

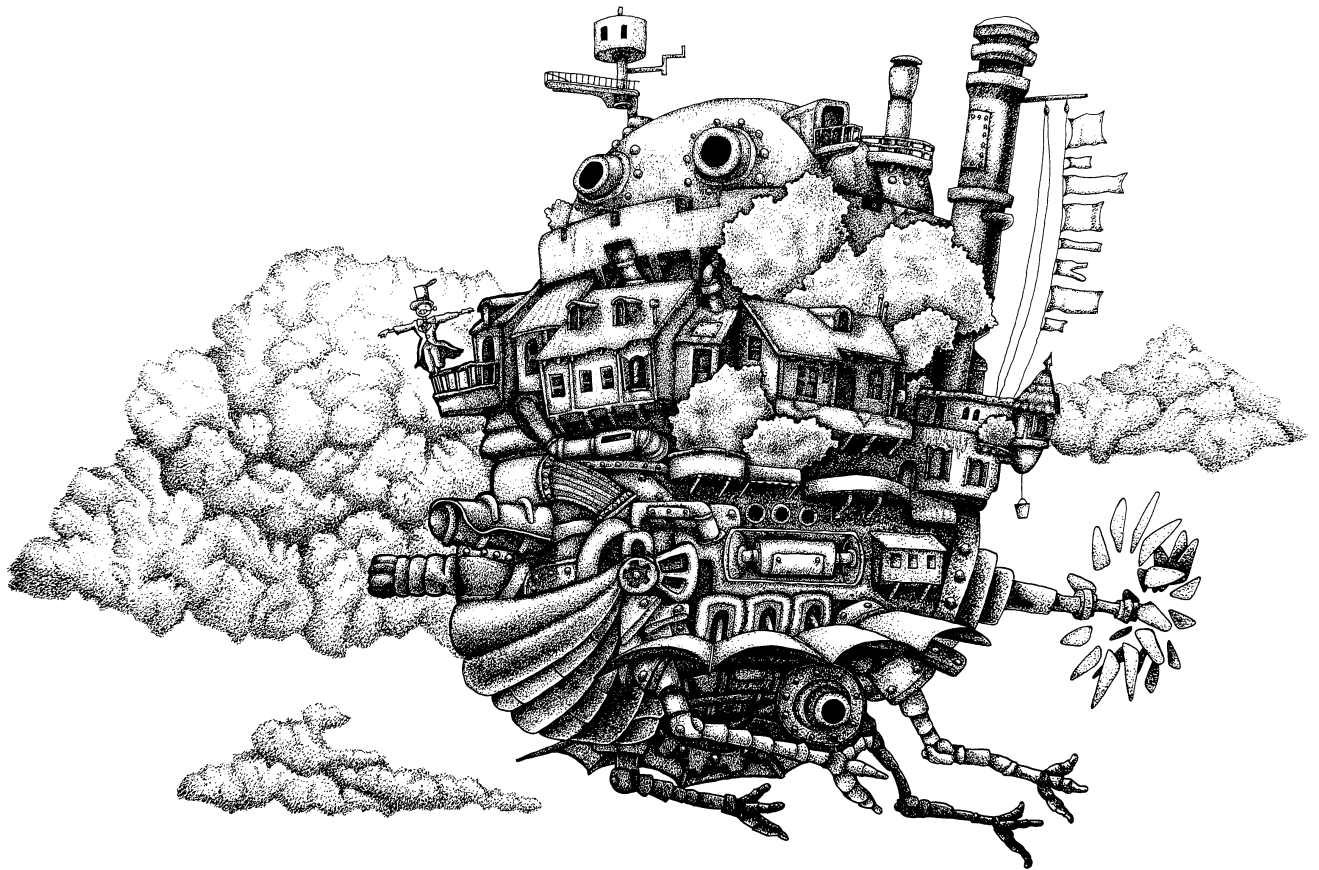


UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO

PONG
Playlab fOr inNovation in Games

Howl's Moving Castle: another door

Game design document



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Change log

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High Concepts

After the previous adventure Howl, Sophie, Calcifer, Markl and the witch of the wasted lands live a happy time. Their idyll is interrupted when Suliman informs Howl of the oncoming from the overseas kingdom of some monstrous animals, covered with a strange green mud and ruled as marionettes by spirits similar to those evoked by Howl in moments of despair. The protagonist understands that he is personally involved in the spread of this new evil: years before his classmate Layton, jealous of Howl's powers and his influence on Suliman, had tried to steal Calcifer pretending to be a charming girl. Howl was so deeply infatuated with the image created by the magician that he released umpteen demons of despair once the deception was revealed. Defeated Layton, he had secretly exiled him in a small magical urn, filling it for further punishment with the powerful evoked spirits. During this imprisonment, however, Layton has learned to control the spirits and, once freed, dominates the sentient minds by amplifying their own negative feelings. Without confessing to Suliman, Howl leaves for the other continent hoping to defeat his opponent while keeping the consequences of his impulsiveness hidden, but this time it will be the wizard Layton to prevail. Sophie and her friends must therefore ask Suliman for help, alarmed by the magician's disappearance and fleeing Layton's henchmen, who also lead to the destruction of the castle. Suliman prepares them for adventure and orders Heen, in the form of a warrior, to watch over them. Over the ocean, with the help of the King Breunor ousted by Layton, they retrace the journey of Howl, who now wanders as a child without memory. The team must find Howl and his old age to bring him back to battle, while Layton rallies his forces to attack their kingdom and defeat Suliman too, completing his revenge. Gathering together after growing up in difficulties, Sophie and Howl manage to defeat Layton.

Settings

Ingary

Ingary is in the same condition in which the novel left her, with the peace and meekness that distinguish her. The presence of Layton's monsters is limited to the waste, and instead there is a huge number of N.P.C. and social quest that accompany the exploration of markets, ancient buildings, crowded taverns and city courses, in Kingsbury and Porthaven. The maritime city is full of fishermen, sailors and merchants, while the imperial city is more heterogeneous and available to meet the most unlikely individuals.

Radme

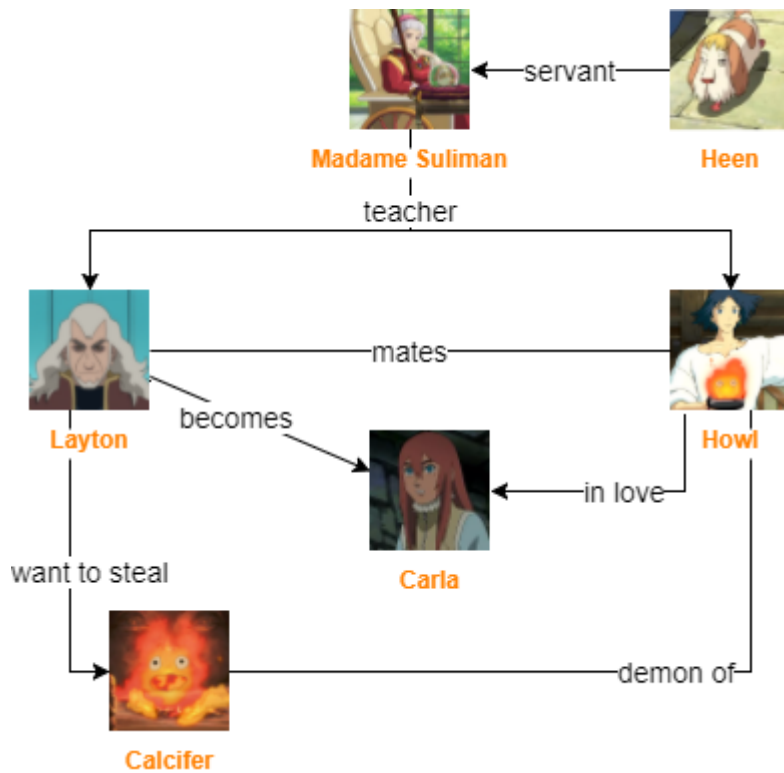
Over the ocean we find the continent Radme. Starting from the small city of Salt Marina it is possible to go through the hills close to the coast in the mainland of the continent. Radme is more arid and poor than Ingary, with vegetation and fauna that recall equatorial climates. His capital, Cal, was governed by an enlightened king, who, weakened by the mourning of his two sons, fell victim to Layton's power, which exploited his despair. Howl's intervention allows the king to re-awake and organize the resistance in a clearing to the north, but in the city the slime of despairing spirits continues to spread, multiplying. In the innermost part of the continent, beyond the marshes, stands the highest mountain, where Layton had been exiled and where it is today his fortress.

