It's the early 1930s, and a new head of the military in Prussia has risen. His name is Hans Schraiber. He's a general, a pretty interesting one at that, as rumors say his skull cane is able to control people. He's very interested and invested in finding ways to improve the morale and capability of his soldiers, especially their loyalty. So, one day, he spoke with a known gentleman and businessman from Wessex, and the man seemed to have the same idea. He funneled resources into Hans' research, all in order to develop a drug that could easily disorient a person and leave them in a state of tranquility, which could be used to make the subject more suggestible.

Hans proceeds to create the "Soldier Ruthlessness Program", which uses this drug as its base and then other methods (which I honestly forgot about already, but considering I took inspiration from MK Ultra I'll say they were probably hypnosis and EST) to essentially reprogram their brains. After a few successful attempts, he sends some samples back to the gentleman, which he uses later for his own motives and plan (which is even more overly complicated than this one, holy shit).

However, someone ELSE also got interested in Hans. I introduce to you Star, the leader of Afghanistan. She is a player (for context, Hans is an NPC created by me), and she has been following Hans' efforts with the drug and the program, but she doesn't know quite well what's in it, so she sends a diplomat/spy to enter Prussia for some years, become close to Hans, and eventually getting the recipe to the drug. **However**, Hans finds this out relatively quickly due to how close this Afghan diplomat wants to get to Hans and his program, so Han does the only reasonable thing and turns the guy into a sleeper agent, not without giving him the recipe to the drug, like he wanted, and material for the whole brainwashing process. What Star failed to notice was that the brainwashing material contained Prussian propaganda alongside the rest of the stuff. Afghanistan and Prussia proceed to become good allies.

Fast forward a few decades later. Star has used the program on tens of thousands of soldiers, becoming some of the wildest and most bloodthirsty in the land. Suddenly, a war across Europe and Africa starts. In 2000, Sicily was attacked by unidentified ships, but due to tensions with Venice, the Papal States believe it's them, so war between Venice & Co. and Papal States & Co. begins. This includes Prussia, so they need soldiers. And where will he get them? **Afghanistan.** He calls upon his sleeper agent diplomats, who then trigger the rest of the soldiers and send them to Prussia. This makes Star very much angry, but she needs to focus on her own war.

Fast forward a few more decades, it's 2050. A meeting between leaders of the nations has been called upon to solve tensions after the war. Between them are Star and Hans. The host was Prussia themselves, which included a soundproof room that, the Prussian diplomat emphasized, "could hide a gunshot from the outside world". No sound enters and no sound leaves. This piqued Star's interest, she's always wanted to kill Hans for what he did. So, after a bit, the Venetian and Dutch leaders went to the private room, but Star then requested a meeting right after. Venice and the Netherlands had a deal with Hans, so they prepared the trap for him. When they returned, Star and Hans went to the room, which was then locked from the outside. Star shouted at Hans and beat him up, then later knocked him to the ground and shot him in the head. Suddenly, a voice in the radio in the room could be heard. It was Hans. He confessed he had sent a double to the meeting, because he knew Star wanted to kill him, he had been spying on her for decades, after all. He revealed the whole

plan to her, how he brainwashed her soldiers when she thought she was making them loyal to her with the drug, and he told her that, "if she paid attention to the world around her, she'd have noticed that she's trapped inside a box that nobody can open". Star looks around, and notices the place is soaked with gasoline everywhere. But it's too late. Then, the room is lit on fire, and Star dies inside, unable to leave.

After that, Afghanistan collapsed, and Prussia was able to invade it successfully.

STEP 1: SCOTLAND AND THE GENTLEMEN

In 1933, Robert Mann created the Gentleman Movement, one about conserving classic culture and families and chivalrous practices, and spread it around Wessex and Mercia using his resources and his charm. He needed the support, he needed the fame, because he was about to unite the peoples.
Soon enough, most of Wessex was supportive of the Movement. Eventually, Mercia was also on board. Robert started talks with the kings of Wessex and Mercia, slowly getting closer to the king of Scotland.
Once Robert got close to the king, he went and talked him into absorbing Wessex-Mercia, for which he even managed to convince the king of Wessex using the Gentleman Movement as a motivator, their people being more united than ever.

Thus, in 1934, Wessex-Mercia officially became part of Scotland, having united the British Isles for once, just one year after Robert started the Gentleman Movement in Wessex.

STEP 2: EXTREMISTS AND WORLDWIDE INFLUENCE

Robert couldn't just be a local British celebrity, no. He needed to look further beyond, beyond the Isles, he needed to get **Europe.** But first, he needed to radicalize his people, but how? He needed something strong, something powerful. Then, he got a call. Hans Schraiber. He had the same idea. So, Robert uses his resources to fund Hans' research on a drug to allow for this to happen. Once Hans' drug was done testing on soldiers, he'd use it.

When the drug proved effective, Robert received the samples and started creating extremists of the Gentleman Movement. At first, it was slow, but then he realized he needed to become known in Europe **quickly**, so he taught the extremists how to use the drug and the method of "radicalization" to make it snowball. After that, Robert took a trip to Europe and started spreading his influence, making businesses and connections, making him even richer and more influential. In a matter of only a few months, he had become one of the most famous men in Europe.

Oh, but something back home was brewing, and he wasn't expecting it.

STEP 3: MANN INDUSTRIES AND THE COUP

Seems like the extremists back in Scotland have grown too large, whatever shall Mann do? Use them, of course. But he can't be publicly associated with them, so he leaves his assets in Scotland and moves to the perfect place to escape to: **Ethiopia.** A particular man lived there, Hargos Hadgoop Mebret, known as "The Ultimate Diplomat". He arguably had an even bigger charisma than Robert, but he was also quite intelligent (which ended up being an issue in the long run) and had tons of connections. He was also, at the time, the husband of both the king and queen of Kenya. However, what got Robert invested the most in the end was none of those things… it was his immortality and strength. This man seemed unbeatable and ageless, he should be in his 80s at this point! So Robert started looking into him…

Meanwhile, Robert's assets were being handled as he ordered, creating a weapons manufacturing company called Mann Industries, to sell weapons to the extremists and delve into the business of other nations secretly. When Mann Industries looked into Norway, they found something interesting: a pattern of prison guards talking about a coup, and many mentioning Hargos… Robert got told this immediately and he started thinking. A coup in Norway, using Hargos… but how…?
They could be talking about kidnapping Hargos and then blaming the Russians for it, that would make everyone mad… and then, they would fight… Russia would be gone if they were facing so many nations… and they'd be weaker… even the Dutch.
…less competition, less resistance. And the way to Norway would go through the Isles. If he got kidnapped with Hargos, and they dropped him off in the Isles, nobody would know! He wouldn't be associated with the extremists and he'd keep his public image! Wait, but how would he handle Hargos returning but him being nowhere in sight? Hm… maybe he could fake his death, yeah. If he's dropped off in the Isles and fakes his death, he could become a martyr, and he'd be able to research what makes Hargos immortal and control the extremists by himself.
…excellent plan, let's execute it.

And thus, Mann Industries contacts the Norwegian insurrectionists and offers to fund their operation, IF they do what they tell them. Since the Norwegian men don't know who's behind this, they just think it's a random warlord, which is honestly possible in their eyes.
The operation starts.
In January 1957, a ship arrives and forcibly takes Hargos and Robert to the Mediterranean Sea, not without a fight. The king of Ethiopia obviously tells the other nations to look for the ship, and they actually do find it, they just don't manage to intercept it, but at least they know where it's going. However, the last point they're seen close to is in Paris. A little bit later, Robert is dropped off in Scotland, and Hargos is taken to Oslo. Thanks to Ethiopian spies, the news spread out that Hargos had been kidnapped by the Russians, and that Robert Mann died in Finland. Shortly after, the jailbreak happens, where the guards rebel and allow Hargos to be set free and return to Ethiopia safe and sound, although the nations are now furious with Russia and commence the war Robert had predicted. Nations are sometimes too quick to rage.

