

The Rajah of Ruin

A Halloween scenario for Ryuutama by Scott Danielson

This scenario was built for characters between levels 1-3. It is expected to take 3-4 hours, it can be played as a one-shot or within an existing campaign. It can also be played as a multisection scenario, see: Extending the Adventure. This scenario is played with its own custom Ryuujin, see: Kurutta, Mad Orange Ryuujin.

Outline

In this Halloween-themed scenario, players are transported to a world where all the seasonal dragons have died. The only dragon remaining is an Orange Ryuujin, Kurutta. To discover how to return to their own world, the travellers must journey to the Rajah of Ruin, the fearsome ruler of this dying land, to discover the secret of how to travel between worlds. However, the Orange Ryuujin has different plans. The travelers must explore strange landscapes, fighting enemies and making a few friends along the way. What they find when they meet the Rajah does indeed bring an end to their adventure, but it is not what they expected...

For GM Eyes Only

This scenario comes with its own special ryuujinn: Kurutta the Orange Ryuujin (see page 10). Through the years as the last remaining dragon she has gone mad and turned orange from eating from the candycorn maze, and has fed off of travelers stories herself, instead of giving it to a seasonal dragon. She wishes to keep the PCs in her world forever, so she can feed off their stories of adventure. She attempts to foil the PCs in their travels and the scenario ends with a confrontation with her. Unbeknownst to Kurutta, the seasonal dragons are not all dead: there remains a ryuutama, a dragon egg, hidden just under her nose.

To the people of Halloween Land the Rajah of Ruin is a giant skeleton with a flaming pumpkin for a head. He rules a terrified populace at his palace with threats of wizardry and dark power. The reality is that the Rajah is just a man, a former puppeteer and magician (the non-magical kind) who has no special power at all, but uses tricks and a marionette to create the Rajah's terrifying visage.

Opening

You have been on the road for some time and have made camp in a deep oak forest. The winds here are strong, howling through the creaky oaks, and stirring up the many orange and red leaves that litter the path and the forest floor. You sleep with some difficulty over the sound of wind and leaves and in half awake moments, you could swear you heard a sound behind the wind, like the flapping of great wings.

In the morning it is dark in your tents: the leaves have piled up so thick they block the sun! When you dig yourselves out you find the path and the forest itself changed. The trees are twisted and leafless and dark cracks in their bark give them the appearance of angry faces. A large, cheese-like crescent moon hangs in the sky even in the day. The road leads to the west you see a village that was not there last night.

The travelers should perform a Condition Check [STR+SPT], then describe how they feel and what they think of their new surroundings. The village is close enough that no journey checks are needed.

Act 1

The Village of Chocolaton

[Terrain] Woods [Weather] Clear (Difficulty: 8)

A circle of small grey cottages with tall dusty windows surround a fountain of bubbling green slime. The orange glow of many candles lights the narrow cobblestone roads. No adults live here, only small children, all of whom wear masks and strange outfits. The only food here is candy [cute food] for sale at 50% off.

The children of Chocolaton balk at the adults, swarm over their strange clothes and objects. They will buy any items from the real world for double price. Their money can be eaten! Every 10 of the chocolate gold coins they pay with also counts as as 1 ration. The children tell them there are no seasons here, that all the dragons died. That is why the grass is grey, the trees are dead, and the rivers have dried up.

If the travellers ask the children how to get home, why the dragons died, or anything involved about the world, the children will say the Rajah of Ruin will know. He is the ruler of an old palace and knows everything about the world, but is scary and dangerous.

When the travelers prepare to leave Chocolaton: An old woman in black, with orange skin and horns appears. She says:

“Travellers from the human world! At long last, a delicious story of struggle and adventure for me to feed on. Try as you might to get home, you will never leave this world, I will make sure of it. I am Kurutta, the Ryuujin, the last of the dragons and I will eat your stories of adventure, forever!”

She then flies away, using whichever Artefact the GM chose for her.

This is Kurutta, a mad orange ryuujin and the last living dragon. She plans to follow the travellers but stop them from reaching the Rajah and returning home, trapping them forever so she can feed on their stories. Because Ryuujin are meant to give stories to the seasonal dragons, not eat them themselves, Kurutta has gone mad.

Act 2

Branching paths

There are three possible routes to the Rajah of Ruin and his crumbling palace. The PCs must choose a route to go through, read the description of each before they decide:

- The Feral Forest
- Ghoulish Graveyard
- The Candycorn Maze

The Feral Forest

[Terrain] Woods [Weather] Cloudy (Difficulty: 8) Journey Length: 2 squares

The curled dead trees with their finger like branches are thicker here. The ground is brown with long-dead leaves that kick up at the slightest breeze. Deep into the woods, you hear a wolf howling.