Ingary under attack

In the final stages of the game, when the protagonists have returned to Ingary to stop Layton's progression, the cities have become very dark, like the sky and the inhabitants. Only a few are saved from the slime, which drives mad crowds spreading like wildfire.

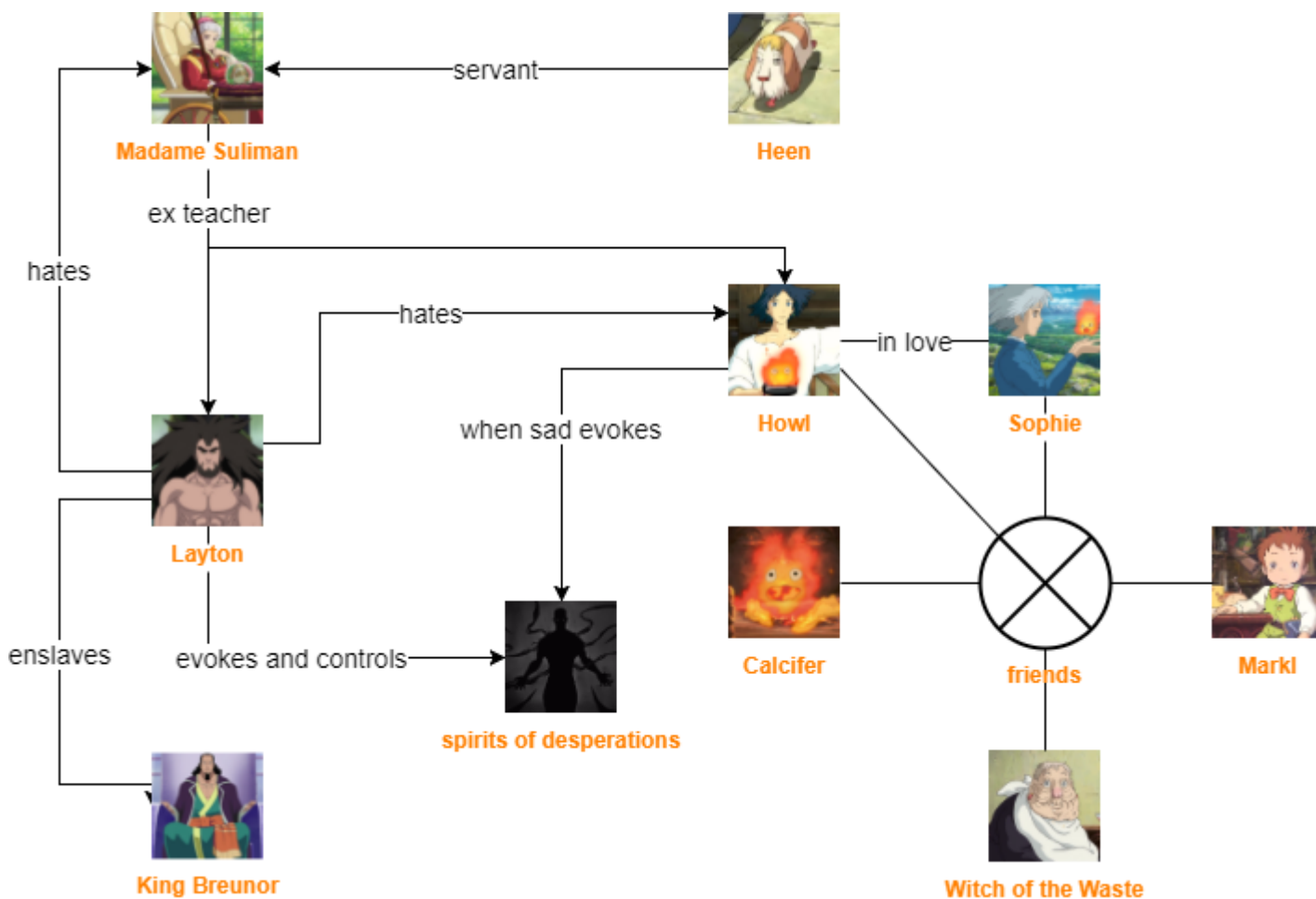
Synopsis

Past



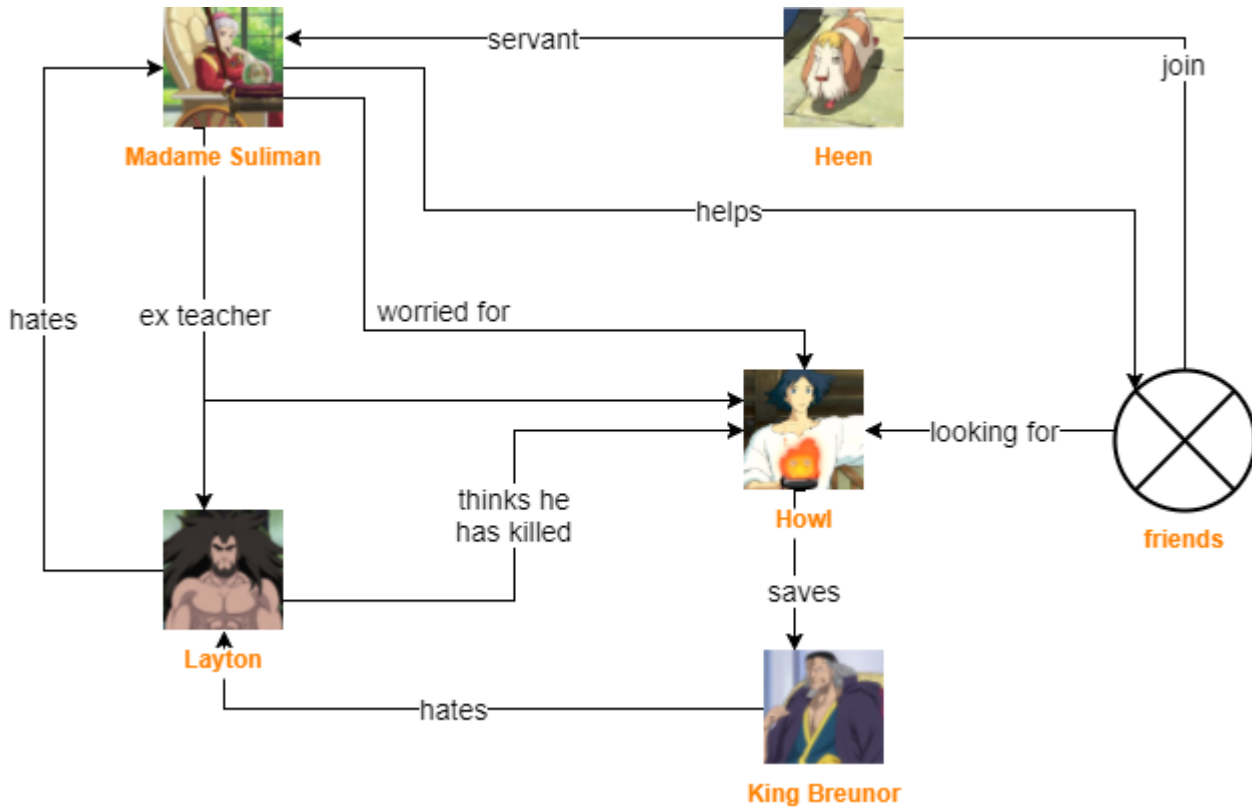
First act

While Sophie, Markl and the land's witch are in a fair in Portheaven, Howl is summoned by Suliman. When he comes back asks Calcifer to help him making a new color of the door leading to Radme, where he disappear. Few days after, since Howl hasn't come back yet, Sophie crosses the door and a bunch of monsters covered with green mud follow her inside the castle. They are forced to run away with Calcifer, so the castle collapses on their enemies. In search for help and answers the group goes to Suliman, where they find out the provenience of the danger but not his nature. Suliman orders Heen to join the group to look after them, then provides them a ship to Radme.



