

THE WURSTFEST

This chapter gives a summary of the events that will take place during the sausage festival. As always, the GM should be prepared to change events, or improvise new ones, in response to the PCs' actions.

✦ JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL ✦

The journey to Heildorf can be calm and uneventful, or it can be punctuated with encounters of various types. The festival started two days before the adventurers arrive, and most of the visitors have already arrived, taking up all the available accommodation. As the adventurers draw near to the village, they can see smoke from the festival's cooking fires. The sounds of merriment and the bustle of nearly a hundred well-to-do visitors gorging themselves on sausage, ale, and other treats is audible from beyond the village wall.

‡ AT THE GATE

The mercenaries stationed at the gate (p. 11) demand to know the adventurers' business in Heildorf, and warn them not to interfere with the festival. They have little patience for troublemakers and are not afraid to deny anyone entry to the village. If the PCs mention the handbill, Claude directs them to the Dancing Dragon, and tells them to ask for Karl. If asked the mercenaries about working in Heildorf, the mercenaries are noncommittal unless a PC makes a successful **Fellowship** test (Warriors +10, Rogues and Academics -10); then they will mention Heinz's pushy, overbearing manner and grating personality. Still, they are well-paid and happy to have such an easy contract.

‡ THE FESTIVAL

In the town square, over a hundred revellers quaff wine and ale, consume prodigious quantities of sausage, and enjoy the entertainers who wander through the crowd. A steady stream of brings food from the cooking tents to the south, bearing plates piled high with food towards the festival tent and carrying out platters bare of anything save gristle, grease, and half-eaten chunks of food. A similar procession leads to and from the Dancing Dragon as servants carry wine and ale to the festival and return with empty mugs. The mercenaries keep a close watch on the adventurers, and quickly move to direct them towards the tavern if they drift too close to the festival.

‡ THE DANCING DRAGON

As the PCs enter the Dancing Dragon, Karl reacts to them based on their dress and appearance. If they are well-dressed and appear prosperous, he assumes they are in town for the festival. If they are armed and armoured, he asks if they are

interested in mercenary work. If in doubt, he assumes they are at the tavern to pay for admission into the festival, which is 30 GC each. If the adventurers have indeed come for the sausage festival, but can't afford the price of admission, Karl will size them up, and suggest that they may be able to find work here. In any event, he sends a servant to fetch Heinz, and makes small talk as he waits for Heinz to arrive.

The Interview

Heinz enters the tavern with a flourish, escorted by the aged witch-hunter Manfred Harwitt. Before he deigns to notice the PCs, he launches into a petulant tirade aimed at Karl, saying that their have been complaints about slow service from the tavern and accusing Karl of neglecting his duties. His behaviour is partly due to his nature, and partly a deliberate move to impress upon the new arrivals that he is the most important man in the village and not to be trifled with. Karl slinks away, and Heinz turns his attention to the PCs.

Heinz assumes a friendly but condescending air while he chats with the adventurers. He asks about their mercenary experience, and their ability to handle themselves in a professional, courteous manner in a social situation like the festival. During the course of the interview, he will insist upon poking, prodding and pinching the applicants in order to assess the amount and quality of the flesh on their bones. Besides his usual cover story of being an amateur physician, he demands the right to assess his potential employees' health before agreeing to hire them.

Throughout the interview, runners and servants interrupt Heinz every few minutes. Servants ask him if it is alright to begin the next round of serving, if a dark or amber ale is appropriate for the next round of drinks, and so on. This gives the adventurers the opportunity to see that Heinz is testy, overworked, and highly strung, and insists on overseeing every aspect of the festival personally.

As Heinz questions the adventurers, Manfred interjects occasionally with questions about their experience and talents. His questions are obviously based more on experience than those Heinz asks; if a character brags about their fighting ability, Manfred may even ask for a demonstration. Heinz watches Manfred closely, gauging the adventurers' strength by the way the old witch-hunter reacts to their answers. After a few minutes, Manfred and Heinz excuse themselves to speak in private.

