

09 Countryside and Caravans

Recap

Lexi is leading Kato Jen towards his father's Sketch of a place where she expects to find something HER Father (Brand the would-be Destroyer of the Multiverse) had described to Kato Jen as WONDROUS!

The current Shadow Axioms are...

- MAGIC+2 (Illusions) which matches their destination)
- PATTERN-2 (which is too low – especially as WE suspect there might be an actual PATTERN there!)
- TECH+1 which is too low

The place has hills and light forest, no obvious hostile flora or fauna and plenty of berries, fruit and fresh water.



The series of unfortunate encounters they have experienced so far might be put down to Lexi's unfamiliarity with Shadow-walking and the lack of a clear idea where she's headed. Minor slips in concentration seem to lead to problems – possibly self-destructive tendencies in her subconscious – possibly she is haunted by fears that her own Father (Prince Brand of Amber – lost to the Abyss five years before, one-time near-Destroyer of Worlds) may have laid traps to protect the place?

As they draw ever closer to the Destination, it seems logical that...

- A. If Brand has set this up as a trap for Lexi, he would **want** her to arrive, so traps would be set up to allow her through (recognising her specifically or his bloodline)
- B. If Brand wasn't setting it up as a trap for his own children, then he might have just wanted to protect it from all-intruders. In this case, the "trap" will have been engineered by Kato Jen or somebody as-yet unknown.
- C. If it really is a PATTERN created by Brand, only his own bloodline would be able to walk it so maybe he wouldn't have felt the need to protect it – especially if he didn't know Kato Jen would have been able to provide a Sketch of it. Again, in this case, the "trap" will have been engineered by Kato Jen or somebody as-yet unknown.

To preserve the mystery/suspense as far as possible, I won't determine which of these hypotheses are "true" until absolutely necessary. Then will try to fit the events to match the "truth" we discover through Play..

It once again seems likely that Kato Jen will try to contact his son via Trump... **Yes** 31

We currently know that Kato Jet is unaware of his father's treacherous intentions towards Lexi and he has grown to respect her and in fact owes her his life! Seems 50/50 that this Trump call will reveal the plot to him... **Yes** 67

As Kato Jet is foraging, while Lexi meditates in preparation for the next phase of the journey, she doesn't immediately notice when Jet receives a Trump call from his father.



Kato Jet

"My son! You and the girl are alive and still proceeding to the destination?"

Jet is unable to tell if his father was more concerned about their being alive, or that they were still heading for the WONDROUS location that obsesses him so.

"The journey has not been without incident Father. But the blade you gave me has served us well and young Lexi-san has proved to be a..."

The image of the old man waves a hand dismissively "Time enough for tales when the deeds are done, my son. For NOW, as the destination draws near, it is time for you to know all that you must do..."



When Kato Jet returns from foraging...

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Spot Jet is troubled (difficulty 4)

Roll 0 **GUILE** + 3

Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

It's worth spending a FATE Point to invoke "her Father's devious nature may have rubbed off on her" so she can tell something is wrong.

After their recent trials and tribulations together, Lexi has become more aware of the brooding Samurai's state of mind and it's clear that something is troubling him.

Is it 50/50 that he would outright disobey his father (seems Unlikely)?... **Yes** 90

Would his father have prepared some cunning and evil plan to stop him revealing the truth? Seems 50/50... **YES+** 98 It's a big YES+ but not a Match, so it isn't something ULTIMATE.

I'll say that after an argument, they had a Mental Struggle via the Trump Contact and Kato Jet has been mentally dominated by the old man, but his mind is still intact, just suppressed. The treacherous Trump Artist has made some kind of Trump-Art through which he can maintain this control without exhausting himself.

Seems Likely to be the Trump-Etched Blade... **YES+** 59



So long as Jet is carrying the blade, he will be under his father's influence. **MAYBE** give him a final self-sacrificing effort if it gets to a critical point!

Alert to something stiff in Jet's manner, Lexi inquires if the older man is OK and studies his face when he hesitates in his reply.