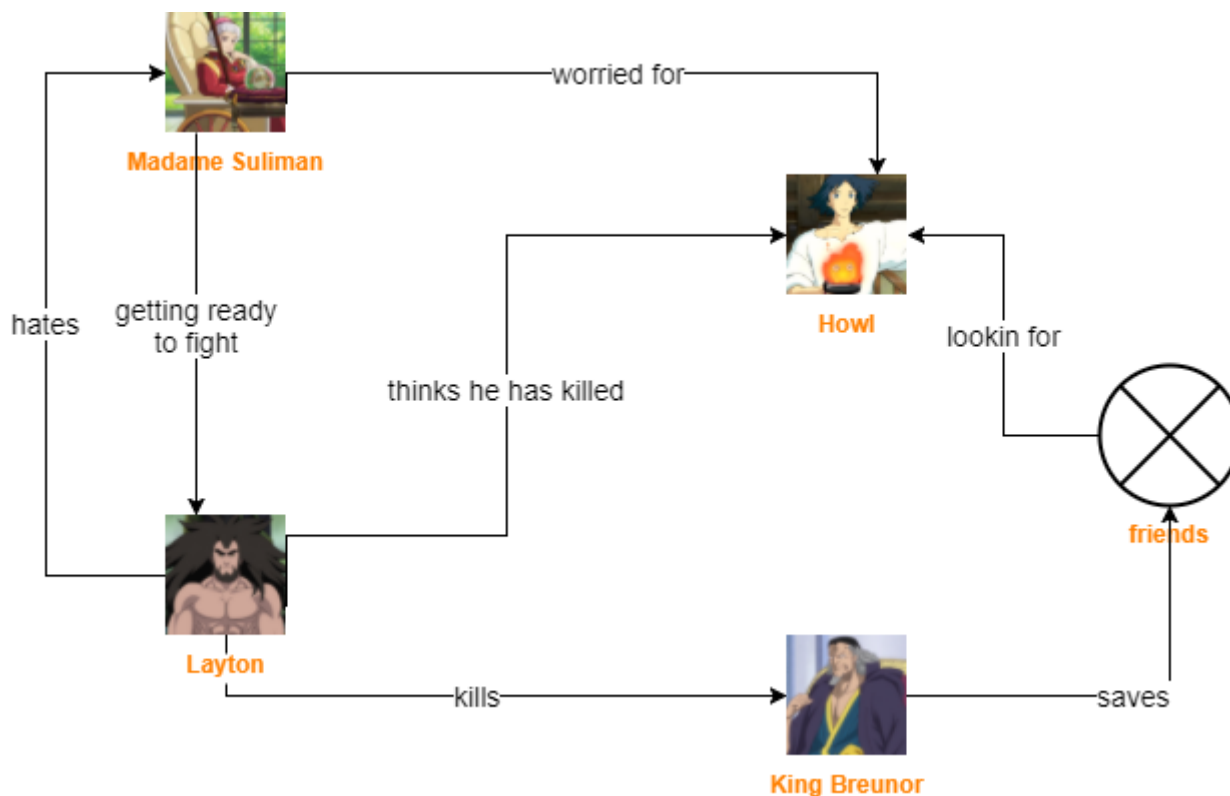
Second act

The group lands in Salt Marina and discovers that the king of Radme has been exiled from the near capital by a powerful magician just appeared from Ingary. Before that, the king had been sick for a while and a deep sorrow had spread around the city, followed by the mug. In the capital they meet Ben, a sentinel of the exiled king followed by an orphan child rescued from a river. He explain that the King's mind was cheated by Layton, an evil magician, until Howl helped him to escape and build a resistance out of town. So the group decides to reach for the king, but soon Layton arrives with his troupes and, before killing the king, tells how he defeated Howl by stealing his manhood and letting him drown in the river in a child-form. In the mean time the group is hidden so they discover that Layton is going to Suliman to ultimate his revenge.



Third act

The group sneaks into Layton's castle to steal the potion that will make Howl adult again, they cross the city during a great uprising to find the child they met earlier (that turns out to be Howl survived) and then, reunited, run to Ingary using the boots of the seven leagues to promptly save the situation.



Themes

The hero leaves to redeem a past error that allowed the bad guy to spread like a disease.

The hero is captured, and his friends, led by a brave and inexperienced heroine, embark on a long journey back to the initial status quo.

They are helped by sages as the old teacher of the hero and the ousted king of Radme.

The unexpected hero leads a revolt to save the city

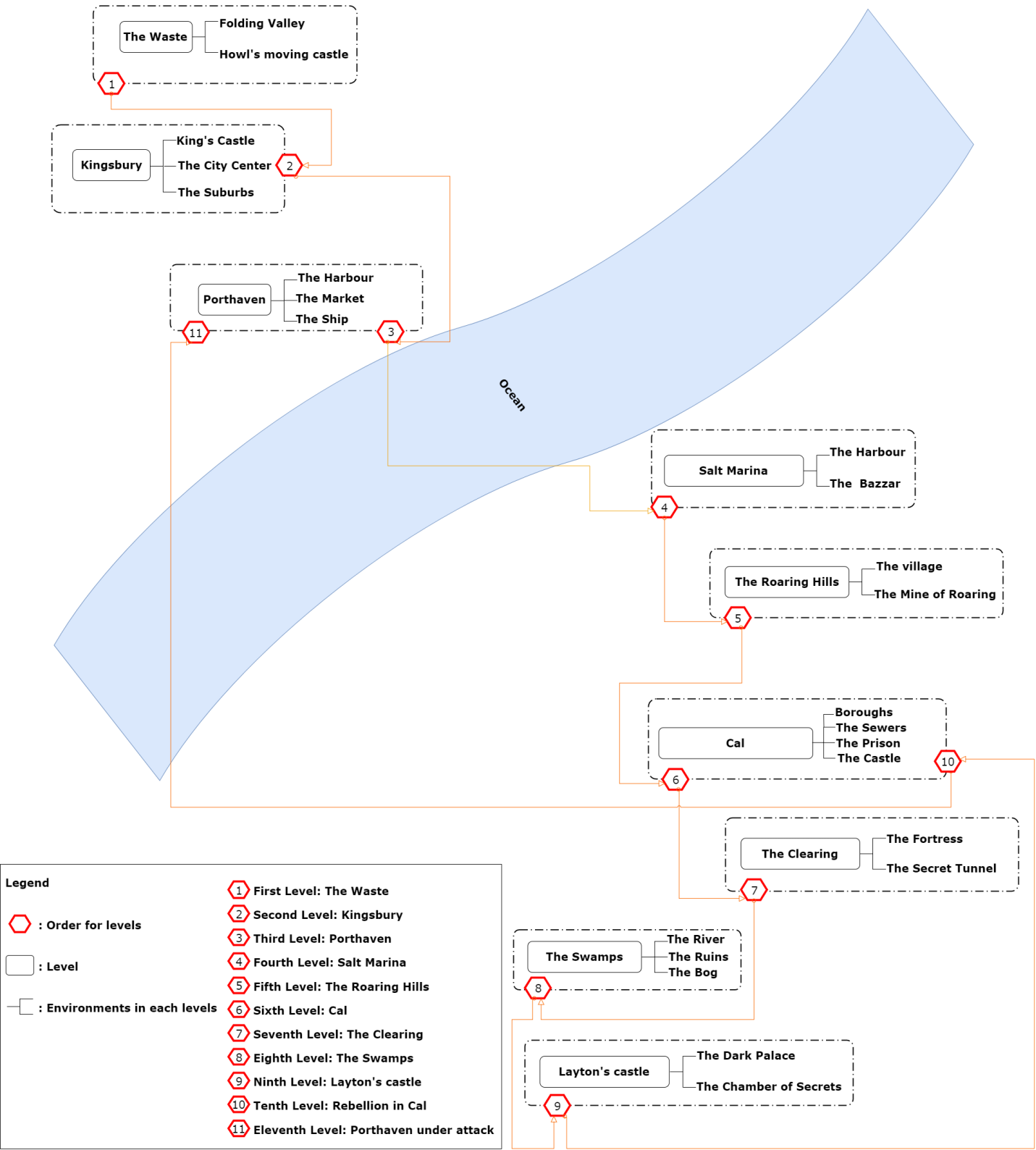
Goal outline

The first act begins with the goal of reaching Suliman through the waste lands, passes for a first training phase at Suliman with relative exploration of the cities and ends with the refueling phase in Portheaven before the departure for Radme.