Once satisfied, Heinz offers to employ the adventurers. His initial offer is two crowns per day plus room and board, but he can be haggled up to a daily pay rate of eight crowns. This is a truly lavish sum for this kind of employment, and may raise some suspicions. The fact is that Heinz doesn't

expect the adventurers to live to collect their pay, so he doesn't mind offering over the odds in order to get the negotiations out of the way.

Once hired, the adventurers are given a single, large common room on the upper floor of the Dancing Dragon. If the party is of mixed sex, they are offered two smaller rooms instead. Heinz orders sausages and ale for the adventurers, tells them to start work the next day. If anyone questions this, he explains that he would rather pay them for a full day of work than a half-day, and suggests that they use the rest of the day to clean up after their journey and get to know the village.

Take some time to describe just how good the sausage is, and how generous the portions are. The ale is also of good quality, but the sausage will be better than anything the adventurers have ever tasted before. If they compliment Heinz on the sausage, he proudly declares that this, one of his newest batches of sausage, is perhaps his best yet. If anyone asks for the recipe, he will be flattered, but decline to share it, saying that is it the secret of his success and the source of his living. At this point, the players have no way of knowing that their characters have just eaten human flesh, but when they finally do make this horrific realization, its effect will be greatly enhanced by the memory of just how good it tasted. Their look of horrified comprehension will be priceless.

After the business of hiring is concluded, Heinz leaves the adventurers with Manfred. He starts regaling them with dull stories of his younger days, and while he never openly mentions the fact that he is a witch-hunter, he is just waiting for the adventurers to realize this and ask him, so that he can make a self-deprecating comment and launch into even more stories. Throughout the discussion, he grows progressively drunker. If the players are slow to realize his profession, Manfred has grown quite maudlin by the time they ask; he stares gloomily into his mug and tells them that a real witch-hunter would spend his days on the road doing something useful, not wasting away in an inn. Eventually he will drink himself into a stupor and have to be carried to his room at the boarding house. Of course, the adventurers can excuse themselves before this time, and how they deal with Manfred on this first encounter will shape his view of them for the rest of the adventure.

➤ THE REMAINS OF THE DAY ◀

The rest of the adventurers' first day in Heidedorf can be handled according to personal preference. If you want to get on with the adventure, it is appropriate to skip to the following day at any time; on the other hand, players who want to take some time to explore the village and meet the locals will be glad they did so as the adventure progresses.

The GM should pay careful attention to the PCs' interactions with the villagers. As employees of Heinz, they are now a part of the town's political landscape, whether they want to be or not. As the new people in town, they draw the attention and questions of the Dancing Dragon's regulars who are eager to size up Heinz's hires.

‡ JUST ONE MORE

One option is simply to spend the rest of the day in the Dancing Dragon – until Heinz hustles the locals out for the evening, anyway. The adventurers may have to put up with Manfred's interminable stories, but they will have the chance to meet many of the more important locals as they come and go throughout the day. Some may even take it upon themselves to rescue the newcomers from the old man, if he has not yet drunk himself unconscious; more enterprising characters might decide to flatter Manfred about his position in the village and ask him to make introductions.

Roughly a dozen villagers are in the tavern during the day. As newcomers who are clearly different from the general run of visitors to the festival, the adventurers draw some interest. The villagers are eager for news from the outside world, and are interested to see just what sort of mercenary Heinz has brought to the village.

While Manfred is about, no one speaks ill of Heinz. However, once he is carried off in a drunken stupor, the others become much more open about the petulant sausage maker. When the PCs aren't directly interacting with Manfred, he rambles on to anyone who will listen. It is quite obvious that the others tolerate the man, but have trouble feigning interest in his stories.

Karl Taunenbaum

Karl makes an effort to treat the characters well, and will be happy to provide introductions. He knows the regulars don't like Heinz, and he does a careful job of balancing his business relationship with the sausage maker with his social connections to his regulars.

