of Kicks aspect, gain a +3 bonus instead of the usual +2)

Mighty Leaps (+2 bonus using Athletics to Overcome large distances and tall obstacles)

Thunderous Kicks (+1 Weapon Rating and +1 bonus to Overcome physical barriers with kick-based attacks),



Bei Kai is a powerful, solid fighter who can down most foes with his mighty kicks. The Bronze Horse has taken his namesake to heart, sporting a long mane-like mohawk and bronze-tipped boots that add additional power to his punishing kicks. He isn't exceptionally evil or sadistic, but he's greedy and amoral enough to fit right in with the other Butchers. Bei Kai has been in love with Silver Ox for some time and often warns or defends her from challenges and threats; she prizes his loyalty but is largely uninterested in his romantic advances.

ELDER TONG, THE BLACK GOAT (8TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *IRASCIBLE OLD BUTCHER, FEELING HIS YEARS, EXPERIENCED CRIMINAL, SURPRISINGLY SPRY, VICIOUS OLD COOT*

SKILLS:

Great (+4): *Provoke*

Good (+3): *Chi, Fight, Shoot*

Fair (+2): *Athletics, Burglary, Contacts, Will*

Average (+1): *Empathy, Physique, Notice, Stealth*

STRESS:

3 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE:
GHOST PHOENIX & IRON CRANE

GHOST PHOENIX FORM
IRON CRANE FORM

Crane Hides in Reeds: Add an additional +2 bonus when using Full Defense to defend yourself in combat. If used to defend others, gain 2 Armor Rating instead.

Exalted Ghost Body: When using Full Defense, you do not use up an invocation to use *Chi Armor*

if the attack against you still succeeds.

Flesh Breaks on Iron: When you defend against a Fight attack with style, you may inflict a 2 shift hit instead of taking a boost on your attacker.

Ghost Strikes the Spirit: Ignore 1 point of Armor when making Fight attacks and add +1 Weapon Rating to any Fight attack against opponents with a

create an advantages relating to resisting or coping with pain, intimidation, or fear.

STUNTS:

Deadly Shields (+1 Weapon Rating and +1 Armor Rating when using twin shields)

Hateful Mien (Can use Provoke for defense against any action based on positive social interaction)

"I'm Too Old For This" (Take a bonus to leave flee a zone or leave a scene after you take a consequence equal to the shifts that consequence soaks)



Elder Tong's appearance is wholly deceiving. His aged, scrawny appearance hides a strong, quick, and dangerous fighter whose age is just enough of a hindrance to keep him in his current position. Despite his obvious age and life experience, he's not particularly wise or paternal. A lifelong bandit, criminal, and killer, Tong's a tough old bird who's too ornery and wicked to die. He uses twin shields in combat whose metal edges have been sharpened to cut like razors.

lower Chi skill than the attacker.

Iron Body, Iron Mind: +2 bonus to

WANDERING YU, THE PEARL MONKEY (9TH BUTCHER)

A former army deserter driven to beggary until he turned to hired murder and theft, Wandering Yu is a mean-spirited bastard who thinks the world owes him something. He enjoys fighting and humiliating his opponents more than other criminal activities, and hoards much of the wealth he's gained while working with the Butchers. He often adopts the appearance of a beggar or drifter as it makes it easier for him to pass unnoticed and ambush his foes. Yu mixes cunning and ruthlessness with a mean sense of humor and a decidedly unlikable



demeanor. He prefers to use a specially designed two sectioned staff which can snap its sections together to appear as a simple walking staff.

Notes: Pearl Monkey was the Butcher killed by Master Lei who has yet to be replaced when the adventure begins. His description is included in case GMs want to introduce the Golden Butchers before or separate from this adventure. He will be roughly the same power and competence as Lao Bo and Elder Tong. He can also be replaced by a new Butcher of the GM's design.