After entering the forest, before making camp for the night, the PCs encounter the wolf man:

A hunched hairy beast, the size and shape of a man with matted brown fur and a face like a wolf. It sniffs the air and licks its lips. “Cheese!” It says, “I smell cheese!”

The Wolfman				Level 5
Topography	All			
Season	Fall			
Materials	Pelt (700g)			
Draconica Number				
HP	16	Abilities	8 8 6 6	
MP	8	Accuracy	d8 d8+1	
Initiative	8	Damage	d8+1	
Condition	8	Armor	2	

Special Ability: Hound The Wolfman can track its prey in the dark.

Special Weakness: Silver Any silver weapons (even improvised ones) give +3 damage

Special Weakness: Cheese The Wolfman is totally distracted by the presence of cheese and will follow it anywhere

When the Wolf Man is defeated, he says he is sorry and didn't want to hurt nobody. When the cheese moon is out it just makes him crazy for cheese and he hasn't found any cheese in this forest for years. He asks how he could make it up to the party and if they know how to get to the moon. A negotiation check [INT+SPI] TN:7 can convince him to join them on their journey to the Rajah, who he can ask about getting to the moon. He will also show them his stash from when he was a traveller, which contains *used Jungle Boots* and a *Camo Cape [Woods]* (pg 64).

As an ally in battle, the Wolfman does not fight as it's own character, but his presence gives the PCs +1 to damage rolls.

Encounter with Kurutta

A dark figure appears in the sky. Laughing with wild abandon, Kurutta yells out “I remember the story of the travelers in the Feral Forest, that story was delicious. One of the humans was a hunter and was bitten by a werewolf. He decided to stay in the woods forever and his friends left without him. I ate that story, like I will eat yours!”

Kurutta will engage in battle for one combat round before flying away. She counts as a **Low-level Dragon** if the party is level 1 or has 3 PCs or fewer, for parties of 4 or more and level 2 or higher, she may count as a **Mid-level Dragon**. Any HP or MP Kurutta loses in this fight carries over to future fights. In the Woods, her *Mother Nature's Rampage* ability manifests as shooting lightning. Describe how it splits the trees in the forest and leaves them smoldering.

The Ghoulish Graveyard

[Terrain] Wasteland [Weather] Fog (Difficulty: 7) Journey Length: 3 squares

Thick white mist hovers low between the small grassless hills like spilled milk. A footpath snakes between ruined tombstones. The path is clear, if a bit eerie, this route is the longest to the Palace, but the easiest to navigate.

If the PCs examine the tombstones, here are some inscriptions:

Here lies our beloved Randy, Kicked the bucket from too much candy.

Here lies Mark Sism, he had a lot of great ideas that just didn't work out.

Here lies Steve, killed by dying.

During the journey, the PCs encounter the Skeleton Crew, a skeleton band forever playing never-ending songs for their boney fans. The Skeleton Crew consists of as many **Skeletons** (pg 195) as there are PCs.

You pass through an old pair of iron gates, an old sign above saying "Graveyard" with the G missing. In the distance you hear music and come to find it's source under a giant angel statue. A crowd of a dozen skeletons clatter and stamp to the rhythm of music. In the center, [four] skeletons stand on a stone sarcophagus, jamming out on a xylophone, saxophone, and drums to the lyrics of a singer skeleton with a large red hat.

This is the Skeleton Crew. They jam out at the Raveyard tirelessly for eternity. They promise they will show the humans the secret shortcut to the Palace if they win a **battle of the bands**. If the humans lose, one of them will have to stay with the crew for eternity. If the PCs agree:

Battle of the Bands

With a snap of their boney fingers, the Skeleton Crew vanishes your weapons with a poof of smoke, replacing them with instruments.

Have each PC describe their new instrument. Minstrels gain +1 to attack and damage during the battle [as they're already musical experts]. Mechanically, the battle proceeds normally, roll as if each side is using their weapons, just describe it as an epic duel between two songs. HP becomes "audience favoritism" and characters who reach zero are booed off the stage. Objects in battle can be topics of songs or improved instruments. Get weird with it.

If the PCs win, the crowd loves them. The skeletons will open a tomb to a secret tunnel that will reduce the length of their journey by 1 square. A negotiation check [INT+SPI] TN:7 can convince the lead singer Skeleton Lou to join their groovy band. Lou is looking for his old friend, Franky, who he lost contact with when he joined the Skeleton Crew 20 years ago after losing a band battle. He wants to ask the Rajah how to find Franky.

