

Managing the Realm

Low level adventurers face great dangers – cruel orcs, daring bandits, and unnatural monsters abound. As they rise in power, so do the adventures rise in scope. Eventually the band of heroes may find itself put in charge of a region or realm. This is an entirely new challenge. A mighty warrior knows all-too well the best way to kill a troll, but what about an emissary from a neighboring kingdom? He may offer support, but what will he want in return? A wizard can call lightning and fire to his will, but what does he do when the price of bread rises too high? By presenting these new challenges, the care and feeding of a realm can spawn countless adventures.

However, this is still a game of heroic fantasy, not accounting and debate. Therefore this system will keep things pretty abstract. There won't be an exact accounting of every copper, or the number of troops and civil servants. Instead a score will be assigned to different attributes of the realm.

Realm Attributes

Realms have a variety of different attributes that define the health of the kingdom. These are rated from 1-20, with 1 being a state of desperation, while 20 is incredibly healthy and vibrant. Various actions by the group can cause these attributes to raise or lower, and often an action can cause one attribute to raise but another lower. The PCs, as leaders of the realm will have to make harsh choices – if they levy taxes to pay for new troops at the border, this could cause prices at the market to rise, as well as make them unpopular. The rating can also be used to make Realm Checks, that determine what the realm can and cannot do.

There are three main attributes that describes a given realm: Economy, Security, and Popularity. The Economy reflects how available food and basic services are, as well as how full the government coffers are. Security represents the safety of the kingdom. A low security could mean a high rate of crime, or tribes of orcs rampaging on the frontier. Popularity is how loved or hated the rulers are. A high popularity means that the people adore the leaders, and follow them fervantly. A low popularity could lead to comfort to spies, or even revolt.

Managing the Realm Attributes isn't a matter of getting them all to 20. This is impossible. Once things get too good in one area, it tends to weaken others. A good Economy degrades Security, since this greatly increases trade and the number of foreigners in the kingdom, allowing for easy access for spies. Further, the riches of the people tend to attract banditry and other ills. High Security degrades Popularity, since such a high rate of security can only mean harsh laws and serious restrictions on personal freedoms. High Popularity will lower the Economy, as the good feelings lead to extravagant expenditures among the middle and upper classes rather than investing it more wisely.

The Attributes and their effects are summarized in the table below.

<i>Economy</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Effect on Popularity</i>	<i>Effect on Security</i>
1	Economic Collapse	-5	-5
2-3	Starvation	-3	-3
4-5	Mass Shortages	-2	-2
6-7	Shortages and Hardship	-1	-1
8-9	Tough Times	0	0
10-11	Weak but Stable	0	0
12-13	Stable	0	0
14-15	Growing	+1	+1
16-17	Prosperous	+1	+1
18-19	Powerful	+2	-1
20	Vibrant	+3	-2

Economic Collapse: This is a dire state of affairs, the economy has completely collapsed. Even the ruling classes will be unable to get basic services or food. The taverns and markets are empty, and there are simply no raw materials to produce pretty much anything.

Starvation: Massive inflation has caused the prices of bread and other staples to rise exponentially. The commoners will be dying of starvation, and even the upper classes will feel the hardship. Prices for all goods are quadrupled, and anything except the basics will be unavailable.

Mass Shortages: Goods are hard to come by, and prices are much higher than normal. Luxury and masterwork items will be unavailable. All prices are tripled.

Shortages and Hardship: There are a lot of people out of work, and prices are going up. Double all prices. Luxury items are unavailable, and masterwork items are triple normal cost.

Tough Times: Things are going south, and prices are moving up. Prices on normal items are standard, but luxuries are triple price and masterwork items are double.

Weak but Stable: The economy is stable, but not exactly roaring. Luxuries are double price.

Stable: Things are going well, all prices are normal and there are a variety of goods and services available.

Growing: The economy is going well and shows all signs of improving. Reduce the price on common goods by 10%.

Prosperous: Happy days are here again. Money is flowing in, and the people are well-fed. Reduce common goods by 10%, and luxuries and masterwork items by 5%.

Powerful: The coins just keep coming, with the Realm becoming a center for commerce in the region. Reduce common goods by 15%, luxuries and masterwork items by 10%.

Vibrant: It seems as any person could make a fortune in these times. Foreign investors and traders flock to the Realm, and nearly any manner of goods can be had. Reduce common goods by 20%, luxuries and masterwork by 10%.

