# RECLAIM

***by Yubi***

**Creature:** *Yuki-Onna* | **Level:** *5*

## SYNOPSIS

When the village of Meijin is infiltrated by a young red dragon and its guardian spirit barred from entering, the party is contacted by a yuki-onna with a duty to uphold. She has been watching over Meijin for centuries, guiding the inhabitants and keeping them safe from avalanches and howling blizzards. But with this dragon usurping her for its own selfish purposes, she needs help reclaiming the village and saving it from the treacherous creature hiding within.

## ADVENTURE HOOK

Snow-born spirit Kiyoko, who watches over the village she loves, has reached out to a group of adventurers after hearing of their deeds in the local tavern a few months ago. Desperate after being barred from entering Meijin, she offers the party a reward of ancient gems and a powerful magical item in return for their help. Kiyoko meets them at her shrine a few miles from the village and asks them to investigate both the village and the magical barrier keeping her out. As well as being unable to enter her village, she is worried that if her shrine falls into disrepair she will vanish, leaving Meijin defenceless against the continual blizzards and avalanches she holds back.

She offers to help should the party need her aid, but as she is unable to enter the village, they will need to clear her a way in if they cannot return to her shrine.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Meijin has been infiltrated by a young red dragon named Wardlaw. Using a *hat of disguise* she has taken the form of a travelling soothsayer and convinced the village that the long, freezing winters are because of the yuki-onna, who has been holding them captive. By setting magical warding barriers along the outer walls she has managed to effectively block Kiyoko from entering Meijin.

There are many clues to Wardlaw's true nature. Firstly the temperature inside the outer walls is much warmer and the snow has melted away to reveal ancient volcanic rock. Wardlaw is in charge of the construction of a new temple to a goddess named Tamait (pronounced 'tah-mate', and Tiamat backwards) and is currently dwelling within the temple. A new sulphurous hot spring has appeared near the temple.

However, while the inside of the village is warmer, various tubers and roots grown for food are dying off in the heat, and the wildlife the villagers would normally hunt have abandoned their mountain homes. Snow has piled up on the nearby peaks, and several avalanches are dangerously close to wiping out the whole village – all of which the villagers (encouraged by Wardlaw) blame on a jealous and vengeful snow spirit.

When the characters realise Wardlaw's nature they can attempt to ask her about her motives, or return to Kiyoko for help after dismantling some of the wards –allowing her back into the village. Wardlaw can be bargained with but she demands a king's ransom for her departure. She is inclined to fight for her territory, however, as this is her first foray into domination and rule. Kiyoko is too weak to fight alongside the party, as the presence of the red dragon has sapped her magic abilities, but can provide a little healing with an initiative order of 20.

When Wardlaw has been vanquished, Kiyoko regains her full strength and turns back an avalanche set off by the fighting. The characters are celebrated as heroes and Kiyoko is re-deified. They are given what food the villagers can muster, and Kiyoko asks them to return to her shrine to receive their rewards. She gives them 1000gp worth of gems, and the Winter's Wand.

# CHAPTER 1 – KIYOKO'S LAMENT

This adventure starts outside the entrance to Kiyoko's shrine, in a small mountain cave. It's bitterly cold with heavy snow falling in feather-like flakes. The shrine is a small altar in the back of the cave and decorated with ornate red ribbons and golden finishings. Though once well tended, it has now fallen into a state of neglect, with withered flowers and items blown onto the floor.

Kiyoko appears in a rush of cold air and snowflakes. She is a tall woman wearing a greyish white robe. Her long hair is dark and loose around her face, and she has a regal, kind bearing. She:

- Thanks the characters for responding to her
- Explains she is the guardian of Meijin, protecting it from the worst of the storms and the avalanches
- Explains she cannot enter the village as the walls have been enchanted somehow to block her access, and her power is fading fast
- Someone or something has turned the village against her, and she needs the players to find out who and why, and to convince them to allow her back in however they deem fit—without hurting the villagers
- She tells them to start by visiting Ursula Gidden, an old priestess by the second gate, and gives them a crystal to show her to prove they've come from Kiyoko
- She will reward them with a bag of ancient gems (valued at 1,000gp) and a magical wand, an heirloom left as an offering to her (see *winter's wand*)

## ENTERING MEIJIN

Meijin is encircled by a 15 feet high stone wall. There are three gates into the village, each with two guards who let the party pass. They direct the party to Ursula's house if asked. Success on an appropriate DC 12 ability check, such as Wisdom (Perception), or Intelligence (Investigation, Religion) reveals new-looking thick, green braided rope around the gates and walls. With a successful DC 15 check, characters also notice wooden talismans hanging from ropes with symbols painted on them. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or detect magic shows them as infused with abjuration magic.

