



# **The Text Avengers**

## **Present:**



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# 1. Game Idea

## 1.1 Abstract

The player is an assassin, hired by an unknown entity to infiltrate the royal castle and murder the king. As the game progresses the player will come to learn the background of this ill-omened contract. The assassination is open-ended; the player is tasked with choosing their own path. Success on the path chosen, however, is relative to the amount of suspicion aroused in the completion of the task. Accordingly, getting away “scott-free” is the best possible scenario, and amounts to the highest score, but is also the most difficult to achieve. In an attempt to make the game replayable, the player will encounter multiple scenarios where their choices will affect the game state and as a result there may be multiple outcomes that can be achieved from various input sequences.

Chess is used as the primary thematic metaphor in Regicide; the movements in a well matched game of chess are not unlike the carefully calculated moves the player must make in order to carry out the nefarious task he has been hired to do. The core mechanic relates heavily to chess as well, as the player can assume the appearance of different chess pieces through various means which changes how they can move and interact with the game. For example, guards are the equivalent of pawns and can only move north (unless attacking), one space at a time, and have the least access to the castle. If the player is impersonating a guard, they must move like one and are restricted to acting how a guard would; otherwise it would arouse suspicion. The player will use this mechanic to strategically maneuver around the castle using chess type rules and must ascertain the best way to assassinate the king.

## 2. Game Story

### 2.1 Overview

An assassin has been hired by an unknown client to assassinate the king of the kingdom. The only condition is that it must be subtle, because whoever the client is they are a powerful and public figure. Since this is the most profitable and prestigious contract the assassin has ever seen, and needs the money due to a struggling lifestyle, it is accepted. While progressing through the game, the player will unravel the mystery behind the contract and the reasons why the king is required to be murdered, while learning about how other characters (Bishops, knights, pawns etc.) feel about the current king's rule. The story ending is dependent on the player's choices, and is resolved in numerous ways.

### 2.2 Setting

The game is set in the medieval era and takes place mostly in one castle in a typical kingdom. The castle itself is as expected with rooms for guards, royalty, servants, clergy, and storage, kitchens, stables dungeons, etc. Outside the castle is not very important for the story, and the only thing the player needs to know is that the assassin is from the outside (but lives in the kingdom) and hasn't been exposed to the affordances and privileges of castle life. Overall the setting of the game is a stereotypical, fairy-tale version of a medieval castle.

### 2.3 Protagonist and Allies

In this game the player as the assassin is the protagonist. Through the gameplay the player can decide whether or not they want to carry out the task of killing the king. Thus if the player chooses to kill the king, their motivation to do so can vary. It may come from a sense of duty to the customer, a need to see the job done, or curiosity in unraveling the mystery surrounding the assassination. It could even come from the player finding the king annoying. The assassin character is purposely vague, such that the player doesn't know why they are an assassin, nor how they feel or what morals or desires they have. Because of this, the player is forced to decide for themselves how to interpret the characters and the task at hand.

As the assassin the player does not have any allies. The closest that you get to an ally is your employer, but who that character is will be unknown to the player. On top of this, your employer cannot acknowledge that they know you because it would rouse suspicion. However by disguising themselves as other pieces to move up the ranks, the player can influence others to indirectly help them set up the opportunity to assassinate the king.

## 2.4 Villain and Obstacles

The game story will paint one particular character in a villainous light: Queen Sindel. She is a mysterious figure in the game, who always speaks cryptically and seems to harbour an unusual

amount of disdain for her dear husband. Some believe she is jealous of the king's power and wants it for herself, others say that she resents the king because while he is making progressive social decisions, she is keeping the kingdom stable by doing the dirty work behind the scenes. Regardless, throughout the game she is meant to be the player's primary suspect as their employer.



The obstacles the player will need to overcome include not exposing their identity before the job is complete, earning the trust of other pieces by disguising themselves and creating the perfect opportunity to kill the king. There will be multiple chances throughout the game for the player to make this decision but some will leave the player more exposed than others, and their objective is to try to do it without suspicion.

## 2.5 Assassination Target: The King



Within our story kingdom the King is known as King Jarvis. The game tries to present the King as an almost saint-like benevolent character, to an extreme and humorous extent. For example, when the king is first introduced he makes a speech about how he managed to find homes for all the orphans in the kingdom. In another scene, the king is overheard saying that he managed to find a way to cut taxes and introduce the four day work week.

This is intentional because the player always has the option to not assassinate the king, and we want to make that somewhat satisfying. The king's character also adds intrigue, and begs the question "who would want a man like that dead?". Naturally the allies of the king are, on the surface, every character in the kingdom, and although though some characters are plotting against him most remain loyal throughout the story.

