

MARTIN ANNANDER

Carrion
for the
Carrion
Crows



Playtank



Carrion for the Carrion Crows

Writing & Design

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Original Cast

Robert Träffe, as Lord Coster Truant

Steven Payne, as Lord Cedric Strong

Pedram Mazloom, as Lady Kara Morgan

Johan Barouta, as Lord Aldric Row

Roger Mattsson, as Sir Jane Cooke

Juha Kangas, as Lady Annabelle Worley

Inspiration

A Song of Ice and Fire Roleplaying Game.

The Art of War, supplement for the *Qin: The Warring States* Roleplaying Game.

King Arthur Pendragon: Epic Roleplaying in Legendary Britain (4th Edition).

Introduction

Carrion for the Carrion Crows

Leaves rustle in the wind.

Deserters hang from the branches.

The waves roll against the coast.

Ships break against shoals.

The rivers flow serenely.

Blood turns the rivers red.

War.

The following few pages is a role-playing game and scenario intended to be played in two to three sessions of four to six hours each. It may take more or less depending on your group's preferences and play style.

Medieval Fantasy

Picture any fantasy story inspired by the European Middle Ages and you'll understand what this scenario is about. There's swords, knights, shining armor, noble houses, and courtly intrigue.

If you need to make up some kind of history for context, feel free to do so. The scenario is intended for limited-time play, so continuity isn't all that important.

Keep a couple of key points in mind however:

- » **NO SEXISM.** Men and women hold all kinds of positions, including in war, at court, on the field, etc. This principle guides the choice of characters and phrasing throughout the scenario.
- » **NO MAGIC.** There is no magic in the world. There is superstition, but there are no wizards, or spells, etc. People can absolutely believe in these things, but as the game master, you know it doesn't exist.
- » **NO RELIGION.** Again, there are superstitions, but there is no church or clergy. Mostly to not have to handle religious conflict in a scenario that's fundamentally about a different kind of struggle.
- » **UNDERDOGS.** The player characters are in a very bad spot and should feel this at all times. They're outnumbered, poorly prepared, and low on supplies. As much as you may want to fudge a dice roll or cheat some other way to make the scenario easier on them—don't!

Custom Rules

This scenario uses custom rules for three things that are all covered in **THE RULES**, starting on page 12.

Custom World

In addition to custom rules, there is also a world described for the game, including a map. The reason this map exists is so that players can talk about military maneuvers and the like in an in-character fashion, rather than having a grid or coordinate system of some other kind in place.

You don't need to know everything about this world and there are no exhaustive lists of facts in the scenario. If you want to, and everyone is fine with it in your group, you can make things up as you go, using the map as a guideline.

Players can improvise stories of a drinking binge with some lord somewhere, or getting into a fight with some lady.

Allow anything. Not even real world history is consistent. So it's fine if two families have entirely different views on some historical or geographical topic. In fact, it's encouraged.

Characters

Part, the first: people to mourn.

Trust no one.

Your cousin wants your power and lands.

Your lover wants your coin and your authority.

Your sibling wants everything that's yours to be theirs.

And you? Trust yourself least of all.

Give each player a character and then introduce the following rules briefly.

- » This game is diceless for players. The skills of your characters are used as micro-economies that you buy favors or battle results for.
- » The game master will use Fudge Dice sometimes, but the results won't be known to you.
- » Data about the real results of most things on the map will only be known to the game master.
- » There may be intra-party conflicts in this scenario, but you are not intended to kill each other. That's what armies are for. Bicker, lie, conspire, and trick each other. Please! Just draw the line at outright murder, or agree that the first character that dies also signals the end of the mini-campaign.

The Meaning of Numbers

CARRION FOR THE CARRION CROWS (CFTCC from now on) uses rules for three specific things: **CONTACTS**, **COURT**, and **COMMAND**.

- » **CONTACTS** measure a character's place in the power structure of the realm and range between 0 and 5. It represents your pull with the different individuals in the realm and you can spend one point to gain access to the specified individual.
- » **COURT** is used to resolve social actions. It's measured by five separate skills: **BRIBE**, **COERCE**, **DECEIVE**, **PERSUADE**, and **SEDUCE**. Range is 1 to 10. This number is added to the numbers of other participants in the same action and then compared to the target of the court action.
- » **COMMAND** is used to order and motivate your troops. It's measured by five separate skills: **CHARGE**, **MARCH**, **SCOUT**, **VOLLEY**, and **WAYLAY**. Range is 1 to 10. Each point represents a bonus 10% casualties that your armies will inflict in battle.

Lord Coster Truant, Duke of Oldport

It's true that your glory days may be over and that your hands shake too much for you to hold a sword anymore. It's also true that you have never been as frustrated as when your children and soldiers set sail to go to war—you wanted to lead them from the front!

Then, with every ship that set sail from Oldport without returning, and every corpse-laden ship that returned, the truth became progressively harder to ignore. Or hide.

But you did it—you hid the truth from everyone—in the name of your queen. Now it's almost too late. Enemy forces have soundly defeated your armies.

They have the ships, they have the troops, and they have the will to retaliate. To pillage and burn your lands, the way you attempted to pillage and burn theirs.

The citizens of the realm don't know it yet, but war is coming. You don't know where, or when, but the tide has been turning for months and things will move quickly. Something must be done.

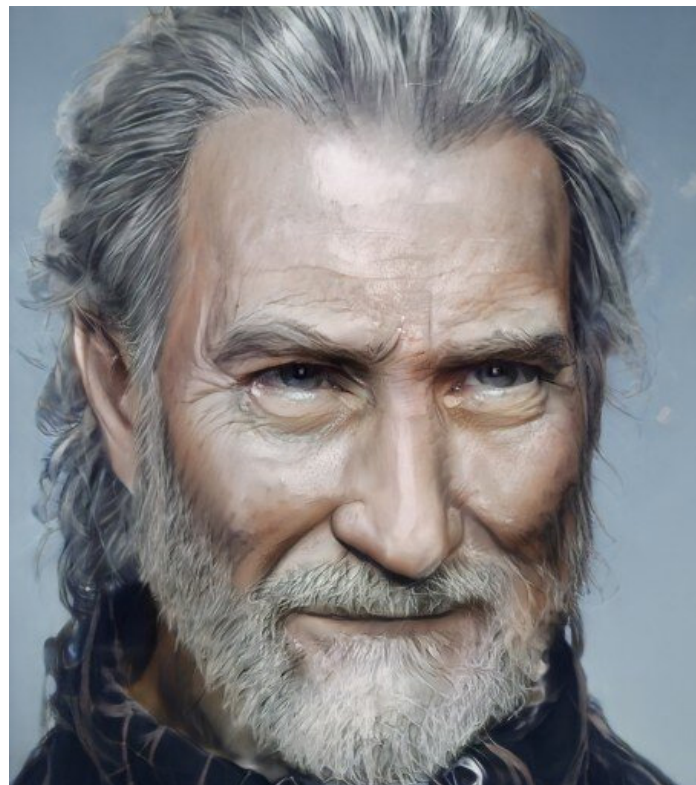
You have sent pigeons to all of the remaining lords and ladies who still command some authority in the realm. Even the attainted pariah, Sir Jane Cooke, whose lands were taken by the queen at the beginning of the war.

It seems your last fight has not been fought after all. You may never again see the sons and daughters who would have inherited your estates, having lost them to a war that should've been a quick and decisive victory.

But you won't allow their deaths to be for nothing.

Armies [at Oldport]

» Ox 2,000 Q4



Contacts

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich	0
Lady Tess Vara, Chief Justice	0
Lord Richard Dunn, Royal Marshal	2
Sir Corley Mothford, Royal Bailiff	2
Sir Bertrant Bott, Royal Exchequer	3
Sir Christina Grimes, Royal Ship Builder	4

Court

Bribe	3
Coerce	1
Deceive	1
Persuade	4
Seduce	0

Command

Charge	4
Hold	3
March	3
Scout	2
Volley	3
Waylay	0

Lord Cedric Strong, Steward of Frostford

Your family never had a strong noble lineage. It was merely a house that courted the crown and performed menial services in the hope that it would some day pay off. It wasn't on the map for ruling any duchy of the realm.

But you had a strategy. If you made friends with the young princess before she became the queen, and became her willing subject, she would hold the keys to your family's fortunes farther down the line. You became like a father figure for her, as her biological father—the king—marched the realm's armies from victory to victory.

You could never have dreamed how things would turn out. When the lords of the realm filed into the war room to plan the invasion, you planted the seeds of doubt against the Countess of Frostford by whispering in the queen's ear.

