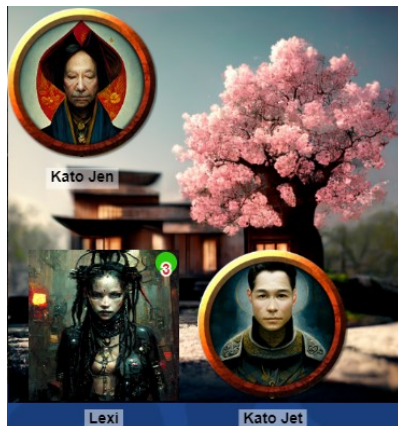


06 – Perilous Shadows



The Stair of Kolvir

The next day, her braids restored, and the kimono swapped for jeans and her leather jacket, scrubbed and polished by the silent old housekeeper, Lexi and Jet rode out of Kato Jen's compound.

The horses, Jet's black stallion and a dappled grey for Lexi, have fine saddles, blue blankets and saddlebags filled with food and waterskins. They have rope and everything they could want for camping in the wilds.

"Thanks to your father, I'm much better equipped for this journey than I was for my previous shadow-walk."

Jet turned in the saddle to smile grimly at her. "One should ALWAYS be prepared when travelling".

"Gee – Thanks Dad! C'mon Kaze.." she kicked her horse into a trot, thankful that Aunt Flora had insisted on four years of riding lessons back on shadow Earth, despite her lack of interest as a sixteen-year-old rebel.

Not wanting to simply believe that shadow-walking in Amber was impossible, she decided to try a few things on the way to the Steps of Kolvir.

"Take it slow Lexi.." she thought to herself as they trotted along for the first hour. Jet seemed happy to ride in silence.

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Shadow-walk in Amber
(needs +8 after an hour)

Roll 1 FOCUS + 4

Fatig 0 Broken 0

The small changes she was trying to effect seemed to hover just outside her reach. Smugly, she thought she could have pushed a bit harder and actually managed it.

"Not impossible... just bloody hard"

She could have spent two of her three FATE points to push for it as a "Daughter of Amber" and because she's "Determined", but not worth it yet.

Although Amber is a harbour city with the ocean lapping at the harbour walls to the south, heading north for an hour led to the edge of a vast cliff. Somehow, Amber is at the top of a plateau on one side and down at sea-level on the other. It gave her a mild headache trying to imagine how the two things can both be true, but it seems that the Forest of Arden, spreading out far below is a different Shadow.

The Great Stair leads down (about another hour of carefully leading the horses) into Arden where a long trail leads through the forest for a couple of day's ride and then into one of the "Golden Circle" Shadows. It should be easier to Shadow-walk out there, or even in Arden itself.

When they had discussed the options, the land route had seemed preferable to Lexi than getting a ship.

Seems 50/50, are there any other Travellers? **Yes** 56 Not a big YES!, so maybe just one person.

Rolling for a Full Character on the https://aigm.igm4u.com/amber_oracles.html page gets me...

Full Character

Full Monstrosity

Name: Maya
Role: Vagrant
Apparent Goal: Secure provisions
Descriptor: Oblivious & Oppressed
Apparent Disposition: Threatening
Apparent Activity: Assisting

A ragged looking middle-aged woman was sitting on a bench near the top. When she finally heard them approach, she sullenly rose and scampered to intercept them, barring the way. "Want old Maya to lead your mounts down the Stair, my Lord? Save you the bother, for just a few crowns?".

If Maya was surprised when the samurai turned to let with his young, scruffy companion answer, she didn't show it. "We can manage thanks. You can go back to your bench".

The woman showed no signs of moving aside. "Sure, you can MANAGE, but why SHOULD you girl. Let Maya do it, easier for you and safer for the animal. Done it before 'av ya? Well I av. Many times, and it ain't like I'm asking a lot" She closed with Lexi and put her hand on Kaze's bridle.

Seeing Jet's hand move to his sword hilt. Lexi raised a hand to stop him. "OK Maya, you win, you can lead the horses, but carefully, we have a long road ahead.". She slipped out of the saddle and chatted to the woman as they began the descent.

"You probably see a lot of folks going up and down the Stair – who's ahead of us on the road today?"

This is an attempt to Create Advantage getting some info. I'd guess at a target of 1
+ **+1** **0** **+1** **-1** Total **+1** So Target +2 and failure will let slip something of their mission instead...

Lexi - CREATE ADVANTAGE

Intention Get some useful info out of Maya

Roll **-1** **GUILE + 3**

Fatig 0 Broken 0

Tie: You get a boost (page 109), a free-floating invoke you must use by the end of your next turn.

Maybe Julian or a Ranger Patrol or some other Family Member might be ahead? Seems unlikely? **No** 58

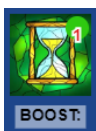
Maybe somebody? Seems unlikely? **NO!** 22

A big NO! and a "matching pair"

"Nobody today, nor yesterday neither" The woman grumbles. "Not a bite to eat".