As an ally in battle, Skeleton Lou does not fight as it's own character, but his presence gives the PCs +2 HP.

Encounter with Kurutta

A dark figure appears in the sky. Laughing with wild abandon, Kurutta yells out "I remember the story of the travelers in the Ghoulish Graveyard, that story was delicious. One of the humans was a minstrel and lost a band battle. She decided to stay in the graveyard forever and her friends left without her. I ate that story, like I will eat yours!"

Kurutta will engage in battle for one combat round before flying away. She counts as a **Low-level Dragon** if the party is level 1 or 3 or fewer, for parties of 4 or more and level 2 or higher, she may count as a **Mid-level Dragon**. Any HP or MP Kurutta loses in this fight carries over to future fights. In the Graveyard, her *Mother Nature's Rampage* ability manifests as sounds of thunder. Describe how it rattles the skeleton's bones and crumbles the tombstones.

The Candycorn Maze

[Terrain] Grassland **[Labyrinth]** **[Weather]** Cloudy **(Difficulty: 9)** **Journey Length:** 1 square
A vast field of corn stalks is the closest sign of living plantlife you've seen since arriving to this world. The stalks make a wall stretching as far as you can see. Most of the stalks are brown and unhealthy, but here and there you see hints of orange and yellow: ripe candycorn under brown husks. The entrance to the candycorn maze suggests the shortest journey to the Palace, but the most difficult to navigate.

Inside the maze, A group of crows will mock the travelers, calling them “worms in a nest” or “lost little bugs.” They will fly away if the PCs attack or insult them. The crows know the correct path through the maze and will tell the PCs if they give the crows 400 gold. The crows will then lead them to a pit, DEX+STR TN: 6 to avoid falling in and suffering injury:6. The crows will fly away laughing.

The PCs may collect ripe candycorn from the corn stalks with a successful STR+INT check, TN:5. The candycorn counts as cute food and are size 1. On a failure, they also get the food but it is spoiled and **disgusting**. Picking the corn will cause a nervous scarecrow to appear and attack the PCs, in order to defend the maze.

The Scarecrow		Level 5	
Topography	All		
Season	Fall		
Materials	Hay (50G)		
Draconica Number			
HP	35	Abilities	10 4 4 6
MP	27	Accuracy	d10 d4
Initiative	6	Damage	d10
Condition	11	Armor	2

Special Ability: Scary When a character is hit by the scarecrow's attack, any damage is applied to both HP and MP.

Special Weakness: Fire When a character uses a fire attack against the scarecrow, it ignores armor.

If the PCs defeat him, he tells them he is sorry and was just angry because the crows are always tormenting him and he is never able to catch them. A negotiation check [INT+SPI] TN:7 can convince him to join them on their journey to the Rajah. He wants to see the Rajah to learn how to be nimble enough to finally get the crows back for their years of taunting.

As an ally in battle, the Scarecrow does not fight as its own character, but his presence gives the PCs +4 MP.

Encounter with Kurutta

A dark figure appears in the sky. Laughing with wild abandon, Kurutta yells out “I remember the story of the travelers in the Candycorn Maze, that story was delicious. One of the humans was a farmer and got so lost in the maze he never made it out. So lost was he, he became one with the maze itself and his friends never saw him again! I ate that story, like I will eat yours!”

Kurutta will engage in battle for one combat round before flying away. She counts as a ***Low-level Dragon*** if the party is level 1 or 3 or fewer, for parties of 4 or more and level 2 or higher, she may count as a ***Mid-level Dragon***. Any HP or MP Kurutta loses in this fight carries over to future fights. In the Graveyard, her *Mother Nature’s Rampage* ability manifests as balls of fire. Describe how it sets the candycorn maze aflame.

Act 3

The Rajah’s Palace

[**Terrain**] Wasteland [Ruins] [**Weather**] Fog (**Difficulty**: 7)

Pale towers with spiraling roofs, orate patterned walls, and tall beautiful windows make up the palace. Once beautiful, its features are now cracked and broken, covered with vines, dead leaves, and the ravages of time. Cowering Neckgoblins live here in service of the Rajah. They lead you timidly to him. Through a pair of golden doors, is a vast throne room, and on a 20 foot throne sits a giant figure. Limbs long and thin, covered with brown rags tattered like broken fall leaves, and for a head a giant orange pumpkin carved with a wicked smiling face, spews fire when he speaks. The Rajah of Ruin stands to his full height and a thunderous voice booms out.