Randolph Guervin

The smith is normally rather quiet, but with the festival in full swing he has not had much demand for his services during the week. He approaches the adventurers and strikes up a conversation about their weapons and armour, trying to feel out their need for repairs or equipment. If they are reasonably civil to him, and either give him some business or turn down his offer politely, he takes a shine to them. Though Randolph is a man of few words, he is one of the few people in town who is universally respected. He only speaks when he has something important to say, and invariably his advice has been worth heeding. Randolph has little to say about Heinz. He doesn't particularly like Heinz, but Karl is friends with him and that's enough to make Randolph keep his thoughts to himself.

Dirk Moser

The miller spends much of his time at the Dancing Dragon now that his sons are old enough to manage the mill. As one of Heinz's sharpest critics, he is eager to sound out the new employees. While Dirk knows nothing of Heinz's conspiracy, he is quite familiar with the sausage maker's methods of management and prickly nature. He playfully taunts the characters and warns them of the drudge work and misery that await them over the next few days. "After all," he tells them,

“Heinz goes through an awful lot of mercenaries. I’m surprised you mercenary folk still come here for work.”

If the characters take Dirk’s ribbing in a congenial manner, he warms up to them. While he is as suspicious of outsiders as any other Heidedorfer, he feels sorry for anyone who has to work for Heinz. He takes them under his wing, assuming a sort of grandfatherly attitude as he fills them in on Heidedorf’s politics. In short, he tells them Heinz is responsible for the festival’s recent success, which has brought quite a bit of jealousy from the other sausage makers in the region. Heinz was never the most popular man in the village, in any case; his short temper, pompous manner, and arrogance earned him quite a few enemies even before he came up with the sausage festival. Dirk warns the PCs to avoid getting too entangled with Heinz. On the other hand, if the PCs are rude, curt, or otherwise disrespectful to Dirk he writes them off as arrogant city boys. He assumes they are cut from the same cloth as Heinz, and either insults or ignores them, according to the circumstances.

Alfred Fochs

If the characters make a good first impression on Dirk, he introduces them to Alfred. Though the old man isn’t eager to dredge up the past, he happily supports Dirk’s assertions that Heinz is a dreadful man.

Once one of Heidedorf’s most respected sausage makers, Alfred is now relegated to watching the festival from the sidelines. Years ago, he was one of the richest and most well-respected men in the region. Heinz was always jealous of his wealth, success, and especially his position of leadership on the committee that formed to run and promote the sausage festival. As Heinz’s success grew, he made an effort to remove his “rival” Fochs. Refusing to supply customers who also ordered sausage from Alfred, he drove the old man out of business, and supplanted him on the festival committee by threatening to keep his wares out of the festivities.

Alfred now spends most of his time in the Dancing Dragon. While no longer able to make a living making sausage, he has enough money to retire fairly comfortably. His children have long since moved out of the Heidedorf area, and his wife passed away five years ago. Alfred still retains the respect of with the local sausage makers, even though no one dares to stand up to Heinz.

Other Villagers

In addition to the NPCs mentioned above, a small number of farmers, labourers, and old retirees spend their days in the Dancing Dragon. None are friends of Heinz, and all harbour attitudes similar to those expressed by Dirk Moser.

Wilf Schwarzhaus

If the adventurers do not visit his shop first, Wilf pays them a visit at the Dancing Dragon to find out if they need any additional supplies or equipment. While Wilf is not universally loathed as Heinz, many in the village resent the prices he charges, and distrust his close relationship with the sausage maker. Wilf is puffing on his signature dragon-carved pipe. When he enters the Dancing Dragon, conversation quiets

until he leaves. If asked, anyone friendly to the PCs – except Karl – will tell them that Wilf and Heinz are business associates. While Wilf is not personally obnoxious, the villagers feel he is an opportunist and few trust him.

‡ EXPLORING

During the course of the day, the characters have the run of village so long as they stay away from the festival. They can shop at Wilf’s trading post, or even wander out of the gates if they wish. Wherever they go, they will probably have the chance to meet the NPCs described above at some time or another; in addition, wandering about the village will give them the opportunity to meet a few of the minor NPCs, such as Heinz’s wife. However, they will probably remain in the Dancing Dragon once they discover that things are rather dull in the rest of the village.