<i>Popularity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Effect on Economy</i>	<i>Effect on Security</i>
1	Revolt!	-5	-5
2-3	Open rioting	-3	-3
4-5	Protests and talks of Revolt	-2	-2
6-7	Grumbling and Disrespect	-1	-1
8-9	Quiet Acceptance	0	0
10-11	Respect	0	0
12-13	Admiration	0	0
14-15	Veneration	+1	+1
16-17	Honorifics	+1	+1
18-19	Celebration	-1	+2
20	Adolation	-2	+3

Revolt!: The rulers are so despised and hated that the people are marching on the castle. The leaders had best do something to appease them or flee, or their heads may find the chopping block!

Open Rioting: The people are so upset with the leadership they are rioting in the streets. Large crowds will begin burning buildings and raiding shops.

Protests and Talks of Revolt: The people have nearly had enough. They march in the streets, demanding that the leaders address their grievances. Rabble rousers speak of dissent and revolt.

Grumbling and Disrespect: The people are not happy with the way they are being governed. They are not yet bold enough to speak directly against the leaders, but will whisper and grumble, and often 'forget' to show signs of respect to authority.

Quiet Acceptance: Things aren't really peachy, but the people largely accept their lot. They still give all the signs of respect to the leaders, but their heart isn't in it.

Respect: The people are unsure of the leaders themselves, but they still honor the office and hope that things will get better in the future.

Admiration: The people have confidence in their leaders, and largely have a positive view for the future.

Veneration: The leaders are regarded as capable and efficient. The people believe that their leaders will lead them to prosperity.

Honorifics: The leaders are widely considered to be among the best in an age. They are frequently compared to great kings of old, and bards compose songs about them.

Celebration: The people throw great celebrations in honor of the leaders, erect statues, and regard them as truly enlightened rulers.

Adolation: The rulers are regarded almost as divinity, or a blessing from the gods. There is almost nothing the rulers ask that the people would not happily provide.

<i>Security</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Effect on Economy</i>	<i>Effect on Popularity</i>
1	Anarchy	-5	-5
2-3	Banditry/Invasion	-3	-3
4-5	Wild and Unruly	-2	-2
6-7	Lawless	-1	-1
8-9	Rough	0	0
10-11	Reasonable	0	0
12-13	Safe	0	0
14-15	Defended	+1	+1
16-17	Protected	+1	+1
18-19	Secure	+2	-1
20	Absolute Tyranny	+3	-2

Anarchy: There is no law, the leaders are utterly powerless to direct their will. If not already occupied, the realm is ripe for invasion from another power.

Banditry/Invasion: The patrols are nonexistent, and even the city watches are hopelessly overpowered. This state could lead to de facto rule by a thieves' guild, invasion by a foreign power, or vast regions falling into wilderness.

Wild and Unruly: Crime is rampant, and raids from other realms or humanoids go unanswered. Most of the realm is indistinguishable from wilderness.

Lawless: Enforcers of the law are spread too thin, and criminals and other miscreants operate freely.

Rough: Criminal and foreign elements are strong, and the realm's defenders are hard pressed to hold things together. Most people are still law-abiding, though help for them is far too infrequent.

Reasonable: Crime happens, and there are occasional raids, but criminals are caught and punished, while the raids are answered in kind. Most people can assume a reasonable amount of safety.

Safe: The people are mostly secure. Crime is mostly relegated to the poor quarters, and raids or monstrous attacks are something that only happens on the frontier.

Defended: The borders are secure, with regular patrols stopping any incursions. Wild areas remain in remote locations, but the civilized areas are well defended.

Protected: Crime is greatly reduced – any guilds are crushed. Most of the kingdom is secure and safe.

Secure: Any suspected spies are dealt with harshly, the borders are well defended, and crime is limited to petty matters. A network of informants lets the rulers know what is what almost immediately.

Absolute Tyranny: External threats to the kingdom are almost nonexistent. A powerful military ensures any attempt at invasion would be foolish, the rulers' spies root out any discontent immediately, and even the orc tribes know better than to attack this realm.

Determining Realm Attributes

One of the hardest parts of running a realm is knowing exactly what is going on. For this, most rulers rely upon their advisors. These men and women must be chosen with the utmost caution. An incompetent finance advisor might assure the ruler that everything is fine, while people starve just outside the castle. Worse, a corrupt High Inquisitor might assure the king that the people love him, while he secretly plans to foster a revolt so he can seize power.

Financial Advisor: This advisor is responsible for being knowledgeable in all matters of trade, commerce, and taxation. He is responsible for keeping the ruler informed of the state of the Economy.