STEP 4: NEW KING AND THE REVELATION

The Russian War breaks out. Practically all of Europe gangs up on the Russians, and Norway is now independent and under Scottish influence. Robert will make sure to use that for later, Norway has some resources. As Robert expected, all the nations that participated became slightly weaker, and no one's looking at Africa. But that's for later.

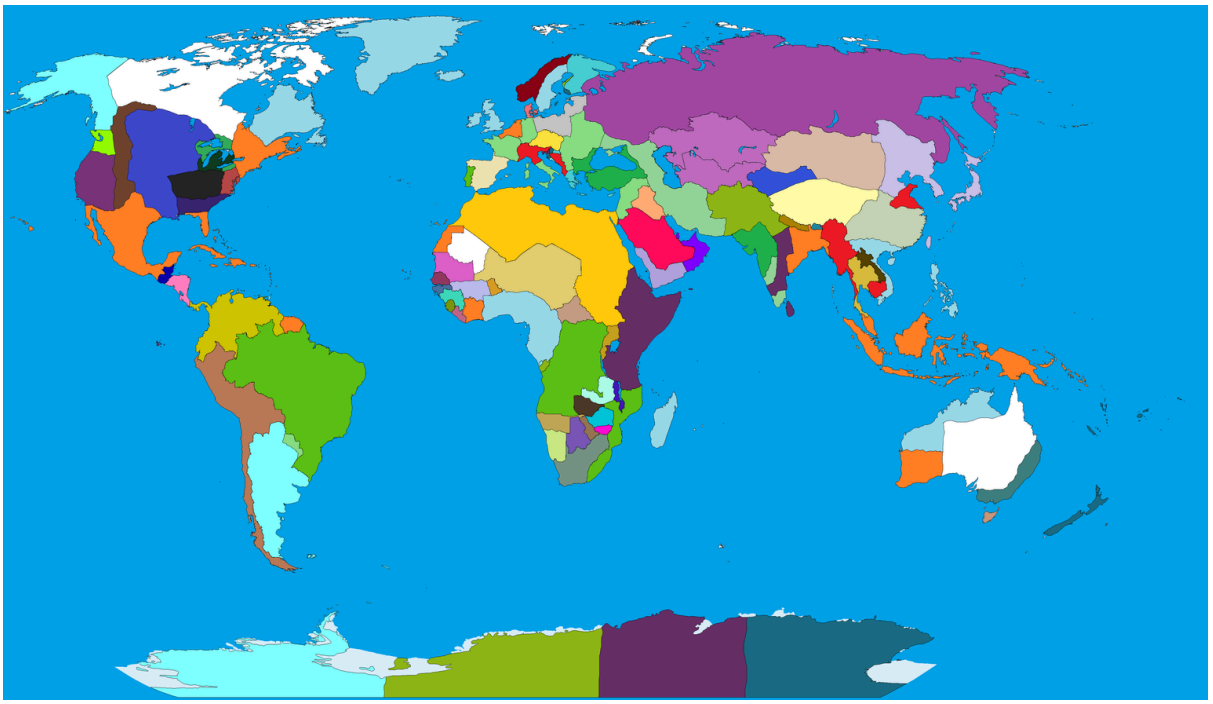
Robert goes back to spreading the extremism in Scotland, at this point 95% of the population has become extremist, and Mann Industries has made sure to equip these maniacs well. Robert then goes to the king of Scotland and kidnaps him, his guards were extremist anyway, they won't disobey. The king stays in a dark room with bright lights, a strange feeling of compliance, and a charming voice guiding his confused mind. It helps deal with everything, at least he can be sure the throne will be safe with him. He stays in that room for almost 5 years, and comes out essentially brainwashed, following Robert's orders at every point. Now that Robert has guaranteed power with an influenced king, he can start looking into Hargos' immortality uninterrupted.

A lot of things don't add up for Robert. No one had previously noticed Hargos' immortality, there's no noticeable source for it, but Hargos does speak of a certain "Goop" as if he was the Lord… this could be the key to the power, Hargos had contacted "Goop" and he gave him immortality! He needs to contact Goop.
In the middle of the night, on the rooftop of a house, Robert screams for the name of Goop, and suddenly… a figure appears. He can't understand it, it's completely abstract, but it claims not to be Goop, however it was surprised that Robert knew of him. It calls itself "the Watcher", and tells Robert that he's the source for Hargos' immortality. Of course, Robert asks why and how it works. After a long explanation, Robert wants to be immortal as well, and the Watcher agrees suspiciously quickly. Then, a massive storm covers all of Europe, but Robert doesn't care.
He begins experimenting. Is he immortal, or is he just ageless? He falls off increasing heights without so much as a scratch, and he even blows himself up inside a house, although that one did make the news even if no one knew he was there. He replaced all his limbs with mechanical ones intended for the Assaultrons, and after he finished all of this, he got confirmation of a few things: the entire population was now his, and the Venetian ships had arrived. Time for the next plan then.

STEP 5: THE WAR

Now that the nations are weak and tensions are still high between the Genoa Pact and the Pact of Madrid thanks to Venice and the Papal States, it's time to take advantage. Africa is weak, and Scotland has a small colony in there that nobody's been paying attention to. Robert decides to invest in it, sends tons of resources and people to it, he needs it stocked up like hell. No one suspects a thing if it's over several decades. After all, he has all the time in the world now, he can afford it.

Robert waits, the world keeps going on, he keeps sending resources, and he rehearses the plan for the year 2000.
First, the Venetian ships, with extremists from Venice, will go to Sicily and attack it, then the Papal States will blame Venice and soon enough, the two sides will be put against each other. Robert knows the leader of the Papal States is unstable, he'll be the first one to bite. Venice will follow. Then the others. As soon as that happens, contact the colony, make sure Portugal isn't looking, and start expanding. The goal? West Africa. But that won't be the only front. Scotland has Vietnam and some of Australia. The Dutch are very observant of the East Indies, so Australia will be the last. Scotland will start with West Africa and the Philippines. When everything's done, the Netherlands should be very weakened after facing France and Austria, and Scotland wouldn't even get involved in the war thanks to the Dutch being too busy to attack. Everyone will be weaker and Scotland will be better than ever to face the 21st century. King Robert the Great will become a legend.



In the end, it all worked out. Scotland shall become the next world superpower.

STEP 1: SICILY

The first step to figure out the plan at hand is to look at the attack on Sicily and to ask yourself one thing. Not “why would Venice attack at all?”, but rather “why would Venice attack Sicily of all places?”.
By looking at the map and realizing it’s the furthest point from Venice in the Papal States, you can somewhat realize that it would make no sense for Venice to attack Sicily when everywhere else is available.

Feat #1: Figuring out Venice is not guilty by realizing Sicily is too far away to justify Venice attacking it

Now, if it’s not Venice, who is it? Who caused this?
Then you look at the attack itself. Three ships. Three **Venetian** ships.
What kind of nation has foreign ships? Either nations with a small navy or nations with a really big one.

Small nations candidates: Bulgaria, Bavaria, France
Big nations candidates: Netherlands, Brittany, Scotland

However, you discard all the small nations. Why? Because they’re in the wrong direction. Sicily is in the west, while Bulgaria is in the east. And why not Bavaria or France then? France doesn’t have enough of a reason to do this, while Bavaria’s ports are too far away in the north.

Feat #2: Managing to discard all small nations after looking at the map and looking at the nations themselves

Now, the big ones. Netherlands, Brittany, and Scotland. You immediately discard Brittany for the same reason as with France, and then look at Scotland and the Netherlands. Why would the Netherlands blame Venice and then support Venice at the same time? It doesn’t make sense. It could be them using that to invade France and Brittany later, but you then remember the 1930s and 40s, where Venice and the Papal States’ rivalry started to show. Why would this happen then but not be mentioned again? Was this planned from before? Maybe the answer is by looking back.