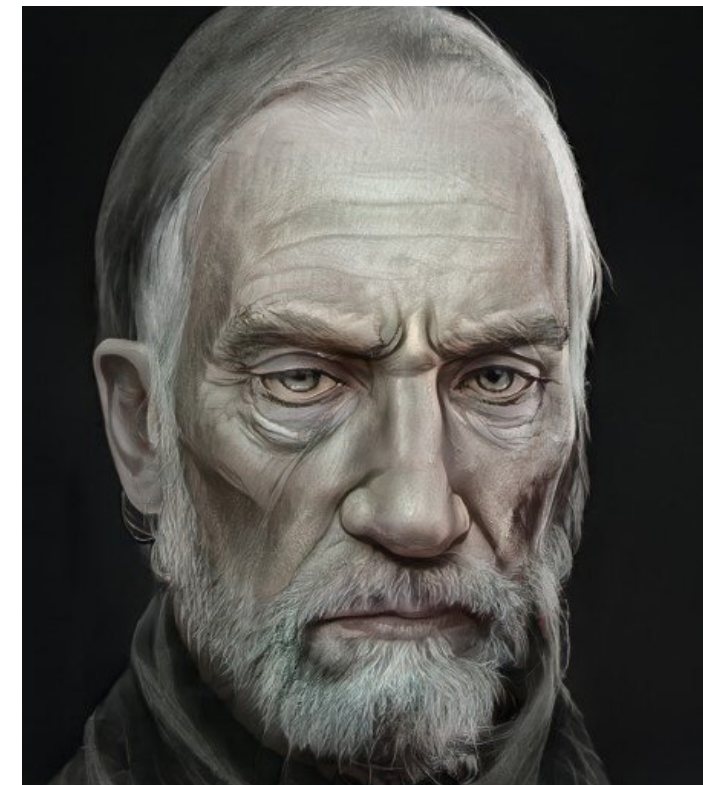
As the stubborn Jane Cooke—now former countess of Frostford—did what she does best, she alienated herself from the court and quickly became the only nay-sayer in the room. Digging up some rumors and having her attainted paved your way to a stewardship over her duchy and put you in a position way above your supposed station.

The resentment of the court and the burning hatred for Jane Cooke—that rotted old hag—matters little to you now that your legacy has been solidified. All that matters now is to serve loyally and receive the queen's blessing as the proper Duke of Frostford. Your useless children will reap the rewards.

Whatever this business with Duke Oldport's invitation happens to be, it requires that you put on your best face, best dress, and play your role as everyone's inferior. Hopefully for the very last time.

Armies [at Frostford]

» Ox 1,500 Q4



Contacts

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich	4
Lady Tess Vara, Chief Justice	2
Lord Richard Dunn, Royal Marshal	3
Sir Corley Mothford, Royal Bailiff	4
Sir Bertrant Bott, Royal Exchequer	2
Sir Christina Grimes, Royal Ship Builder	0

Court

Bribe	0
Coerce	0
Deceive	4
Persuade	4
Seduce	0

Command

Charge	1
Hold	1
March	2
Scout	3
Volley	1
Waylay	3

Lady Annabelle Worley, Acting Duchess of Godwin

Every adult of the Worley house and Godwin estates has gone to the war. They left you—their youngest heir—behind. Though you’ve been groomed for the estate court your whole life, the real thing is hardly a dream come true. It’s a long list of chores and an even longer list of outrageous demands.

Most of your days are spent holding court, writing letters, and visiting parts of your estate. You have taken to drinking a little too much wine to handle it all.

You coddle to the demands of people who have never seen you before and try to take advantage of you at every turn.

The lumber yards require most of your attention, as they keep producing valuable wood reserved for ship construction. But everyone is suddenly requesting an audience and demanding that you prioritize their needs over those of their competitors. All of them expect you to know the ins and outs of their dealings with your parents and older siblings. Or they simply invent ins and outs that never existed and play you for a fool.

Fortunately, the war will be short, and you can soon go back to more comfortable living. But until then, you will do the best job you possibly can. You will not let yourself be played for a fool.

When mother and father return, they will be thoroughly impressed with what you have achieved. They may think that they left a child behind, but they will come back to a responsible adult.

Armies [at Godwin]

- » Ox 1,000 Q4
- » Mounted 500 Q5 +Cavalry



Contacts

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich	0
Lady Tess Vara, Chief Justice	0
Lord Richard Dunn, Royal Marshal	3
Sir Corley Mothford, Royal Bailiff	4
Sir Bertrant Bott, Royal Exchequer	4
Sir Christina Grimes, Royal Ship Builder	2

Court

Bribe	3
Coerce	1
Deceive	3
Persuade	2
Seduce	2

Command

Charge	2
Hold	2
March	2
Scout	3
Volley	2
Waylay	0

Lady Hara Morgan, Acting Duchess of Hornham

For almost two decades your position was as the queen’s spy master. A fixture at every banquet and a popular attendant at every court. You made it your habit to know everything and to find sources of information in every nook and cranny. Most of them never knew who their employer was.

You knew everything. Who slept with whom, where secrets were buried, how many citizens the estates kept in arms, how much gold they spent, and so on. Nothing went unnoticed, and everyone assumed that your inquisitive nature was just a personality quirk. No one knew that you spied for the queen.

Then your mother and your brothers went to war, and you suddenly had to take charge of the estate. All of the farms need attending and the granary storages must be inspected. Able-bodied citizens who have not been sent to the war must be put to work.

You miss court life and the capital and hope that things will return to normal when your family returns.

Everyone knows that your talents are best used at court and not honoring pointless audiences with the lower classes.

But something about Duke Oldport’s invitation sends chills down your spine. That shrivelled old man has always been pragmatic, always trustworthy. He is one of few true pillars of the realm.

So when he sends you an invitation—an individual he has barely dared to acknowledge before—something must be truly amiss.

Armies [at Hornham]

- » Ox 2,000 Q4



Contacts

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich	5
Lady Tess Vara, Chief Justice	0
Lord Richard Dunn, Royal Marshal	3
Sir Corley Mothford, Royal Bailiff	2
Sir Bertrant Bott, Royal Exchequer	1
Sir Christina Grimes, Royal Ship Builder	0

Court

Bribe	1
Coerce	1
Deceive	3
Persuade	4
Seduce	5

Command

Charge	1
Hold	1
March	1
Scout	4
Volley	2
Waylay	1

Lord Aldric Row, Acting Duke of Wyrn Isle

The love you feel for Wyrn Isle is never stronger than when you're on a sailboat or trading cog cutting through the waves along the coast. Sea breeze tugging at your cloak, your own nearly innate knowledge of the shallows to chart the course, and your hand on the tiller.

But your love for the ocean, and the way you preferred its company to that of people, made you the black sheep of the family. Your own parents avoided you and doted on your younger siblings instead. For a while, they tried to teach you to run the estate but you never cared much for it and was soon left to your own devices.

Shouting orders to your crew in a storm, or leading midnight raids against smugglers near Wyrn Isle, was what you wanted and what you did. A hard life with the ocean as your only mistress.

When the war began, you were called to the manor grounds on the island for the first time in almost ten years. Your parents demanded that you stay there and manage things until they return with the spoils of war.

You've done as they demanded but you've felt as a prisoner every second of every day. Your discomfort with the situation is obvious to everyone who knows you, as you snarl in reply and hurl unnecessary invectives at anyone who dares to speak to you out of turn.

You weren't made to wear finery and dress your words. You were made to sail the coasts. Hopefully the house trained dogs of the family will return soon enough so you can stop pretending.

It seems you'll just have to attend banquet in Oldport first. Good. Gives you a reason to sail.

Armies [at Wyrnport]

» Horses 750 Q5

Armies [at Bredon]

» Horses 500 Q5



Contacts

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich	0
Lady Tess Vara, Chief Justice	0
Lord Richard Dunn, Royal Marshal	2
Sir Corley Mothford, Royal Bailiff	1
Sir Bertrant Bott, Royal Exchequer	4
Sir Christina Grimes, Royal Ship Builder	2

Court

Bribe	0
Coerce	4
Deceive	0
Persuade	4
Seduce	0

Command

Charge	5
Hold	0
March	5
Scout	3
Volley	3
Waylay	1

Jane Cooke, "The Robber Knight"

It's funny how things turn out. Not long ago, you and your troops were hated. Bounties were posted that offered the weight of your severed heads paid in gold for anyone who could bring them to the bailiff.

But just as you had predicted when the queen drove you from your lands to feed her army, and seated the imbecile Lord Cedric Strong as steward over your duchy, the war wouldn't turn out well. Now they turn to you—"the robber knight" as they say—because they need you. They need your troops.