## 2.6 Story Introduction

### **The following is the opening scene to the game :**

After years of war and suffering, the kingdom rests. A peace agreement has been finally been reached between King Jarvis and the leaders of the neighboring nations, but the damage was severe. A mysterious figure, hooded and cloaked, enters a village on the outskirts of the kingdom, where the results of war are most evident. Houses are broken, land has been burnt, any life the village once had is long lost. The figure enters a tavern, though hardly even noticed, and heads to the back to meet a person waiting in a small dark room.

“Are you the assassin?” asks the figure.

“Yes. A pleasure to finally meet you” replies the person from the darkness.

The figure cautiously looks around before tossing a piece of parchment to the shadows.

“The method I leave up to you. My only stipulation is that as few people as possible suspect foul play. You will find all other details in that parchment.” whispers the mysterious person.

And with that the cloaked stranger leaves a small bag of coins and exits the tavern, disappearing into the night. Back in the tavern, the assassin unravels the parchment. His assignment, as written in three simple words, “Kill King Jarvis”. From here on, it is up to the player to decide the fate of the kingdom.

## 3. Game Location

### 3.1 Overview

The main setting will take place within the castle, but there will be multiple rooms that the player will be able to explore. Some of these locations include: the grand hall, courtyard, castle basement, stables, barracks, dining hall etc. Each of these locations will serve different purposes throughout progressing through the game, as some rooms will enable the player to learn more about the plot of the story while others will have disguises hidden inside the rooms that the player will have to obtain.

### 3.2 Game Maps

All maps were designed in Google Sheets. This provided our team with an easy place to collaborate and work on the maps as a team. The maps represent the gameplay area, and are used to plan the possible pathways and locations of game units.

## Map Legend

Legend	
Colour	Meaning
Red Lines	Doors
Blue	Water
Grey	Unavailable Areas
Dark Grey	Hallways/Passages
Red	Upstairs Entrance

## Castle Main Floor West

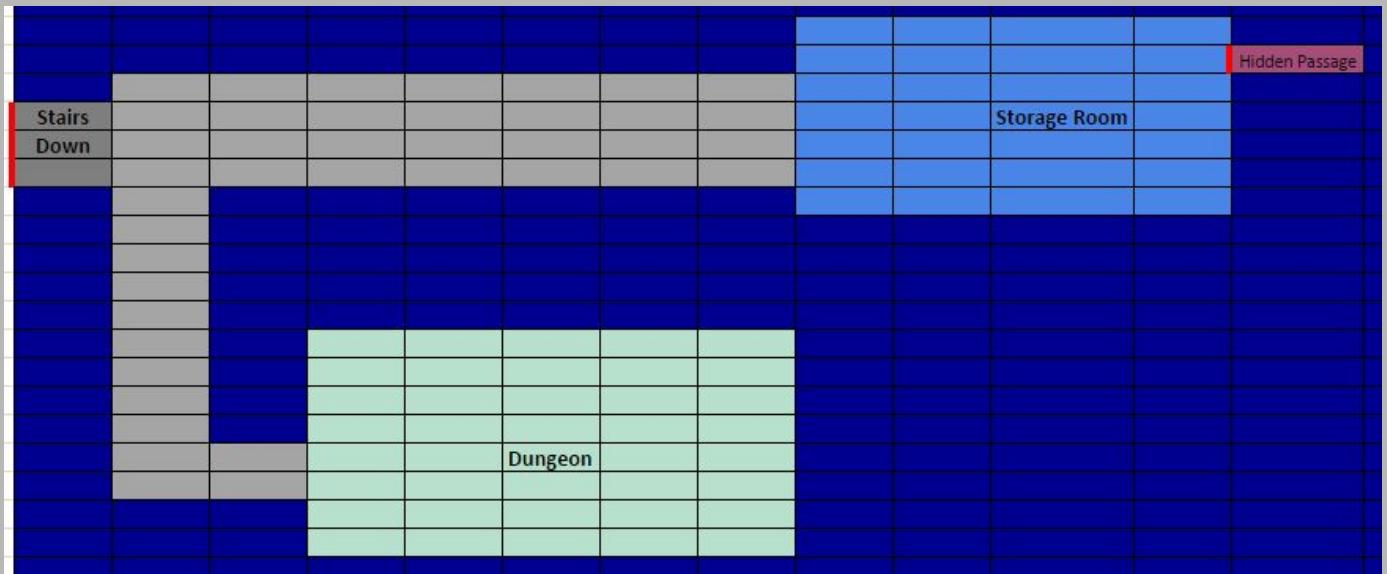


## Castle Main Floor East



## Castle Basement

(The game will begin here, in the storage room)



## Castle Upper Floor



## Zoomed In Castle Room Example



# 4. Game Mechanic

## 4.1 Overview

This game includes basic text adventure functionalities, along with specialized features to make up its game mechanic. Movement is handled via player inputting movement commands (like "n" to move north) into the parser, and general interactions like attacking or picking up items by appropriate input as well. The player can also enter commands to listen in on conversations going on around them and gather intel, or survey the room to get a textual description of their surroundings. Essentially, the game's input-output mechanic is that of a basic text adventure game, the player inputs a command and outputted is new information that lets the player progress. Beyond this, there are several mechanics that are exclusive to our game, which are detailed below.