⇒ ON THE JOB ⇐

The day after their arrival (and the fourth day of the festival), the adventurers start working for Heinz Schiller. While he intends to send them to their doom in Black Rock Keep as soon as possible, he needs a few extra hands with the festival at the moment, and details the adventurers to help out. If anyone questions him or enquires about bandits, he flies into a rage and screams at the adventurers that he is paying them to do what he tells them.

Heinz expects them to spend most of their time near the festival tent, keeping the peace and guarding against ruffians. He keeps a sharp eye on them during the day, and if anyone does not appear to put enough effort into the job, he lets them know in no uncertain fashion. A PC who mingles with the guests is sure to draw Heinz’s ire.

The PCs are responsible for keeping the peace throughout the day, without disturbing the day’s festivities. Heinz makes it clear that they are to treat his guests with the utmost respect, solve every problem they have quickly and courteously, and keep other interactions with the revellers to a minimum. Throughout the day, Heinz’s mercenaries are stand watch at the gates. Heinz would rather have them keeping an eye on travellers and directing visitors to the festival tent than rely on the soon-to-be-slaughtered PCs.

Emphasize the confused, raucous nature of the festival to the players. Ideally, the PCs should feel they’re trying to juggle a dozen problems at once. Just as one seems to have resolved, another two or three arise. Heinz is a terrible person to work for; he is finicky, never satisfied, always willing to resort to insults and browbeating, and can switch in an instant from berating a lackey to fawning over a visitor. If after the first day the players aren’t sick of dealing with Heinz, they are either far too forgiving or you haven’t played up his obnoxious qualities quite enough. The more the PCs hate him, the greater satisfaction will accompany their subsequent drive to bring him to justice.

Some of the following events are meant to serve as optional scenes to keep the action moving and to provide some ex-

citement for the PCs during their first day on the job in town. Most, however, will take place with or without the character's involvement – though Heinz will blame them for every mishap that takes place, whether they were present at the time or not!

‡ THE MORNING

The first few hours of the day pass without much trouble. Most visitors are either freshly arrived and enjoying the proceedings, or miserably hung over from the previous day's festivities.

The Drunk

Pick the strongest-looking or most heavily armoured PC. An old, half-crippled retired mercenary named Dirk Lang (p. 47) lurches towards them, still drunk from the night before, and launches into a rambling monologue on the proper method to fortify a homestead against goblin attackers. He discourses at length, albeit somewhat incoherently, on managing a besieged fort's human waste without tainting its water supply, and how to allocate troops and to organize near-suicidal charges against the attackers to cut down the number of defenders in light of a fort's dwindling food supply.

So long as the chosen character keeps nodding and smiling, the old man is content to ramble on. If, however, the character makes some excuse and tries to get away, or simply ignores the old soldier (or is called away by Heinz to do something else), he grabs at any weapon the character carries in an effort to demonstrate first hand his favourite fighting techniques. If he is given a weapon, he makes a few lurching stabs, parries, and ripostes in the air before doubling over and vomiting copiously on the PC's feet.

The old mercenary's travelling companions rush over to collect their comrade after he loses his breakfast. Rolf and Otto (p. 47) are veterans who served alongside Dirk through decades of war. If the character was civil to their friend, they discreetly slim him a few crowns for his trouble; if not, they glare as they lead their comrade away. The old war dogs may prove valuable later on. While the three are far from useful in a fight, they all served as officers and have the calm, forceful demeanour necessary to calm a rioting crowd.

If the PCs strike up a conversation with either Rolf or Otto, they can learn some valuable information. Their last assignment as mercenaries involved serving as guard captains for caravans heading into Altdorf, and both men recognize Utrecht Magnussen as a one time bandit, assassin, and enforcer for the infamous bandit chief Ernst Gottlieb, who extorted protection money from merchants travelling the Altdorf road. Two years ago the Gottlieb gang disintegrated, pushing the three veterans into retirement. Since caravans carrying sausage from Heidedorf were never touched, the mercenaries thought it fitting to visit the place that gave them so many easy assignments as caravan guards.