At least that's how you interpret Duke Oldport's invitation. *Please, dear robber knight, come dine with me at a fine banquet.* What would be his motif, if not to make use of your archers?

At first, you thought it was a trap. But Duke Oldport has never been your enemy. In fact, he may very well be your only true friend. Someone who knew your house before the queen signed the attainder.

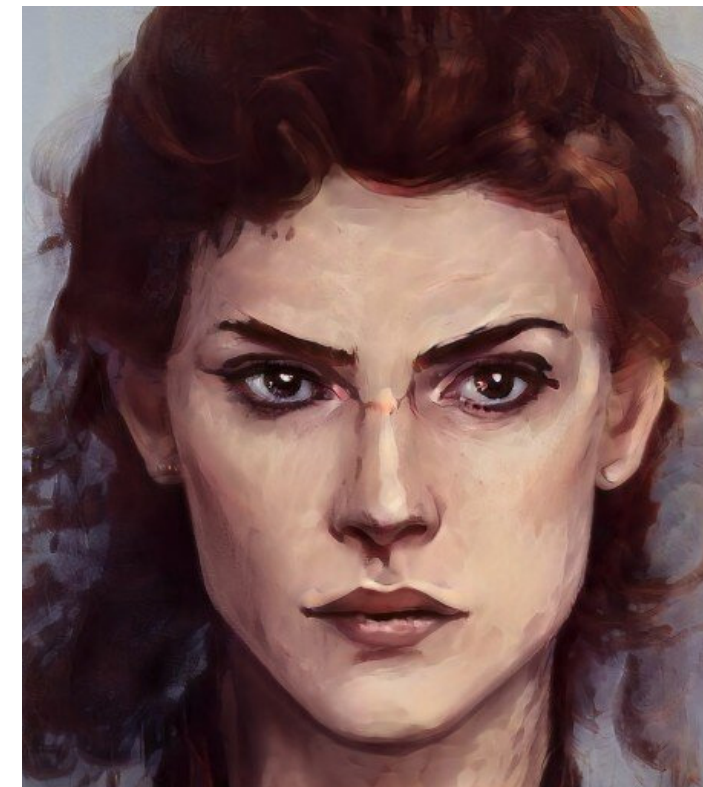
Officially, you were attainted for not having mustered a large enough army for the war. But you know exactly what happened. The queen wanted to claim the Frostford lands for her own house and wanted to reward Lord Cedric Strong for his valiant lifelong efforts as a sniveling liar and courtly crook.

In the few years since you were driven out, you have roamed the realm, recruiting brigands, deserters, hunters, and bandits. They're admittedly not the most moral rabble but they're the finest band of archers the realm has on offer. You've robbed countless caravans along the roads of the realm but have always avoided the Oldport Paveway.

Maybe Duke Oldport simply wants in on the spoils, but you think something much bigger is about to go down.

Armies [Hiding Near Where the Player Wants]

» Horses 1,500 Q6 +Archers +Crossbows



Contacts

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich	0
Lady Tess Vara, Chief Justice	0
Lord Richard Dunn, Royal Marshal	0
Sir Corley Mothford, Royal Bailiff	0
Sir Bertrant Bott, Royal Exchequer	0
Sir Christina Grimes, Royal Ship Builder	0

Court

Bribe	0
Coerce	5
Deceive	4
Persuade	4
Seduce	3

Command

Charge	0
Hold	0
March	5
Scout	4
Volley	5
Waylay	5

The Rules

Part, the second: casting the die.

The leaders of an embattled land learn that a massive invasion force is approaching. A force that intends to deliver the final blow in what has been a long and bitter war.

They must stop this invasion, no matter the cost.

This mini-campaign has been specially written for play via Roll20 or other virtual tabletop. A number of things are enabled by playing in this way:

- » **ASYMMETRIC INFORMATION.** Two maps are used. One is the **PLAYER MAP**, where players can freely talk about what they do, as their characters. The other is the **TRUE MAP**, where the game master moves forces and resolves battles. Both maps are copies of the realm map, available on pp. 34-35.
- » **INTRIGUE AND SECRECY.** Players are free to lie, fabricate information, make secret alliances, plead, coerce, etc., as much as they want. This can be done in secret via chat rooms. When it was played, a separate chat client was used, and separate channels used where players could go to have in-character conversations of a secret nature. Compare to the boardgame **DIPLOMACY**.

Time and Talk

Time passes a little differently in **CFTCC**. Each day, the characters get to do one thing each. This is then followed by a night phase where some bookkeeping occurs. Then another day dawns and the process repeats.

Characters can split up, they can stay together, etc., but all of that should always be reflected in how they can communicate.

In other words, they cannot share information they have learned locally, and they cannot have conversations as if they were in the same room.

Making sure that this is followed is up to the game master.

The Timeline

Unless the characters find a way to attack the boats before they arrive on shore, the timeline dictates when and where enemy forces commence mounting their invasion.

The invasion force has a few objectives to achieve, primarily to take Duncaster. Lady Tess Vara is letting them land in Cresthill and is committing her own forces to theirs. This will be completely obvious if any character sends scouts to Cresthill.

When everyone gathers in Oldport after Duke Oldport's invitation, the enemy fleet is still three days from landing in Cresthill.

Contacts

All characters have six established contacts. Each has a value between 0 and 5. Higher is better.

Each time a contact is used, its value is decreased by one, regardless of how it was used.

Note that you can never fail using a contact. These numbers are mostly there to provide a pointer to what you can achieve with your character's noble relations in the limited time of the mini-campaign.

Court

Talk isn't always cheap but it's the most important instrument you have. Using any court number simply means that you compare your number—or the total of multiple cooperating nobles' numbers—to the number of the person you're interacting with.

You can use a **COURT SKILL** to ...:

- » Gain control over the **UNITS** a contact currently controls.
- » Increase any applicable **CONTACT** by one.
- » Interact with the person in question. Ask questions, make demands. Some NPCs will have special actions based on their titles.

Bribe

Represents readily available gold or valuable favors that may pay your point across.

Coerce

A talent for putting pressure where it provides the most impact, without having to resort to overt threats.

Deceive

Sometimes outright fabrication is the only thing that works. Then this is the skill you use.

Persuade

It's rare that you persuade someone to truly see things your way, but the second best thing is to persuade them in the moment.

Seduce

Appeasement, cajoling, even sexual advances. All is fair in love and war. Just make sure to get what you want before the attraction fades.

Command

Once the enemy stands at the gates it's time for swords and spears to speak. Each of the **COMMAND** skills represents your proficiency with one of the central tactics in medieval warfare as interpreted by **CFCC**.

Each of these numbers represents a bonus +10% to the casualties you will inflict when you successfully use this type of command.

They're also pairs that are compared against each other when a battle happens.

Charge vs Hold.

March vs Scout.

Volley vs Waylay.

Charge

Making the best possible use of both infantry and cavalry is crucial. Good use of the charge is often what decides a battle.

Hold

Defending and fortifying a position to more efficiently resist enemy attack. Good use of hold is the patient warrior's strategy.

March

Deployment and movement off the field are both encompassed by this skill. If you master it, your troops will move swiftly and with precision.

Scout

If you don't know what you're up against the battle may be lost before it begins. Making good use of scouts is the first stage of every battle.

Volley

The right time to fire your volleys and the right flanks to focus them is what this skill includes.

Waylay

Waylaying your enemy is all about making things seem like something they're not and laying clever traps along the way.

Day Phase

During the day phase, players portray their characters. They're normally in the same place, together. At the start of the scenario, this will be in the city of Oldport, in Duke Oldport's castle. Later, this may mean anywhere at all more or less.

Use the Map

The map is there to establish a common language when you talk about the Realm. If you go somewhere, which road do you take? What cities will you pass along the way?

Make it a habit to refer to things as if they are real.

Send Spies

There are always spies to send, but to make this manageable, you can only send one per day phase. Tell the game master in private:

- » Where the spy is going from and where it's going to.
- » What the spy should check out. Be creative! Check if there seems to be troop movement, if another character is doing something fishy, etc. Check anything and everything.

Send Messages

If there is information you want someone who isn't at your location to have, you need to send it somehow. As with spies, you can only send one pigeon per day phase and you need to tell the game master exactly what the message is. At most one sentence.

Go to Places

If you want to travel somewhere, tell the game master, and then you will inch forward on your journey every night phase until you reach the new destination.

Lead Armies

To be able to use all of your **COMMAND** stats, you need to lead your army yourself. This is a dangerous decision considering the opposition that is coming, but it may be something that players decide for their characters anyway because they don't know the truth.