High Inquisitor: This person is in charge of the ruler's network of spies and informants. He is responsible for informing the leaders about the strength of the military, any news of foreign powers becoming aggressive, and the state of the wilderness areas.

High Herald: This advisor keeps his ear to the ground about what both the commoners and the nobility are saying about the ruler. If they adore him, or speak against him, it's the High Herald's job to know about such things.

Each advisor will have a skill in Gather Information. True, one person with high skill ranks could fulfill all three jobs, as could a PC ruler. However, keeping up on these matters is a full time job. A person attempting to keep an ear to two of these areas, or attempting to rule or go adventuring at the same time has a -3 Circumstance penalty to each roll. A person trying to do all three, or rule and go adventuring has a -6 Circumstance penalty to each roll. No matter how talented, the results will suffer if a person spreads themselves too thin.

The DC for determining the actual value depends on the size of the realm. A single city or small collection of villages has a DC of 15. A collection of several cities has a DC of 20. A small kingdom has a DC of 25, while a large kingdom has a DC of 30. Large empires could have a DC of 35 or more.

The roll is made in secret, and if it is failed the advisor reports incorrect information to the ruler. After making a failing roll, the GM should roll percentile dice. 01-50 means the estimation is too low, while 51-00 means it is too high. For each point the skill is missed by, the estimation is off by one. There is a ceiling, however, of 6 above or below. Even a vastly incompetent finance minister can tell the difference between a healthy market and a famine.

For example, the Lord High Inquisitor consults the generals and his spies about the state of the kingdom. He's in a small kingdom, so the DC is 25. He has a Gather Information skill of 12, and the GM rolls a 10 for a total of 22. He has failed by three. The GM rolls percentile dice, getting a 33. He knows from his notes that the real score is 12, indicating that the kingdom is generally safe. The advisor however places too much stock in rumors of an orc tribe gathering on the northern border, and reports that the kingdom is Rough, as the threat of a humanoid invasion seems imminent.

Modifying Realm Attributes

There are three things which can change the various attributes. Many of them will change more than one Attribute. Conditions modify the

base rating on things such as geography, government type, and culture. Edicts can modify them as well, by levying taxes, declaring holidays, or placing tariffs. The PCs have complete freedom with their edicts, and can offer any idea for the GM's consideration. Finally, Events may happen that are outside the leaders' control, such as a famine, plague, population explosion, or invasion by a foreign power.

Conditions

Conditions refer to unchanging aspects of the realm that influence their Attributes. At the founding or acquisition of a realm, each score is considered to be at 10. This is subject to the GM's whim, however. If a new realm was conquered in a vicious war, the new leaders may have a low popularity. Conversely, if the PCs lead a revolt against the former corrupt regime, they may have the benefit of a high popularity.

Geography

The fortunes of the kingdom may well depend on the natural terrain around it. The realm can certainly qualify for more than one, and the GM is encouraged to use these as a guideline. For instance, if the realm is completely surrounded by mountains except a small section of well-traveled coast, it could qualify for both Isolated and Busy Port.

Isolated: The realm is geographically isolated, with high mountains, deserts, or other terrain forming a natural defensive barrier. **Security:** +2 **Economy:** -1

Busy Port: There's a busy port city, or at least a good spot for one. Whether a natural crossroads between other realms, a large river that flows through other realms, or a natural harbor along a busy coast, it's very easy for foreign trade to reach your shores. **Security:** -1 **Economy:** +1

Barren: The land is poor and hard to work. It may be stony, badlands, swamp, or desert. This could also represent a general dearth of natural resources. **Economy:** -2

Verdant: The land is full of rich farmland, and as such can support a large population. Or, this could represent a great amount of natural resources. **Economy:** +2

Government Types

The government of the new realm will have an effect on the populace. Most realms in fantasy worlds are Traditional Monarchies, but other types are appropriate.

Traditional Monarchy: The ruler(s) are considered to be leaders by Divine Right, chosen by the gods to lead the people. The commoners swear fealty to members of the nobility, and the nobility in turn swear fealty to the monarch. In theory, the monarch has absolute power, but in reality they must keep the nobility happy, for without their support they are powerless. **No Modifier**

Despotism: On the surface, this is similar to the Traditional Monarchy, except there is no noble class. The ruler appoints and dismisses his administrators at a whim. On the upside, the ruler has much more control over his kingdom, but the people feel much less represented than with a noble speaking for them. **Security:** +1 **Popularity:** -1

