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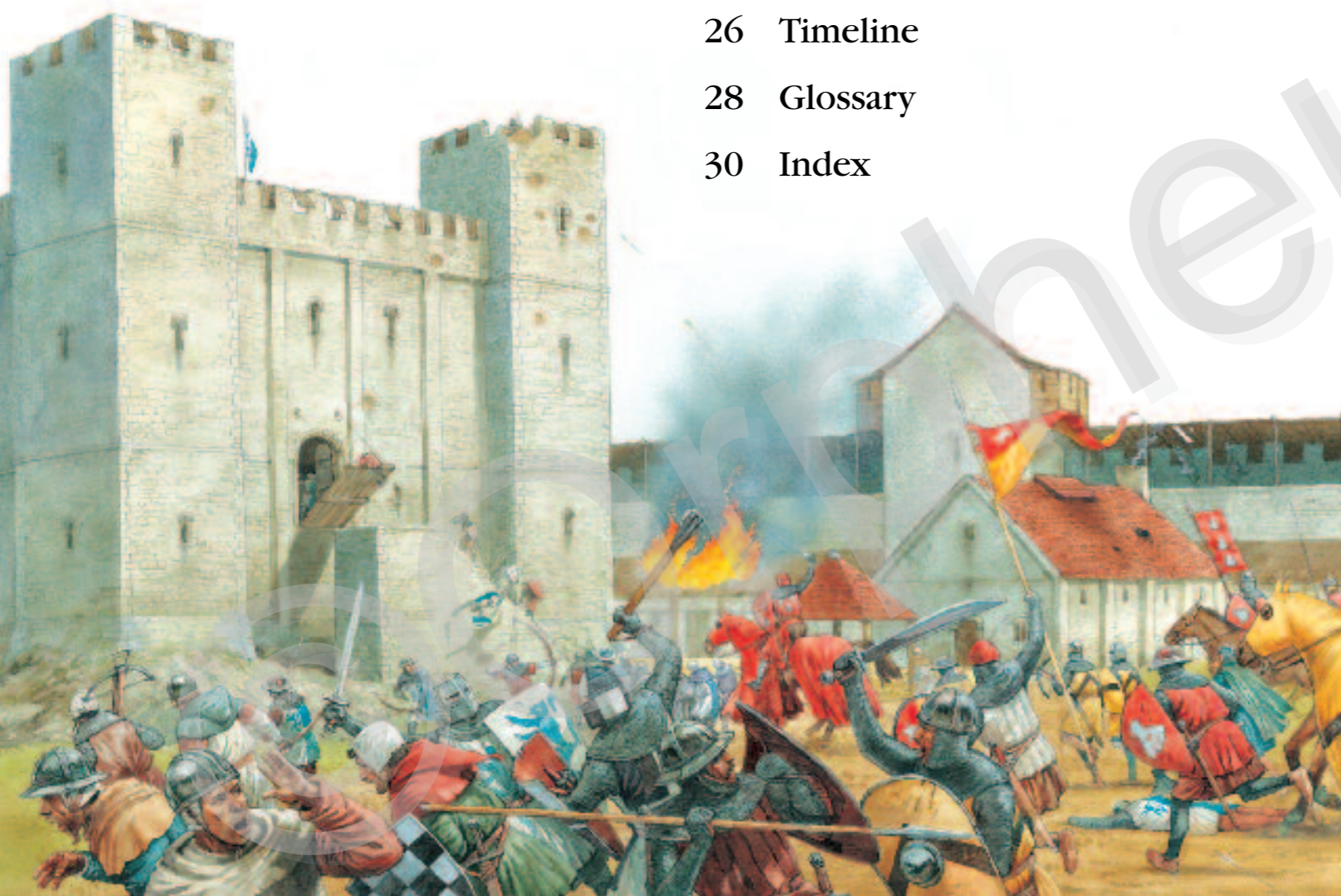
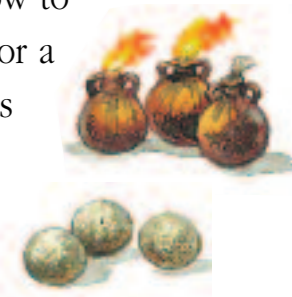
Your challenge

The year is 1300 and times are troubled. Your king is being challenged by some powerful nobles who want to seize power. As his most loyal troop commander, he is sending you to quash the rebellion. Your target is the leader of the nobles, a rebel lord whose stronghold is his gleaming new, well-defended castle.