What You Can Do

What can't you do? You're the lords and ladies in command of thousands of soldiers and large estates. You may not be the actual elite, since they're off fighting in the big war, but don't just sit and wait—make shit happen. Make it up as you go. The game master isn't here to tell you what you can't do but to explain the outcome once shit goes down.

Night Phase

Once everyone has had time to talk, discuss, send spies, and set things in motion, it's time for the night phase.

Players can still talk and interact among each other if they want to. Given how extreme the circumstances are, it's unlikely that they will get any sleep anyway.

But the game master must now step aside to the *real* map and put things in motion.

Moving Things

Things move on the map based on their baggage train.

- » Oxen represents an army that hauls its baggage with oxen and hand-drawn carts, moving just below walking speed.
- » Horses represents an army which's baggage train is drawn by work horses. It's restricted by the soldiers rather than the train.
- » A mounted army means each soldier has a trained horse and carries their own supplies.

	GOOD ROAD	BAD ROAD	NO ROAD
OXEN	20 km	15 km	5 km
HORSES	40 km	30 km	10 km
MOUNTED	80 km	60 km	30 km
BOAT	180 km		

Spying

Any spy that's within five kilometers of an army or recent battlefield will learn that it's there and can report this back to whoever sent the spy. For simplicity's sake, they do this with pigeons, who can fly across the island in a day.

The information reaches the recipient no later than the night phase *after* the sighting is done.

Fighting Battles

Any place where an army is within five (5) kilometers of another army, a battle occurs. See the section on battles, startin on the next page.

Raising Armies

Armies can be raised from militia, levies, and forced pressgangs. Anyplace where this was done, the night phase is the time for the army to begin its existence on the map.

Battles

Each place where a battle happens, the following rules are used. Go through the steps meticulously. When we played it, we used an automated online sheet to do all the maths, simply plugging in the numbers. A calculator is fine too, but adds overhead.

Why?

Before we dig into the rules, a few notes are in order.

First, let's cover what this system is not:

- » It's not a tactical game. No split-second decisions are made—battles follow a strictly defined formula.
- » It's not balanced. The numbers are stacked against the characters but their skills also give them a considerable advantage if they play their cards right.

Then let's look at what it actually is:

- » It's a neutral system for providing interesting in-world results for the ongoing war.
- » It's an experiment in writing a scenario entirely for online play, relying heavily on asymmetries that are very hard to pull off around a gaming table.
- » It's too complicated (and annoying) for manual use. Suggestion is to write a handy script that can calculate battle results on the fly.
- » Player-driven! Results are entirely up to what the players decide to do. There is no predetermined "story" whatsoever.

Armies

Each army is simplified down to its baggage train, the number of soldiers, a quality number, and possibly a number of advantages or disadvantages. Quality ranges between 1 and 6:

1. The sick, infirm, very young, or very old.
2. Unarmored and poorly armed serf pressed into service.
3. Trained militias with decent weapons.
4. Professional Men-at-Arms.
5. Veteran Men-at-Arms.
6. The absolute elite, trained for war since an early age.

In other words, an army can be listed as **Ox 1,000 Q3 ARCHERS+1**. If you want, you can mix troops of different quality to form a larger army. They will still be handled separately when the results are calculated.

Advantages and Disadvantages

There are six possible advantages/disadvantages that armies can have. The default is that they don't have either. But especially well equipped or poorly trained armies will have this expressed as a +1 or a -1 in the following forms:

- » Archers
- » Crossbows
- » Pikeneers
- » Cavalry
- » Knights
- » Infantry

Battles

Follow this sequence for each battle during the night phase:

1. Determine Battlefield.
2. Divide armies between Quality numbers.
3. Match army command.
4. Add advantages and disadvantages.
5. Generate circumstances.
6. Calculate final strengths.
7. Calculate results.

1. Determine Battlefield

Note any village or other map feature that is close to where the battle takes place. Then name the battle after it. If there have already been battles nearby, it'll be the second, third, fourth, etc., battle for that area. *The Battle of Dunburn*, for example, *The Second Battle of Dunburn*, etc.

2. Divide Armies Between Quality Numbers

This is only necessary if either army, or both armies, are composed of mixed Quality numbers. Mix it so they get an equal share of opposition and so that there is only ever two Quality numbers to compare when you (or preferably, a program) calculates the result.

3. Match Army Command

Only armies led by player characters do this. Add the difference between the higher and lower number the higher number's army.

- » Compare Charge against Hold.
- » Compare March against Scout.
- » Compare Volley against Waylay.

When a player character fights other armies, add Command to Quality.

4. Add Advantages and Disadvantages

Add any advantages and disadvantages to the Quality of each army.

5. Generate Circumstances

Roll a pair of Fudge/Fate dice six times and apply them as circumstances for each army. Ignore any rolls that show identical results on both dice. To speed this up, use the same circumstances for all battles in the same night phase.

The following are the circumstances:

- » Initiative
- » Position
- » Ground
- » Terrain
- » Wind
- » Rain

6. Calculate Final Strengths

Each army uses the same formula:

$$\text{QUALITY} + \text{COMMAND} + \text{ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES} + \text{CIRCUMSTANCES} = \text{STRENGTH}$$

7. Calculate Results

The strength of each army is the impact of its efforts on the opposing army. The number of inflicted casualties is:

$$(\text{STRENGTH}/10) * \text{ARMY SIZE}$$

Another way to look at it is to multiply the strength by 10 and see it as a percentage number of the size of the army and then use that percentage as casualties.

For example, with 10,000 soldiers, if you have a strength of 9, that's 90%, inflicting 9,000 casualties on your enemy.

Outcomes

Battles are never fought for more than one day. After the engagement, it's over, one way or another. Sometimes with few casualties, sometimes with none at all, and sometimes with one or both sides barely able to limp away.

Who Wins?

The army with the highest strength wins the battle. This means that sometimes, the army that suffers the *most* casualties will still win, due to size discrepancies. Medieval (and therefore medieval-inspired) warfare was weird.

There are also a couple of criteria that need to apply:

- » The army must have forces left. If it's reduced to zero (or less), it's obviously gone from the face of the Realm.

- » An army that can't retreat anywhere without marching to within 5 kilometers of yet another enemy force is routed, and removed from the map permanently.

Draw

If both armies achieve the same Strength, they both retreat and no one wins. This rarely means they will fight again. They've tested the waters. Now they'll camp down, send nobles to parley, and find another way. It's not unheard of for someone to simply switch sides at this stage.

Both armies suffer morale loss as if they had lost.

Morale Loss

An army that loses suffers must decrease its Quality by one. If an army's Quality is reduced to zero this way, it disbands, deserts, or dissipates some other way. Remove the army from the map. It's permanently lost.

Morale Gain

An army that wins is happy, but doesn't gain anything beyond the results of the battle.

The Realm

Part, the third: places to burn.

"I know people, I know towns, farms, hills and rivers and rocks, I know how the sun at sunset in autumn falls on the side of a certain plowland in the hills; but what is the sense of giving a boundary to all that, of giving it a name and ceasing to love where the name ceases to apply? What is love of one's country; is it hate of one's uncountrry? Then it's not a good thing. Is it simply self-love? That's a good thing, but one mustn't make a virtue of it, or a profession..."

Ursula K. Le Guin

This scenario is built around the somewhat abstracted map of a medieval-like realm. The idea is that it paints more of a picture to say that an army travels north from Oaklake, through Narthwich, Mournmouth and Lerwick, before it can reinforce the garrison at Spalding.

Noble Titles

The realm is loosely based on the British system of peerage. A queen or king rules as supreme monarch. Duchies are ruled by duchesses or dukes directly sworn to the monarch, and countesses or earls are sworn to them in turn.

Under these higher noble tiers there are lower tiers too, but for all intents and purposes they're simply "knights" to the characters, and not worth considering too much in game terms.

Queen

There is no queen but the queen and her name is Lady Rose Whitrich. "Her Grace" to you.

Duchess or Duke

Each of the major cities is the stronghold of one of the great families in the realm and headed by a duchess or duke.

The characters are all either active or acting as duchesses or dukes, with one notable exception: Jane Cooke. She was born the duchess of Frostford but lost her inheritance through an attainder enforced by the Chief Justice.

Countess or Earl

All of the townships are held by countesses or earls, including the holdings of Cresthill, home of the Chief Justice herself.

Other Titles

Some titles bestow unique powers on the people given them. There are countless titles like these, some more frivolous than others, but for the scenario the focus is on just a few, each represented by a specific NPC.

Chief Justice

This is the judge and jury of the realm. The person holding this title—currently a secret traitor to the crown—wields the full might of the monarch's law. Condemnations and death sentences are par for the course for the person holding this position. Not to mention the dreaded attainder that strips a noble of all their rights and holdings.