New Arrivals

Shortly before noon, a badly damaged carriage tears around the bend in the road, out of control and hurtling towards

the town's gate. The victim of an attack by Werner Krause's gang, the carriage carries the merchant Lars Hedderlich and his wife. Their bodyguard Dolph drives the cart, barely hanging on to life as he drives the cart's two horses onward. Two crossbow bolts have pierced his chainmail overcoat, which is slick with his blood.

As the cart nears the gate, anyone who has a clear view to it can plainly see that it is heading straight for the festival tent. A character may to leap up onto the cart and seize the reins on a successful **Dex** test (*acrobatics* +10, *trick riding* +10). To bring the carriage to a halt, the character must make a successful **S** test (*drive cart* +10, *charm animal* +10), hauling on the reins until the horses pull up.

If the **Dex** test is failed, the character cannot maintain a grip on the bucking carriage and falls to the ground, suffering D6 Wounds in the process. The carriage ploughs into the tent, causing much confusion and a few minor injuries, but the mess is cleared up within an hour or so and the festival returns to normal.

If the **S** test is failed, the horses at least swerve away from the crowd and slow down to a canter. The character can repeat the test every round, with a cumulative +10 penalty per round, to bring the carriage to a halt. The GM should refer to the map of Heidedorf and decide where the carriage goes and what obstacles it encounters before it is brought under control.

Dolph is badly injured, but will survive his wounds. Lars and his wife are both uninjured but panicked. Their appearance greatly upsets Heinz, who fears that the ghastly sight of blood is a terrible damper on the festivities. If the PCs make an effort to comfort Lars or his wife, they can provide some information on their attackers. Heinz insists the PCs conduct any questioning on their own time. He calls over his mercenaries to right the carriage if necessary, and bring it to the stables. He becomes very pushy, and obviously cares more about clearing up the mess than tending to the injured Dolph. However, he takes care to flatter and impress Lars.

Lars can give them a basic description of Krause's gang, including their tactics. If the PCs volunteer to go after the bandits, Heinz refuses sharply, and tells them to get back to work, as they are needed here. In fact, he is appalled by the prospect of their getting killed by bandits before he has a chance to murder them.

‡ THE AFTERNOON

The Lovers

Shortly after noon, a merchant furtively leaves the festival, sneaking off towards the north gate. The merchant, a portly, bearded Kislevite named Igor Marinovich, is on his way to meet his lover Anya, a maid in service to his mother-in-law, who is also at the festival. His nerves are already on edge from fear of discovery, and he panics if anyone seems to notice him. Igor locks eyes with the character, freezes in his steps, giggles nervously, then turns to rush back to the tent.

If the PCs make a point to keep an eye on him, the now-paranoid Igor notices their attention and begins to buckle under the weight of his guilt. He desperately avoids all contact with them, breaks into a nervous sweat if he sees anyone watching him, and stammers if directly approached. Igor may jump to the conclusion that the PCs want to blackmail him, and offers 25 GC to silence them. Obviously, the poor man knows nothing of Heideldorf's secret and merely wishes to avoid a dreadful scandal.

Try to build up some tension in this encounter. If the PCs approach Heinz about Igor, the sausage maker panics and assumes the poor Kislevite is a spy for the bandits who attacked Hedderlich. He then decides that they should keep a sharp eye on Igor, but never approach him for fear of tipping their hand. Of course, this reduces Igor to a quivering, paranoid wreck. Let the players believe the poor man is some sort of spy based on his manner. Perhaps he attempts once again to slip away and meet his lover.

Trouble Brewing

This is the first in a series of incidents that will culminate in a brawl this evening (see below). A small scuffle erupts in the tent. Two Tileans engage in a brief shoving match before retreating to their tables. The PCs are not needed to intervene, but the festival's mood is broken for a few moments. The two men and their comrades both spend the rest of the evening eyeing one another. The Carmelli and Tortella gangs (p. 47) are Tilean merchant/criminals who have met here to settle an old score. For the rest of the day, the two groups avoid each other save for the occasional glare or gesture.

Needless to say, Heinz blames the incident on the PCs, and berates them for not responding to it quickly enough.