Your challenge is to capture the rebel lord and so put an end to the rebellion. If you can do this without a fight, so much the better, but you have the king's authority to besiege the castle if necessary. If you succeed, you can be sure your king will reward you, perhaps even giving you some of the rebel lord's land and property. But this is no easy task. He is very ambitious and his castle is strongly fortified with a garrison of well-trained soldiers. You need to plan your strategy carefully to give yourself the very best chance of success.

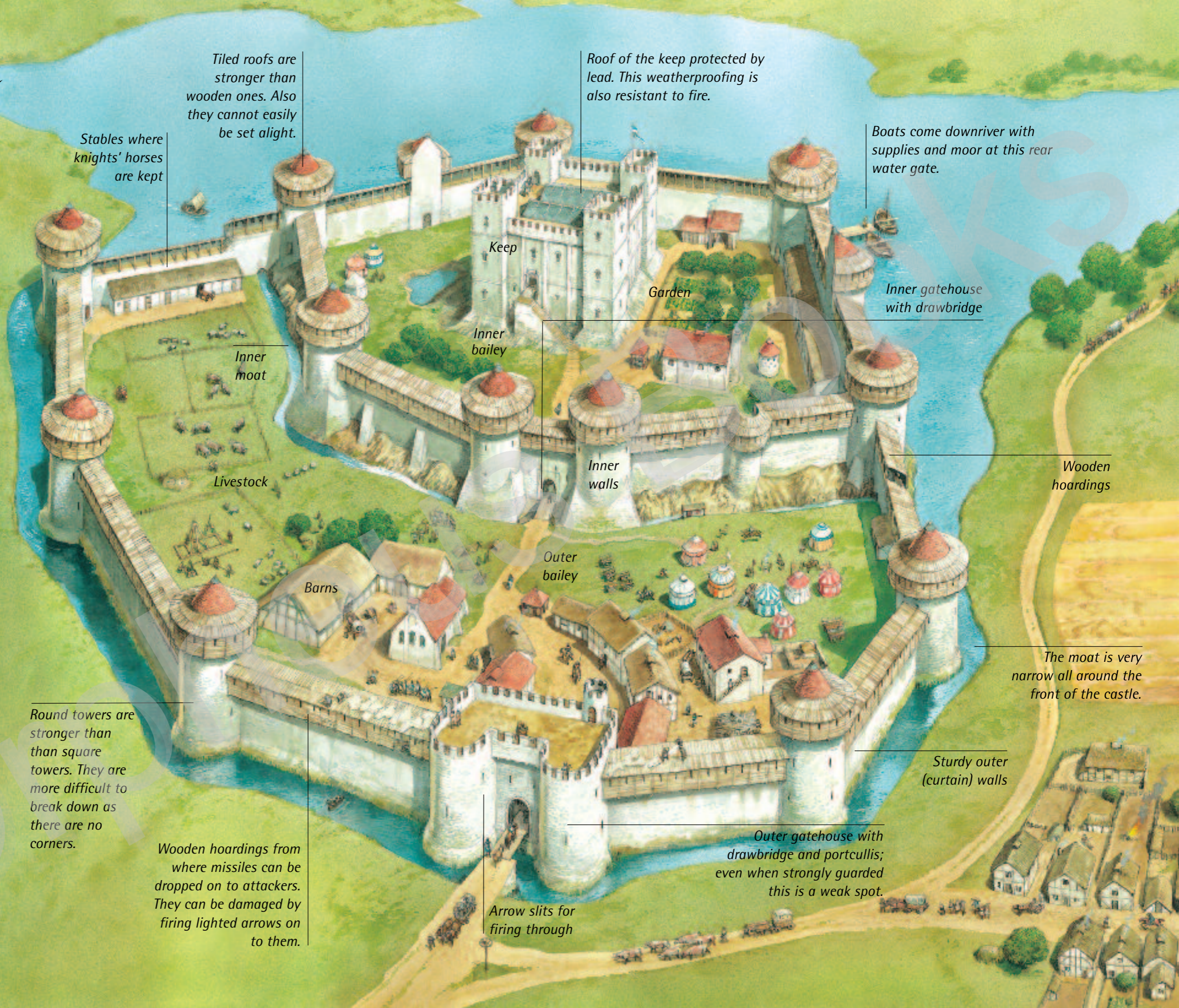
This guide will take you through the campaign step-by-step. It will show you how to find out as much about your target as possible and explain the best strategies for a successful attack. It will tell you about your troops, show you what sort of weapons you will need and, if necessary, how to carry out a long siege. Armed with all this information, can you successfully capture the castle? Will victory be yours?