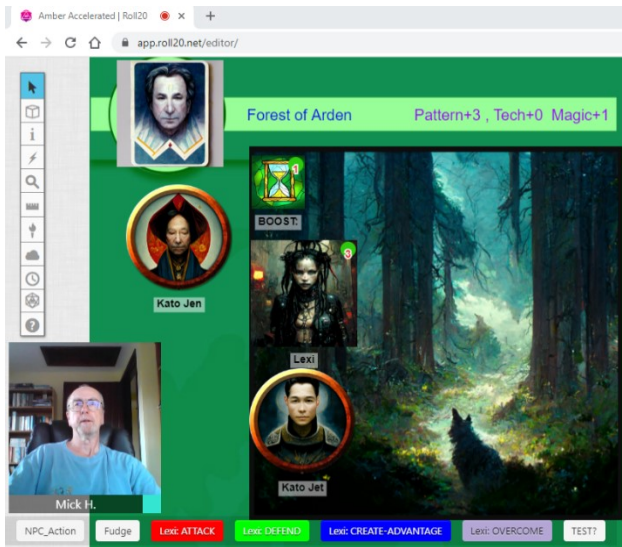
Lexi shares some food with her and offers her a drink. "Been real quiet of late on the bloody Stair. There's been wolves in the Forest recently and there's Ranger patrols active... puts off most folk with any sense..." then she trails off, realising what she's said.

Maya seems to know what she's doing and leads the horses down safely but seems exhausted by it (perhaps hamming it up for a tip). It's not her money, and it seems to be winding up Jet, so Lexi rewards the woman handsomely.



The "Boost" will cover the start of the first encounter (if any) in the forest as they are on the alert now.

The Forest of Arden



Towards dusk, as they ride through Arden the trees loom overhead, growing closer to the edge of the road.

Ruts from carts and divots kicked up by horses, show the road is heavily used, although not for a few days at least.

Lexi is quiet for an hour or so as she tries to Shadow-Walk some of the trees to be closer to the Painting...

Arden is a different Shadow, joined to Amber by the Stair of Kolvir, so it has a lower Pattern Axiom of only +3. An hour of effort Shadow-walking in Arden only needs a +6 success. However, the Rangers and their Hounds are sensitive to the workings of Power and are Likely to intercept anyone trying this, whether they succeed or not.

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention	Shadow-walking in Arden to get closer to the Painting
Roll	3 FOCUS + 4
Fatig	0 Broken 0

Lexi will leverage Maya's information, gaining a further +2 to succeed with style! I'll say this avoids an encounter with Julian's Rangers, but they are likely to Shadow Trail her until she is a bit further from Arden. Probably just to watch and report back on who is working with shadow here

Lexi's will is strong and she's pretty confident they aren't going to stumble on random travellers, so she concentrates deeply and the trees eventually begin to change. Fewer pines and oaks, and the low hills rise to meet a range of distant mountains.

Rules Revision 0.9.3 – Use of Power Tracks or Consequences to trigger Powers

Each attempt to Shadow-Walk costs 1 Pattern Stress so she's now run out – but could still try more by ticking Fatigued or Broken. They have both taken 2 Stress from the climb down Kolvir too.

STRESS & CONDITIONS

0	Stress	○○○○○	⊗
0	Indebted	○○○○○	⊗
0	Fatigued - 3 Stress (-1 on all Rolls)		○
0	Broken - 6 Stress (-2 on all Rolls)		○
0	PATTERN		⊗
0	TRUMP		⊗

+Add Modify

She doesn't know the ideal Axioms for the target location but manages to get the general look of the place. With her success she can adjust one Axiom, so she'll move Pattern down to +2.

I'll roll the dice to see whether the target Axiom is higher, lower or the same

0	+1	-1	+1	Total	+1
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as current. If the first Axiom isn't right, I won't bother with the next. I'll choose to check Pattern first.

She'll now know that the Pattern Axiom is **higher** than her current +2, but not what it is.

“Damn – the place we’re going has stronger Pattern than where we are now! I just spent the last part of the afternoon reducing the bloody thing! Still, it’s easier to change other things while the Pattern is lower. I should fix everything else first and push the Pattern back up at the end.”

They decided to make camp for the night. Kato Jet and both horses are tired out from the long climb, so, despite Jet’s suggestion that he take first watch, Lexi sits and tends a little fire while Jet gets some sleep. The horses are loosely picketed where they can graze on the long green grass that Lexi remembered to include.

Will they get encountered on Lexi’s watch (it seems Likely) ? but **NO!** 6

Will they get encountered on Jet’s watch (it seems Likely) ? **YES+** 65

This is a big YES!, but not matching numbers so it should be a significant encounter, but not a deadly one. It’s an opportunity for the two travellers to see what each of them can do. As I generated an image in Midjourney for another game of some angry baboons, I’ll go with that. Next time I’ll generate a random monstrosity, beast or NPC using more Oracle tables and GM Decisions.



Jet is now back to his full 4 Stress when six ape-like creatures leap from the trees and rush the camp.