The village is notably warmer inside the gates, the falling snow melting quickly on the stone ground and rooftops. There's a smell of sulphur in the air.

Ursula Gidden's house is the only house not covered in rope and talismans. The words 'GO FREEZE' have been painted messily on her door in green paint.

## URSULA'S ISOLATION

Ursula [OLD, TIRED, AND KIND] is an orc with white hair pulled back into a messy bun. She is broad and tall despite her old age, and is wearing pale blue robes with red brocade around the sleeves and hem. She is wary until shown the crystal, and then eager to talk.

> Ursula's house is small but well kept. A miniature version of Kiyoko's shrine sits in the far corner, a beautifully carved stone baby taking centre stage. The shrine is lacquered, and has a beautiful chrysanthemum pattern inlaid in white opal. Ursula looks tired but regal, and she gestures for you to sit at her table with an air of patience.
>
> *"What can I do for you travelers?"*

Speaking to other villagers reveals the same information given by Ursula, but they speak highly of Wardlaw and side with her. They believe Kiyoko has been causing the blizzards and avalanches, and point out the warmth since she was banished, and the new hot springs which have emerged.

- Wardlaw arrived 3 months ago. She is a soothsayer and claims she was drawn here by the presence of a malevolent spirit
- Wardlaw started to convince the people that the Guardian was keeping them in an eternal winter for her own amusement
- A month ago the villagers strung the braided rope and hung the talismans around the gates and walls on Wardlaw's orders

- The temperature inside the village has risen and a hot spring has appeared near the temple, causing the sulphurous smell
- The tubers and roots Meijin grows are dying, and the mountains have been deserted by the elks and game that called them home
- Wardlaw is living under the temple she's having constructed in the name of Tamait, a goddess the village is now worshipping
- Ursula believes Wardlaw is not who she says she is, and has malicious intentions of some kind
- Her unwavering belief in the Guardian has caused dissent between her and the villagers

### DEVELOPMENT

Once Ursula has passed on the relevant information one of her windows is shattered by a brick flying through it.

## CHAPTER 2 – DISSENT

A group of kids are responsible for throwing the brick through Ursula's window. When questioned, they say Wardlaw told them it was Ursula's fault the food had disappeared and they're trying to make her leave Meijin. They point the party toward the Temple of Tamait.

### THE TEMPLE OF TAMAIT

The new temple is a tall structure made of black stone and surrounded by scaffolding. It is clearly still being built. The double doors are open, and while villagers are working on the outside, the temple is empty inside.

On the floor is a large mosaic of a beautiful woman with dark hair, her eyes closed. She's wearing a long cloak of red, green, and blue with a black and white lining. At the back of the temple is a copper chalice filled with gold coins, colored gems and pieces of jewellery. An appropriate DC 12 check such as Intelligence (History or Religion) reveals this is a temple in the style of Tiamat.

An appropriate DC 12 check (Perception or Investigation) reveals a trapdoor in the far corner of the room. It has five small hollows in a circle at the top and a riddle carved into the stone beneath:

*Five to pass beyond the gate,*
*and five to guide you forth.*
*First is night as old as hate,*
*then snow with little worth.*
*Third comes oceans deep and still,*
*then blood with ancient lore.*
*Fifth for valleys with treasure to spill,*
*and I shall reign forever more.*

Placing gems, rocks, or other small items of the corresponding colors (black, white, red, green, and blue) open the trapdoor and show a set of stairs leading down to a corridor. Feel free to use Intelligence, History, Religion, or any other appropriate check to either give clues or solve the riddle. If they cannot find the trapdoor, a worker outside tells them about a "hidden door for true believers" and point them towards it.

### WARDLAW'S LAIR

Wardlaw is not in her lair. A simple room carved from the rock, it is very warm. There's a desk and a chair, with a mound of precious items given by the villagers, which she uses in place of a bed. If the PCs have not yet worked out Wardlaw's true nature and intentions, place clues from the following list in the room:

- A small statue of Tiamat, the red head with golden eyes
- Charred marks and claw marks on the walls and floor
- A written prayer to Tiamat, proffering the little village of Meijin to her eternal hoard

> The chamber is carved from a dark, volcanic rock and the smell of sulphur stings your nose. A gleaming hoard of treasure—still small, but much loved—lays in the corner of the room. Beside it is a simple desk and chair with a standing mirror. The room is silent, but foreboding.