Planning your attack

The castle is a massive stronghold with formidable defences. It is positioned on an island with water all around it. You will somehow have to bridge this to get to its walls. The castle is also in excellent repair. The walls are sound and topped by wooden hoardings, from where the defenders can safely attack your troops. There is an inner bailey, protected by a second set of strong walls and another moat. The garrison defending it is obviously well-trained. Guards regularly patrol the walls and keep a sharp lookout from the towers. And last but not least, you should be aware that the castle is very well supplied for food with livestock and grain stored in the barns.

On the other hand, the castle is not without its weaknesses. The moat in front of the castle is very narrow and shallow and you should be able to infill it or bridge it without difficulty. There is access to the castle from the river through a water gate that is not well guarded. The gatehouse with its wooden drawbridge is vulnerable to a direct attack: if you can batter a way through the entrance then you have no need to scale the walls or attempt to make a breach. This castle has a large number of towers. These are structurally weaker than the walls, so your assault should concentrate on them. Note also that the wooden hoardings running along the tops of the walls are susceptible to attack by fire.



Tiled roofs are stronger than wooden ones. Also they cannot easily be set alight.

Roof of the keep protected by lead. This weatherproofing is also resistant to fire.

Stables where knights' horses are kept

Boats come downriver with supplies and moor at this rear water gate.

Keep

Garden

Inner gatehouse with drawbridge

Inner bailey

Inner moat

Livestock

Wooden hoardings

Inner walls

Barns

Outer bailey

The moat is very narrow all around the front of the castle.

Round towers are stronger than square towers. They are more difficult to break down as there are no corners.

Sturdy outer (curtain) walls

Wooden hoardings from where missiles can be dropped on to attackers. They can be damaged by firing lighted arrows on to them.

Outer gatehouse with drawbridge and portcullis; even when strongly guarded this is a weak spot.

Arrow slits for firing through

Before the siege

Remember, it is not just brute force that will secure success. There are other actions you can take before you attack that are equally effective. These include: sending spies into the castle to glean information; disrupting the castle's food supplies and preventing the movement of enemy troops. The more information you can gather about the land, the castle, its lord and its people, the better.

Recruit spies from your own loyal followers if you can. Men posing as mercenaries make excellent spies as they will be told about the castle's defences as part of their job. You could also use local merchants or craftsmen who have legitimate business at the castle. Things spies can find out include:

1. how many people are in the castle
2. weak spots in the castle's defences
3. how large the garrison is
4. how food and water are supplied
5. how prepared the castle is for an attack.



If your spies tell you that additional troops are on the way to help defend the castle, organize an advance party to ambush them before they get there. You could also attempt to capture the lord of the castle. If successful you can hold him until he surrenders.



Encourage local people, particularly women and children, to enter the castle. They will be no use to the defence of the castle, but at the same time use up vital food and water. The defenders are much more likely to surrender if they are hungry and thirsty.