Feat #3: Realizing the rivalry goes way back and the instability showed a long time ago, and figuring out you need to look back

STEP 2: LOOKING BACK

So, we've got two candidates for now: the Netherlands and Scotland.
You look back and notice the conflicts are mostly forgotten about after the Russian War. You then start looking back, from the 60s to the 30s, to see what's going on.
The Russian War, the kidnapping of Hargos, the independence of Norway.

Feat #4: Realizing the Russian War is somewhat involved in the attack on Sicily

You use information from spies to see what happened during the kidnapping. You check the records.
The ship sailed in Ethiopia, went through France, the Iberian Peninsula, and Paris reported it to be going towards the northeast.
Then you see something weird. Upon arrival, and before Hargos was imprisoned, Robert Mann was nowhere to be seen. The records say nothing about it, but you keep going with Hargos. You use your spies to listen in on conversations at the prison, and hear the guards discussing a few things, such as a jailbreak and funding something with "the help of some Warlord". **The Warlord.** This will be very important, probably. You save it in your head. Then, a few days later, Robert Mann is oddly declared dead… in Finland? He wasn't in the boat when they arrived in Norway, and it was only one ship, this makes no sense! Robert either was dropped off somewhere along the way and died on his way to Russia, or Robert faked his death. Then, the news spread that Russia kidnapped Hargos and took him to Oslo, so every nation was outraged. While demanding that Hargos be free, a jailbreak suddenly happened where Hargos was being held. He returned safe and sound to Ethiopia, but the anger wasn't satiated. After the Russian War ends and you notice Norway is now independent, you start looking at the big picture. Norway… someone kidnapped Hargos and Robert, took them to Oslo, then they staged the jailbreak to make everyone more trusting of them, in order to secure independence. This was all a plan by Norway, they played everyone.

Feat #5: Figuring out Norway's plan for independence after the Russian War

But something is still not clear. Who's the "Warlord"? It's clearly someone with a lot of money and influence, and smart enough to figure out all of Norway's plan before it was even executed, because otherwise they wouldn't have funded it. This person needs to have immense influence and intelligence to do this, and there's not many people that fit this description. However, there's one in particular that lets us finally discard the Netherlands for the attack on Sicily… **Robert Mann.** It's very coincidental that, right before the plan is executed, Robert suddenly dies just like that. In the middle of Finland. We already know he faked his death, but where is he? Well, the last clue we got from the ship back when Hargos and Robert were being taken was that Paris said the ship was going to the "northeast". There are only two places northeast of Paris before Oslo: Bavaria and **Scotland.** We can finally say with certainty that Robert Mann is the "Warlord" behind the funding of the Norway Plan, the one who figured it out before anyone else, and the one who faked his death to hide his involvement.

Feat #6: Realizing that Robert Mann is the "Warlord" who funded Norway's plan, and that he faked his death

Ok, so we know Robert clearly played a part in Norway's rebellion, but why would he do this? Why would he fund it? Very simple: **to weaken the world powers, and to save Norway for later.**
Just think about this. Let's go back to the present for a moment. Norway, after invading Sweden and taking control, gave most of the land to Scotland. That's odd, VERY odd. Why would they? The answer is right there: **Norway was always under Robert's control.**
However, there's something that doesn't make sense. Robert was 49 when he "died", and by now he'd be well over a hundred years old. How would he still be in control? Well, let's look at Hargos for a second.

STEP 3: THE MASTERMIND

Hargos, as we know and were told in the early 1900s, is completely immortal. He's been in Ethiopia for almost 200 years now. That is insane. Now, how exactly does he remain young? Well, his immortality allowed it. The only way to justify Robert still being in control of Norway by the World War… is for **Robert to still be here.** And clearly, he still is. So how did he do it? Well, let's remember he was with Hargos for 10 years in Ethiopia. In that time, Robert must have figured out Hargos was clearly immortal, but he couldn't find the source in time before Norway's plan was executed. However, he faked his death and was dropped off in Scotland to continue researching. Then, let's remember the storm that covered all of Europe. Something important was said when it happened.
"Someone did something they shouldn't"
That phrase, it was said by the Watcher. This means something strange happened… but what was it? **It was Robert Mann becoming immortal.** Then, what was the house explosion that was announced in Scotland? **It was Robert testing the limits of his immortality.**

Feat #7: Figuring out that Robert Mann figured out Hargos' immortality, the source, and the method to get it, that he became immortal, and that the storm and house explosion were both caused by him

Now, let's arrange the evidence we have for now:
- Scotland is behind the Sicily attack
- Robert figured out Norway's plan before it was executed
- Robert funded Norway's plan
- Robert faked his death and went to Scotland
- Robert figured out Hargos' immortality and became immortal himself

I suggest we go back to the present, knowing Robert is probably in control of Scotland, and see if we can explain something weird.
Scotland, during the World War, suddenly expanded immensely and ridiculously quickly into west Africa, as well as attacking Australia and the Philippines. All of this with seemingly little

effort, in just a few years. Something gives you the feeling that this was planned, the resources were already there. Maybe this is what Robert was planning all along. But how did he get the resources and manpower for this? Oh… the Gentleman Movement. The extremists. But how…? Why would they… listen to… him?
…oh. What if he planned the extremists? What if this was all his plan?

Feat #8: Putting the pieces together and realizing Robert was behind both the Russian War and the World War, that he planned ahead for all of it, and that he's somehow behind the extremist Gentleman Movement

STEP 4: THE MASTER PLAN

So, let's see the facts.
Robert Mann has apparently been one step ahead of everyone all along.
He figured out Norway's plan and was in on it. He funded it, to gain control over Norway.
He figured out Hargos' immortality and reached immortality himself.
He planned the World War decades ago, sending resources and manpower to Africa to blitz through.
But how did he get the manpower and resources? Easy. **The extremists of the Gentleman Movement.**
We know he created the Gentleman Movement in 1933, a social movement in Wessex that revolutionized society. He spread it around, to dozens of countries. He got power. He got influence. He got money.
So… what's to say the extremists aren't his creation as well? But how? Well, let's use these spies we've got to look back on Scotland a while ago. What we captured was… interesting. A conversation between extremists and someone giving them orders, clearly in charge of a chain of command… **speaking in some Slavic or Germanic language.** This is important. Why would they be speaking to him? Unless… he's important. But who would be speaking with the extremists that is Slavic or… Germanic.
Germanic… it's Germany. It's Prussia. **It's Hans.**
Of course! It makes so much sense! Hans has the brainwash drug, and the extremists are known for their brainwashing! It all makes sense now!
Wait… then, does this mean Robert's been working with Hans all along? To create the extremist Gentleman Movement? Oh god… that's right… Mann Industries. They made the guns that the extremists used to slaughter all non-extremists, it was to make them all good soldiers for Robert, that's how he got all the manpower and resources!

Feat #9: Realizing that Robert planned out the Gentleman Movement from beginning to end, working with Hans, using the brainwash drug to create the extremists in order to have all of Scotland under his control

You also realize something. This would've never happened with non-united British Isles. Wessex and Scotland uniting was essential to the movement existing. And who united Scotland and Wessex? **Robert fucking Mann.**

THE MASTER PLAN, IN ORDER

So, this is the entirety of the master plan of Robert Mann, in order of events.

First, in 1933, Robert Mann creates the Gentleman Movement, becoming a known name and celebrity.

In 1934, Robert talks with the king of Scotland to unite Wessex-Mercia with Scotland, and succeeds, uniting the British Isles once and for all.