‡ THE EVENING

The Uninvited Guests

As night falls, three local farmers try to crash Heinz's party. They plan to scale the eastern wall, make their way to the edge of the kitchen area, and run off with as much food as they can carry. Gunnar, Magnus, and Zeke are three teenage sons of Farmer Relsteng, an influential figure amongst the families that farm the land surrounding Heideldorf. Stiffened by the home-brewed spirit they carry in a jug and fuelled by their simmering resentment of Heinz's success, they want to show Heinz up and disrupt his festival.

If they manage to get into the village unnoticed, the three steal several plates of food and a cask of ale, and hide in the south-eastern corner of the village. After downing the ale, their ambition grows. Encouraged by their initial success and the alcohol in their systems, they decide to shed their clothes, toss them over the wall, run naked and whooping through the festival tent, scramble out through the main gate, then circle back to pick up their clothes before heading home.

As far as Heinz is concerned, allowing three drunken yokels to get anywhere near the festival tent is unforgivable. Failing to prevent their disgraceful display (which may cause more

than one elderly female visitor to faint, or even suffer a seizure) constitutes negligence bordering on deliberate sabotage. The only way to escape a tongue-lashing is to head the farmers off so quickly and quietly that no one knows they were ever there.

If the adventurers catch Gunnar, Magnus, or Zeke and turn them over to Heinz he deals with them harshly, ordering his mercenaries to give them a thrashing, confiscate their clothes, and send home naked. News of this ill-treatment spreads amongst the homesteaders, helping turn them even further against Heinz and the families who live in the village. On the other hand, if the PCs deal with the boys fairly by letting them go, protesting the sausage maker's treatment of them, or otherwise making an effort to shield them from Heinz's wrath, they could win some allies among the farmers. In particular, if anyone stands up to Heinz or undermines his authority, the news of their action spreads.

The Meeting

Shortly before the evening meal is served, the PCs receive word from one of the servants that they are to meet with Heinz at the Dancing Dragon. They find Karl and Manfred with him. Heinz has decided to capitalize on the morning's bandit attack, and has heard from Wilf that the traps and mutants are ready in the keep.

Heinz does most of the talking, mustering as much charm and flattery as he can. After dinner, as the festival winds down for the evening, he explains, he can spare the PCs from their duties long enough for them to track down the bandits and deal with them; he offers an additional 10 GC each for this service, telling them that they must be sure to return by morning before the festival starts again – not that he really expects them to do so. He mentions Black Rock Keep as a sometime bandit hideout, while Manfred nods enthusiastically and urges the PCs to investigate the ruins first.

Heinz and Manfred know of an overgrown trail that leads west from the village to the keep. Heinz offers them a map of its cellars, explaining that Wilf drew it a couple of years ago while guiding a party of mercenaries to the keep. This version of the map does not include any of the secret passages or traps.

The Brawl

The last meal of the day is served shortly before sunset, and visitors begin to drift into the Dancing Dragon. Heinz warns the PCs to keep a close eye on Aldo Carmelli and Luigi Tortella, the two Tilean merchants who were involved in the afternoon's incident in the festival tent. Their story is told on p. 47.

The Carmellis may try a few tricks to lure the adventurers and others out of the Dancing Dragon, such as claiming to see a second carriage under attack outside the stockade. If the PCs leave the tavern, Aldo and his men bar the door shut and settle their feud with the Tortellas. Karl merely hides in the kitchen and whimpers pitifully, hoping that both sides overlook him in the melee. If the adventurers are present to deal with the situation, he runs to fetch Heinz.

The Tileans will continue to fight for 2D6 rounds after the adventurers intervene, though individual combats stop whenever one participant is reduced to 2 W or less. The two sides try to ignore the PCs, but will defend themselves if attacked. While the Carmellis are eager for revenge, the PCs' weapons and armour make them too much trouble for Aldo's liking. Of course, Heinz does not appreciate the hired help manhandling or yelling at the guests, whatever the provocation.