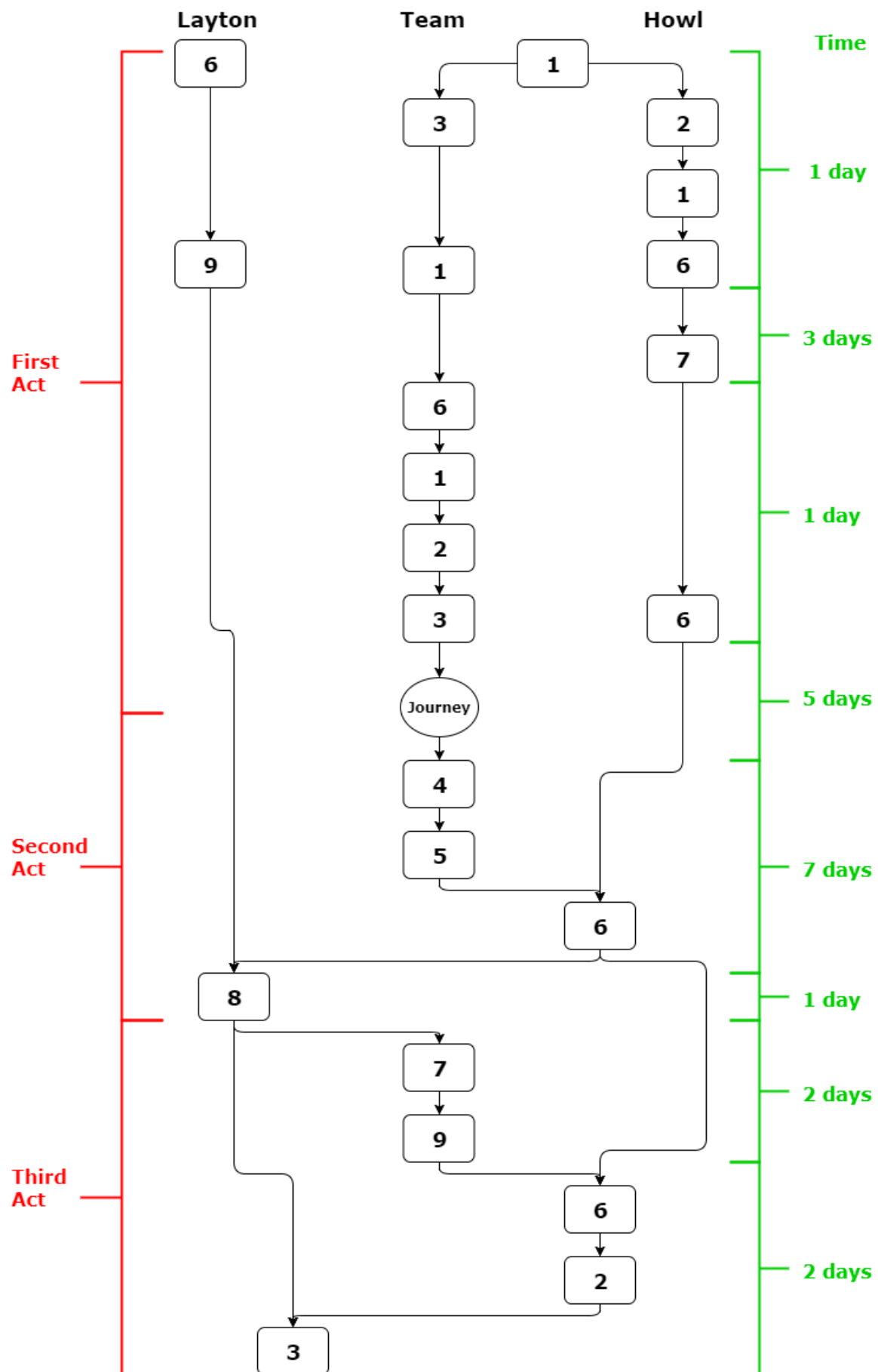
The second act begins with the exploration of the new continent, up to the capital. Here they meet and help some allies, but finding themselves in the heart of the enemy reign they decide to reach King Breunor to join his resistance out of the city.

In the third act they flee from the king's outpost, and go to the point where Howl should be drowned. Here they discover that Howl survived in the form of the child they met in the capital. They then go to the fortress of Suliman, taking advantage of his departure for Ingary, where they steal Howl's potion. They go back to the city and, save Howl and help Ben with the revolution that arose after the death of Breunor and the departure of Layton. Then using the boots of the seven leagues they reach Layton and defeat him to Portheaven.