Throughout the 1930s, Robert becomes a celebrity in the entire British Isles, and he starts experimenting with Hans' brainwash drug to create extremists. At the start, he just makes extremists himself, but with time, he teaches the extremists how to brainwash others, and the snowball starts rolling hard.

Then, in the 1940s, he visits other countries to expand his influence and power, which he successfully does.
Once the extremists in Scotland become "a problem", Robert goes to Ethiopia to feign innocence, also interested in Hargos' intelligence and unnatural charm.
During this period, Robert uses his assets in Scotland to create Mann Industries, to sell guns to the extremists knowing damn well they'll use it against non-extremists.

Then, during the 50s, while waiting for the moment to be just right to return, he studies Hargos and realizes his immortality. He doesn't manage to find the source, but what he does find out is Norway's plan for independence, so he becomes the "Warlord" and gives Norway all the funding the plan needs. In 1957, Norway's plan is carried out, with Robert being dropped off in Scotland and faking his death in order to study Hargos' immortality hidden.

The Russian War happens and goes according to plan, with Norway becoming independent and Robert now having control over it. After this, he finally finds out the Watcher's existence and achieves immortality, causing a thunderstorm to cover all Europe. He tests his immortality by blowing himself up inside a house, which he survives.

Decades pass, and in 2000, he utilizes three Venetian ships he acquired to attack Sicily, causing tensions and the World War to eventually occur. During this war, he annexed much of West Africa with his overwhelming resources, as well as the Philippines and Australia. No one noticed, no one knew.
At the end of the World War, most superpowers were exhausted and recovering after such battles. Scotland, however, could not be better off.

All thanks to Robert Mann.

INTRODUCTION

In 2051, the Great War ended, Prussia invaded Afghanistan, and the Players left the world. Argentina, the Great Lakes, Ethiopia, Greece, Afghanistan, the Maori, all of them lost their ruler. All at the same time, they died of old age. Instantly.
One man, one very important man, rose to power in Ethiopia after this. The best diplomat in the world, king of Kenya, 200 years being the best… Hargos Hadgoop Mebret.

Hargos, a few years before the Great War ended, discovered a secret plan done by Scotland. He realized that the once-known gentleman Robert Mann had planned the unification of Scotland, became a political influence in the Isles, funded the kidnapping of Hargos in Oslo, and even caused the Great War, all to make Scotland powerful. And he succeeded.
Hargos knows all of this, but he can't prove any of it. And so, he has decided to go get him himself. Hargos **knows** Robert faked his death and he's still out there, and he **will** find him.

But he can't go straight for him. Hargos doesn't have the capability yet. He needs a stepping stone for it, he needs to weaken Robert by taking on his allies first. And who's a better ally than Hans Schraiber, head of the Prussian military?
Hargos will need a lot of things to defeat Hans, though. He needs to remove Hans AND also stop the Soldier Ruthlessness Program, but he can't risk Scotland finding out before everything is over. Hargos needs to cut international communications somehow. Both radio and mail… this will be difficult.

STEP 1: NONE THE WISER

JANUARY 2052

This is the first thing Hargos needs to do. He needs to disable or straight-up destroy radio towers and then needs to make sure mail cannot move from Prussia. Hargos, being the king of one of the most technologically advanced nations in the world, has decided to use it for a good cause and secretly build huge Steam Cores (essentially steam batteries with insanely high pressure in order to store massive amounts of steam for machines) to use as bombs. He'll need to take a few weeks to research and check both which towers communicate with Scotland and where to place the bombs. He doubts there will be many.

The first thing he did before heading out was plan a few months ahead to write as many ideas he'd have to execute as he could so that, for the next year or so, the advisor he would put to speak for him would stay busy and not have to come up with anything new that would be different from Hargos' way of ruling (which there's a chance Robert would pick up on, so that's why Hargos doesn't want that to happen).

Once that was dealt with, Hargos went in secret after growing out his beard. He blended in mostly fine amongst the Prussians, they only talk to him every once in a while because

seeing an African working class man in Berlin is somewhat rare, but he gets by just pretending to be an immigrant with a broken German. For the next month, Hargos looked at all the revolutionary and separatist movements in Prussia and also checked the bomb placements as planned. The most important movement seems to be the revolutionary “No Monarchs” movement represented by a broken golden crown. Hargos takes note of this, because he plans to frame them for the destruction of the mail and the radio towers.

So, first things first: immediate communication. The radio towers need to go, and they need to go QUICK. Hargos gets to work, bombing every single one (he might have gotten carried away) in three days. I don’t ask Hargos why he did all this, I’m just the guy writing his accomplishments. In every bombing, he puts the broken crown to frame the “No Monarchs” movement, and you know what? They ABSOLUTELY FUCKING CLAIM THEM. Free publicity, baby. When the first postal offices were bombed by Hargos, the “No Monarchs” movement even helped with the others… we have no idea why this is happening, but Hargos ain’t complaining. The Prussian military and police are now constantly on the streets, though, so Hargos needs to be more careful and avoid attention as much as possible. Let the revolutionaries take the hit.

STEP 2: THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE KING

Hargos, in his infinite wisdom, realized that, after all these bombings, there is absolutely no way Hans doesn’t have, like, 100 guys around him all the time. As an individual, Hargos can’t do **shit**. He’s **cooked**. And so, he decided to go ask for help from the “No Monarchs” movement directly. He’ll spend a week or two following some members of the movement to see where they’d gather, and soon enough the whole movement should gather somewhere due to the recent events. Hargos knows exactly how to get them to comply and help him, so he goes to the important figures in the movement. He gets access to them via claiming he was the secret bomber and showing them one of the bombs, and once he can talk to the “leaders”, he’ll take off his glasses and hat to reveal his identity to them and speak in his diplomat persona to build some trust. Hargos talks to them for several hours until he actually addresses the issue and his mission, which he only tells them is to remove Hans from power. How will he make them comply and help? There is a little thing called **“sunk cost fallacy”**, which makes someone hesitant to stop an activity after they spent time and/or

resources into it. Hargos will remind them that they joined the bombings and claimed them as theirs, and now both the police and military are awake and active. He'll tell them that they can't back down, not anymore, and the **only** chance they'll get to actually achieve their objective of overthrowing the government and the army is now, by taking out the head of the military. Those few days or weeks of instability in the chain of command should be enough to overthrow the government. After all this talking, they agree with him and now, it's time for the plan to somehow kidnap Hans.

…it's just straight up bombing the place he's at and grabbing him from the rubble afterward once he's unconscious, he's immortal after all (and as an immortal, Hargos had figured that out long ago).

STEP 3: COMPLICATIONS

Hans is gone, but so are the revolutionaries. They're too busy overthrowing the Prussian government to help Hargos end the Soldier Ruthlessness Program, so now he's alone again. Also, as he was heading back to Ethiopia to make more bombs, he made sure to keep Hans unconscious the whole way through so that he doesn't know where he is once they're in Ethiopia.

Now, back in Ethiopia, he commissioned more Steam Cores to use as bombs and also went to Kenya for a few days to bang his husband and wife properly. Once the bombs were done in just a week, Hargos headed back out to finish what he started. He doesn't have much time until word by mouth reaches Scotland that Hans was kidnapped and the government was overthrown. He needs to be **fast.**

He arrives at Prussia again in his immigrant disguise, after going through several borders. He carefully locates where they store the reserves, and he finds himself with a problem: they haven't stored it all in some warehouses, they spread out the reserves in a ton of regular places, so now Hargos has to bomb way more places than expected if he wants to get rid of all of it… or he can help the revolutionaries and speed up the government takeover to make them help him. He chooses the latter, he needs the support and the intel for this to work.

