

# The Spanish are coming

## Characters



- ☞ Narrator
- ☞ Queen Elizabeth I, Queen of England
- ☞ Sir Francis Drake, an old 'sea dog' and captain of 'The Revenge'
- ☞ Lord Howard of Effingham, commander of the English fleet
- ☞ Sarah Harchester, Lady in Waiting
- ☞ Charlotte Cobham, Lady in Waiting
- ☞ Messenger
- ☞ Lord Burghley, William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer
- ☞ A jester (all round performer and idiot!)

- ◆ *Narrator:* It is 12 noon on 19th July, 1588. Queen Elizabeth is at her court in Richmond, a jester performs for her.
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* You have to be the most rubbish jester I have ever seen. Guards, get him out of here before I have his entrails removed (burps and farts)
- ◆ *Jester:* But your majesty I only aim to please...
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Right, you idiot, do you know what would really please me? First I'll hang you upside down, then I'll remove your ...
- ◆ *Messenger:* Your Royal Highness, forgive the intrusion, but I've got bad news. The naval fleet of King Philip approaches Cornwall. It looks like they've got about 130 ships.
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* (sighs) Blimey, I s'pose this means war then! But it's not unexpected. **War has been on the cards for a while now.** Well, Phil will be making a mistake.
- ◆ *Messenger:* Madam?
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* **I have one of the strongest and newest navies in Europe, messenger. My ships are faster and easier to steer than any of the rubbish King Philip cares to send our way.** His ships are like his hairstyle, he hasn't changed the design for years...(ladies in waiting giggle silently). They are big and slow, like my late father.
- ◆ *Messenger:* Madam? (totally confused)
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Oh for goodness sake, man. **No wonder I decided to stay a spinster and run this kingdom on my own.** Now, get out of my sight and send Lord Burghley here immediately.
- ◆ *Narrator:* The Messenger exits to get Lord Burghley, a close and trusted advisor of Elizabeth. Elizabeth's Ladies in Waiting begin to mutter.
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Sarah! Charlotte! This is hardly the time for laughing. Is my wig crooked or something?

- ◆ *Sarah:* No madam. It's just, King Philip must really fancy you to do this. He's wanted to marry you for years.
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Oh, Sarah, that's far too slushy. **Philip has never really wanted me, he wanted the crown of England and to put Catholics back in charge of the church in England.**
- ◆ *Charlotte:* But madam, wasn't your cousin Mary Queen of Scots a Catholic?
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Yes, she was. **My ministers thought she was plotting against me with other Catholics – I wasn't so sure myself. Philip is a Catholic and was allies with Mary. I expect he was a bit angry about her death.**
- ◆ *Narrator:* Lord Burghley enters.
- ◆ *Lord Burghley:* That's not all that King Philip is angry about, is it? **I think there is the small matter of Sir Francis Drake attacking Spanish treasure ships with your permission.**
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Well, he shouldn't have tried to keep all those newly discovered lands in America and the Far East to himself, should he? They're full of silver and new trade, I just wanted some of the action! (Ladies in Waiting giggle some more). **Philip is the most powerful ruler in the world, and he's just getting a little bit too big for his boots!**
- ◆ *Lord Burghley:* OK, but I reckon **you've really made Philip cross by making an alliance with the Protestant Netherlands who wanted freedom from Spain, and helping them to rebel against him.**
- ◆ *Queen Elizabeth:* Well possibly. **But they are Protestants and I had to help them.** But now, we must decide what action to take. I trust Drake and Effingham are ready.
- ◆ *Lord Burghley:* Yes, madam, the messenger left word that they're waiting for a good tide in Plymouth.
- ◆ *Narrator:* Meanwhile in Plymouth, Sir Francis Drake and Lord Howard are playing bowls.
- ◆ *Lord Howard:* Drake, that's a cracking shot mate, but we really must get going. The Spanish galleons have been seen off of Cornwall, old man.
- ◆ *Francis Drake:* Howard, you old devil, there's time to finish the game and beat the Spaniards too. Besides, I've got 10 groats resting on this one. Give it three hours, and once the tide comes in we can sail out and get the Spaniards, what ho!



To be continued...



Sir Francis Drake: working out his next bowls move.