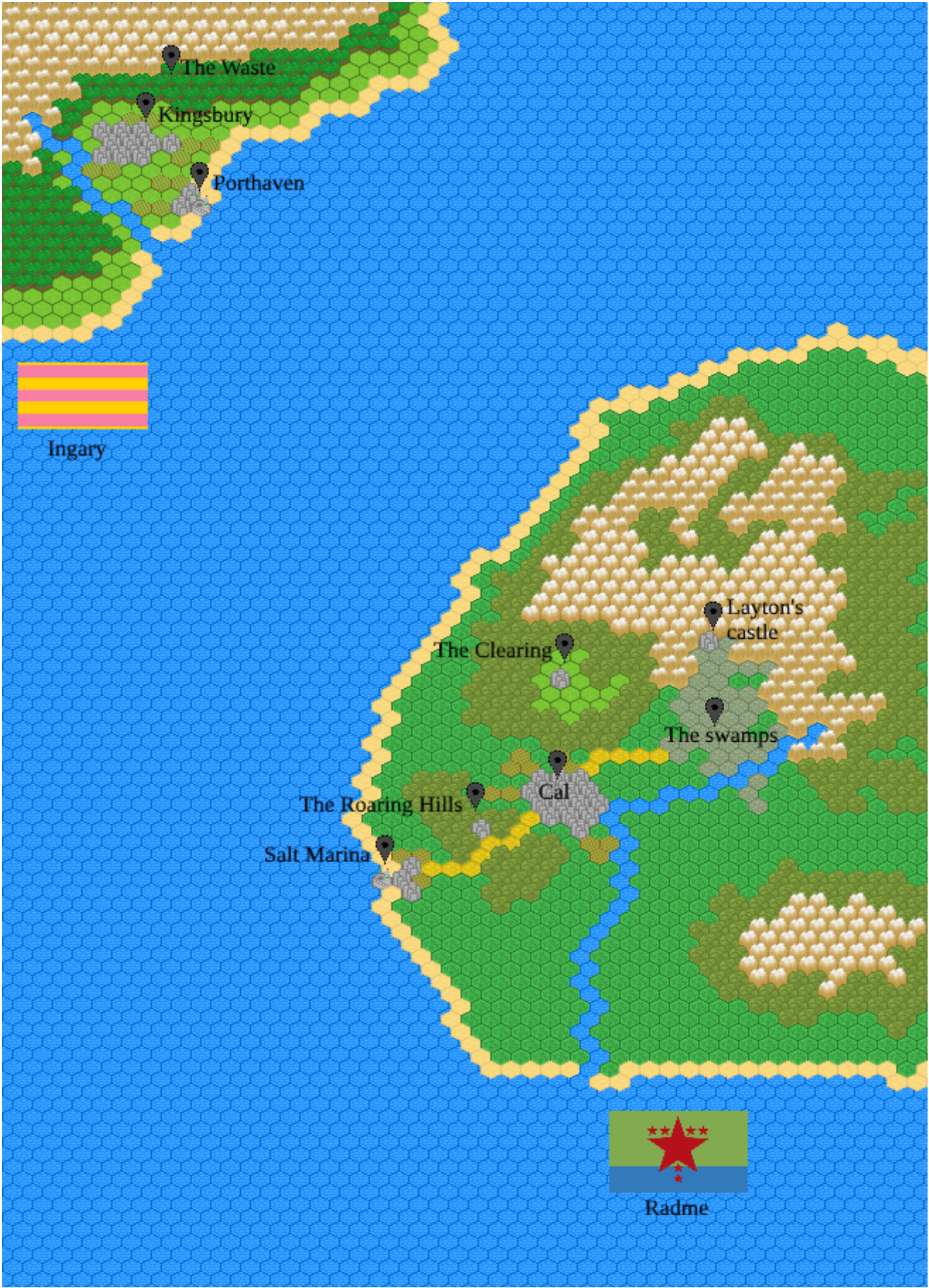
World diagram



Story flowchart

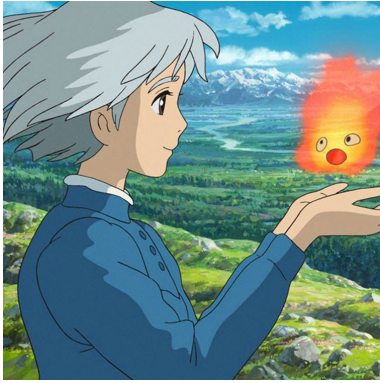


World map



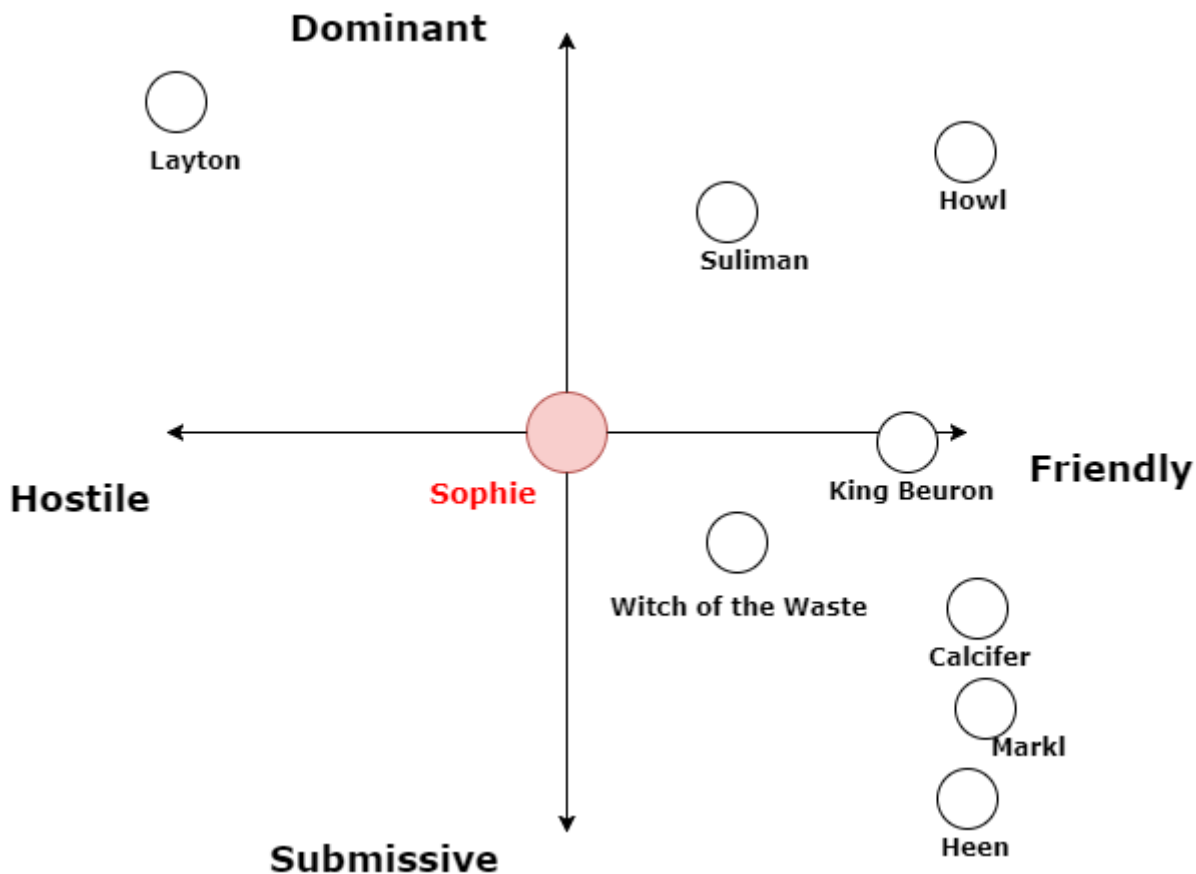
Characters

Sophie Hatter



Sophie is a young witch, in love with Howl and friend of all of the castle guests. Genuinely cheerful and positive, she is able to exert an innate influence on those around her. Sophie, decidedly wise for her age, seems to positively influence the fate of the difficulties she has to face, and of those she meets. As soon as the scope of the danger is understood, she manages to keep control of the situation and to meet her fate, keeping high the morale of the group, that loves her very much in return. In Sophie the calm meekness of an elderly lady and the vital energy of a young girl coexist, to which the sure pride of a sorceress will be added soon.

Sophie has recently discovered her magical potential, so the girl dedicates herself for to the first experimentation of the magical arts a period, with howl and Suliman as masters and Calcifer and Markl as allies. It is immediately evident how confident she is with the magic world, so, once learned how to control it, she brilliantly overcomes a first training. Meanwhile, her relationship with Howl is strengthened, and their life as a couple proceeds happily, except for some hitch linked to Howl's childish character.

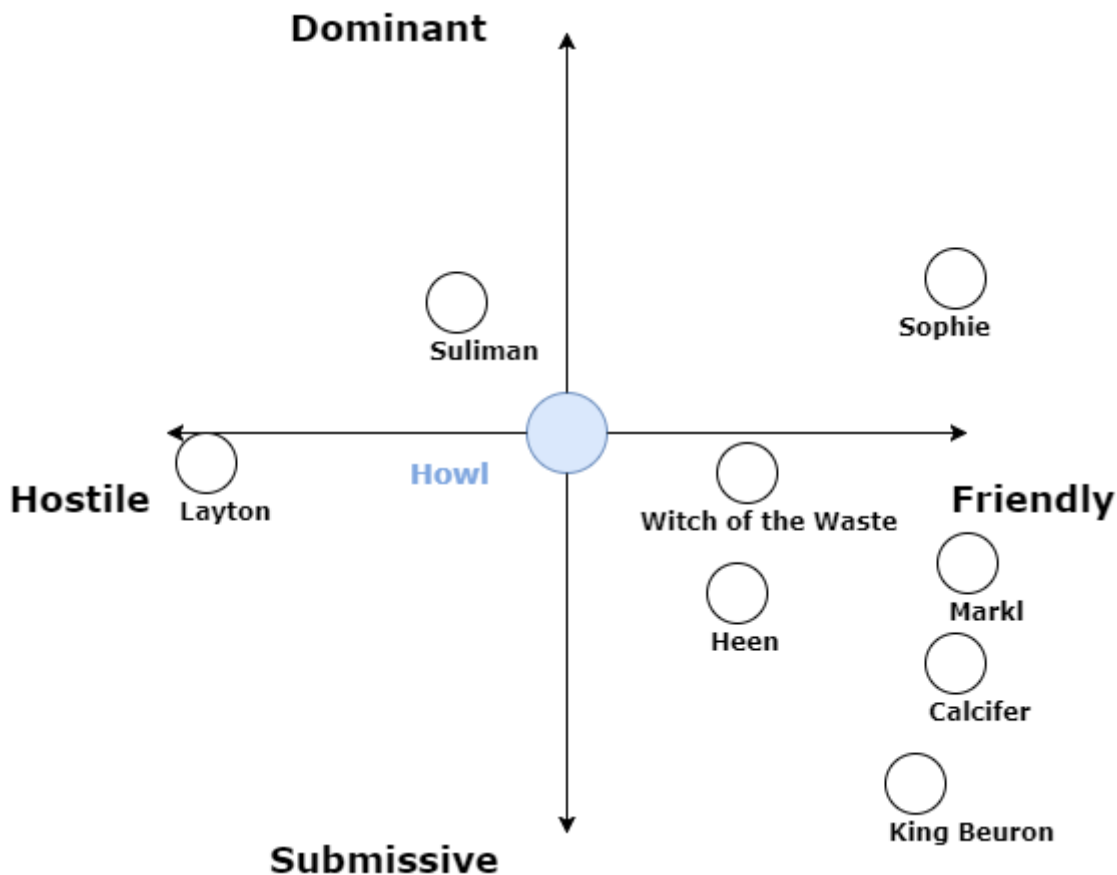


Howl



Howl is a powerful wizard, in love with Sophie and owner of the castle. He can rely on the support of his friend, the fire demon Calcifer, and the young apprentice Markl. He is very vain, he dyes his hair and pays great attention to how he dresses. When he's depressed he evokes the spirits of desperation, evil demons that emanate rivers of green slime able to break down and to control the feeble souls. Howl, although he's extremely good, still is childish and narcissistic, and despite of the great security he flaunts, intervening whenever essential, he has a tendency toward depression and a deep fear of failure. This sides of his character make him tended to paranoid thoughts and to an evasive behavior, in particular with the authoritarian figures like his teacher Suliman, that persists even after finding more emotional stability thanks to Sophie. His new relationship is a big change for his rigidity, and it has a powerful influence on him. He immediately recognizes his own desperation's green slime on Layton's monsters coming to Ingary.