They slowly take care of the military, Hargos himself personally kills the head of state and burns him alive. It's all going according to plan, this should be where it ends… but it's not. They're facing a lot more resistance than expected, and the army and police are really giving it their all to regain territory. Hargos needs to think fast. He wonders what Robert would do in this situation, how he would solve this… and realizes Robert wouldn't have made the mistakes Hargos made. He wouldn't have chopped up Hans, he wouldn't have killed the head of state without hesitation. Now Hargos is left with an impossible problem and an even harder task: diverting the police and military's attention to split them up. He **could** also make the other revolutionary movements join the cause, but it'd cause too much chaos for movements with different ideals.

…wait, why does he care about that? Also, there are more than revolutionary movements. He could go to the Russian territory to stage a coup d'etat with a different separatist movement to split the attention of the army. LET'S GO, QUICK.

Hargos practically runs to Russia as fast as he can to recruit the local separatist movement. He has no time for formalities, he's just going to look for the first popular separatist movement he can find and bomb a government building in their name. He didn't destroy the mail service there, so the news should reach Berlin fairly quickly. However, it was clearly NOT HIS FUCKING DAY, so he had to bomb another two buildings before the police got involved and the separatist movement joined in on the chaos. As soon as he saw that the separatists were actually competent and had numbers, he said "GOTTA GO FAST" and rushed back to Berlin. It only took one more week for the military to be weakened and split enough for the revolutionaries to win. Hargos personally spoke with the new head of state (who came from the revolutionaries and was the same one he originally talked to earlier) to make him officially end the Soldier Ruthlessness Program and stop any funding going to it. He also made sure to relocate the scientists and all the equipment to a separate, huge facility where they'd develop chemical weapons (as an excuse). Now that the ones in the know are dealt with and haven't fled the country, it's time for the bombings.

It has been two months and a week since Hargos first arrived at Prussia, and it's been two weeks since Hans "disappeared", and Hargos thinks it's time to end this. Half of the brainwashed soldiers were killed during the (unrealistically short) uprising, and there's no doubt in everyone's mind that this fight will take YEARS to finish, but Hargos had located all the places the drug was stored in earlier, so it's time to blow them up. It took a week to blow it all up with the help of the new "government", but now the reserves are gone and the factories and scientists are all that's left in Hargos' way.

Hargos, soon enough, destroyed the previous manufactories of the drug, then also had the scientists at the facility shot. (yes, Hargos might be a diplomat and a good person but he's not merciful, this NEEDED to stop and never come back… in his eyes)

STEP 4: WHAT NOW?

Well, Hans is gone, the Soldier Ruthlessness Program is gone, Prussia's facing a revolution and an uprising, the people who knew of the drug are also gone, so… what now? I think it's time for Hargos to think about what he has done in the two and a half months he spent in Prussia.

He overthrew a government.
He destroyed all communications in its capital.
He led a revolution, and caused an uprising.
He bombed dozens of buildings.
Several streets are completely destroyed.

He helped kill thousands of people, and the revolts will kill many more thousand thanks to him.
He removed the head of the military to destabilize a government in order to get a group to help him in his own selfish goal.
He killed the head of state HIMSELF.

He doesn't know who's hiding behind his own self, but what he does know… is that, whoever it is, it's a **monster.** A cruel monster who barely flinched at the thought of killing thousands just to remove an ally from his enemy.

THE NEW CHAIRMAN

INTRODUCTION

MAY 2052

It's been a month since the news of the whole thing reached Scotland. Robert was mad for a bit, but when he asked about Hans and the Soldier Ruthlessness Program, he relaxed when the answer to both was "gone". Now it's no longer his problem and it's not worth fixing a nation with two separate revolutions just to see if the program can be restarted under another man's rule, it's better to find new allies for Scotland. Norway was still around and well, so that's not a problem. Spain is currently dealing with Egyptian influence, Venice is still recovering from the war, Portugal is just chilling and their deals for Africa are still in place, France will be hard to reach, Austria got royally fucked by Prussia, but the Netherlands are still doing well even after losing Australia and the Philippines. That'll be the next ally. Robert's advisors, of course, ask him how on Earth he'd get the Dutch on his side, and he said it's simple: he'll take office.

This will need some planning, though, but just a couple of years should be enough. The plan is fairly easy:

- With his fake identity of Prince Harold IV of Scotland (established in Europe by himself weeks earlier), gain the favour of the young princess (he's lucky she's the only heir) for a few years
- Make her fall for him (but he will not marry her because then he won't be eligible for later)
- Gain the approval and support of the parliament
- Get the king and queen killed so that the princess inherits the throne and appoints him as Chairman of the Council of Ministers for an indefinite term
- Start handling the Dutch Empire with the help of the eight ministries, most importantly Foreign Affairs (for Scottish influence) and Colonial Affairs (to cash in on North America and especially the East Indies)

However, of course that won't be easy, he'll need a ton of political maneuvering, influence building, and possibly manipulation or blackmail to get his way, but at least the future queen will always have his back and give him her support. He also will not expect a certain factor later. But let's get to this, the first year.

2052: THE YOUNG PRINCESS' FRIEND

HAROLD'S ARRIVAL

Harold IV of Scotland has arrived at the mainland Netherlands with one goal in mind: meeting the king and queen. It doesn't take him long to start building influence and popularity in the city of Amsterdam thanks to his gentleman-like attitude and his title as a prince of Scotland.



With his new disguise, he starts asking questions about the royal family to the locals in order to learn more about them. Seems like the queen feels insecure about her husband, she

thinks he's going to leave her for another woman and he'll kill her then marry the other woman. This is already an insane help, as Harold now has a way to get in the royal family, through the struggling and doubting Natasja. He also asks about the princess, and seems like she'll be married off to a man from France when she comes of age in 2 years to re-establish relations with them… he can't have a possible liability, he needs to find a way to isolate the princess so that she only trusts him. He has enough time to figure this out and pull it off, this is good. He has also gained information on the princess, little Eva is only 16. Harold decides to stay nearby for a few days to keep speaking to local businesses and get to know the people. It pays off, as it seems like the queen will walk around town in two weeks… excellent.

THE ROYALS' HEARTS

Two weeks go by, and queen Natasja comes out of her royal palace to walk around town. She looks more refreshed, still feels like she's walking on eggshells, but now she's acting more normal than the people were saying. Harold introduces himself to the royal guards to talk to the queen. He re-introduces himself to Natasja and they start talking. He mentions he'd heard rumors about her husband and the fact he may be having an affair, and offers to listen to her issues and be a shoulder to cry on. Nat appreciates the gesture, and after talking for a while about how it is to be a prince in such a strange place like Scotland, Natasja invites Harold to the royal palace, since her husband was gone to talk to France and her daughter was busy.

Inside the royal palace, Harold listens quietly and attentively to the queen's issues and doubts, gives her a shoulder to cry on, he gives her his full support and affection, and he tells her how brave she is for telling this to someone, as it must be very difficult to talk about this. But alas, he is here to help her out and be a voice to not feel alone with. His efforts are working, she's warming up to him and she's given him a tour around the palace several times. He mentions how he understands her issues as a grown woman, as he is "of a similar age to her", he's constantly relating to her problems and has even given her solutions, he even solved a few of them. Over the next couple of weeks, Harold keeps building confidence with Natasja to the point she has introduced him to Eva, who he acted even more respectfully with, she absolutely adored him and his manner of speech, she felt like she could talk about anything when with him.

At this point, Natasja was starting to worry she was getting too close with Harold, but he kept her with him by assuring her the king would barely mind. After all, is he not having an affair? It would be hypocritical for him to be mad about his wife being in the company of another man, something much lesser than what he is doing to poor Natasja. He had to repeat this several times throughout several days to make sure she doesn't worry about his closeness anymore.