LAO BO, THE RED ROOSTER (10TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: FOREIGN DANDY BUTCHER, INSCRUTABLE OUTSIDER, LOVES TAKING CHANCES, "HEY THERE GOOD LOOKIN'..."; UNPREDICTABLE FIGHTER

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Athletics, Deceive, Provoke

Fair (+2): Chi, Provoke, Rapport, Will

Average (+1): Contacts, Empathy, Lore, Notice, Stealth

STRESS:

3 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE:
LIGHTNING PHOENIX
LIGHTNING
PHOENIX FORM

Lightning Splits the Tree:

When you succeed with style on a Fight attack, you may remove an invocation on an existing advantage affecting you instead of taking a boost.

Lightning Strikes Without Pause:

Gain a +2 bonus to Notice (or other skill) used when determining turn order.

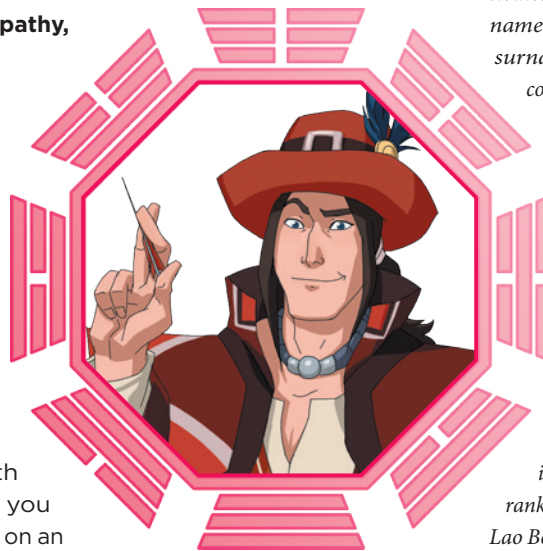
Phoenix Beats its Wings: If you defend with style, you may gain an *Off Balance* advantage on the target, with a free invocation instead of a boost.

Phoenix Calls to Heaven: You may use *Chi* instead of Physique to

determine extra stress boxes and consequences.

Phoenix Laughs at the Sun: If you succeed at an Overcome roll using Athletics or Fight with style, you may create a situation aspect with a free invocation instead of taking a boost.

Exotic Ye Fighting Arts: While in most ways Lao Bo's fighting style resembles Lightning Phoenix, it is not the same and the differences



can be distracting and difficult to adapt to. Whenever Lao Bo invokes his Form, he counts the bonus as a +3 instead of a +2. He only gets this additional bonus when he invokes the Form for bonus to his own rolls.

STUNTS:

"Pick a Card" (+2 bonus when gambling or cheating at games of chance)

Throwing Master (May use Fight to attack with small thrown weapons up to 2 zones away)

Inscrutable Foreigner (+2 to Defend rolls to hide his motives or intentions)

The tall and lanky Lao Bo dresses in strange clothes and speaks with an odd accent. His name is a bastardization of his foreign surname, but he's long since given up correcting people about it. He's an expert in some strange foreign art based around kicking and short jabs that he augments with a golden tipped cane and throwing darts. No one know how he arrived in Shénzhōu, but he's carved out a niche for himself among the Butchers. He's one of the more talented Butchers in combat, but he's working hard to gain the support of his peers despite his foreign background—he isn't foolish enough to challenge higher-ranked Butchers without it.

Lao Bo fancies himself a charmer and loves to take chances, often gambling in his spare time or making morbid little wagers with his fellow Butchers or underlings. He loves to flirt with opponents and allies alike, often caring more about the challenge and keeping others off-guard than romance. He's generally just kind of an opportunistic jerk. Note that while Lao obviously is of at least mixed Ye ancestry, he resembles none of the barbarians or tribes near the borders of Shénzhōu.

CHANG CHAN, THE GREEN DOG (11TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: NAÏVE YOUNG BUTCHER, EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE, "I WILL NEVER BE WEAK AGAIN!", IDOLIZES GOLDEN RAT, KILLER PRODIGY

SKILLS:

Great (+4): Athletics

Good (+3): Fight, Stealth

Fair (+2): Burglary, Deceive, Notice

Average (+1): Chi, Physique, Provoke, Will

STRESS:

4 Physical Boxes, 3 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE:
LIGHTNING MONKEY
LIGHTNING
MONKEY FORM

Lightning Strikes Without

Pause: Gain a +2 bonus to Notice used when determining turn order

Monkey Dances in Moonlight:

When succeeding on a defense with style, you may create

a *Distracting Movements* advantage with a free invocation instead of taking a boost.