Howl recalls that time when his apprentice mate (Layton) tried to steal Calcifer from him while they were still studying at Suliman's. Layton decided to make him fall in love by transforming himself in a woman (Carla), in this way he would have get to know his weaknesses, but once he entered the house and revealed himself, he was quickly defeated by the demon whose power he had underestimated. At the time, Howl de-spaired so much for the sincere infatuation that he evoked a myriad of spirits. Impulsive and vindictive as just an adolescent can be, he locked them all in a small urn, damning Layton to the same faith.

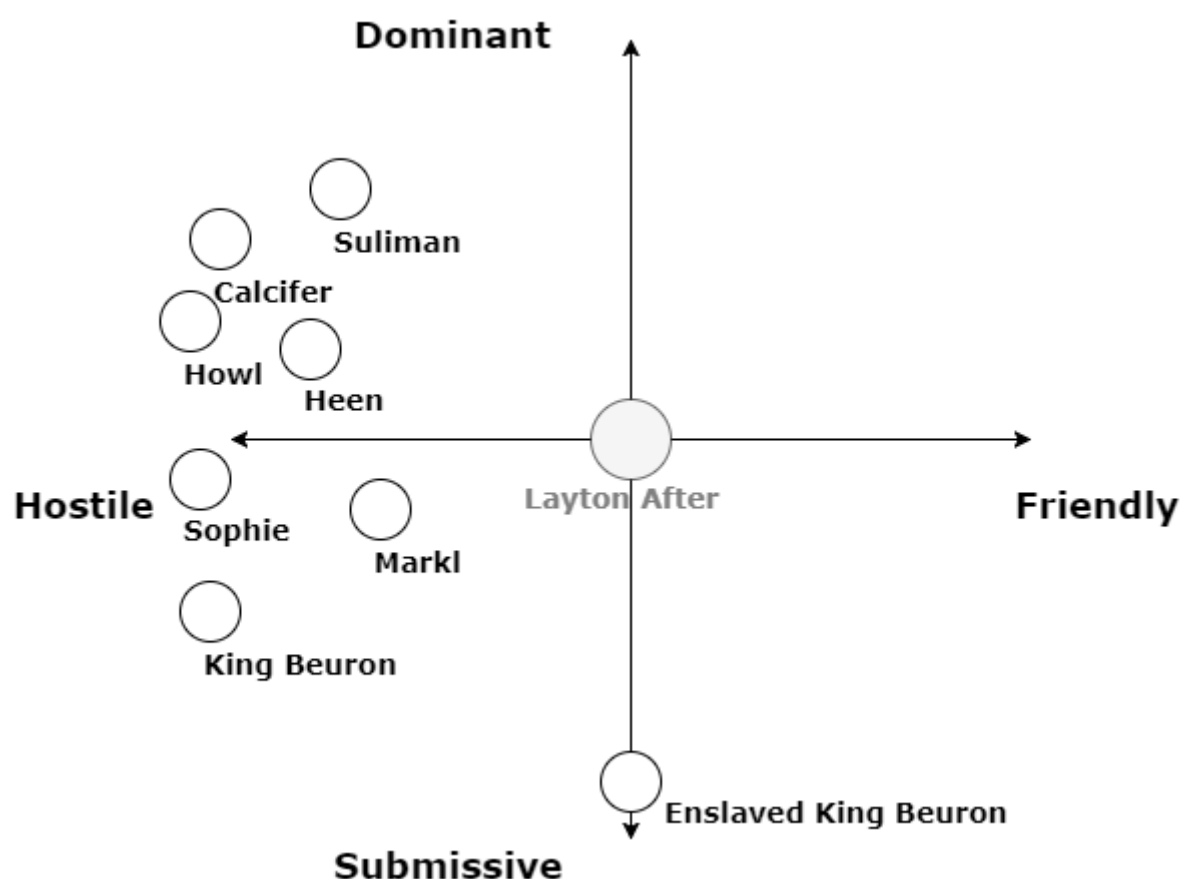


Layton



Egocentric and maniacal, Layton has developed a symbiotic bond with the slime of the spirits, which allows him to control them spreading despair on everything that crosses his path. He intends to take revenge on Howl, for the humiliation of having been defeated and for the cruel way he was punished, and on Suliman, for having preferred on him Howl despite his power was certainly hiding a misconduct or a big fortune.

Layton, in fact, was Suliman's apprentice, and he had great admiration for her. He cared a lot about her opinion about him, but the arrival of Howl and his rapid progress in the magical arts did not bother him because of his advanced experience. But when Howl suddenly reached his abilities, he decided to investigate because of envy, and he learned of the existence of Calcifer. When he failed his awkward attempt to steal the demon found himself condemned for years in an urn with the demons of despair, merging with them. A fortuitous finding of the urn by some students of the other continent leads to its liberation.



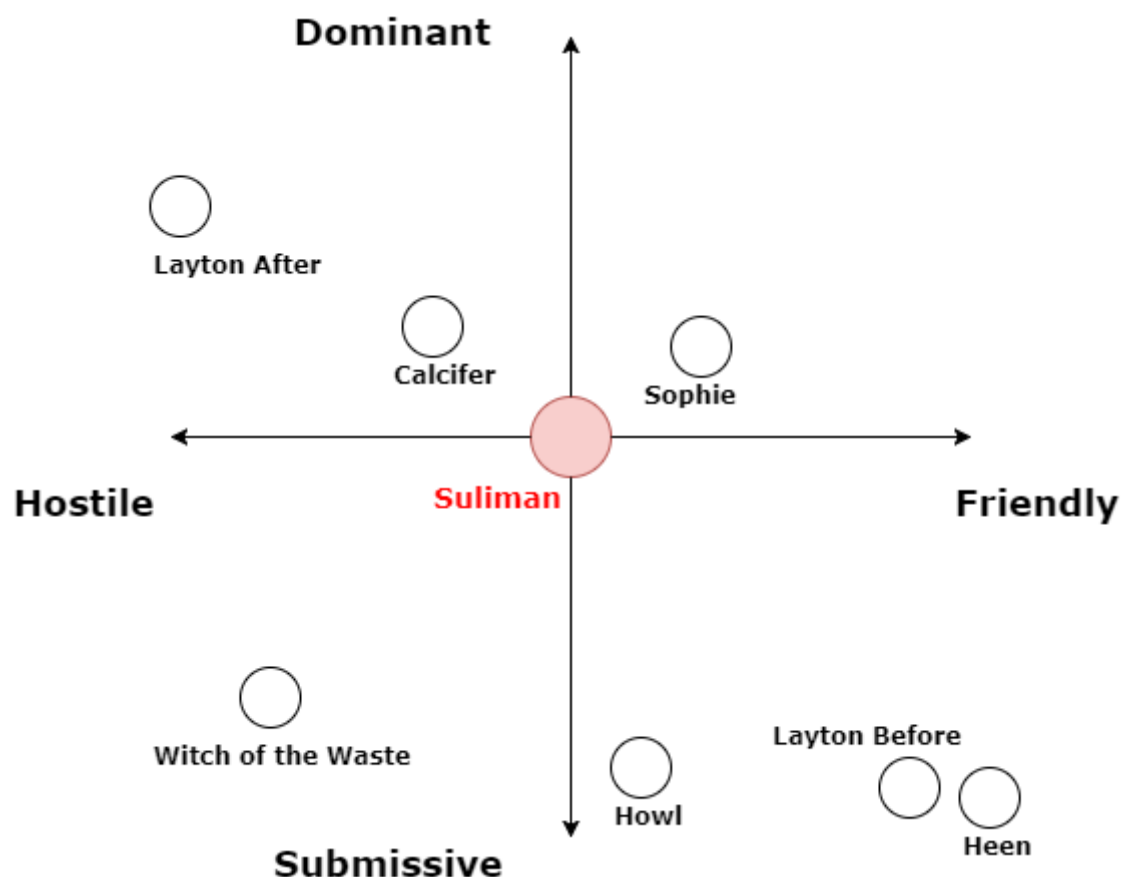
Madame Suliman



Suliman is the sorceress of the king of Ingary, and as such is reputed to be the greatest sorceress of the kingdom. She was the teacher of Howl, for whom she is constantly apprehensive and whose behavior can not explain. Despite his powers she can not move, and gets tired easily. This leads her to play a marginal role in the action, but through Heen she is constantly in contact with the group, and controls a small network of emissaries on Radme.