### **Assassin Base Class**

The player will begin the game as the assassin class, which has special traits. Movement for the assassin is like a king in chess, meaning they can move one space in any direction. The assassin also carries a dagger and a bottle of poison which it keeps regardless of class. These tools can be used for assassination of characters at any point and make killing possible at any stage in the game. The assassin always carries his outfit with him, and can revert at any time to his original class, but cannot carry more than one outfit at a time. This means if a player changes class, they cannot change back without finding another way to do so. If the player is in the assassin class and seen by any castle dwellers, they are immediately noticed and the player loses the game.

### **Suspicion**

When the player acts in the game, they must be careful not to look suspicious. Too much reckless action, will result in blown cover and a failed assassination. The underlying mechanic that handles this element is a suspicion value, which increases every time the player acts carelessly such as crashing into tables, or killing too many people. If suspicion reaches a certain threshold, the player is exposed and loses the game. This essentially is implemented to encourage the player to try to act as stealthy as possible.

## Implicit Attacking

The player can attack characters conventionally, by walking up to them and inputting the attack commands, or by *implicitly attacking*. This is a mechanic taken from chess, where if the player commands movement onto the same square as another character or object, it is treated as an attack command. This mechanic allows for a more chess-like experience, and more movement opportunities for the player. For example, if I am a guard class (equivalent to a pawn) I can only move north. However, if there is a character to the northeast or northwest of my current square I can move to it by attacking that character, just like in chess. If the square is occupied by, say, a table, it is also attacked and destroyed; nothing is safe.

## Class Changing

The major mechanic in this game is impersonating various castle dwellers to gain access to important information and different parts of the castle. There are various ways for the player to do this. First, they can attack and kill a character and steal their clothing, which can be useful in some instances, but the more characters that are killed the higher chance of being caught. Second, they can knock out a character and take their clothes, a method similar to killing, but less consequential. The last method is via exploration; the player can find outfits in chests or closets and use them. The differences in classes are outlined in section 4.2, and are very important to the game progression.

## Map

A defining feature of our text adventure is a map component that shows the player's current location and objects around them. This is primarily to help guide the player when their movement is restricted by class, and also give clues as to which class can access which areas. The map will also show information such as player items, class, weapons, suspicion, etc.

## 4.2 Classes

### Guard



Guards are inspired by a pawn in chess: they are common, the most restricted in both castle access and movement, and are overall the least valuable. When the player impersonates a guard they can only move north (relative to the direction they face) or north-west/ north-east if attacking. As a guard, the player can enter the barracks, the church, the cellar, and the mess hall without raising suspicion, as well as speak to other Guards and Knights to gather intel.

## Knight



Knight are based on rooks from chess and in our game represent higher ranking units that command guards. Their status is higher than that of a guard, and so can access more areas of the castle than a guard without raising suspicion. In addition, They can speak freely to Guards, other Knights, and Bishops and there are far fewer of them in the castle. When a player impersonates a Knight they can move as far as they want north, south, east, or west, but not at all diagonally.

## Bishop



Bishops, as one might assume, are inspired by the bishop piece in chess, and are a highly influential class in the kingdom. Since the game's setting is within the medieval era, the status of the church is almost as high as the king's rule. Thus, if the player impersonates the Bishop, they will be granted the ability to influence majority of the other pieces within the castle to do as they command, because instead of physically asserting themselves, they use their words as weapons. The player can move as far as they want but only diagonally, and has unrestricted access to the castle. Also when impersonating the bishop, the player may speak to any class, including royalty, without suspicion.

## Horseman



Horsemen are a special class, based on the knight in chess, that can jump over walls and move into areas inaccessible by any other class. A player can become a Horseman by simply choosing to mount a horse. When this happens, they lose the ability to interact with other classes, but can move anywhere accessible without suspicion. Movement becomes "L" shaped (ie. two north, one west, etc.) and if there is a boundary it can be crossed. The Horseman serves as a means of accessing new areas, and therefore new scenarios, as when you dismount you continue as the class you were before mounting the horse. For example, the only way for the player to access the training area is to become a Horseman and jump over the wall.