Theocracy: Rather than appoint the monarch as chosen of the gods, the realm is ruled instead by the clergy directly. This could be cooperative among a pantheon, or one deity may reign supreme. Since betrayal of the realm and sin are one and the same, the odds of revolt are much lower, but the religious rule often stifles innovation and progress. **Security +1 Economy -1**

Oligarchy: The realm is ruled by the wealthiest individuals, determining policy that will personally benefit their fortunes, and hopefully the realm as a result. Such systems are great for the economy, but they are rife with corruption. **Economy +1 Security -1**

Republic: Rather than ruled by might, wealth, or divinity, this realm is ruled by mandate from the people. Elections are held periodically, with the people deciding who their leader will be. In some systems the monarchs are still there, though they co-rule with a parliament of some type and are often little more than figureheads. Such systems are called Constitutional Monarchies, but for these purposes they two are the same. A Republic is naturally popular with the people, but are notoriously slow to respond to threats. **Popularity +1 Security -1**

Culture

The different aspects of the people's culture may provide a bonus or penalty to the realm's attributes. Not all people have the same attitudes, and the leaders must take this into account. A given culture could have more than one of these properties or none of them. Again, the GM should use his judgement if none of these descriptors are appropriate for the realm.

Militant: A militant culture greatly values valor and strength. Enlistment in the military is considered a noble and honorable calling. **Security +1**

Mercantile: Innovation and Enterpreurism are valued in this region. Merchants and traders are looked up to as honest gentlemen, and every person makes wealth a goal and the mark of happiness. **Economy +1**

Traditionalist: The people have a desire for stability and respect for their rulers, and are naturally resistant to revolt. **Popularity +1**

Pious: Most of the people are deeply religious, and their respect for the gods leads them to embrace leaders mandated by them and a tendency toward pacifism. **Popularity +1 (if Traditional Monarchy, Theocracy, or Constitutional Monarchy) Security -1**

Isolationist: The people are naturally distrustful of outsiders, and seldom travel outside their borders. Foreigners generally stick to their own districts, and the common people will have little to do with them. **Security +1 Economy -1**

Cosmopolitan: Foreigners are welcomed here, and the people rejoice over goods and tales from distant lands. While the boost in trade is good for trade, the naturally open borders make it easy for foreign agents to make inroads in the society. **Economy +1 Security -1**

Edicts

Edicts are commands by the rulers to change how things work in the realm. These commands are carried out by the rulers' underlings,

though the effects are never certain. Sometimes a well-thought out edict will have dire consequences. These are only examples, the GM should use his judgement on the exact effects of whatever edicts the PCs decide to make.

Levy Taxes: In an attempt to raise funds for the economy, the leaders levy new taxes on the people. The tax can be on anything the PCs like, and may have other effects based on the exact type of tax. In general, the PCs can levy anything from light to very heavy taxes, giving a bonus of +1 to +5 to the Economy rating due to the new coins in the kingdom's coffers. Note that exact amounts are not tracked, just an amount relative to what was taken in before. For every bonus point to economy, this inflicts a -1 penalty to either Security or Popularity. Usually this hits popularity. For example, the PCs want to raise funds to build a new keep. They decide to place a tax on the marketplaces, demanding a copper from every peasant that enters the market. This is pretty light, giving them a +2 to their Economy. That makes the roll to get the funds for the keep easier to get. (See Realm Rolls sections) However, the peasants don't much like paying a copper for entering the market, so the ruler's popularity decreases by -2.

There are limits to taxation as well. If the economy is too high, the law of diminishing returns means that the taxes gained are offset by the impact on the economy. If the economy is too low, the people simply don't have enough to pay them, and thus the economy is hurt as much as it is helped. Therefore if the Economy Attribute is 5 or below, or 15 or above, the bonus to the Economy score is lost. However, any penalties to Popularity or Security is still applied.

Declaring Holidays: Holidays are always a good way to make the people appreciate you. They get a day off of their labor and have a little fun for once. The leaders can have anything from a small fair to a major celebration. This will give a +1 to +5 bonus to Popularity, while giving a total penalty of the same amount to either Security or Popularity. For example, the rulers decide to have a harvest festival. This is a full day off of their labors, with free food and some bards and dancers, for a +2 to popularity. However, the work is not getting done and there are large crowds in the cities, giving a -1 to Security and Economy.

Placing Tariffs: Tariffs are special taxes on foreign goods, in order to make one own goods more attractive to the marketplace. This is good for the local economy, but can anger neighboring realms, on whose goods are now devalued. Additionally, the people can now not afford these products at the same price. This provides a +1 to +3 to Economy, with an equal penalty either Security or Popularity.

