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Long Live the King - Detailed Solution

Would you like to know more about the historical background and connections in UNDO – Long Live the King*? Below are details for all of your decision options for each of the Story cards in the case.*

A Reminder: What Truly Happened

Our fictional story takes place in the 13th century at the English royal court. The king married his younger cousin a few years ago with the blessing of the pope. They only had one child, a son. Although they wanted to have more children, no more had been conceived so far.

The young prince was well guarded as the future heir to the throne. His combat training was entrusted to an experienced baron who had returned injured from a successful battle. The baron initially felt that training the prince was an honor. Over time, though, he felt inadequately rewarded as he would have preferred to have been given land instead.

At the age of 10, while playing with a stable boy, the prince unfortunately fell from the castle wall and died. This tragic accident was blamed on the baron as he was responsible for the prince. Only the queen's intercession saved him from severe punishment by the king.

As the king had no other heirs, the queen, as his cousin and only known living relative, was now first in line to inherit the throne.

Sometime later, an acquaintance of the baron told him of a document that proved the baron was a distant relative of the king. This would mean that the baron was next in line to the throne after the queen. The baron greatly desired this document and paid his acquaintance generously for it.

In order to gain time to develop a plan to secretly get rid of the queen, the baron first obtained an herbal drink that would reputedly make the queen sterile. He arranged for the queen's maid to put a drop of it in her drink each evening. The maid believed the potion would promote fertility, but said nothing about it so as not to offend the devout queen's beliefs.

The king found himself in conflict with the pope. When the local bishop asked him to make a pilgrimage to Rome and swear allegiance to the pontiff, the king refused. The bishop therefore turned to the deeply religious queen and whispered to her that she should lay claim to the throne. However, the queen was unexpectedly loyal to her husband and reported everything to him immediately, whereupon the king sent the bishop into exile.

The queen had a close confidante who was originally promised to the king before he decided on his cousin. Because there was still no heir forthcoming, the envious confidante sensed her chance to take her place as the new queen. Earlier, she had overheard the baron's conversation with his acquaintance and knew that he was second in the line of succession after the queen.

The queen's confidante wrote a letter to the baron and suggested that he accompany the queen on a recuperative excursion to the coast, where an accident could be staged. The reason she gave was her desire for the baron and her wish to ascend the throne with him. The baron was pleased by her flattery—and now finally had a plan for getting rid of the queen.

As part of this, the baron gained the queen's trust and became her closest advisor. When he suggested that he accompany the queen on her trip to the coast, she agreed. Once on the coast, the baron found a suitable opportunity and pushed the queen off a cliff unnoticed, and made it look like an accident

However, the baron had made his calculation without taking into account the queen's confidante who had plans of her own. After the two of them spent the night together in the baron's tower room, she stole her letter, which would have compromised her, as well as the signet ring that the baron had received from the king.

With that, the queen's confidante went to the king and claimed that she had found the signet ring on top of the cliff from where the queen had fallen. With this evidence, she convinced the king that the queen's death had not been an accident.

Together with his personal doctor, the king devised a plan to fake his death in order to trick the baron into exposing his treachery. The plan worked. After the king's supposed death, the baron announced his claim to the throne as a distant relative. For the king, this was the final proof of the baron's hunger for power and his guilt for the queen's death. Thereupon the king sentenced the baron to death by hanging on the gallows.

Whether the confidante's plan to become the new queen succeeded is up to your imagination...

Details for all Decision Options

1: The King's Private Chamber, Autumn 1253, in the early evening

A: If the king had granted the baron some land, the baron would have felt amply rewarded and would have been less likely to turn against the king later. (+1)

B: This is what actually happened. At first the baron felt it was an honor to train the young prince, but after a while his pride turned into disappointment that he hadn't received any land. (0)

C: Without some form of reward for the battles he won and his other services, the baron would have been even more disappointed and probably would have turned against the king much earlier. (−1)

2: On the Castle Wall, March 1256, in the moonlight

A: This is what actually happened. The young prince was so badly injured in the fall that his neck broke when the baron picked him up. By the time the baron got him to the personal doctor's room, the prince was already dead. (0)

B: If the baron had killed the prince, even if only to relieve him of the pain, this would have alienated him emotionally even more from the royal family. Later, this would also have reduced his scruples regarding the elimination of the queen and the king as well. (−1)

C: After such a personal plea from the dying prince, the baron would have felt he was complicit in the accident as he had allowed the impetuous prince to play without supervision on the castle wall. Plagued by a guilty conscience, he would have been more likely to support the royal family in their grief and would later have felt a closer bond with them. (+1)

3: The Tower Room, mid-April 1256, in the evening

A: Without adequate payment, the visitor would have taken their document back with them. Later, this would have made it more difficult for the baron to prove his distant relationship to the king. This would have made the death of the queen or the king of no use to him, so he wouldn't have ever considered a murder. (+1)

B: This is what actually happened. The baron was clear how important this document could be to him in the future. Therefore, any price was good for him. However, he did have to hope that his visitor wouldn't betray him before he could carry out his plans. (0)

C: The visitor was the only person apart from the baron who knew about the document and therefore was a dangerous co-conspirator. Sitting in the dungeon, the acquaintance would no longer have been a threat to the general's plans, which would have increased his resolve. (−1)