Here the players might decide to try and destroy some of the wards keeping Kiyoko from entering the village, or they might decide to head straight to confront Wardlaw.

### DEVELOPMENT

Once the players have left the temple, if they are going to destroy the wards they come across a currently unwatched part of the wall with a sturdy ladder propped up against a villager's house opposite. If they are going to confront Wardlaw, as they leave the temple they hear cheering coming from the direction of the hot springs.

## CHAPTER 3 – ENTER: THE DRAGON

If the players decide to confront Wardlaw immediately, then Ursula removes enough of the wards during the commotion of the ensuing fight or confrontation to allow Kiyoko to enter for the encounter.

### DISMANTLING THE WARDS

The ropes are strung over the edges of the walls in an unbroken circle, passing over the tops of the gates and threaded with wooden talismans. Severing the ropes or destroying them in whatever manner they see fit breaks the wards. Consider adding ability checks for balancing on top of the walls, destroying the rope, avoiding being spotted by other guards, or whatever else you deem appropriate. To give the characters a chance at destroying the wards keep the DCs between 12 and 15, and play to their strengths. If the characters are caught, the guards take them to Wardlaw in the hot springs and Ursula finishes the job if they didn't manage to destroy the circle.

### WARDLAW

Wardlaw [CALCULATING, SMIRKING, CONFIDENT] is overseeing a group of four villagers building baths from the hot springs. She:

- Does not reveal her true form unless attacked or directly confronted
- When her form is revealed, gloats over her power and the obedience of the now terrified villagers
- Can be persuaded to leave for a huge sum
- Decides to 'make a show' out of the party if they attack or press aggressively, and attacks

> A tall human woman dressed in a cloak of red, green, and blue stands by the newly formed hot springs, overseeing the construction of baths. Her copper hair gleams and her pale amber eyes have strange glint to them. She turns to face the party with a smirk.
>
> *"Well well well... the ones who went to visit dear Ursula."*

While Wardlaw can be bribed into leaving, she demands over 10,000 gp to be provided immediately, or will take 10,000 gp worth of magic items/other valuable items. She is more likely to defend her territory out of hubris. The villagers do not help in the battle.

### DEVELOPMENT

A clash of two conflicts rings out in Meijin. Fight, or flee! If the party fights, Kiyoko appears during the battle at your discretion. She has two level 1 spell slots, and only *cure wounds* prepared, and acts just prior to the lair actions. She has 30 ft of movement and cannot make a physical attack.

Wardlaw uses the stats for a **young red dragon**, including lair actions. Consider adjusting her hit points depending on your party size. If your players are overpowering Wardlaw, have her summon a **fire elemental**.

# CONCLUSION

With Wardlaw defeated, the last of her magic fades, and Kiyoko returns to her full strength. An avalanche, triggered by the fighting, rushes towards the village and is turned back by Kiyoko. Wardlaw's thrall over the villagers melts away, and Kiyoko is reinstated. The rest of the wards and talismans are destroyed, her shrine is repaired, and Meijin is once more protected.

> As you pause to catch your breath after the fight, the mountains around Meijin groan and shake with the rush of a huge avalanche. Kiyoko turns, ice and snow whirling around her as she lifts her hands and wails out this note so pure and clear the water in the hot springs freezes over, and as the avalanche tumbles towards Meijin it is split by this tone, parting and flowing around the village without touching it. There is a second of silence in the aftermath before the villagers burst into cheers and grateful shouts, bowing before their guardian spirit.

The villagers are apologetic to the party, and offer them food and shelter for their services. They begin dismantling the temple and the hot springs.

# REWARDS

The party is celebrated as heroes! Kiyoko presents the party with 1,000 gp worth of gems and the *winter's wand*. Dragon parts can be harvested from Wardlaw's remains. They may also take her *hat of disguise*.

#### Winter's Wand

*Wand, rare*

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast the spell *ice knife* (save DC 15). For 1 charge, you cast the 2nd-level version of the spell. You can increase the spell slot level by one for each additional charge you expend.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into snow and is destroyed.

# AUTHOR'S NOTES

I would like first to thank Ashley for this amazing opportunity and for organising this event. I am so pleased to be a part of this anthology, and cannot wait to explore the adventures created by my fellow authors. I would also like to thank my playtesters.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yubi is a nonbinary, queer creator who lives in sunny Scotland. They DM a *D&D* 5e actual play podcast, "The Mortal Path," and publish unique *D&D* content on their twitter @uzbadyubi. With several degrees in Japanese and Japanese Culture, they enjoy drawing on popular myths and legends from Japanese folklore.