Conscripting Troops: If the realm's security is at risk, the rulers can conscript able bodied men into military service. This is an extreme measure, as it will both anger the people whose family members are being sent off to fight, and the loss of so many laborers and craftsmen, not to mention the cost of arming and training them will impact the economy. Conscription can provide a +1 to +5 bonus to Security, while inflicting an equal penalty to both Popularity and Economy.

As stated, these are only examples, and the GM should feel free to reward the PCs imagination or punish their foolishness. For example, the kingdom is threatened by invasion, and the PCs need to raise troops. However, they don't want the people to be as upset with them. Rather than force troops into service, they decide to offer increased pay to entice more people into enlisting. The GM decides that the action can get them a +2 to Security in exchange for a -3 to Economy,

but no impact on Popularity.

Events

If you could plan for every eventuality, being a ruler would be easy. However, events often come up that are totally out of the leaders' control. These events can apply sometimes large penalties to the Attributes.

Famine: Droughts, floods, locusts, or an evil curse, the result is the same. The crops don't come in, and the people are starving. There simply isn't enough food to feed everyone. **Economy -10**

Plague: Disease spreads through the cities like wildfire, striking without mercy. The dead pile up as the living struggle to treat the sick and dying. The people are weakened and at great risk, for there frequently aren't enough soldiers to man the patrols and trade and industry slow to a crawl. **Security -4 Economy -4**

Population Explosion: There's a massive increase in population. In truth, the explosion happened some time ago, but the children of this era are now coming of age and putting a stress on all of society. There are more people than jobs, leading to discontent and poverty. **Security -3 Economy -3 Popularity -3**

Invasion: This could mean a foreign power, powerful tribe of humanoids, or a powerful creature such as a dragon and its minions start laying waste to the countryside. The people will cry out for the leader to respond. **Security -6**

Scandal: Vicious rumors abound about the leaders. The townsfolk may whisper that the leaders ruthlessly murdered an innocent man, committed incest, or worship evil gods. These needn't be true, for people are naturally eager to repeat such tales. **Popularity -3 to -7**

Again, these are only examples for the GM's imagination. Events can often be dealt with directly by the PCs, with their abilities as high level heroes. For example, a Druid PC might use his spells to make barren fields grow, a Cleric might devote himself to curing plague victims, or a warrior might take on an enemy general in single combat. Such direct actions are the benefit of having adventurers as leaders. This will immediately reverse the modifier and apply a bonus to Popularity, depending on the GM's judgement.

Realm Rolls.

The realm totals are more than just a guide to health, they can be used to exert a variety of effects on the realm. These are used when the effects of an Edict is unsure, or the PCs want to use the kingdom to extract some other effect. A Realm Roll is simply a d20 roll with the Realm Attribute added to it. Each Attribute has a variety of actions that can be attempted. As with other parts of the Realm Management system, this is just a guide and the GM should use his judgement to adjudicate other uses. As a guide for setting DCs, recall that the average roll on a d20 is 10.5, and the average rating for a realm that isn't too good and isn't too bad to be 10. Therefore, for an action that has an average 50% chance of success you want a DC of 20.

All rolls assume a small kingdom. Larger or smaller realms will have lower or higher DCs, depending on the GM's judgement.

Economic Rolls

Finance Building – The PCs may desire to construct a new building, such as a castle or city walls in a given city, or a fortress in a dangerous area. To raise the funds for such an event, the base DC is 20. A successful Economy roll will allow the building to go up, and apply a +2 to Security.

Acquire Rare Goods – By making a DC 20 Economic roll, the PCs can managed to get a rare or hard to find item from their merchants. This doesn't mean they get the item for free of course, but they can locate a rare item. This could be a rare book, an ancient map, or a magical item.

Dip Into the Coffers – The leader attempts to take some gold from the city coffers without seriously impacting the economy. With a DC 20 check, they can reclaim 10,000 gp from the treasury. However if the roll fails, the realm gets a -2 to Economy from the impact on public funding, and a -2 on Popularity as the public learns of this embezzlement.

Security Rolls

Repel Invaders – Sometimes the PCs will be at the forefront of the battle, leading the troops themselves. Othertimes, all they can do is send their armies off and trust in their generals. In this instance, the GM should make a Security Roll to reflect the strength of their military. If the armies are roughly equally matched, the DC is 20 to become victorious. The GM should raise or lower this depending on the number and quality of troops, terrain, morale, and other factors that he or she thinks may come into play. A success indicates victory, and a failure defeat. If the roll is passed by 5 or more, the enemy is completely wiped out, giving a +1 to Security. If the roll is failed by 5 or more, the army is annihilated, giving a -1 to Security. There may be multiple battles to be resolved over several months before an invasion is repelled. Victories may also increase Popularity.