Lexi - ATTACK

Intention Get at the truth
Roll -1 GUILLE + 3
Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

NPC ACTION

Character Kato Jen
Action DEFEND
Intention Hide the truth
Roll -1
Bonus +6 Fantastic

The old man succeeds with style and gets a **BOOST**.



Fully refreshed (although Jet's combat skills will be woefully inadequate if they run into any trouble) they set off and Lexi takes her time with the Shadow-walking, hoping to remain in pleasant, non-threatening locations while raising the level of Technology in the Shadow.

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Shadow-Walk (after an hour DC0)
Roll 2 FOCUS + 4
Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

She succeeds with Style. After another hour, I'll check if this level of Tech+2 is right...

-1 **0** **-1** **+1** Total **-1**

As it shows a minus and we already know it can't be less, then **TECH+2** is right for the destination. That's about equivalent to our Shadow Earth today.

As Lexi made a concerted effort to keep things calm and easy this time, an encounter will be Unlikely... **NO!** 18

As it's a big NO!, she may be able to find a road and some sort of vehicle they can use for the rest of the way. I'll make this possible with another DC0. If she succeeds with Style, no cost in Pattern Stress.

With a +6 success let's make it a Motorhome 😊

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Find an abandoned and working vehicle and a road (DC0)
Roll 2 FOCUS + 4
Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

Perhaps Jet has already revealed that he doesn't know about modern technology, but Kato Jen is in control and simply opens the door, puts on a seatbelt and waits for Lexi to drive them away? Seems Unlikely... **No** 73 No such luck!

It's about midday and they are cruising along country lanes in a fancy new – fully-appointed - motorhome, leaving some poor family of “shadow people” behind in the forest.

Lexi is already starting to slip into the Amber way of thinking about Shadows – not caring much for the consequences of what she wills into existence.

The viewers will see a cupboard in the motorhome's small bathroom with several boxes of serious-looking medication!

To be sure of avoiding legal troubles, she attempts to continue the Shadow-walk, this time heading “up-hill” to reach a higher level of Pattern.

Lexi - OVERCOME	
Intention	Shadow walk to Pattern 1 (DC0)
Roll 1	FOCUS + 4
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Maybe she's getting the hang of it, and after another hour or two, the road leads on with barely any other traffic and they continue through the afternoon.

An encounter will be Unlikely... **No** 74

Checking if the Pattern Axiom is right, she finds that it is ...

+1 -1 -1 +1 Total **0**

She could push further and be fatigued, or they could rest here. Uncharacteristically, the normally cautious Kato Jet asks her to push on further. There is an eager spark in his eyes.

I'll just use Kato Jen's +6 Mental Attack as the target to see through this.

Lexi - OVERCOME	
Intention	See through Kato Jen's control (+6)
Roll -3	GUILE + 3
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Perhaps blinded by her successes today and annoyed at Jet's insistence, she decides to ignore him from now on, grits her teeth and pushes to get the sky exactly right.

It's a little harder here as the Pattern is stronger, she is fatigued and the Shadows resist her a little more, so she takes two hours rather than one.

Lexi - OVERCOME	
Intention	Shadow Walk to get to the Destination (DC0 after two hours)
Roll -2	FOCUS + 4
Fatig on	Broken 0

nb. Fatigue is now showing as “on” so that's -1 on the result. It's still a success, but not with Style.

They arrive at the base of the hill with the winding path leading up and over, just as the sun is setting.

Kato Jet seems keen to push on straight away, but Lexi is tired and insists they wait for morning.



*** End of Session 009 ***



The Axioms here are PATTERN-1, MAGIC+2, TECH+2

Next time, we're going up the trail on foot and over the hill to see the WONDER.

Unknown to Lexi, the ancient Trump Artist is looking out through his son's eyes and controlling him completely.

I think there's Likely to be a Guardian... **YES+** 55

Big YES+ and a Match!

I'll probably need to decide between options A, B & C near the top of this document, but will leave it to the last minute.