Royal Marshal

Responsible for the musters and armies of the realm. Both for the strategic measures taken and for the training. A large part of the marshal's duties is to make sure that the duchies deliver on their pledge of allegiance to the monarch.

Royal Exchequer

'Exchequer' is just a fancy title for treasurer. Keeping the books, sending the bailiff to collect taxes when none are forthcoming, and paying those who should be paid. Many an exchequer have themselves gone bankrupt rather than telling the monarch 'no.' The current one has no such problem, since his own treasuries never held any gold to begin with.

Royal Bailiff

There are hundreds of bailiffs employed in the realm, commanding men-at-arms to pressure late tax payers into coughing up the gold they are due. But not just gold. Meat, livestock, horses, grain, bread, furs, and all manner of other goods are collected by the bailiffs. At the top of this industry of taxation sits the Royal Bailiff, rumored to be the most corrupt individual in the realm.

Royal Shipwright

For an island nation, the fleet is always a very high priority. Royal Shipwright is one of the realm's most highly regarded titles and goes against the meritocratic nature of the monarchy by only going to the most qualified. Typically a Master Shipwright.

Major Cities

Each of the major cities is the seat of a duchy. All of the characters except the attainted Jane Cooke represents the interest of one such major city, and some of the NPCs do too.

Cities are large; 50,000 to 150,000 people, or more.

Duncaster

The Queen's Capital. In the scenario, it represents the final retreat. If the characters and their armies must retreat here they are effectively finished, even if it may also provide them with a grand last battle.

Frostford

Seat of the university and the second bread basket of the realm, producing slightly less food than Hornham.

Daklake

An important trade and transport hub that has grown as a city around an important crossroads on the Oldport Paveway.

Oldport

The largest port, central to sea trade and transport. The origin of the Oldport Paveway that ends at the gates of Duncaster.

Wyrm Isle

Valuable iron ores needed for the supply of weapons and armor are mined on Wyrms Isle and shipped to the mainland from Wyrmpport.

Wakely

Coastal town and watch tower, traditionally the outpost that signals first when an enemy fleet is approaching.

Godwin

Supplies the realm's timber and wood for fortifications and fuel. Surrounded by deep forests filled with game and the occasional brigand.

Hornham

Reaps and stores food supplies for the winter. Hornham's wide-stretched fields and large granaries are the bread basket of the realm.

Townships

There are **15** townships in the realm, each ruled by an earl or countess and sworn to whichever duchy managed to sway their banner.

Townships are urban settlements with most of the comforts expected by a noble, but are not always walled. Population can be as high as 1,000 people.

Here is a handy list of all the townships:

- » Axminster
- » Bannockburn
- » Bredon
- » Chester
- » Cresthill
- » Colkirk
- » Eelry
- » Holmfirth
- » Perborough
- » Spalding
- » Sudbury
- » Wavemeet
- » Windermere
- » Windrip
- » Yalford

Villages

There are **90** villages in the realm, each part of a township. These range from tiny inland hamlets to fishing villages and rarely have a population greater than 100.

Her Grace, Lady Rose Whitrich, Duchess of Duncaster and Frostford, Queen of the Realm

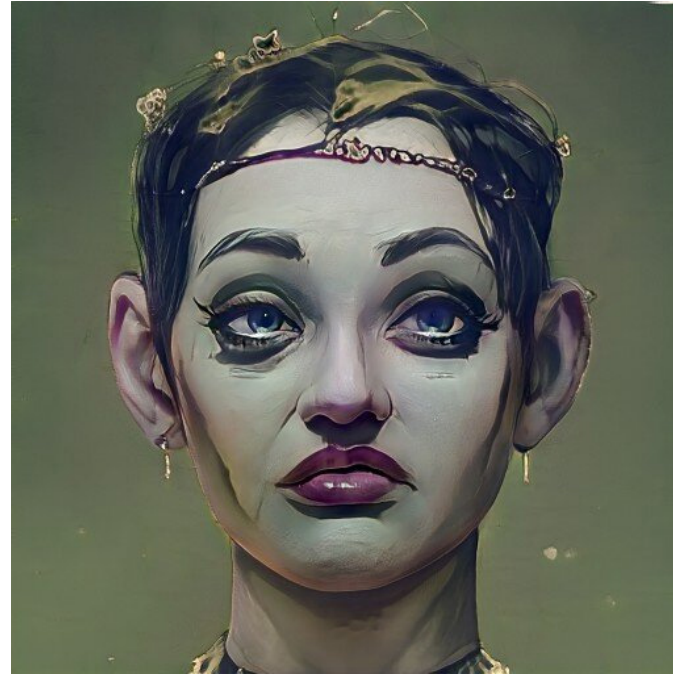
The queen refuses to acknowledge that the war is lost. She won't engage in conversations that assume that the war is coming home. Not until the situation gets truly desperate.

She was the main instigator for the war, and mostly as a means to save the realm's (and her house's) failing economy. All of her advisors predicted that the war would be short, decisive, and prosperous.

She has access to a fairly large royal guard but will refuse to give them up. She insists that they're for the protection of the capital.

If the characters' armies come to the capital she won't open the gates.

- » The Royal Guard. 2,500 trained, disciplined, and well-armed soldiers.
- » Increased or decreased relations with anyone.
- » Having someone arrested be executed.
- » What Works: **COERCE, DECEIVE, PERSUADE.**



Chief Justice, Lady Tess Vara, Countess of Cresthill

With the bailiff and marshal as her loyal instruments, the Chief Justice is possibly the most influential person at the royal court. Her measures as war come to the realm will be harsh and seemingly desperate. Militias will be forcefully recruited and granaries depleted in the name of the capital and Queen.

She's an unreasonable and dangerous courtier that wields her legal power like a hammer. Argue too much against the crown and you risk an attainder.

She's also secretly siding with the enemy and consciously sabotaging the effort to mount a successful resistance. Whether the characters manage to find this specific truth is of course their problem.

- » Increased or decreased relations with Her Grace, the Queen.
- » Attainting a noble, or having them arrested.
- » Finding out the truth about Cresthill, if she is asked directly about colluding with the enemy.
- » What Works: **BRIBE, DECEIVE, SEDUCE.**



Royal Marshal, Lord Richard Dunn, Duke of Wakeby

An aggressive man with little left to lose that still clings to the morsels of power he has left and remains firmly loyal to the queen.

Has access to some forces but only troops that were earmarked as reserves and are poorly trained or have returned from the war with wounds.

Also has the ability to muster forced levies from the very old, the infirm, and the very young.

- » Patrolling Soldiers. Last remaining trained soldiers of the realm. 2,000 soldiers spread across the realm, mostly policing the Oldport Paveway.
- » Militias. Each village may give you up to 10 soldiers, each town 50, each city 500.
- » Levies. Same 10/50/500 count as militia, but have much worse morale.
- » Pressgang. Same 10/50/500 count again. Will incite riots and may cause desertions.
- » What Works: **BRIBE, PERSUADE, SEDUCE.**



Royal Exchequer, Sir Bertrand Bott

Can tell you exactly how badly the coffers of the realm needed a victory and will most likely hang himself if pushed too hard. Has considerable personal wealth and it takes only a little investigation to see that most of it has been stolen from the treasury.

- » Mercenaries. Some souls who can still be paid with the treasury's theoretical gold. Up to 1,000 soldiers.
- » Get him to admit that he has stolen his personal wealth from the treasury. Will hang himself that same night.
- » What Works: **COERCE.** Hangs himself if coerced more than once in the same day.



Royal Bailiff, Sir Corley Mottford

Collects tax money from the estates and maintains the queen's realm by funding sheriffs and militias. Can provide some troops but will only do so if he makes some money from the endeavor. Extremely cynical and selfish man that won't budge without the right incentives.

- » His bailiffs, numbering 500 capable and well-armed soldiers.
- » Increased or decreased relations with the Exchequer or Marshal.
- » What Works: **BRIBE, COERCE, SEDUCE.**



Royal Shipwright, Sir Christina Grimes

A force to be reckoned with and the least favorite courtier of the queen. Her competence as a Royal Ship Builder has shined through, however, as she managed to supply the whole royal army with ships.