“Come forward! I am the Rajah! My power and wisdom are unmatched in this land. Who are you?”

Any allies with the PCs will cower and stay out of the scene, letting the PCs speak for them. When the PCs begin to ask the Rajah for help or information he cuts them off rudely with a booming threatening voice

“Silence! I know why you have come! You dare to approach the Rajah, you...” the Rajah then proceeds to insult each of the PCs, see below for insults by class.

Artisan	Artless, awful, awkward, absurd, annoying, aggravating, abominable, atrocious, anemic
Farmer	Foolish, fat-headed, foul, frivolous, feeble, faulty, faltering, futile, failure of a farmer
Healer	Half-witted, haughty, hesitating, hunch-backed, horrid, hopeless, headache of a healer,
Hunter	hoax of a hunter
Merchant	Mindless, moronic, misshapen, malapropos, maladjusted, meddlesome, muddle-headed, misdirected, mendacious, mess of a merchant, misfit of a minstrel

Minstrel	
Noble	Nefarious, nasty, nauseating, noisome, naive, nonsensical nincompoop of a noble, nightmare of a noble, nuisance of a noble

Example: *You dare to approach the Rajah, you half-witted headache of a healer! You muddle-headed moron of a minstrel! You nasty, nauseating noble!*

Give the PCs a chance to respond, then continue:

“I know you want to return back to your woesome world! Go west to the Perished Pumpkin Patch! Defeat that cantankerous coot Kurutta in her hut under the dragon statue. The mighty and wise Rajah will know when this is done! Do this, and I will grant your wish! Now out!”

Climax

Perished Pumpkin Patch

[Terrain] Grassland [Weather] Rain (Difficulty: 7) Journey Length: 1 square

Brown farmland stretches in rolling hills around you. Twisted blackened roots and ball-like brown husks tells you this was once a sprawling field of pumpkins, now all dead.

After 1 square of travel, the PCs reach the home of Kurutta:

Atop a lonely hill and under a gnarled dead tree, carved with the face of a dragon, sits a small house. The Home of Kurutta the mad Ryuujin.

Battle: Kurutta the mad Ryuujin

“You think your journey is nearly over, but I will ensure you never leave!”

Use the same monster stats for Kurutta as in Act 2. When Kurutta is reduced to zero HP, the dragon faced tree is split open by an attack and inside a glowing light appears. Nestled in the trunk is a glowing egg the size of a gourd, spotted with red and orange. Kurutta will stop fighting at the sight of it. A **Knowledge of tradition** or **Refined Education** check TN: 7, or a simple knowledge check TN:9 will reveal that this is an egg of a seasonal dragon, a Ryuutama! This means the dragons are not all dead! If the PCs fail to know, Kurutta tells them. She goes and touches the egg and the evil leaves her eyes, the orange color drains from her skin and she becomes the color Ryuujin she was originally, (GM’s choice).

Kurutta with kindness in her voice will apologize to the travelers, and tell them now she has purpose: to raise this egg and restore the seasons to this world. She gives them an old **compass** and flies away with the egg.

Return to the Palace

[Terrain] Grassland [Weather] Clear (Difficulty: 6)

The rains clear and sun shines. The yellow crescent moon is gone today and a refreshing breeze washes over the dead hills. You notice tiny sprigs of green starting to grow among all the brown.

When the PCs return, the Rajah greets them with similar rudeness, and if they ask to return home he tells them they are rude for asking, and to come back next week, that he might feel like it then.

If the players want to investigate, have them roll to perceive DEX+INT TN:9 to noticed a man in the rafters above the Rajah, speaking into a brass horn and operating marionette sticks. If they point it out or act upon it, the Rajah shouts “Pay no attention to that man in the rafters!” and attacks the party. Add the man in the rafters to the battle too, with 10 HP who makes no attacks. If the man in the rafters is reduced to 0 HP, the Rajah falls apart, revealing itself to be merely a giant marionette.

The Rajah of Ruin Level 7			
Topography	All		
Season	Fall		
Materials	Giant Marionette (1000G)		
Draconica Number			
HP	47	Abilities	10 8 6 6
MP	12	Accuracy	d10 d8
Initiative	6	Damage	d10
Condition	11	Armor	4

Special Ability: Orange Flame Breath Twice per combat the Rajah may deal 7 damage to characters in all areas. This ignores defense points and is in addition to its normal attack.