Plant Spy – While foreign spies are a constant threat, the rulers can attempt to implant their own spies in foreign kingdoms. A successful Security roll (DC 20) will implant a spy in the court of a foreign land. A failure increases hostility, giving a -1 to Security. Once the spy is implanted, the High Inquisitor can attempt to get information from the spy. Another DC 20 roll will allow the spy to pass sensitive information back to the High Inquisitor, granting a +2 to his Gather Information check. If the roll is failed, however, the spy is discovered and killed, giving a -1 to Security from increased hostility.

The DC for these checks depend on the level of security of the foreign power. A lax state will lower it, and a strict one will raise it.

Bring in Wanted Man – A single individual can sometimes hold valuable information or be wanted for a particularly heinous crime. The realm's security forces can attempt to locate and apprehend the wanted person. The DC is 20 for a 5th level fugitive. The higher level the character is, the more difficult is it for the troops to apprehend them. For every level over 5th, the DC increases by three points. It is impossible for the security forces to apprehend a character over 10th level.

In this instance, the Security forces may instead just attempt to get information about the individual. In this case, the DC for a 5th level character is 15, increasing by 2 points for each level over 5th. There is no upper limit, and once the PCs have the location of the wanted person or a lead of some kind, they can attempt to deal with him themselves.

The effect of bringing in a wanted man depends on why he is wanted. A spy or enemy agent could provide a +1 or +2 to Security, especially if the rulers can get valuable information from him. A notorious murderer or other infamous character may provide a similar bonus to Popularity as the people rejoice at the villain being brought to justice.

Popularity Rolls

Popularity Rolls work a little differently. In this instance, the leader makes an appeal to the people directly, hoping for a boost to either Security or Economy. With a DC 20 roll, the ruler can make a call for service, drumming up support and enlistment in the military. Or he or she make an appeal for charity, encouraging the people to give to the lower classes to help pull them out of their misery and get the economy going. If successful, the realm gets a +1 to Security or Economy respectively. However, if the roll fails the leader is seen as impotent, and gets a -1 to Popularity.

Using the System

In general, a realm is governed on a month-by-month basis. At the beginning of the month, the GM makes the advisors' rolls and reports the current state of the realm. Once this is done, the advisors explain any new situations that the PCs may not be aware of. The PCs can make their decisions, issue edicts, and attempt to make Realm Rolls. These things are uncertain, and the group must use their judgement as to how much to do and how often. They must wait until the next month to learn the result of their decisions.

This is designed to allow the PCs to be adventuring leaders. They do not sit in their towers, counting coppers and gossiping with the gentry. They take action to see to the protection and preservation of their realm. The Realm Management system should serve as a springboard for adventure ideas and a part of the campaign, not overtake it.

The events that come up can result from the PC's exploits as well as inspire new adventures. Defeating great villains and overcoming huge challenges can increase Security or Popularity, while discovering a lost mine or making a trade negotiation can increase Economy.

Example Realm

Below an example realm, described with this system and how a few events and edicts work out. This could be used as-is, or as a springboard to imagination.

Dalamar: Kingdom Forged by the Sword

The Kingdom of Dalamar is a rough land with a lot of potential. When the paladin Galin overthrew the Orc-Lord Tarkus, he freed the huge number of slaves that the orcs used to work their mines and fields. He erected a new keep at the heart of the old orc city and named it Dalamar, after the sun-god Dal. Over the last year he has worked hard with his band of knights to tame the land, driving off trolls, orcs, giants, and even a red dragon. As tales of his achievements spread along the Iron Coast, tradesmen and commoners filled Dalamar and the surrounding cities, eager to find prosperity and a new life.

Sitting at the southern tip of the Iron Coast, Dalamar is directly along the trading route from the northern cities to the rich Southron cities. Now that the Orc-Lord has been defeated, the rich land can

be worked to feed the growing population. All is not well, however. Much of the land is still untamed and unexplored, and under the Orc-Lord Pirates prospered. Dalamar is declared King by the temple of Dal, and he sets up an aristocracy from among his finest knights to help him rule.

By default, all Attributes start at 10. However, due to the remaining wild lands and the pirates, the GM decides to start Security at 8, deciding the area is Rough. Dalamar is right along a busy trade route, so the Security gets dropped by 1 and the economy is raised by 1. The lands are Verdant, raising the Economy by 2. The government is a Traditional Monarchy, giving no modifier. Since the nobility is made up of experienced knights, and the people came due to the tales of Sir Galin's valor, the GM decides they have a Militant culture. Thus the Attributes for Dalamar is Security 8, Economy 13, and Popularity 10.