4: In the Forest, end of April 1256, in the morning hours

A: This is what actually happened. The maid needed the money for her poor family. In addition, she believed what the baron said and that this was a good way to increase the chances for a new heir to the throne. (0)

B: The fact that the queen hadn't had any additional children was mainly due to the king's advancing years. A lover would have greatly increased the chances of a new heir to the throne. And in turn, that would have made it much more difficult for the baron to remove all of the heirs. (+2)

C: A charlatan wouldn't have been able to make a successful contraception. She would have simply sold the baron a vial of water. This would have given the queen a better chance to conceive another child with the king. (+1)

5: Audience Chamber, beginning of May 1256, in the afternoon

A: If the bishop had sided with the king, he would have had one less adversary. The bishop wouldn't have tried to incite the baron later. (+1)

B: This is what actually happened. The bishop knew the queen was very religious, unlike her husband. He hoped he would be able to influence the queen towards the interests of the church. (0)

C: The suspension of the royal payments to Rome would have angered the pope and turned him against the king. He would have looked for opportunities to discredit and remove the king—perhaps he would even have excommunicated him. (−1)

6: In the Confessional, end of June 1256, at midnight

A: This is what actually happened. The queen was loyal to her husband and shaken by the bishop's advance. Her conscience left her no choice but to tell her husband about the experience as soon as possible. This led to the king sending the bishop into exile. (0)

B: In the meantime, the baron had gained the queen's trust. If she had told him what happened, the baron might have had conceived of a plan to ally himself with the bishop against the royal family. (−1)

C: Such an unexpected and violent blow to the bishop's face by the queen would have demonstrated how steadfastly she stood by her husband. He would have recognized how pointlessness his endeavors were and would have stopped his machinations against the king. (+1)

7: In the Stable, end of July 1256, at night

A: The stable boy's direct question about what the queen might have said about the medicine would have plagued the maid's conscience and likely would have provoked her to confide in her mistress. (+1)

B: If the two lovers had immediately left the royal court, the medicine would no longer have been administered to the queen. The chance for an heir to the throne would have increased. (+1)

C: This is what actually happened. The stable boy advised the maid to increase the dose of the medicine, which she did. However, because the medicine was already taking effect and the extra dose didn't have any undesirable side effects, this option had no effect. (0)

8: In a Messenger Bag, beginning of September 1256, in the morning

A: A few weeks earlier, the bishop's failed attempt to turn the queen against the king had led to his exile. Nevertheless, the bishop still considered the devout queen as an important ally at court when it came to representing the interests of the church. If the bishop had received this letter, at the very least he would have warned the queen not to go to the coast. (+1)

B: If the messenger had brought this significant letter to the king instead of the baron, the king would have learned of the confidante's insidious plan immediately and would have banished her from his realm. The baron would also have come under suspicion and would thereby have lost the queen's trust, which would have made it very difficult for him to get rid of her. (+2)

C: This is what actually happened. The queen's confidante had written the letter to the baron with instructions for the messenger to bring the letter to him. This now provided the missing step in the baron's plan. However, the baron didn't recognize that the confidante actually had an ulterior motive and was only using him. (0)

9: An Abbey in the Mist, mid-September 1256, at nightfall

A: This is what actually happened. The baron was now obsessed with his plan. The falsified content of this letter fitted his scheme well. The baron thought that if the king himself wanted to get rid of his queen, then he probably wouldn't even investigate how her death had happened. In his blind zeal, he didn't even notice that the letter was a blatant forgery. (0)

B: If the baron had recognized that the royal seal was forged, he would have assumed that the bishop was acting on behalf of the pope. It would have unsettled him that another party was apparently intriguing against the king as well. In view of such a complicated situation, the baron would have deferred acting on his plan. (+1)

C: If the bishop's forgery had become a reality, it would have meant the king would have opposed his wife, even though the two were actually loyal to one another. Without this mutual protection, both the king and queen would have been considerably weakened. (−2)

10: A Steep Cliff, September 16, 1256, at sunset

A: If someone other than the baron had approached the queen, it was more likely that the baron would not have been able to push her off the cliff—at least for the time being. It would still have been possible later for the baron to find another opportunity, but perhaps the queen would have discovered the intrigue against her in time. (+1)

B: This is what actually happened. The baron had snuck up on the queen from behind and pushed her off the cliff. (0)

C: See A. (+1)

11: The Tower Room, September 19, 1256, at dawn

A: This is what actually happened. The confidante took the signet ring, and a short time later presented it to the king. She claimed to have found the ring in the place where the queen fell to her death. The king immediately recognized it as the ring he had given the baron long ago. He then devised a plan to expose the baron's treachery. (0)

B: An ordinary kitchen knife wouldn't have helped the confidante convince the king that the queen's death wasn't an accident. The baron would have been free to pursue his plan to get rid of the king next. (−1)

C: If the confidante had dropped the letter without noticing it, the baron would have discovered it the next day. He would have realized that the confidante had specifically searched for it and he wouldn't have been able to trust her anymore. Later, he would have been able to use the letter to drag his confidante with him to their deaths. (+1)

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