She does not know that Layton has merged with the spirits of despair after having fought with Howl and must accept his disappearance.

She is aware of several places where parts of Heen may have been spotted.



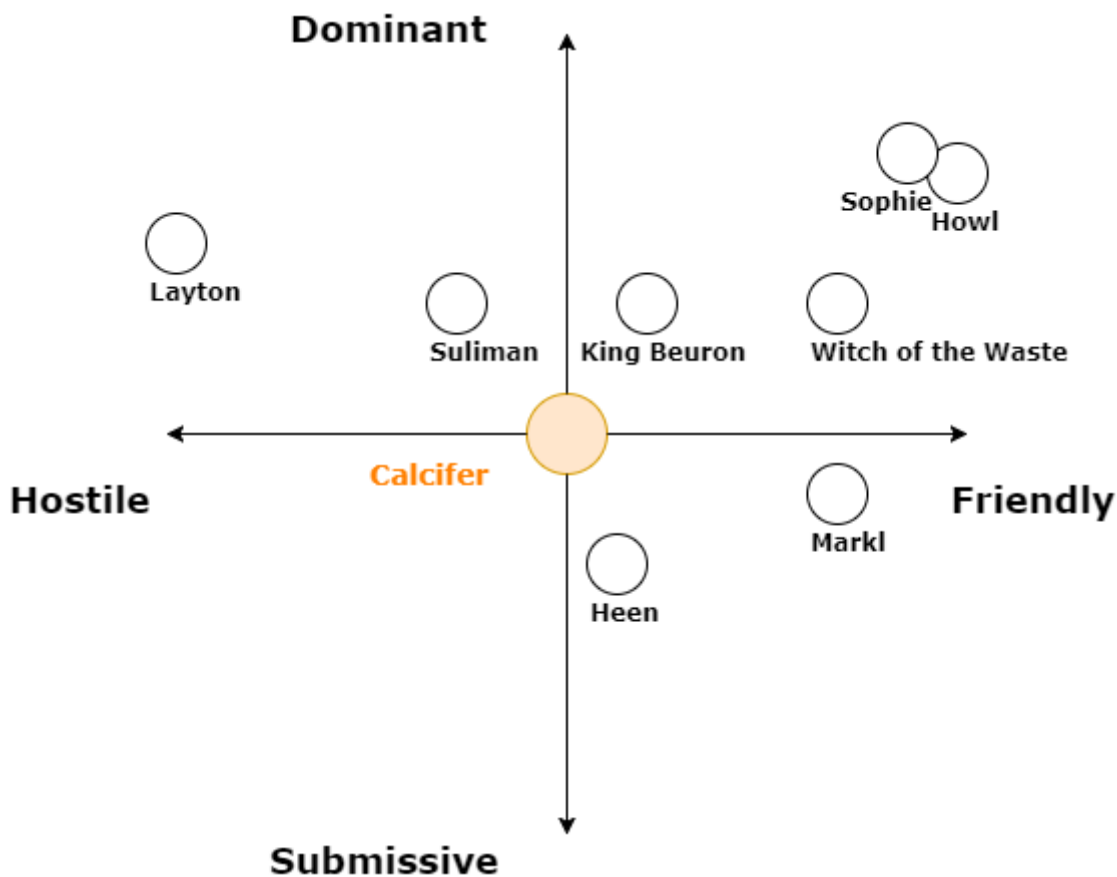
Calcifer



Calcifer is a young and powerful fire demon, freed from the magical power of Sophie. Now it is extremely autonomous and can move to his liking. is able to amplify the magical power of mages with whom it has a deep bond. He often moves inside an exoskeleton, such as a knight's armor, which allows him to disguise himself among the people. It is capricious and easily complains, but it is also very determined, and has a profound knowledge of all that is magical.

Calcifer recognized Layton's intentions as soon as he saw him enter the castle, while Howl was deceived by the transformation into Carla. After defeating him with Howl he was deeply concerned by the mixture of wizard and spirit that Howl had created, and suggested to hide the whole thing, so Howl hid him in a remote land.

Since he was freed from the contract Calcifer is even more tied to his friends, and hardly spends a day away from them. Since the castle has expanded, he travels to the most exotic places.

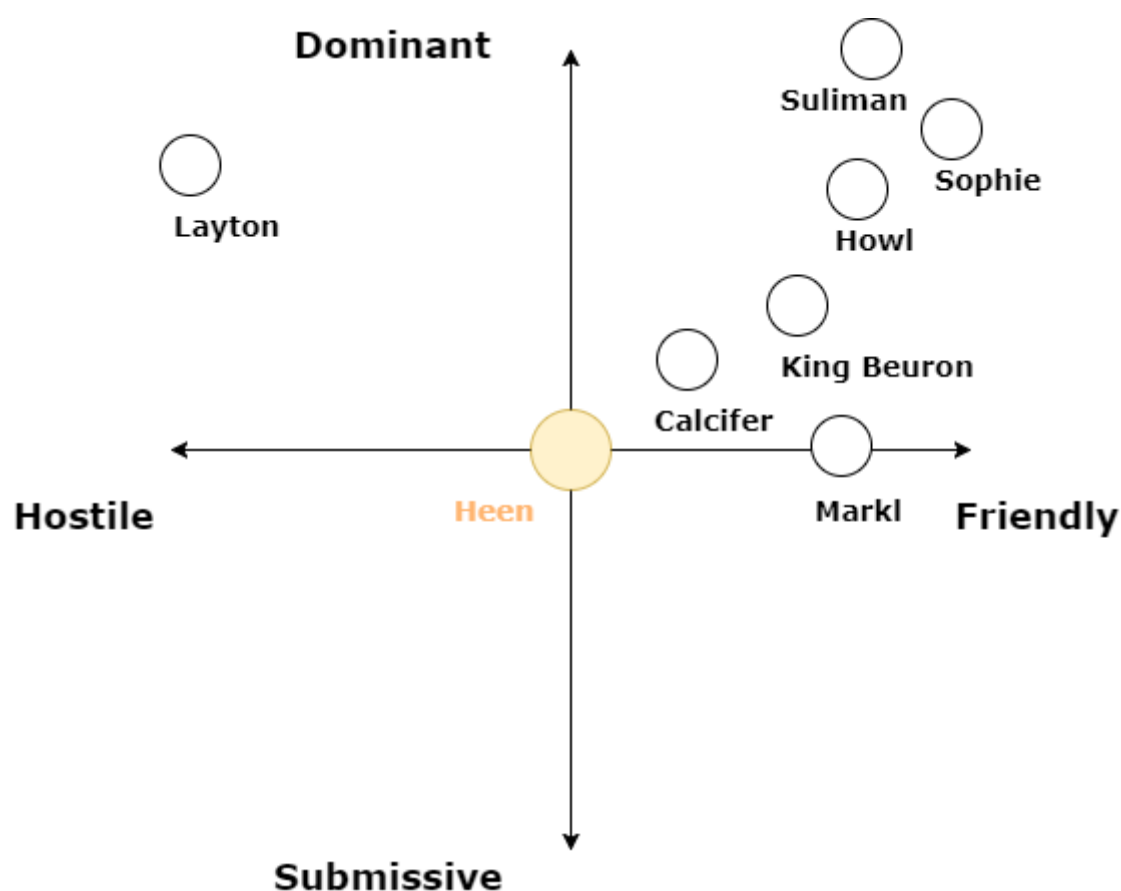


Heen



He is the most faithful servant of Suliman. Known by everyone in the form of a dog, he has obtained the ability to return to his state of huge human, even if incomplete and similar to a golem. His will is all about serving Suliman and Sophie who have a great influence on him. However, while traveling with the group, he pays attention to the eventual discovery of one of his parts, which leads him to a better state of consciousness and health.