- » Can provide ship transport for up to 6,000 soldiers from any coastal village or town to any coastal area.
- » What Works: **DECEIVE, PERSUADE.**



Fealty

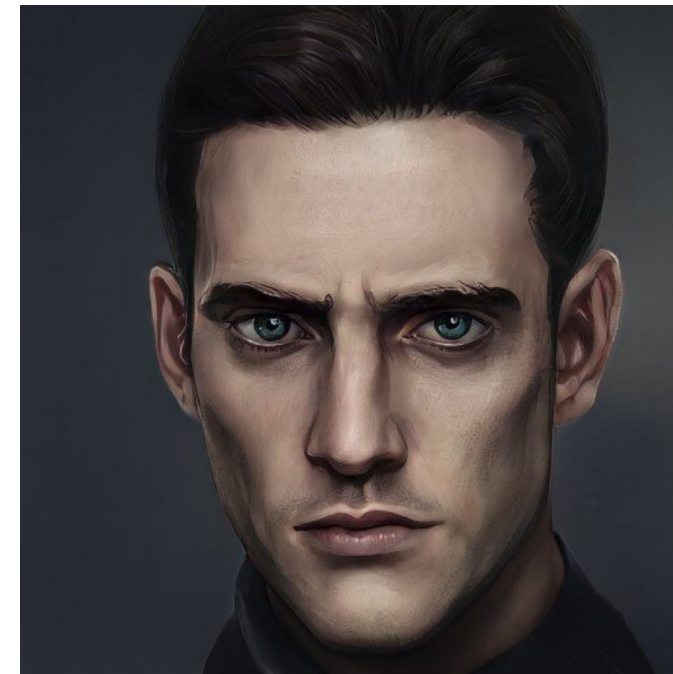
Some figures in the nobility of the Realm are merely the pawns of the dukes and duchesses. They're earls and countesses.

Player characters will need them to muster levies and lead armies into battle, and may have to sway some of them over to their own control.

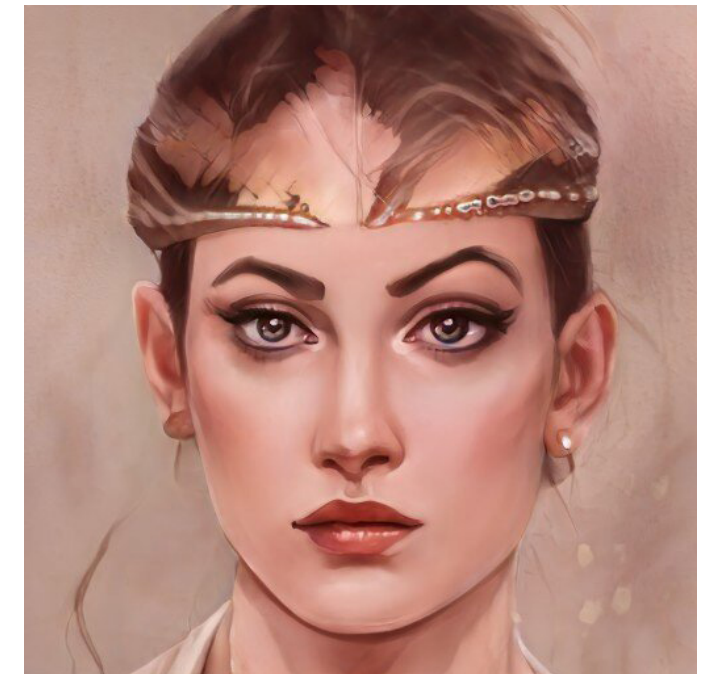
Having a long argument over who owes fealty to whom is perfect in the stressful environment of the current situation.

Let the players know that they can send letters and communicate in other ways behind each others' backs. Having one person rely on fealty from the Countess of Spalding, for example, while she pledges her levies to someone else, is exactly what this mini-campaign is about!

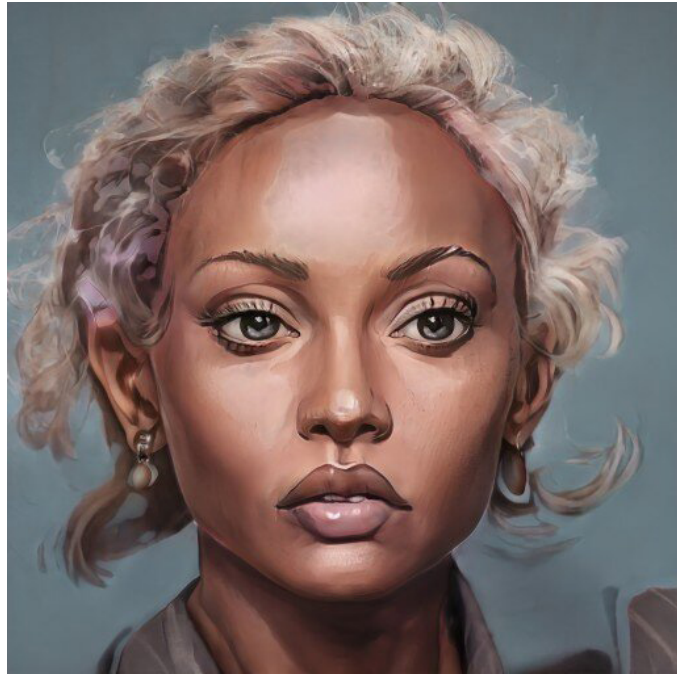
Lord Edward James, Earl of Bannockburn



Lady Brynn Lawrence, Countess of Spalding



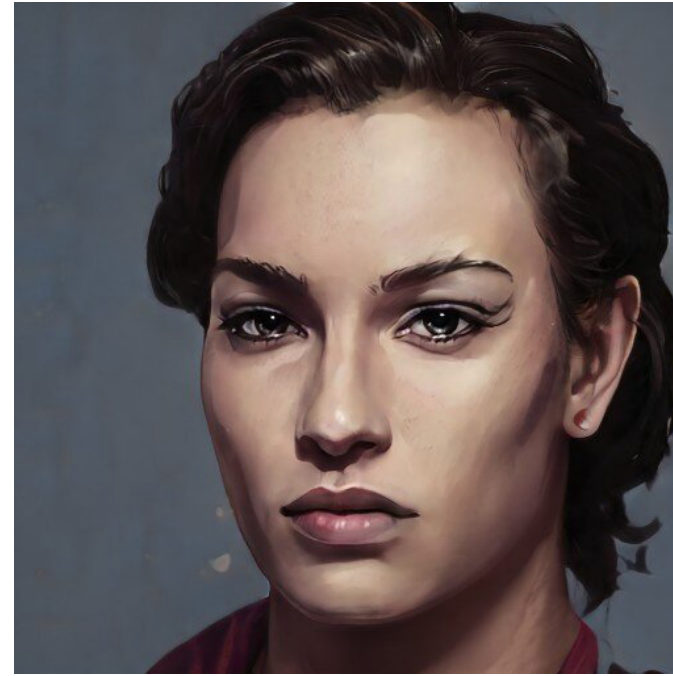
Lady Meriall Royce, Countess of Wavemeet