GOOD SPYING TIPS

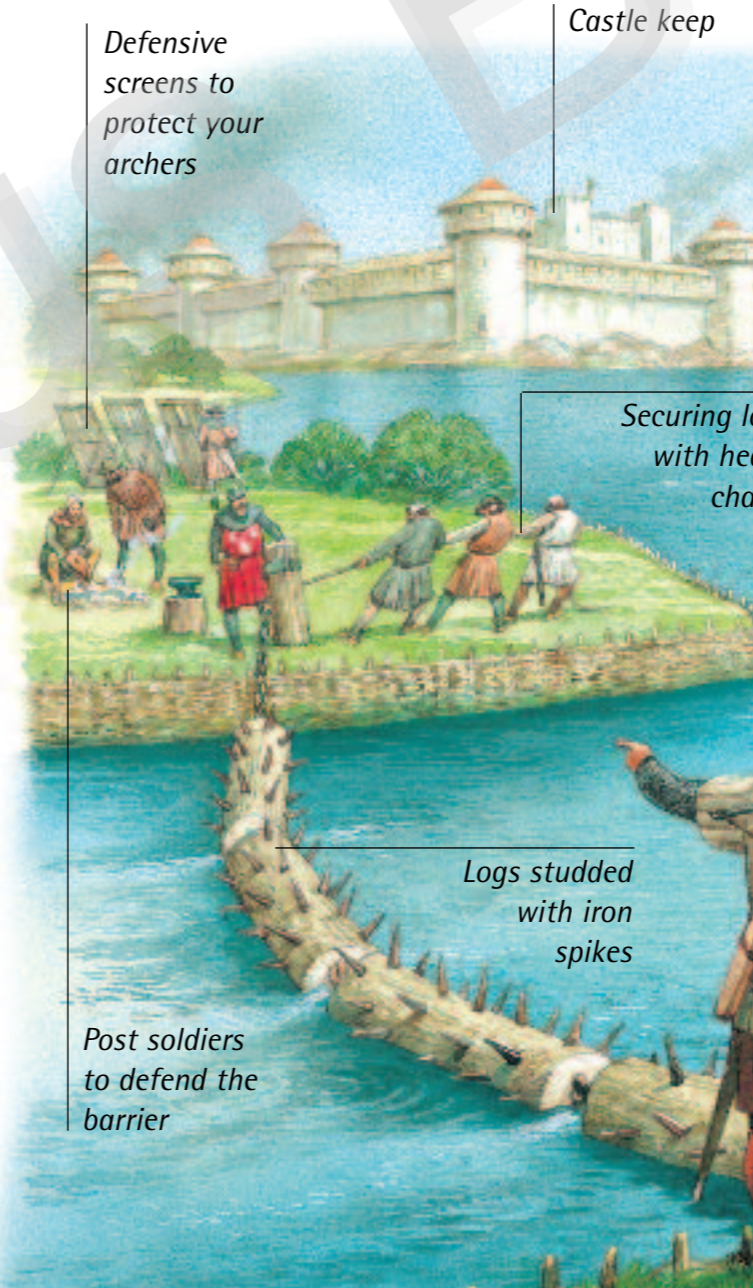
1. To keep your spies loyal, make sure they are well paid.
2. Brief them carefully so that they understand exactly what they have to do.
3. Train them to use sabotage, for instance attacking guards or spoiling the water supply.

It is essential that your own troops are well supplied. Remember, they fight better on a full stomach. Make contact with merchants and negotiate with them to sell you food, clothing and weapons. In addition, you may need to raid local farms and villages for provisions. It is wise to destroy anything you don't need to prevent any supplies getting to the defenders in the castle.

Access to fresh water is vital



Maintain good relations with merchants to ensure supply



Defensive screens to protect your archers

Castle keep

Securing logs with heavy chains

Logs studded with iron spikes

Post soldiers to defend the barrier

You can halt supplies getting to the castle by boat by blocking the river. This can be done by stringing a heavy chain across the narrowest part of the river, just below the water's surface, to snarl up boats. You could also, as here, float logs, chained together and studded with metal spikes, between the banks. Make sure they are securely tethered at each end. You will need to post soldiers on both banks to defend the barrier from attack.

Logs are strung across the narrowest part of the river