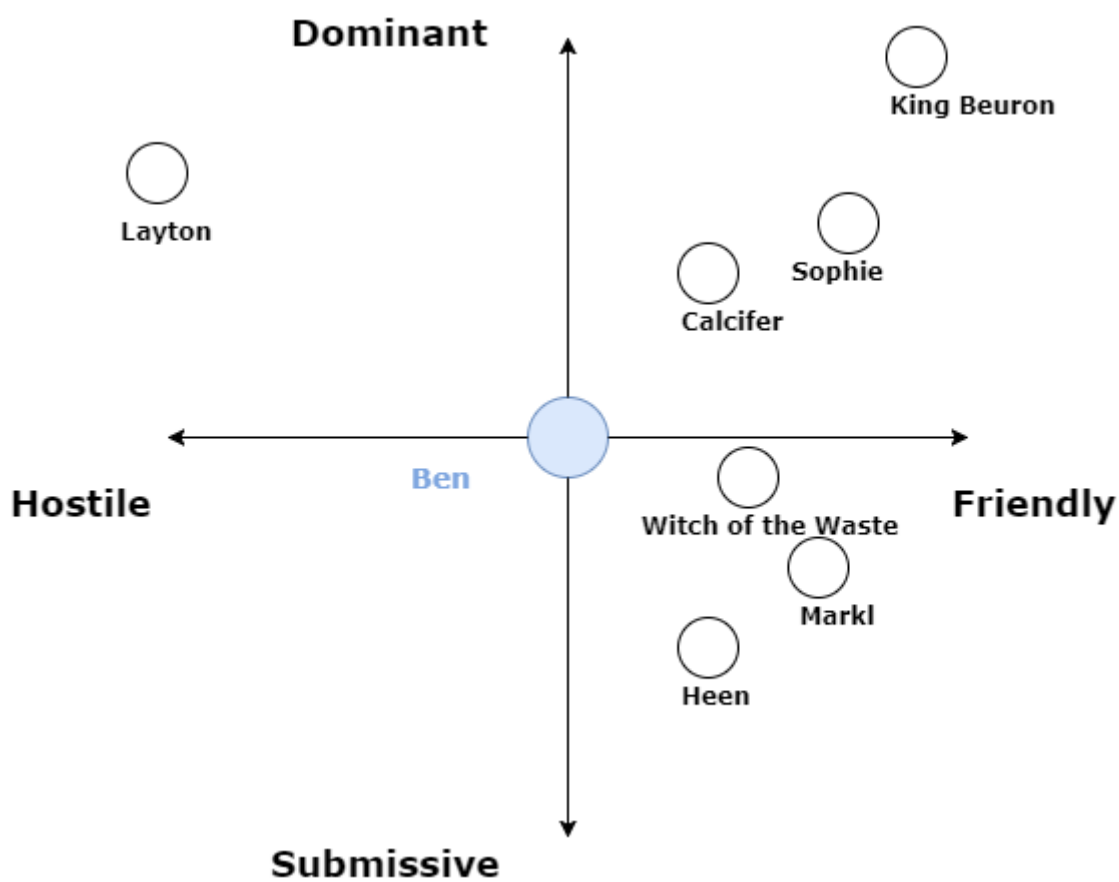
Heen is actually the greatest warrior of Ingary, who years ago was cursed by the witch of the waste, and decomposed in different parts. Although Heen remains the most important part of the body, his other parts have been sold or lost by the witch over the years. Suliman has been rowing for years to reassemble him but is too old for a mission like that and had little success.



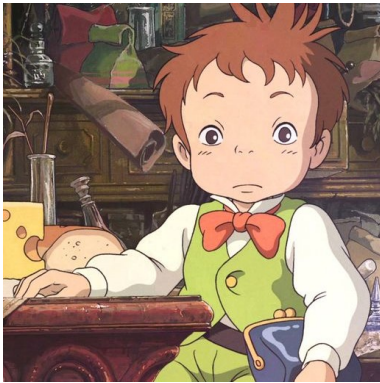
Ben



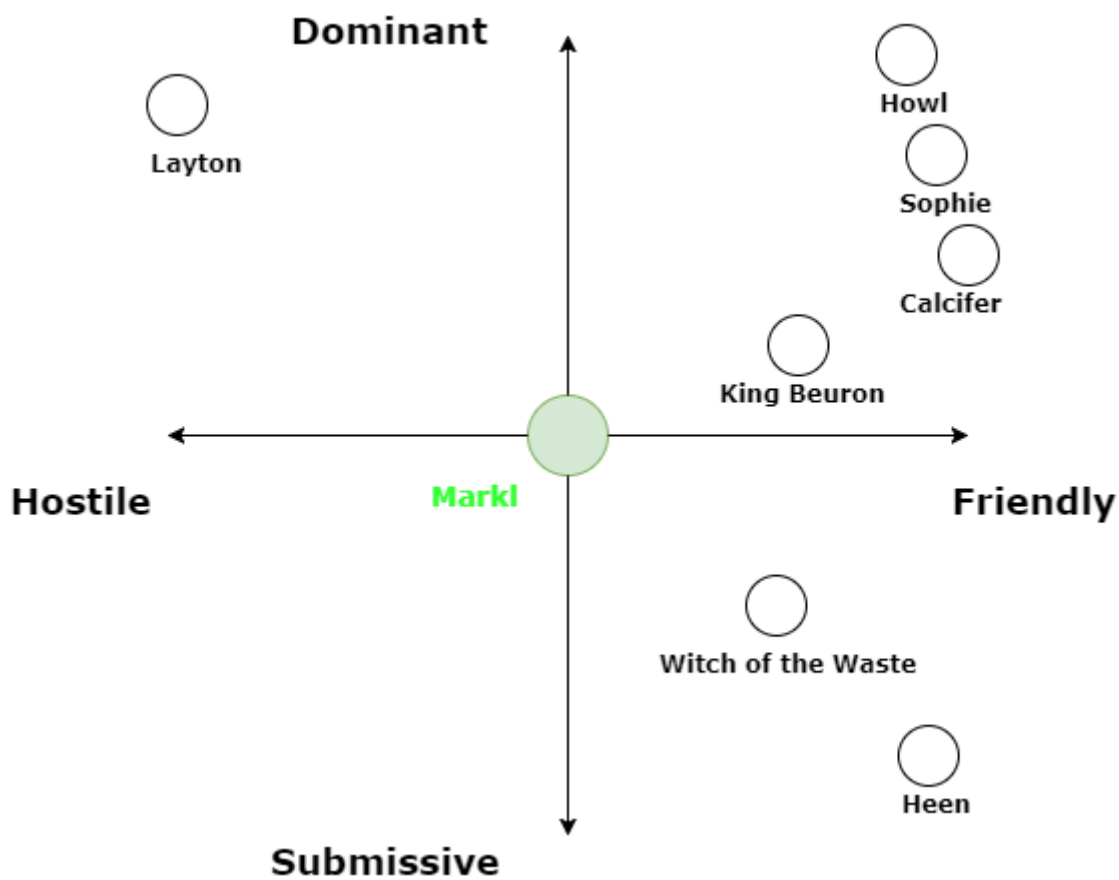
Is the squad captain of the Special Operations Squad within the Scout Regiment, and is said to be humanity's strongest soldier.



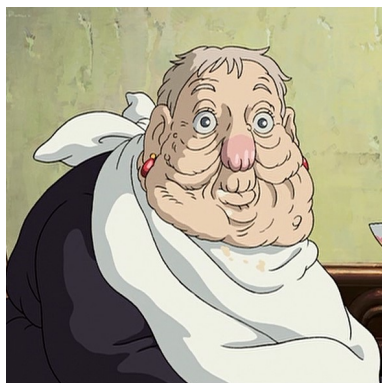
Markl



Markl grew quickly, in a few months he gained several centimeters and became a good level apprentice. Motivated by the presence of Sophie, Markl has made a lot of progresses, and now controls a discreet power. Nevertheless, he continues to show a certain insecurity, and he asks for help with his own spells.



Witch of the Waste



She's apparently a completely harmless old woman. She has a great experience with magic but his brain is too old to be able to use her knowledge in a functional way. On many occasions her intervention adds an element of randomness to the situation, as she is very naive and curious.

She does not remember where she lost or who bought the parts of Heen, but often a small incentive is enough to start recalling. Helps the group as an odd counselor.

The most powerful and arcane spell that the witch has ever performed allowed her to form a puzzle with parts of Ingary's most powerful warrior, obtaining a prodigious object from each. Unfortunately, over the years she has lost or sold them all.