Now with the more important part, Harold now has access to Eva constantly, he can talk with her, he can tell her things, and she seems to be somewhat isolated from the common people, something he can exploit. He tells her all sorts of things about how everyone spreads rumors about her and her family (which is actually true as seen earlier, the best lies are half truths), how they keep trying to pry into their business, how they feel like she's from

another world, all this to convince the young princess there's not all that much out there for her to experience, the outside world is not worth it, and if her own people talk like this about her, who knows what barbarities other nations say about her? They're not trustworthy, they're not worth considering, and he uses himself as an example. He tells her that she would be completely correct to assume he's not trustworthy either, even as he has listened to her issues. He knows this will make her doubt, because she seems to trust him, and a young woman like her is not all that rational when faced with these situations, and it works, because she tells him that's not him. He's spent the past few weeks helping them out and keeping them company, he's not like the others, the rest can go to hell for all she cares. Harold holds her hand in his and thanks her for having him here, for letting him be around.

UNEXPECTED VISITOR

You see, Harold's not fully perfect, he's not invisible. A Scottish prince approached the queen of the Netherlands and has been seen with her and the princess. Being there in person in the Netherlands to execute his plan **was** the most optimal to make sure it worked, **but** it meant he'd be in the newspapers nearly instantly. Honestly, it was more of a surprise the fact that it took a month since he was seen with Natasja on the streets for this to happen. And do you know who reads the newspapers? **The King of Ethiopia.**

To absolutely no one's surprise, news of a Scottish prince approaching the Dutch queen reached Ethiopia, and none other than our good friend Hargos read the news. It was easy for him to figure out there's no way Robert had a child, and this would clearly be a spy trying to gain power and influence in the Netherlands, so of course Hargos put on his disguise and got there as fast as he could (which was like a week) to investigate what was going on. **He was not expecting to find Robert himself in Amsterdam trying to earn the princess' trust. Oh fuck.**

Hargos, as soon as he saw Robert passing as a prince and trying to earn the princess' trust, immediately realized the king and queen's lives were in danger and that he needed to rush to stop their assassination. However, Hargos let himself be overcome by his emotions (something Robert noticed immediately) and threatened Robert the next time he saw him. It was a cloudy day, "Harold" and Natasja were on the street, when suddenly Hargos pointed a

gun at them.



Robert understood that, in everyone's eyes, Hargos was a crazy gunman trying to assassinate the queen, so he smiled. He knew Hargos wouldn't shoot him, he couldn't. Hargos shouted at Robert to get away from the queen and tried to warn Natasja that he was dangerous and that he was going to kill her, but all he could do was shoot Robert twice in the chest before fleeing the scene after seeing the royal guards running towards him.

NOW WHAT?

Hargos just became a national threat, he let himself be overcome by his emotions and his rage towards Robert, now he needs to leave and get back to Ethiopia to make a plan. He NEEDS to stop Robert somehow, it's clear he wants to get control over the Netherlands and he's been with the queen and princess for weeks. Robert clearly won't leave on his own, he needs to set a trap, to lure him somewhere and kidnap him to take him back to Scotland. Even Hargos understands he can't straight-up remove Robert all at once, or else Scotland will go wild.

Meanwhile, King Cees comes back from France as quickly as he can after the news of the "crazy immigrant threatening the Queen", and immediately checks up on her. She's terrified, incredibly paranoid to the point she screamed when Cees came into her private chambers. It took 30 minutes of talking to stop her from panicking every time he moved. However, when Harold came into the room to see what was going on, Natasja practically flew to his arms in search of tranquility. This made Cees a bit suspicious, he's dealt with his fair share of opportunistic men throughout his life. When Harold left the room after 20 minutes of soothing

her, Cees was waiting outside ready to question him. He asked who he was, and Harold answered with “I’m Prince Harold IV of Scotland”. Harold claimed he came with intentions of strengthening political relations with the Netherlands, but when asked if he was after Eva, he immediately denied it, saying he knew perfectly well she’s supposed to be married to Prince Félix of France in two years. Cees asked how exactly a prince from Scotland would know that kind of information so casually, and Harold answered he had interacted a lot with the locals to understand the people of Amsterdam. He also mentioned how Natasja told him as well. Cees kept questioning Harold, which made him realize this man will just not stop suspecting him. Harold changes the strategy, he clearly won’t be able to stop Cees from suspecting him, he’s clearly insistent and he’s likely encountered other people just like Harold, so he switches the strategy to getting Cees off his skin for a while, and the weakest link here is Natasja; her distrust could spell trouble for Cees but he can’t just kick out Harold because then his wife will be even more mad. He tells the king he had his wife very worried, and that he’s so absent in the kingdom that not just Natasja but even the local people of Amsterdam are spreading rumors of an infidelity. Harold tells Cees that he should focus on keeping his wife happy and feeling loved for the time being, and if she wants something, he listens and lets her have her way. Cees can no longer risk being more absent, lest his wife will fall in love with this other man.

Now, Harold has the Queen’s approval, the Princess’ trust, and the King on a leash. Harold knows that Natasja wants him around, and Cees is now going to listen to her until she says she feels loved and appreciated fully again (which Harold will make sure never happens and will keep planting seeds of doubt), so Cees will no longer be a problem and Harold will still be around for a very good time while he starts spending more time with Eva.

2053: THE YOUNG PRINCESS’ LOVE

GAINING HER HEART

Harold, now that the Cees situation is more under control and Natasja still allows him to be near Eva, needs to start gaining her full trust.Yes, he’s spent months talking with her, but she needs to be completely unable to doubt him… it’ll take a while, but it’s possible, and it’s needed. How will he do that? very easy, my friend. **He will genuinely become his best friend and lover, he will treat her like a normal human, and he will let her be herself with him and stop pretending to be someone she doesn’t want to be. Fuck being a princess, she’s Eva II first and foremost, she’s a woman first and princess second.** You thought he’d manipulate her and break her mentally, didn’t you? Ha ha, no, he will definitely NOT do tha-

HYPNOSIS… OF COURSE

Of course it was, of course there was going to be hypnosis in this story, the guy had a brainwashing program, people! However, not so fast. He needs the setup. His idea is to have Eva panicking and traumatized so that hypnotherapy sounds tempting and like a good idea when he brings it up. He'll use that opportunity to mix the traumatic memory with different ones and add details to make her even more distrustful of herself and depend more on Harold to remember for her. But for that, he needs the traumatic memory, which she doesn't have, since she wasn't even there for the assassination attempt on the street and even then, it was months ago already. So, he creates a plan to generate that traumatic memory and leave no evidence.

First, Harold contacts a hitman from Scotland (under his control) and brings him to Amsterdam. He gives him a gun from Amsterdam and a specific location, including what he'll do. Harold will make it so, at a certain time, he and Eva are near a window where the man can shoot from afar. First, he'll shoot Harold in the arm to shock Eva and make her panic, then Harold will take another shot to the back as if he was protecting Eva from the attacker. The man will then kill himself before police arrive, so no testimony can be given and the assassination attempt is catalogued as an isolated case and not organized crime. Now Harold has a gunshot wound in his back and young Eva is completely traumatized after an assassination attempt. Nothing went wrong.

Harold recovered very quickly, because of course he did, and the first thing he did was go straight to Eva, knowing she would be delighted and probably desperate to see him. He offered to try using hypnotherapy, which he mentions he has experience with, to Cees and Natasja in order to help reduce the emotional impact the event had on Eva. Cees was reluctant, to say the least, but Natasja absolutely agreed to do anything to help her daughter. And so, Harold got to work. Under Natasja's careful supervision, Harold took Eva to a room with dim lights and he started to speak. He instructed her to try to relax, take deep breaths, and count to 10, very slowly. She needed to be focused and she needed to be relaxed. Once the "workstation" got ready and Eva went under deeper and deeper over the minutes, Harold had to convince Natasja to leave the room, claiming the hypnotherapy would work better if they were alone. He eventually convinced her and she left the room, finally leaving Harold alone with his "test subject".