## 5. Game Progression

Story progression is achieved through exploration and interaction with the various persons and objects within the castle walls. In order to complete the game, it is necessary to proceed through one of multiple alternate paths; certain actions will take the player down certain paths. As the player explores, they discover important story information such as:

- Various small exclamations about how the King is a wonderful and noble person.
- A number of different comments about how the Queen can be impulsive, rude, and obnoxious
- Dialogue that gives hints to the player about how they can progress and gain access to new areas of the castle.

Key to progression through the game is the disguise mechanism. Some actions are only possible when the player is wearing a particular costume. This is where a bit of creative strategy will come in handy when playing Regicide. The concept is that the player may progress and gain access to new areas of the castle by acquiring various disguises and applying them judiciously.

Some examples of these disguises are:

- Bishop robes allow unrestricted access within the castle
- The horse allows the player to jump over some walls in the courtyard
- Servant clothing allows access to the kitchens, servant quarters, and the royal chambers

Progression through the different paths will provide the player with the entertainment of unraveling the storyline, with its many twists, turns, and subtle sociopolitical commentaries, until they arrive at a climactic point which can vary depending on their previous choices, as is described below.

## 6. Game Endings

Once the player has decided upon the opportunity to kill the king, they will be forced to make a decision. In one scenario, they will be able to murder the king to complete their contract, on the other hand they could choose to refuse to kill the king. Either one of these decisions will impact what will happen to the kingdom and it is up to the player to decide whether to accept the objective of the game or not.

### 6.1 “Screw this, I’mma be a farmer” Passive Game Ending

Throughout the game one available ending is for the player to just decide it’s all not worth it and to leave the castle. The front gates of the castle will always be open and no-one will block the path. If the player decides to leave they will forfeit their assassination contract, and become a wanted criminal for treason. Because of this the assassin character will be forced into exile.

The player may choose this ending for a number of reasons. Perhaps they decided that the King is too nice of a guy to kill, or that their employer is a big fat jerk. Whatever the reasons, the player always has a way out. The reason for this is that as an assassin they are experienced enough to get away with an unfulfilled contract and an enraged employer. The game is based on many decisions and the player may ultimately decide that they would rather let the kingdom run its own course instead of intervening.

This ending decision triggers a small cutscene showing their wonderful, simple life as a farmer after the decision. In addition, there will be no knowledge provided of what happens to the kingdom, as to whether the king lives or dies, which may motivate the player to go back to the game and discover the other possible endings from replayability.

### 6.2 Kill the King - Multiple Endings

Should the player choose to kill the king, there are multiple variations of how they may do it, and how it ends the story. Essentially, the player can kill the king at many various points in the game and depending on how far they have progressed, different endings will be activated:

- 1) The player kills the king and completes their contract. Afterwards, the player collects their earnings from the client and decides to leave the kingdom and move on to their next target as is normal for an assassin.
- 2) The player kills the king and afterwards becomes power hungry, so they disguise themselves and assume his position in the realm. No one in the kingdom outside of your client knows about the true story of the assassination.

- 3) The player kills the king without stealth or planning. This likely will occur in an early stage of the game, where the player class will be lower, and the castle dwellers will be less forgiving for suspicious activity. For example, the player may kill the king at the very outset of the game, in plain sight of others, by simply attacking him. Although they have completed their objective, the assassin will be killed, and to the player, story elements will not be revealed, and a minimal score is obtained.

### 6.3 Unravel the Mystery of the Client and Assist the King

As another ending, the player may go through the work of learning the details behind their contract and when they have an opportunity to kill the king without suspicion, have a change of heart and share their information with the king. Due to the king's kind nature, he sympathizes with the assassin and decides to reward him by giving him land, making him an honorary lord in charge of others and renowned for their heroic act. This "moral" ending is difficult to achieve as it requires the most steps, but is perhaps the most rewarding to the player.

## 7. Game Engine

The game is written in Python and text output/user input is handled through the terminal. Additional graphic elements are handled by the Tkinter library. The main graphical element is a map interface that resembles a chess board. The player is able to move around each room in the manner of the current disguise, like moving around on a chessboard. We are using a custom engine built in Python because this style of movement is much different from that seen in typical text adventures, so a premade engine would likely not support it. Even if such an engine were to be used by placing a grid of rooms together all interconnecting, it would then be hard for the player to keep track of where in the room the character is. To remedy this we decided to have a display showing the current room and the player's location in it. Since this design places very specific demands on the engine, we decided it would be best to make it ourselves.

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