Will he spot them coming in time to draw his blade and shout a warning to Lexi? I’d set

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	OVERCOME
Intention	Spot the apes
Roll	0
Bonus	+3 Good

the difficulty at +2. He has Awareness Skill+1 and Mind+2 so there’s a good chance...

Jet spots the apes before they attack and the moonlight glitters along the complex lines etched into the blade – scenes of battle and glory, drawn with the Power of Trump Art by his father.

He hisses a warning to Lexi and she is roused from sleep too.

So how dangerous are these things? I’ll assume they are Mooks and there are 6 of them...

Aspects: *ANGRY BABOONS, Tree Dwellers*
Good At: Fighting, Climbing, Teamwork **Bad At:** Thinking

Combat: +2 **Damage:**3 (1 + Combat) **Armor:**0
Stress:3, **no Consequences**

They’ll attack as 2 Packs of 3, getting +2 for numbers, but take damage individually. The enemy started the conflict, so acts first.

I’ll use their numbers as targets for Lexi and Kato rather than roll for the Baboons.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	DEFEND
Intention	Parry 3 apes (+4)
Roll	1
Bonus	+5 Superb

Kato Jet clearly knows what he's doing and the magical blade sweeps round to fend off the three attackers.

Lexi- DEFEND	
Intention	Dodge (Skill+1)
Roll	-2 HASTE + 1
Fatig	0 Broken 0

There are too many of them, and Lexi only has a dagger. She is raked by their claws and bitten by their fangs.

Damage would be 3, but with +2 for numbers = 5, but they are shadow creatures, so Lexi has 2 pts of Armor and only takes 3 Stress.

It's a new Scene so her Standard Stress track was back to full and she'll have recovered 1 Pattern too. She takes the 3 as Standard Stress and has 3 remaining.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	ATTACK
Intention	Strike Monkeys vs +5 (with Pack bonus)
Roll	1
Bonus	+5 Superb

Jet slashes at the pack and his blade slices one in two.

He does 1 damage for the Shift, +2 for the Trump-etched blade. They only have 3 Stress and no armor, so the Pack is now only 2 creatures so down to +3 for defence and attack.

Lexi grabs one by the leg and uses it as a club.

Lexi - ATTACK	
Intention	Smash two monkeys together (vs +4)
Roll	-1 FORCE + 2
Fatig	0 Broken 0

Not wanting to be shown up by her companion, she will spend **two** FATE points to invoke "Amber" and "Determined" and succeed. As Blood of Amber against Shadow creatures, she does +2 Damage, so with the +1 for the Shift, it's enough to kill one.

Both our heroes now have two baboons circling them. With a scream, the frenzied creatures leap to attack.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	DEFEND
Intention	Parry 2 Baboons (vs +3)
Roll	-1
Bonus	+5 Superb

Lexi- DEFEND	
Intention	Parry 2 Baboons (vs +3)
Roll	1 HASTE + 1
Fatig	0 Broken 0

Kato Jet is much too good for them, and his blade easily keeps them at bay.

Just 1 short of gaining a Boost.

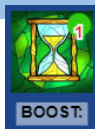
They do 3 damage but as Shadows only 1 gets through.

Lexi isn't quite so skilled and grunts as the creatures get past her guard and scratch her face.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	ATTACK
Intention	Slash vs +3
Roll	1
Bonus	+5 Superb

Succeed with Style: Your attack inflicts damage to your target equal to your shifts with the option to sacrifice one shift and gain a boost (page 109)

More damage than needed, so will gain the Boost



Jet slashes one in half and sprays blood in the eyes of his remaining foe. "Are you alright?" he asks, risking a glance at Lexi and the two crazy baboons clinging to her.

Lexi - ATTACK	
Intention	Break a baboon's neck
Roll	1 FORCE + 2
Fatig	0
Broken	0

She'll spend her last FATE Point to get a success and do 2 for the shifts + 2 for Amber vs Shadow creature.

With a defiant flourish she plucks a screeching baboon off her by the head, twists sharply and hurls the corpse to one side. "Just peachy!"

Seems LIKELY the remaining two would run for it... **YES+ 81**

The two remaining creatures take to the trees and vanish into the dense forest. All is still.

Lexi dabs at the blood from the cut on her face and watches her companion carefully clean his blade, the blood seems to slide off the intricate etchings. She recognises it as some kind of Trump-powered artefact. "Nice blade. That your Dad's work?"

Seems Likely, if it isn't then it would be Brand's work instead... **Yes 45**

Returning the gleaming blade to its scabbard with a skilled flourish, Jet nods. "My Father is a great artist, his power protects us, even here."

***** End of Session Six *****

After finishing the night's rest, the new Scene will fully restore their Standard Stress. As it wasn't a peaceful full night, Lexi will only get 1 of her two Pattern Track back so attempting to continue the Shadow Walk might become fatiguing.

I'm going to assume that Brand will have left guardians or other defences to protect his Pattern, so it will be ALMOST CERTAIN that they will be opposed at each step as Lexi moves them towards the depicted location.