Harold started by asking Eva casual questions, like her name, her age, and who she was in general. He began asking more personal questions, like her relationship with her father and what she thought of Harold. Eva answered. She felt somewhat distant to her father, as he was always arranging things, meaning her mother was his preferred parental figure and the person who taught her the most about the world and life. When asked about her thoughts on Harold, she responded by saying she felt like she could talk about anything with him, as if he already knew her and they were lost soulmates waiting to be reunited. She said Harold was more than a friend, but she knew she was going to get married to Prince Félix, and that made her sad.
…Harold really had no answer for this. Sure, she was effectively in love and had a huge deal of confidence in him, but this sort of made half of this pointless. He had her trust, he had her heart (although thank God she's still reluctantly accepting to marry Félix, that saves Harold the headache)… so he decided to skip the theatrics, all he needed left was to have her mind.

He started asking Eva about the assassination attempt and what she remembered. Eva starts talking and recreating the scenery in her mind, as if she was in that moment again. Harold started adding some details from previous memories of hers while she spoke.

Eva was with Harold in one of the rooms, talking about the previous day and holding her hand. Natasja was there too, just checking on them, when suddenly the immigrant that tried to kill her mother climbed the window and shot at her, but luckily Harold's arm blocked it, then Natasja left the room and Harold took another shot to the back before kicking the man off the window and making him fall to his death.

Harold let the memory settle in Eva's mind for a few minutes before she let her think about it more, which made her realize her memory made no sense, her mother wasn't there at the time, she couldn't have seen the man shoot her or else she would've kicked him off herself, so what is this memory? **Why can't she remember what truly happened?!** Harold calmed her down by saying the memory must be fuzzy from the trauma, maybe she can think of something else… but it ended up the same. Mixed up memories, details that weren't there, things that didn't make sense. Harold wasn't implanting memories to change her perception, he left things exactly the same and was specifically adding mistakes for Eva to find and think she can't rely on her mind. She doesn't understand, and she thinks that, maybe, so many other memories are like that, and that she just didn't notice yet.

Harold ended the hypnotherapy session right there, by giving her a post-hypnotic suggestion to make her calm. She'll feel calm and relaxed when she wakes up, feeling as if she solved the puzzle, and that she figured out the solution: she couldn't trust her memory. He clapped his hands, and all was right. Eva was now constantly asking him about details from her memories, every time she needed to think of something she'd seek out Harold, and Natasja and Cees were delighted to see their daughter fine and happy again. All according to plan (so far). Now, to the Ministry of the Interior in The Hague, he needs to research the parliament's inner politics.

HARGOS' WHEREABOUTS

Now, it's been a few months since the whole fiasco happened. Thankfully, no one recognized Hargos, so he managed to get back safely to Ethiopia. Back in his country, he sent some spies to get information for him, he needs to return with a solid plan to take this man down. This is his only chance and he needs to do it perfectly, he cannot afford letting Robert go back into the shadows.

So, what has Hargos been doing for the past few months? Well, half of that time was spent helping out the people of Ethiopia and improving the country the best he can, another chunk was spent checking up on the Prussian Revolutions, which seemed to be doing well, although casualties were very high (as one would expect), then the past few weeks he's been planning his return to Amsterdam not as his immigrant persona, but as Hargos himself. He's been getting information on the Dutch' royal family thanks to France and his spies, and he's currently trying to arrange a meeting with the Council of Ministers and especially the Minister of Colonial Affairs, as Hargos claims there was a problem and some conflict in the border between the Scottish and the Dutch colonies in West Africa. His true intention is to

meet with the Ministers and King Cees (who the spies have told him looks pretty suspicious of “Harold”) and tell them all about Robert in order to potentially gain an ally against Scotland; Hargos will need all the help he can get, especially if it comes from the second strongest nation in the world.

THE MINISTERS

Harold goes to the Ministry of the Interior to meet the minister Steef Velten in order to learn more about how everything is going. Steef doesn’t know all that much about how things are for the Ministry of the Navy, but he has been talking to the ministers of Finance, Colonial Affairs, and especially with the Minister of Justice, they get along quite well. Harold asks about the ministries of War, Water Management/Trade/Industry, and Foreign Affairs and why he hasn’t mentioned them. Steef just says he doesn’t talk too much with Foreign Affairs and War, but Water Management, Trade, and Industry is just working as usual, there hasn’t been any change in a good while. Harold, over the course of the afternoon, asks Steef about the different ministries and puts a focus on Colonial Affairs, which Steef is glad to answer.

(for context, there are 8 ministries in the Netherlands in this period:

- **Ministry of the Interior**
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
- **Ministry of Colonial Affairs**
- **Ministry of Water Management, Trade, and Industry**
- **Ministry of War**
- **Ministry of the Navy**
- **Ministry of Finance**
- **Ministry of Justice)**

The Ministry of Finance is doing rough lately, still recovering from the Great War, as one could imagine. Same with War and the Navy, although not recovering nearly as well as Finance. The Ministry of Justice is doing pretty well right now, and the minister Berg Koestra is doing an excellent job, also being a friend of Steef’s. Now, as for Colonial Affairs, it took a big hit after the Philippines and Australia were lost, certainly. He mentions that, however, the minister is going to try to reach an agreement with the king of Scotland in a few years when tensions calm down, and lets Harold know that, maybe, he should go there next, as the minister Huig van der Maat would be delighted to see the King’s son. Harold tells Steef that it was his idea as well, so he can be sure he’ll go. Next destination: Ministry of Colonial Affairs.

Harold arrives at the ministry and introduces himself as a prince from Scotland. Huig welcomes him with eagerness, and tells him that he was just recently thinking of talking to his father about the Philippines and Australia. Harold mentions he will make sure his father gets the message, then asks Huig how everything is going, and he answers that he’s pretty occupied and busy lately, but apparently there was a problem in the border between the Dutch and Scottish colonies in West Africa, and King Hargos from Ethiopia let him know that he will be there in Plein in two weeks to meet him and King Cees. **Robert** immediately starts thinking. There is no way something happened, he knows because he is the king and knows when something happens, plus Hargos has no business talking about that. Robert figures

out Hargos is planning on exposing him to Cees and Huig. He also realizes this means he had been spying on him with Ethiopian spies over the past few months, and that's how he knows Cees would be likely to trust Hargos' claim, he'd already be biased against Harold. Robert thinks of how to prevent this situation, but he realizes he just needs to ruin the opportunity for Hargos. Hargos will probably drop early unannounced if the diplomat knows Robert would know all of this, so Robert will just need to make sure Huig tells him as soon as Hargos arrives.

So, the day arrives. Hargos, just as predicted, arrives at The Hague one week early and goes to Plein. However, he doesn't just not find Cees there, but Harold is there instead.



Hargos knows he can't make a scene, he knows he can't lash out, so he just tries to get Huig alone the entire meeting but can't. In the end, they end up talking about things completely unrelated to the supposed conflict in West Africa. Hargos, of course, tried to ask where King Cees was, and Harold calmly responded that he had fallen ill a few days ago (Harold got him sick in secret), and that he would take around a week or two to recover. In the end, Hargos had to go back to Ethiopia empty-handed, his opportunity ruined.

THE NEW CHAIRMAN

It's time for the final step of the plan: actually getting in power in less than 12 months. Of course, though, Harold can't just randomly be elected and expect to hold absolute power, this is modern society. There's a system here, and that system is the Council of Ministers. It's a collective government conformed by the eight ministries and the Chairman of this council. The Chairman doesn't have absolute power, he just calls for and handles the meetings regarding national policy with the Council, so if he wanted things to get done, he needed to get the other ministers to agree with him. Harold already knows what he'll do to the ministers, but he needs them to lower their guard first, and he needs to address them one or two at a time to make this more effective. He already has the Minister of the Interior's backing, so he'll start with the Ministries of Colonial and Foreign Affairs.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Harold has already had his fair share of conversations with Huig, as seen before, but he still doesn't have him 100% on board with his ideas like with Steef, so he'll spend the next two weeks with him. Thanks to Harold being a "prince" from Scotland, he can very easily start conversations with Huig about practically anything, knowing any input from him will make Huig happy. Of course, Harold lied half the time, but a lot of times he said many things with some truth in them to make the lies slip. These two weeks also gave Harold a lot of information on the Dutch colonies, especially the East Indies, and he took the opportunity to take away some credibility from Hargos by proving that, indeed, no conflict had happened, and that he must have come to Plein for a different reason, since the king of Ethiopia would have no business knowing a conflict like that happened before the Ministry itself knew it.