Monkey Rolls Away: When invoking an aspect or advantage during a defense roll, gain 2 Armor Rating against the attack if it succeeds.

STUNTS:

"I'm Just a Little Girl!" (+2 bonus to Deceive rolls based on appearing

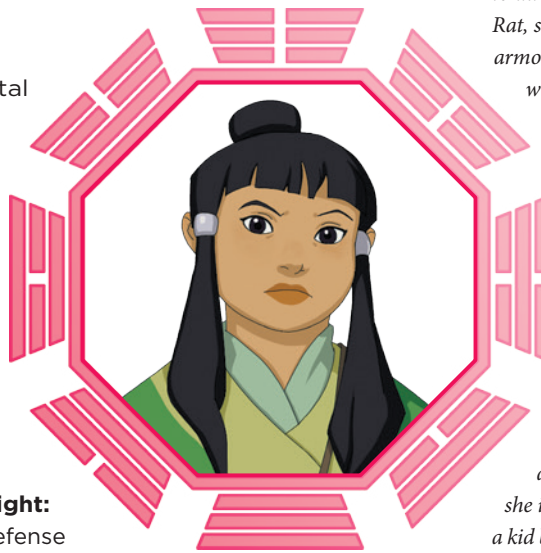
innocent or helpless)

Surprise! (+2 Weapon Rating with attacks the target is unaware of or not expecting)

Youthful Resilience (Use Athletics instead of Physique to determine bonus physical stress and consequences)

Behind her innocent appearance Chang Chan is an ambitious young killer eyeing those above her trying to decide how best to advance past them. She idolizes Golden Rat, seeing his mix of cunning and skill as armor that shields him from the ills of the world and seeks to emulate his strength.

She has a love-hate relationship with Silver Ox, admiring her strength and skill but resenting her position and closeness to Rat. She's very inexperienced, and easily manipulated, but that hasn't prevented her from killing over a dozen older and more experienced fighters. Chan prefers to use a pudao, a long-handled saber that's somewhere between a sword and a polearm and seems nearly as big as she is. Though she hates being treated like a kid by her peers, she's adept at acting weak and innocent to gain an advantage on a foe.



BLOODY WEI, THE BRASSPIG (12TH BUTCHER)

ASPECTS: *LAST AMONG BUTCHERS, BULLYING BRUTE, "NO ONE LAUGHS AT BLOODY WEI!", SLOVENLY THUG, HIS REACH EXCEEDS HIS GRASP*

SKILLS:
Good (+3): Fight, Physique
Fair (+2): Burglary, Provoke
Average (+1): Athletics, Chi, Notice, Stealth

STRESS:
4 Physical Boxes, 2 Mental Boxes

JIANGHU RANK: 1

KUNG FU STYLE: IRON TIGER STYLE

IRON TIGER FORM

Iron Cleaves the Stone: Ignore 2 points of Armor when making an attack to inflict physical stress.

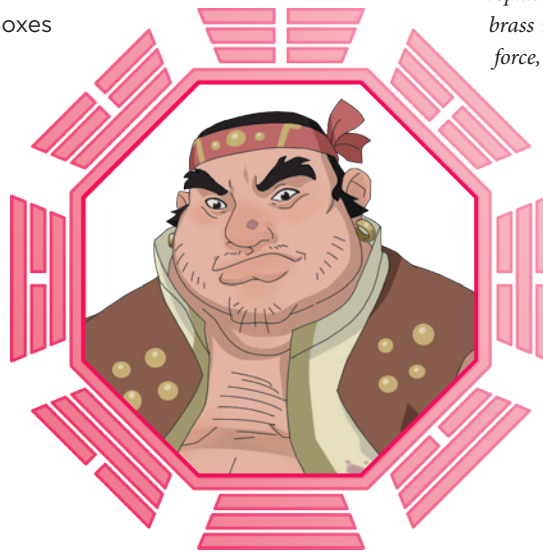
Tiger Rules the Jungle: You may use Physique instead of Will to defend against Provoke attacks.