If the fight is not stopped, the Carmellis will eventually gain the upper hand, and beat Luigi Tortella severely after disabling his guards, finally slitting his throat before fleeing the village. If the adventurers stand by and do nothing, the Carmellis pay them little heed. Heinz will be greatly upset by the murder, not least because as the Carmellis' method of killing their rivals may have left the corpses in a less than ideal state for butchering. Regardless, he hustles the bodies away for "burial" and swears the PCs to silence.

If the adventurers stop the fight, the Carmellis will leave and the Tortellas will be in their debt. Luigi bids one of his flunkies to deliver a 5 GC reward to each PC, and speaks highly of them to Heinz when he has the opportunity. If trouble should arise later on during the festival, he is much more amenable to following the characters' lead and supporting any actions they propose. In addition, he has some information that could prove helpful. Luigi recognized Utrecht Magnussen at the festival, and knows he was a follower of Ernst Gottlieb, a powerful crime lord based in Nuln who disappeared two years ago and left his organization in a shambles. While Luigi was happy no longer to pay protection money when doing business in Nuln, he was somewhat nervous about attending the festival, since he had heard Ernst was a great fancier of Heildeldorf sausage.

‡ OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS/COMPLICATIONS

The following encounters may be used to add some excitement to the day's proceedings and keep the adventurers even busier.

The Lost Dog

A noblewoman brought her lapdog, Puffs, to the festival, and the animal runs off. Beside herself with worry, the noblewoman begs Heinz to send his servants (the adventurers) to find the missing dog. While small and weak, Puffs is a snappy, ill-tempered beast who will think nothing of taking a lump out of anyone who comes too close. Of course, any rough handling of the dog will earn the perpetrator the wrath of both its owner and Heinz.

One possibility is to have Puffs spot a rabbit through the open village gate, and chase it into the woods. While looking for the dog, the adventurers might run into Werner Krause's bandit gang (p. 48), giving them a chance to vent their dislike of Heinz on some poor, unsuspecting bandits.

Whether the PCs defeat the gang or not, Heinz still insists the characters go to the keep that night, afraid that Krause and his partners may be only a scouting party for a larger bandit gang.

Mad Geddi

The crazed Troll Slayer (p. 48) ambles out of the woods and parks himself just out of reach of the front gate. He leans on his axe, clears his throat, and launches into a steady stream of expletives concerning Heinz, his unnatural relationship with a legless, diseased sheep, and some rather unconventional uses for his prize-winning sausage. His voice is loud and clear enough to be heard all over the village, and Heinz immediately rushes to the gate to silence the abuse, screaming even worse things at the mercenaries until they fire a volley of arrows at Geddi to drive him back into the woods.

If Geddi finds himself with a clear run-up to Heinz, he will immediately raise his axe and charge, regardless of the danger. The mercenaries will run to help Heinz and any nearby PCs may do the same, but Geddi will fight with single-minded determination, ignoring everyone except the sausage maker. Even if the adventurers do nothing, the mercenaries should be able to stop the attack before Heinz is seriously hurt, though he will be shaken and in an even fouler mode than usual for the rest of the day. If Geddi somehow survives the encounter, he will have a burning enmity for any character who tried to stop him from killing Heinz.

Fire!

The fire in one of the cooking tents flares out of control. The adventurers must bring water from the well to douse the flames, and prevent the crowd from panicking.

If they can keep the situation under control, Heinz grudgingly admits their competence and grants them each a 5 GC bonus. Otherwise, he spends part of the afternoon screaming at the hapless cook who let the fire run out of control.

Harmless Fun

During the course of the day, the adventurers will have to deal with enough drunken, arrogant nobles and merchants for a lifetime. Roleplay a few encounters between nobles eager to lord over the adventurers or abuse their position. An annoying drunk is one part unreasonable, unthinking dolt, combined with two parts demanding, petulant, child and a touch of reckless disregard for life and limb. A noble may decide to dance a jig on a table, while another may try to climb up the side of the Dancing Dragon. Two or more might have an impromptu contest to see who can de-bag a dozen servants in the shortest time, or a real or imagined slight might result in nobles waving their swords around dangerously and demanding a duel. All the while, the adventurers must balance keeping control of the situation and treating the nobles with enough deference to keep them and Heinz happy.