Lord Galin gathered in his audience hall with his most trusted advisors. He first turned to Sir Terrinal, one of his most trusted generals. "What news of the campaign against the remnants of the Orc-Lord's armies? And are there any other threats to the kingdom?"

Sir Terrinal is a man the Lord trusts, but he's not the most skilled advisor. After all, he's spent his life in the saddle, and has only recently come into the position of High Inquisitor. However, sometimes it's better to have a man you trust than a man with high skill in such a position. Sir Terrinal and Lord Galin defeated the Orc-Lord together, and have been adventuring together since they were both green boys.

He has a Gather Information skill of just 6, but does the best he can. Dalamar is really just a city-state at this point, with the city of Dalamar and a few surrounding villages under Galin's control. Currently the DC is 15.

The GM rolls a 6, for a total of 12. Sir Terrinal has failed by 3. The GM rolls percentile and gets a 21. Sir Terrinal incorrectly assesses the Kingdom's security at 5, wild and unruly.

A battle-scarred veteran rose, speaking with respect tinged with a touch of familiarity. "Ill news from the front, your Grace. I've heard many reports about chieftan named Ultar, claiming to be the new Orc-Lord. He's massing troops on the Western Frontier, and plans to strike for Dalamar as soon as possible. Further, the pirates threaten the trade routes. If it continues, the northern tradesmen may begin bypassing our port altogether.

Sir Galin considered this news, then spoke with authority. "We will have to levy a tax to fund the creation of a Royal Navy. For every silver made on the sale of grain, one copper will be taken to fund the new ships. Then we'll drive the pirates far from our shores. As for the so-called Orc-Lord, we'll ride out to take care of this upstart personally.

The taxes the Lord has levied will give a bonus to the Economy roll to create the new ships for the navy. The Lord has to wait until next month to make this roll, however. It does take time to gather the money before the ships can be built. He'll get a +2 to his Economy rating, but since Sir Terrinal overstated the pirate threat, he only gains a +1 to Security if the roll is successful. In addition, the Lord's popularity will drop by 1.

As for the new Orc-Lord, if the Lord's campaign to slay him is

successful, he will gain another +1 to Security and Popularity. This would be a higher boost to Security, but again Sir Terrinal overstated the threat.

The new King then turned to an elderly man in rather elegant clothes. "Sir Ashton, how fares the kingdom's coppers?"

Sir Ashton is a master merchant, one of the first to come to Dalamar. He is easily the wealthiest man in Dalamar, and is most competent at keeping his ear to the ground. He has a Gather Information of 12. However, his first interest is in maintaining his wealth and power that comes from owning the largest trading house and brewery in the growing city.

The GM rolls, and gets a 10, for a total of 22. Sir Ashton has a clear picture at the economic situation in Dalamar.

The man rises, exuding a sense of confidence and power despite his great age. "Your Grace, things are largely going well. The farms are bringing in a bumper crop and more ships appear by the day, though I agree with Sir Terrinal that the pirate situation must be addressed. However, our market is being flooded by cheap brandy from Tharkeld. I suggest a tariff on their product to ensure the growth of our local markets."

Lord Galin again considered carefully. He knew that Ashton was the most masterful merchant in several kingdoms, but he looked after his own interests first. He knew perfectly well that 'local markets' meant Ashton's own breweries. "Good to hear, overall. As soon as the fleet is assembled we'll deal with the pirates. On the subject of brandy however, that is not wise. While I appreciate fostering our local markets, we can't risk angering Tharkeld. We've got enough problems with orcs and pirates without offending the most powerful nation on the Coast."

He turned finally to a man in finery, fair of face and with a melodic voice. Marcus had been a constant companion during his adventuring days, and Galin trusted him implicitly. Besides, the job of High Herald finally gave the bard's propensity for lounging in taverns and listening to idle gossip to good use. The man always did have a way with people, anyway.

Marcus is as skilled at finding the word on the street as Ashton is at counting coppers. He has a Gather Information of 12 as well. The GM rolls a 15, getting a 27. Marcus can accurately describe the people's attitudes toward the king.