Lord Symon Reyn, Earl of Colkirk



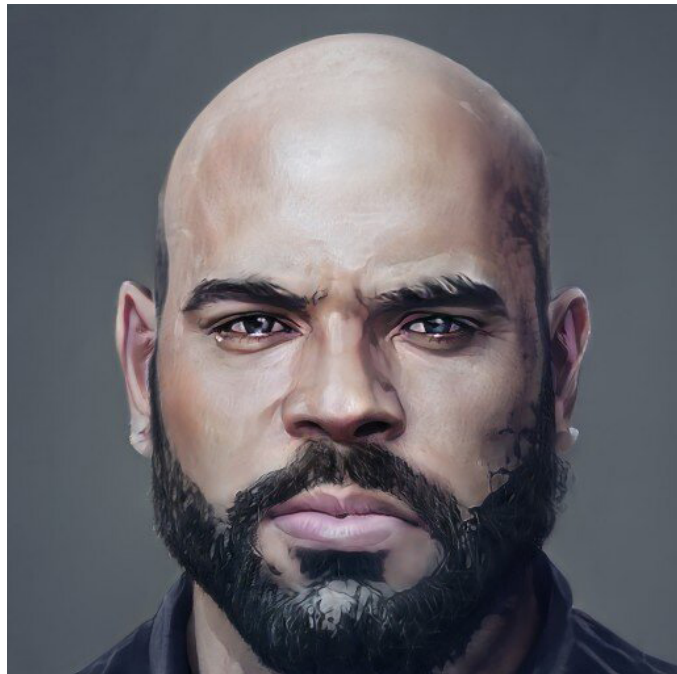
Lady Ida Odger, Countess of Yalford



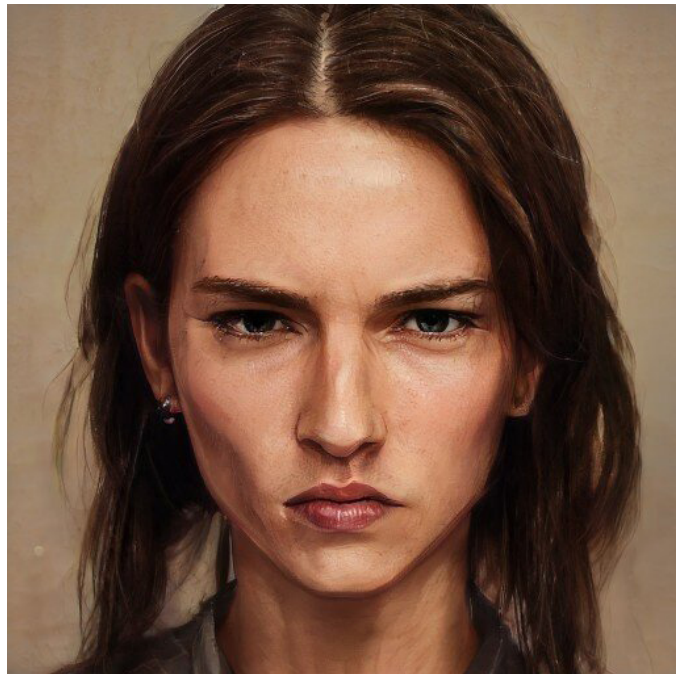
Lord Christof Milet, Earl of Sudbury



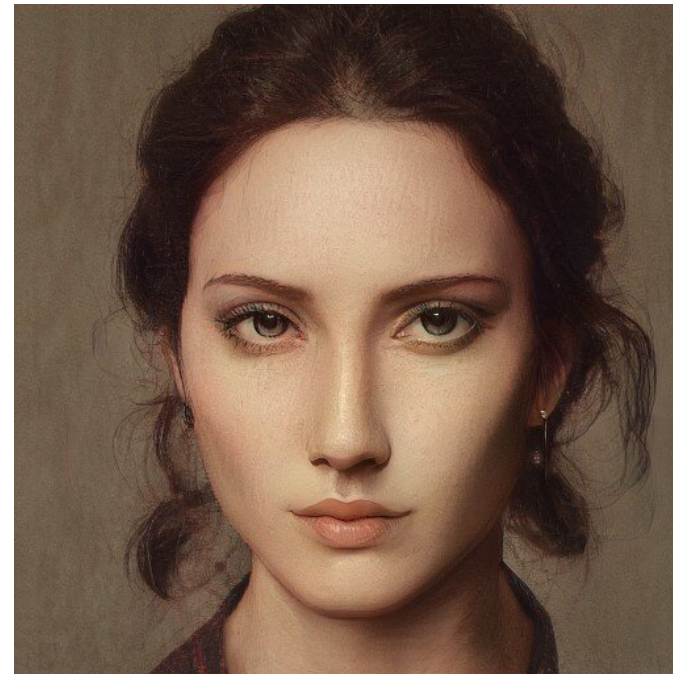
Lord Otho Clarenbald, Earl of Raminster



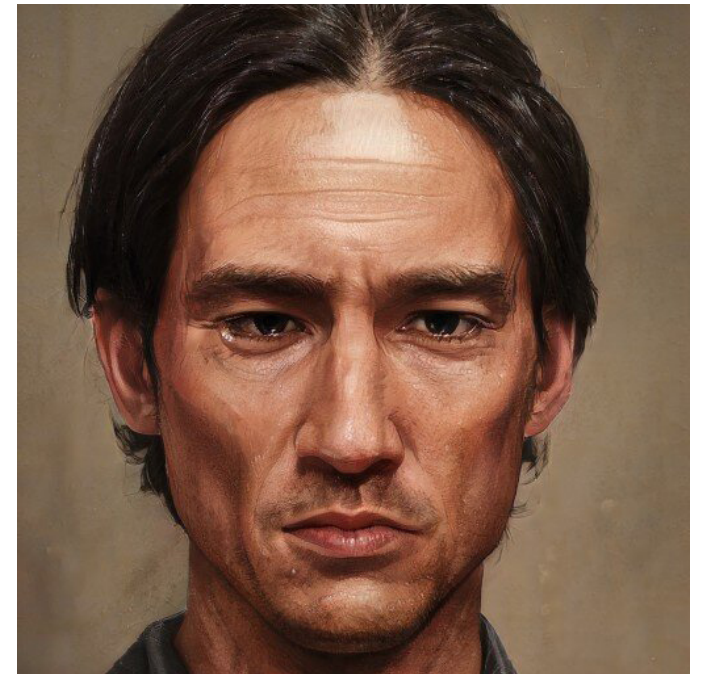
Lady Ninette Delwyn, Countess of Bredon



Lady Lina Adela, Countess of Perborough



Lord Kit Azelinus, Earl of Windrip



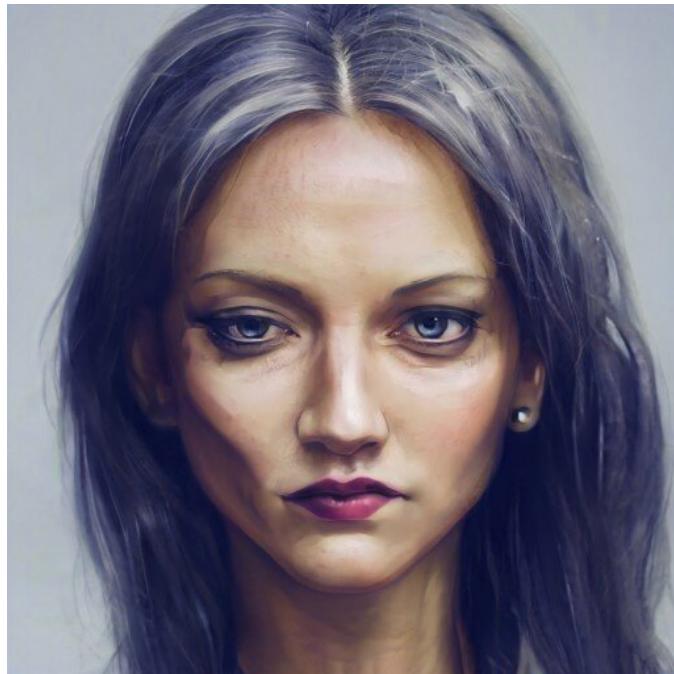
Lady Adele Thim, Countess of Windermere



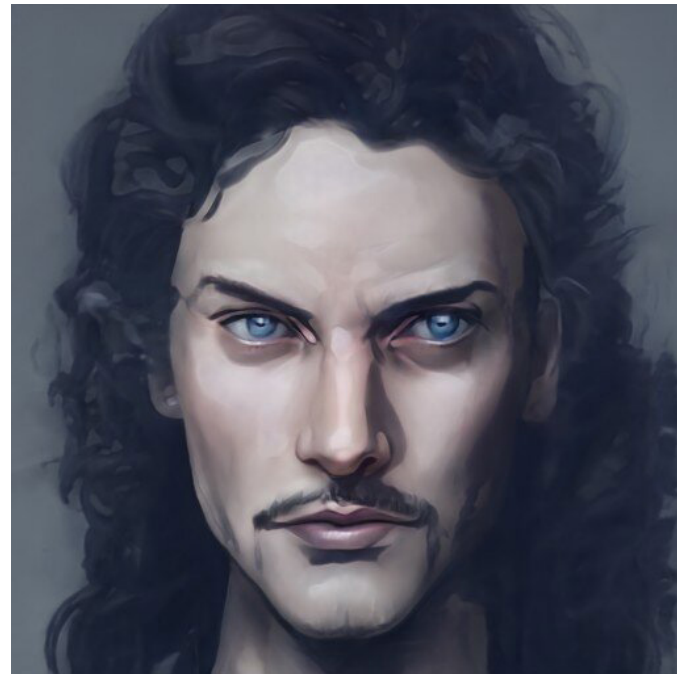
Lady Issobella Godfrey, Countess of Chester



Lady Margaret Woods, Countess of Eelry



Lord Tristan Cale, Earl of Holmfirth



Portraying the Nobles

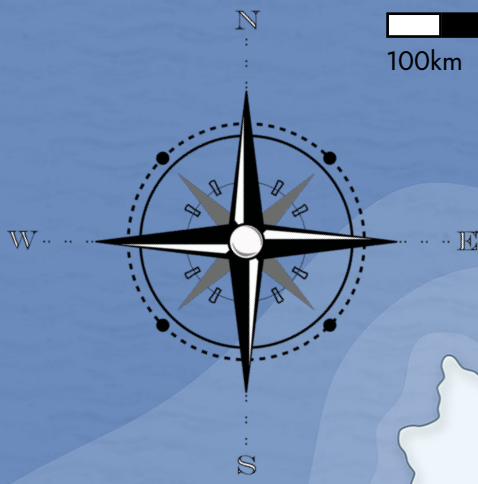
As game master, your job will be to portray the nobles pulled into the war of the realm. Always remember that the characters—and therefore the players—are the cream of the crop. Except for the Queen and her closest allies, the characters are the powers that be.