STUNTS:

Bully (+2 to Provoke attacks against targets he's beaten physically)

Hard Hitter (+1 Weapon Rating when making Fight attacks)

A brutal bully, Bloody Wei is definitely the weakest fighter in the bunch. He is prone to throwing his weight around due to being the least prominent among the Butchers and most of his peers believe he'll soon be replaced with another fighter. He uses twin brass rods and can strike with surprising force, if not skill.



SLIDING SCALE OF OPPOSITION

It's pretty easy to increase the effectiveness of the 12 Golden Butchers for a high-level game. Simply add more Kung Fu, perhaps increasing the skill ranks of some members. Note that GMs might still want to leave a few of the lower-ranked Butchers fairly weak; characters like Bloody Wei may be a bit harder to accept if they've managed to master a Kung Fu style or have several notable Skill ranks.

Making the Butchers less effective is also simple. Just remove some techniques, reduce skills, and adjust Jianghu ranks down. Don't make the Butchers pushovers, but there are a lot of them and making at least a few of them weaker makes it easier to use them together against many starting or relatively inexperienced PCs.

Remember to note that the Butcher's compound is mostly a

"matte painting" in this adventure. It is an interesting image in the background near the village, but doesn't appear in the action scenes. For a longer campaign it could easily become an important location. As such it is left for the GM to develop. It can be a *Small Fortress*, a *Decadent Estate*, or somewhere in-between.

OTHER CAST:

These minor NPCs don't have much in the way of exceptional skills and abilities and are given an abbreviated description. GMs should use these characters to provide depth to the adventure, but none of them are vital to the plot. For example, perhaps it is Pao Tan who tells the PCs about how the Butchers run the town or Stumbling Bo makes a half-hearted attempt to control the situation when the PCs and one of the Butchers clash.

THE CITIZENS OF RED JADE CENTER

Pao Tan, *Cheerful Innkeeper and Proprietor of the Lucky Badger* dislikes and fears the Butchers more than most.

Pao Lin, Tan's wife and *Hostess of the Lucky Badger*. She is more *Cautious* than her husband but shares his feelings.

Pao Mei, *8 Year Old Child* of Pao Tan and Pao Lin. She is *Helpful and Sweet*, and really doesn't understand what's going on in the town save that the Butchers are "bad people."

Stumbling Bo, the *Town Drunk* and *Mostly Useless Constable*. He was placed into power by the Butchers to have someone who would stay out of their way and he's done his job admirably.

Digger Niu, an *Old Jade Miner* who runs a small mining operation near town. He *Employs Several Townsfolk*. He is no fan of the Butchers but has come to accept them as a necessary evil.

Gao Mu, the *Town Doctor*. Gao has Good (+3) Lore and Craft which he uses primarily for herbalism and medicine. He also runs an herb and spice shop in town. He was a *Good Friend of Master Lei's*.

Jasmine, this *Beautiful Peasant Girl* works as Gao Mu's *Physician's Assistant*. She is a charming

and kind young woman who is quickly learning from her mentor how to become a capable doctor in her own right.

THE BUTCHERS GOONS

These thugs and local hoodlums are treated as a mob. They make up the bulk of the 12 Golden Butcher's organization in terms of numbers. Like most mobs, they are Jianghu Rank 0 and are best used as a pacing mechanism for combat and a way for PCs to show off their superior Kung Fu.

ASPECTS: *OBEDIENT BRUTES, SCARED OF THEIR BOSSES*

Fair (+2): Fight

Average (+1): Athletics, Provoke

Jianghu Rank: 0

CHALLENGE THE 12 GOLDEN BUTCHERS!

DISCOVER THE SECRET

Red Jade Center seems like an innocent enough village, but a dark shadow looms over it. What powers hold sway over the people here? What hidden evil draws the butchers ever closer?

FACE THE BUTCHERS

Some of the deadliest Kung Fu killers ever assembled have gathered their forces here. Dare your heroes stand between the Butchers and what they seek? What will they do if they find it first?

DISCOVER YOUR FATE

Full-color art by *Dionysia Jones* and a cast of vicious villains designed by author *Jack Norris* give you the tools to experience a compelling adventure, or begin an entire campaign against the 12 Golden Butchers!



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