The Man in the Rafters Level 1			
Topography	All		
Season	Fall		
Materials			
Draconica Number			
HP	10	Abilities	4 6 4 4
MP	5	Accuracy	d4 d6
Initiative	5	Damage	-
Condition	6	Armor	0

Special : The man in the rafters controls the Rajah of Ruin as a marionette. He makes no attacks in combat, and when he is reduced to 0 HP, the Rajah of Ruin is also reduced to 0 HP.

The man in the rafters will fall to the floor where the PCs are and be defenseless. He reveals himself to be Franky, a traveler who found himself stuck in this world 20 years ago. He was an illusionist and used his stunts to fool the neckogoblins into thinking he was a powerful monster and things got out of hand. He will apologize for being rude and award an object to each PC as a token of apology.

End

If any of the NPC companions are with the party he will give them what they wish.

“To the Wolfman who wants the cheese of the moon, I say shoot for the moon and land on the earth. Why wish for the cheese of other worlds when you can make your own? To you I give you my farm, with guinea cows to make your own milk! It’s the least I could do after having to leave you in those woods all those years ago.”

“To Louise, my old friend. I’m sorry I had to leave you in that graveyard those years ago, but your spirit and talent have not waned a bit! I gladly offer you my friendship and what is a minstrel without fans? Why no better than a court without a minstrel! Join my palace and you can play any of my collection of instruments for a loving audience of neckogoblins in dire need of entertainment!”

“To the Scarecrow, my old friend the farmer, who became one with his work. You are so tormented by the crows of the field. Don’t you know that the pen is mightier than the sword, and words carry farther and faster than any bow. I give to you, my thesaurus of insults, to show those crows that they are not the only ones with sharp tongues!”

To each of the PCs he gives, according to their type:

Attack Type: a +1 weapon of their chosen type. “To remember to strike a foe where it matters, not where your foe wants you to strike.”

Technical Type: a spyglass, +1 to checks to notice hidden things. “To remember that illusions are all around us, seeing through them is the easiest way to defeat them.”

Magic Type: A bottle of fire, emits light, never dies, and can be opened to produce a tongue of flame. “To remember that your own fire never truly goes out, no matter how lost you get.”

Franky tells them that to get home, they had to awaken the dragon of autumn from her hibernation in the dragon tree, and now if they sleep beneath a cover of dead leaves, the dragon will return them home. He also asks them not to tell the neckogoblins his secret, as he has a good racket going on and he’s afraid they will eat him if they find out he is an ordinary human.

Franky will lead the party to his dead garden, now already showing sprigs of fresh grass as new life returns to the world. As the party goes to sleep under the moon and leaves blow and whistle and cover their bedrolls, they see a small figure silhouetted against the moon, flying alongside a tiny dragon taking its first flight. Life has returned to this world. ***End.***

Orenji-Ryuu Orange Dragon

Keywords: Madness, Unpredictability, Paranoia, Strange Tales, Weird Creatures, Surprises, Destruction of Nature

Artefacts

Broomstick

A gnarled broomstick used for flight. Cackling optional.

The Ryuujin can fly using the broom.

This artefact determines in the setting that the PCs each have a character flaw they are trying to overcome (cowardice, unintelligence, trust issues, need for love, ect).

Vampire fangs

Pointed canine teeth that hunger for blood.

The Ryuujin can transform into a bat, and only appears at night.

All characters (PCs, NPCs, and monsters) gain 2 hp when they roll a critical success in combat.

Tattered White Gown

A ghostly dress that shimmers in darkness

The Ryuujin may become insubstantial (passes through objects) and fly

Any character who dies (PC, NPC, or monster) appears again some time later in the Whispering Wood without memory of how they got there.

Benediction

The Tale of Redemption

An NPC or monster who are defeated in battle has a change of heart and joins the PCs as an ally (no check needed).

The Tale of Twists

Each PC may, once per session, declare a check a critical failure before rolling, grant the other PCs a fumble point, and gain a fumble point themselves.

The Tale of Desire

Each PC who roleplays wanting something specific from the Rajah (other than to return home) can raise their Spirit by one step for the rest of the session.

Extending the Adventure

For a multi-session scenario:

In Act 1, the children of Cholocalon tell the travellers that to get to the Rajah's palace they will need:

- 1) a rubbing of a map etched on a tomb with an angel in the Ghoulish Graveyard. The map can only be etched once the Skeleton Crew stop playing and get off the tomb.
- 2) An offering of food from the Candycorn Maze, to gain entry to the Palace. Ripe candycorn can only be found in the deepest parts of the maze.

The map to the palace, once discovered, plots a route through the Feral Forest. In this way, all of the above routes must be explored.