Because of this, the characters will typically get what they want. Unless there is a secret agenda to it all.

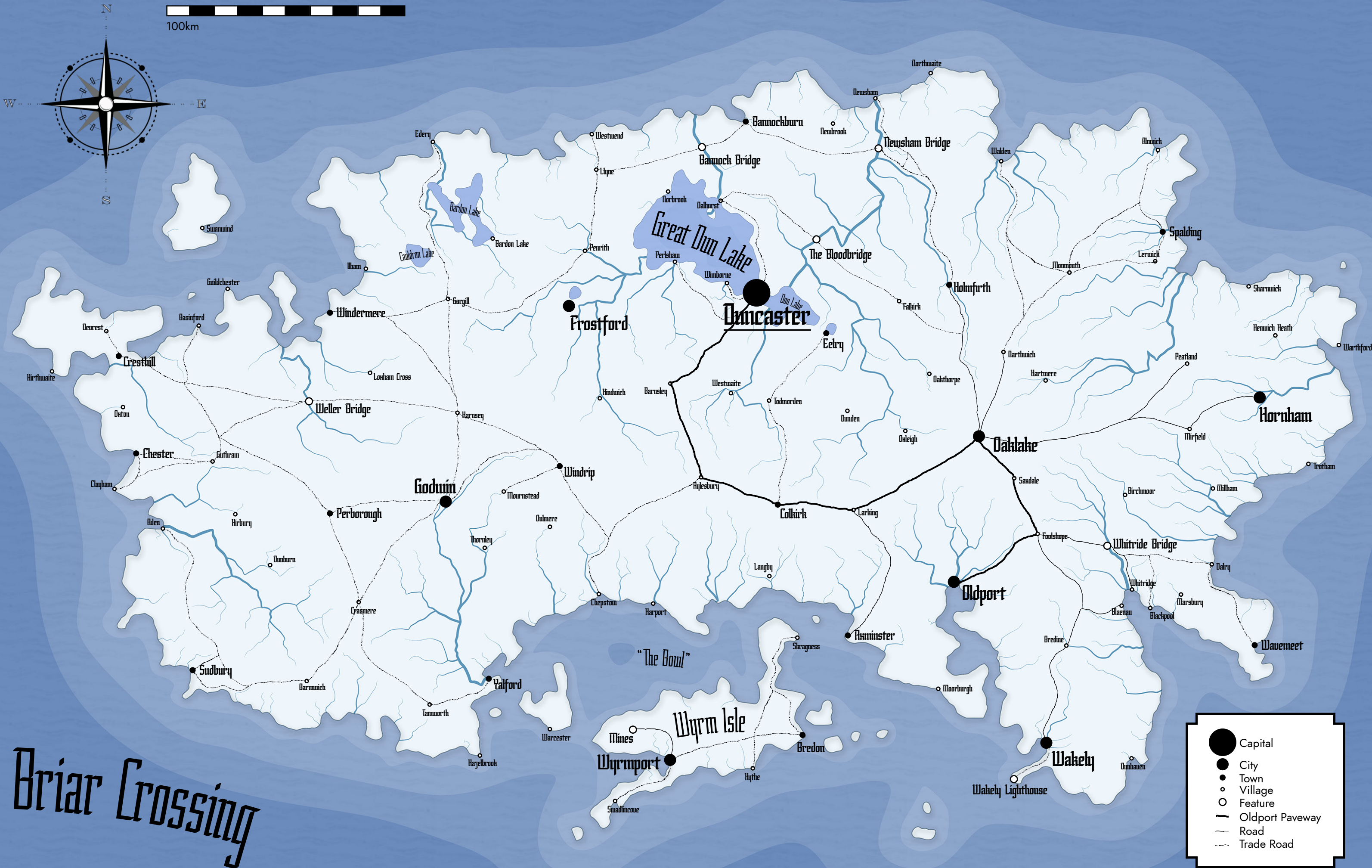
Conflicts of Interest

Some of the more interesting conflicts between player characters will be when two characters claim the same towns or other holdings.

There are no rules to solve such conflicts. The players will have to resolve it in-character.



Briar Crossing



●	Capital
●	City
●	Town
○	Village
○	Feature
—	Oldport Paveway
—	Road
---	Trade Road

Events

Part, the fourth: things over which to despair.

“At the front, people die for their mistakes. Why should politicians be more gently treated? They made the war. They deserve a dozen deaths, each of them. What can we try them for, except for treason, and how can you punish treason, except by death?”

Maximilien de Robespierre

(As written by Hilary Mantel)

The following can be seen as a kind of framework for the mini-campaign. There is no story that has to happen and the troop movements of the invasion force may very well be disrupted.

Whether they win or lose or some other thing happens—maybe with all the characters pledging fealty to the invaders—is entirely up to you.

There is no predetermined “story” or “plot” to follow here. Just an invitation to backstab your friends and fight a few battles before wrapping everything up.

Duke Oldport’s Gathering

The gathering is the beginning of the game. When the gathering happens, the players need to already know the player-facing rules. As game master, you should never explain how battles work, or any of the other systems that are intended to work “behind the scenes.” Play on the illusion.

When the game begins, all of the characters are at Oldport. They may talk about their accommodations—that Oldport is of course paying for—and the fancy banquet he invites them to. Of old grudges and how they each enter the castle grounds to begin with. They may talk about guards, servants, or anything they like to introduce at this stage.

More role-playing is almost always encouraged, and this serves as an introduction to the forgotten elite of the Realm.

Once Duke Oldport wants to, his player gets to introduce the situation. The war is lost, and an invasion force may be coming. The Queen is refusing to listen. How the player decides to introduce this will have effects on the rest of the campaign. No pressure!

When we played it, our Duke Oldport was extremely loyal to the Queen. As mentioned elsewhere. But still wanted to be careful, and invited the others to do the work while the Duke maintained a facade of accepting the Queen’s commands.

Use the non-player characters if you want to. As many as you want. Play more than one each of day and night phases, to make everyone comfortable.

The Invasion Force

The Queen’s closest advisor— Chief Justice, Lady Tess Vara, Countess of Cresthill—is the traitor that is allowing the invading army to use her township of Cresthill as its landing.

From there, the invaders have a plan to move for Duncaster, via Godwin. They will also attempt to take some of the western ports, securing transportation back home and staging areas for more attacks to come.

Invasion Timeline

Day 0. The meeting in Oldport starts. The mini-campaign kicks off.

Day 3. Chester (south of Cresthill) is taken by Cresthill. Lady Issobella Godfry is in the Chief Justice's pocket, via threats of attainder.

Day 6. The invasion force lands in Chester. It's 50,000 strong.

Day 10. The invasion force splits into three separate armies:

- » The first army, **Ox Q4 25,000** marches for Duncaster, aiming for the following rout: Guthram->Weller Bridge->Harnsey->Windrip->Aylesbury->Barnsley->Duncaster.
- » The second army, **Ox Q4 10,000** marches for Godwin, using the following rout: Guthram->Perborough->Godwin.
- » The third army, **Ox Q4 15,000** marches with the intent of taking both Sudbury and Yalford, following the second army as far as Perborough, then goes south to Crasmere, before splitting into two separate forces of **Ox Q4 7,500** each, with one marching to Sudbury via Barmwich, and the other to Yalford, via Tammorth.

Once Invasion Begins

Beyond the splitting of the armies, there's no way to tell how things will work out. When this was played, one of the characters had sent a spy to Weller Bridge, spotting the large army marching east and forcing all the nobles to try to petition the Queen into understanding what's going on. Some even decided to go to Duncaster to meet her in person.

If there are decisions that need to be made due to the invading armies suffering casualties, or being held up in battles, just keep the main objectives in mind, prioritised as listed:

- » Taking Duncaster.
- » Securing the west coast.
- » Taking Godwin.

Defensive Forces

Each character has available troops listed on the character sheet. Beyond those, all of the cities, towns, and villages, can be used to muster more troops at decreasing level of quality. The following tables list the absolute maximum numbers.

	MILITIA	LEVY	PRESS	#	MAX
VILLAGES	15	15	15	90	4,050
TOWNS	150	150	150	15	6,750
CITIES	500	500	500	8	12,000

Playtank