The cultured man lounged back in his chair. "Well Galin," he started, drawing icy stares from the people around him. He had trouble remembering that Galin was his King now, instead of the brave man who has saved his life a dozen times and constantly berated him for his drinking and wenching. Galin really didn't mind, and he dreaded the day Marcus remembered to call him 'Highness' or 'your Grace'. Truth be told, the bard's lyre and tales did as much to build this kingdom as Galin's sword. He was also the only man at the table that wasn't knighted. He swore that if anyone ever called him Sir Marcus he'd see to it that the knig was known as Galin the Flatulent all across the kingdom. Galin loved that Marcus could always make him laugh.

"Your Grace, Galin, I mean. The people are generally hopeful. Their heads are still full of the tales of your exploits, and while life is hard, they're a hard people. But they have high expectations, and

are waiting to see if the man lives up to the tales, so to speak. There's a lot of talk about these orcs, they ruled this land for ages. A lot of them are former slaves, and fear the old masters returning.

And they aren't going to like these new taxes. Not at all."

Lord Galin considered Marcus's counsel. "Well, we need to keep the people happy. Maybe I can kill two birds with one stone. If I could persuade Sir Ashon to sell us say, a dozen kegs of ale at a discount, we could offer it at a festival tomorrow. Free for all. And perhaps you could arrange for some of your layabout friends to put together some singing and dancing. That will make the people happy, and get some of our local ales into the public's gullet"

The two advisors agreed that this would be acceptable.

The GM decides that this festival will be worth +2 on the realm's Popularity. However, since the ale will be at a discount and the entertainers free, the GM rules that this will only apply -1 to the Economy.

"Is there any other business before the court?" The Seneschal spoke up.

"There's an emissary from the Dwarven Kingdom of Zal-ithad, one Kordon Ironshield," the nervous young man reported.

"Send him in."

A dwarven man entered the hall, clad in black plate armor and a dusty red cloak hanging from his shoulders. He knelt before the council and introduced himself. "I'm Kordon Ironshield, come to speak for King Uther, Lord Under The Mountain, High King of the Dwarven Kingdom of Zal-ithad"

"Rise, Kordon Ironshield. The dwarves are ever welcome at Dalamar."

The dwarf rose and approached the table, unfurling a map before the council. "His majesty wants to know your intentions. The orcs have ruled here for ages, and we defended our mountains with our blood. Now that you're in charge, we'd like to know if you'll respect our borders." He gestered to the map. "Our claim is to the mountains and the foothills. Do you plan to honor our traditional territory."

Galin examined the map carefully. "Yes, that looks appropriate. This kingdom is forged out of the territory of murderous orcs. We have no designs on the Mountain Kingdom. In fact, we would very much like to become friends. Would your King like to establish trade routes between your land and ours? We have plenty of grain and spirits, as well as a port on the coast. Our merchants would love to buy some fine dwarven iron and arms, I'm certain."

"His majesty was hoping you'd suggest that very thing. I'll go over it with your Financial Advisor."

"You mentioned a long hatred of the orcs. We are embarking on a campaign to eliminate the remnants of their kingdom. Would Zal-ithad join us in this noble cause?"

"I cannot speak for the King in this matter, but I'll bring it up with him. He's always up for some orc-killing" With a smile, the emissary begged for leave.

This is a fortunate turn of events. With Dwarven Ore and Weapons flowing in, the GM decides that Dalamar gets a +1 to Security and Economy. If King Uther decides to join in the fight against the orcs, that will give an additional +1 to Security.

Over the next month, the PCs journey to the western frontier and battle with the orc tribes. The humanoids are quickly routed, and the new Orc-Lord slain. The GM makes an Economy roll with last month's score of 13. He rolls a 10, getting a 23, beating the DC of 20. The GM tallies up the modifiers before the next meeting.

Last months Attributes were Security 8, Economy 13, and Popularity 10. The tax levies made the Economy 15 and Popularity 8. He successfully raised enough money to fund the new Navy, giving him a Security of 9. Lord Galin has successfully slain the new Orc-Lord

and dispersed his horde, making his Security 10 and Popularity 10. The festival was a big hit with the commoners, raising his popularity to 12 and lowering Economy to 14. Finally, the trade agreement with the dwarves allowed the merchants a new source of customers and allowed the military to arm with high quality dwarven weapons, raising Security to 11 and Economy to 15. Now that he has the totals, the GM checks the tables to see what effect the new scores have on each other. An Economy of 15 grants a +1 to both Security and Popularity! Now his totals are Security 12, Economy 15, and Popularity 13.

So now his Security is Safe, his Economy is Growing, and he is Admired among the people. Now if only his advisors can adequately assess the situation, and no bad events befall the kingdom, the future is looking bright!