



EMERALD LEGACY



The Folly of Yasuki Yoshi

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Months prior to the invasion of the reavers from Toshigoku

Two scribes, an Otomo and a Miya, met in an antechamber within the Imperial Palace. They spoke in harsh whispers. They couldn't allow the guests from the other clans to overhear them and create undue strife.

"What do you mean *he* is the only applicant here?" the Otomo scribe said.

"Just that. The Crab applicant is the *only* one who showed up for the tournament. Apparently, the two candidates from the Crane Clan got into an argument and both stormed off," the Miya scribe explained.

"At least they didn't duel to the death as so many Crane want to do."

"The Akodo Tenro came down with a case of food poisoning and withdrew, Shosuro Cho was caught poisoning the Crab's food and was disqualified-"

"They were probably the one who gave food poisoning to the Lion."

"You'd think so, but it was just a weird coincidence. Shame, because Akodo Tenro was the odds on favorite to win."

"But the Scorpion representative was stopped, the Crab is ok?"

"Correct. Now, the Shiba Tetsu's clothing apparently flew out the window on its own, not sure how that is possible, and now they won't come out of their room. Oh, and Shinjo Denjiri broke their ankle when they were climbing off of their horse. Talk about irony."

"What about Mirumoto Masushi?"

"Who?" the Miya counted on his fingers the contestants he already mentioned, "Oh yes, the Dragon representative. Funny thing, they never even showed up. Don't know what happened to them."

"And that leaves us with *him*?"

"Yes."

"*Him*?"

"Correct, Yasuki Yoshi is the *only* choice we have for Pearl Champion."

"Yasuki Yoshi? That old man is going to be the leader of our military? He looks like he can barely hold a wakizashi, let alone a katana."

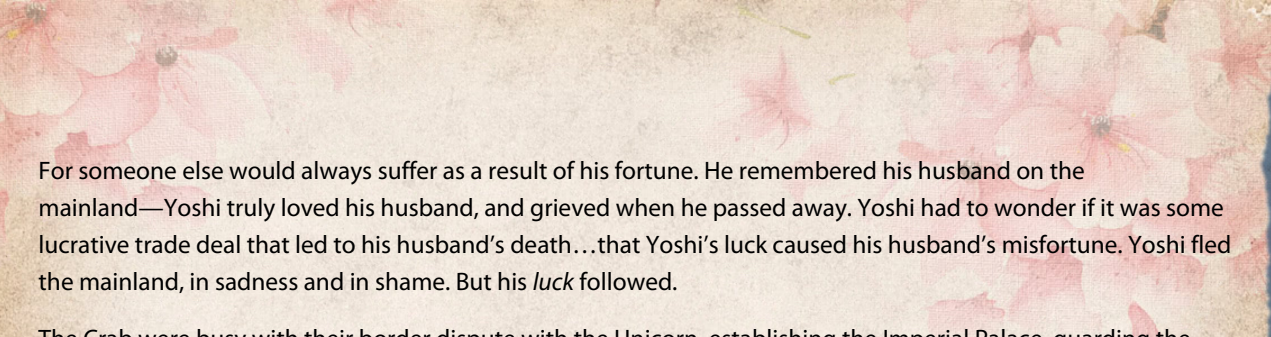
"Should we just cancel the whole thing and try again later?"

"No," Otomo Tsuji, the lead advisor to Empress Botan, said coming into the room, "the Empress needs a champion and the Kami have shown their favor for him. He may not be the champion we want, but he is the champion we have."

Upon the arrival of the reavers of Toshigoku

Yasuki Yoshi sat quietly puffing away on his kiseru pipe. Smoke hung like a curtain in what was now his office. Even he thought it strange for him to be leading the troops of Sanctuary. He was nearing the third life but not yet there. His hair was white and gray, held up with ornate gilded pins. Wealth and luxury dripped from him. He may well appear younger than his age due to a comfortable life and little time spent in hard work. Yet now it was he who would lead the imperial legions upon Sanctuary, he who would make the military decisions in the event of an attack. Could they put their trust in such a man? How many summers did he have left? Would he soon cut off his topknot and take the habit of a monk? Who was to say. They, the Empress and people of Sanctuary, must put their faith in him and in the Kami. How did he even wind up in this situation?

He remembered wistfully back on life on the mainland, when he was always blessed with luck. Or was it cursed?



For someone else would always suffer as a result of his fortune. He remembered his husband on the mainland—Yoshi truly loved his husband, and grieved when he passed away. Yoshi had to wonder if it was some lucrative trade deal that led to his husband's death...that Yoshi's luck caused his husband's misfortune. Yoshi fled the mainland, in sadness and in shame. But his *luck* followed.

The Crab were busy with their border dispute with the Unicorn, establishing the Imperial Palace, guarding the Imperial families, and forming their own holdings to be bothered with sending anyone to the tournament to name the Pearl Champion. It was an afterthought with everything else going on, and so they sent someone who was just sitting around not doing much. He would be a better help out of the way. Yasuki Yoshi.

While waiting for the tournament he sat quietly and bothered no one. Unbeknownst to him calamity struck every other clan's representative, leaving him the only option. This was nothing new to Yoshi. Things always seemed to work out in his favor. He succeeded even when he failed. Who cares that he didn't know much about marshaling an army? In the end they would win and his brilliant tactics would be written in the history books. So, when it was revealed that the Reavers of Toshigoku were coming to the Imperial Palace he said the first thing that came to his mind. The monks and shugenja would team up in pairs and fight as they saw fit. The bushi would fight in regiments. Ultimately, the forces of Sanctuary were successful. They eliminated the bulk of the opposition and drove off what remained. Even when the Empress was attacked, they saved her.

And, as usual, Yasuki Yoshi succeeded. As he puffed away, he angrily muttered to himself, "So, what tragedy did I cause this day?"