Now, let's go over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose minister in charge is Mart Bodde. Harold makes sure to talk a lot more with Bodde, as Foreign Affairs will be useful for calling off the engagement between Eva and Félix; the ministry will be the figure of authority to give more validity to the evidence Harold will plant and cause next. Bodde is a man deeply invested in history, and he talks about how Scotland rose from a mildly powerful nation to a strong empire in the early 20th century and especially after the Great War. Harold pretends not to know about the topic to keep the man talking, until he starts talking about the Russian War; that's when Harold starts talking, he can't let Bodde start thinking about Robert Mann. Over the two weeks, Harold becomes sort of a "friend" to Bodde, and he says that, if Harold ever tries to become a member of the Parliament, he has his support.
Now, let's go for the next two.

FINANCE AND JUSTICE

Time to go for the other two important ministries to have more power in the Netherlands. First, Harold goes to the Ministry of Justice, managed by Berg Koestra, admittedly a friend of Steef's, much easier to befriend than a ministry he doesn't know that much about. Of course, Harold asks Steef all he can about Berg. He uses that knowledge (which at this point I'm sick of adding and explaining, I want this finished already and no one cares about this part) to get close with the guy, not befriend him completely, but at least earn his trust and some bit of support thanks to also getting along with Steef. All that Harold needs is for him not to suspect him, so that's good enough. He'll summon him later when it's time to call "the boys" from Scotland.

Next, Harold goes to the Ministry of Finance and honestly, they just ramble the whole afternoon about economics and business, as the minister Vincent Bolkman was also a big shot in the business world before becoming a minister. They find they have a lot in common, and Vincent actually can identify and sense Harold's sense of greed and how he likely does anything he puts his mind to, no matter the cost, because Vincent is just as ruthless if he wants as well. Vincent mentions that Harold reminds him of a certain gentleman from a long time ago, a certain "Robert Mann" from Scotland, but he boils it down to just "the Scottish being like that". Harold got lucky, and now he has Vincent's full support after just a week of talking in Vincent's free time… nice.

WAR AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Alright, final stretch before his plan to frame Félix and make him unsuitable, thus making Cees have to bother looking for another candidate: getting the support of the Ministries of War and Water Management, Trade, and Industry. And first is the turn of the Ministry of War, handled by Rik Kleise. He reminds Robert of Hans in a certain way, but Hans was more ruthless; a shame Hans was taken by Hargos, although maybe he could set him free and have him as a pawn later. They talked a lot about the Great War and how the Dutch colonies were taken by Scotland, to which Harold mentions he has no idea how his country invaded so much so quickly, but still offers his trust to ol' Rik regardless of the hard feelings between their nations. Rik lets Harold know he doesn't immediately trust him, but at least he's not his father, so they can agree to a truce between the two.

Now, the last ministry (because no one really talks with the Ministry of the Navy) is the Ministry of Water Management, Trade, and Industry, managed by minister Ido Holleman, who was a lawyer before entering the Parliament. That doesn't help Harold very much, he doesn't know too much about the law, but it's a nice detail about the guy. Harold just does the usual, spends the whole week talking with the guy to build some rapport, talking about common interests, and Ido actually shares his interest in psychology from his childhood, and Harold tells him that, as a prince, he knows a bit about that and is glad to teach him.

Anyway, after that, it's time for…

THE GRAND FINALE

Yes, it's time. This is what all this was for. Harold will do a few things.
First, he'll need to gather the ministers in a place and bring "the boys" from Scotland to give them a good ol' therapy session, MK Ultra style (scopolamine, ECT, and hypnosis).
Then, he'll call Prince Félix to Amsterdam, then Harold will steal an old jewelry piece from Natasja (which, 100 years ago, belonged to Félix's grandfather) and make it seem like it was a regular thief, but he'll present "evidence" that it was actually Félix. This will ruin Félix's reputation and make him unsuitable for marriage with Eva, so the marriage will be cancelled by the Council of Ministers and Queen Natasja. This will force Cees to have to go back to looking for a new candidate.
A few weeks after this, Harold will have Natasja and Cees assassinated, they've served their purpose. Eva will inherit the throne as queen and appoint him as Chairman of the Council of Ministers (which is now under his control) for an indefinite term. And that's how he'll get the control of the Netherlands for good (or at least until Eva grows older and he gives her a daughter, which he'll make sure to raise to be obedient and single to make things easier).

Let's get to it.

First step. Robert brings some of his guys from Scotland who are usually in charge of the brainwashing process, then he gathers 7 of the 8 ministers.
Steef Velten.
Huig van der Matt.
Mart Bodde.
Berg Koestra.
Vincent Bolkman.
Rik Kleise.
Ido Holleman.
Thanks to the scopolamine, the several weeks they spend being manipulated and influenced don't even register in their minds (scopolamine makes it incredibly difficult to create new memories for 24-48 hours after being dosed). They just think their weeks were completely normal and nothing happened. This was the easy step, because Robert was already incredibly experienced with this process. The next part was the difficult one, but he already knows what to do, it's just a matter of executing it correctly, of leaving the evidence in the correct order to make it seem like it was simply a very skilled thief.

Second step. Harold gets to work and plans it out. Natasja has the jewelry stored in her own room, so he'll need Félix to be there at the time of the "robbery", then he can plant the evidence framing a common thief and then show the proof that it was actually Félix who stole that because of the significance it has to him. So, he summons Félix to Amsterdam for a meeting; they meet at the royal palace with Natasja's approval. They go near Natasja's room, then Harold excuses himself for a moment and sets the scene as if Félix was desperately looking around for the necklace. After getting the necklace, he slips it into Félix's pocket and they keep talking. Eventually, Félix leaves and Natasja stumbles upon the scene of the robbery. At first, they blame the clearly sloppy robber and do a search around town, but when nothing comes, Harold goes to Foreign Affairs and tells Mart Bodde through radio that he heard the whole thing when Félix excused himself, so they should search Félix before he leaves the Netherlands. He actually contacts the police as his own investigation,

which avoids exposing Harold as the man with the main evidence, and they search Félix at the border. Indeed, the French prince had the jewelry and was arrested for theft of royal jewelry. The newspapers go haywire with the news that Princess Eva's fiancée tried to steal from the Dutch queen, while the French king wonders what kind of idiot his son must have been to do it. Soon enough, after being released, Félix is disinherited and Harold makes the Council of Ministers cancel the marriage altogether as the prince is no longer suitable for marriage, which everyone actually supports, even King Cees.

Third step. Everything is in place, and there's only one thing left to do. The ministers are controlled, Félix is out of the equation, and a new candidate is not yet on the table, so the only thing left is to finally take out Cees and Natasja. So, what does he do? He just makes one of his guys pay a hitman in Amsterdam (to avoid Scotland being connected to the assassination) and has them killed. Of course, this causes a huge commotion and people go wild about it, but Harold makes sure to give Eva all the help and reassurance she needs to be able to function as the new queen she will become. After three weeks, Harold is appointed as Chairman of the Council of Ministers with most of the Parliament and the entire Council agreeing to it.

"Harold IV of Scotland" aka "Robert Mann" has officially become the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Netherlands.

