

Fan Material for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay : The Bigger They Are...



THE BIGGER THEY ARE...

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INTRODUCTION

The Bigger They Are... is set in the town of Kenselheim, which can be set almost anywhere in the Empire. The adventurers are hired by a nobleman to eliminate the local magistrate's judicial champion, an Ogre Pit Fighter, so that he can challenge the magistrate to trial by combat in order to reclaim his ancestral lands. The Ogre is a fearsome opponent, however, so the characters will have to think carefully about how they will defeat him. This adventure is designed for characters on their first or second career, though it can easily be tailored for players on their third career (just make Mentag even more fearsome). Less experienced characters will have to be more inventive in dealing with the Ogre, while others may be able to beat Mentag through sheer force of arms. Socially inclined characters can conceivably complete the adventure without having to enter combat at all.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mentag the Undefeated

Mentag is a happy Ogre. He gets all the food he can eat, the occasional fight (though rarely a decent one), a nice comfy barn to sleep in and loadsa' gold. Sure, the hummies in town tend to stare at him like he has two 'eds or sumfink, but he likes the way they run when he roars and pretends to be mad. Mentag's best friend is Toddles. Toddles takes care of getting' the food and keepin' the Maj-ee-strayt hummie happy. Mentag does the fightin'. Toddles also does all the cooking. Mentag hasn't said anything 'cause he doesn't wanna hurt Toddle's feelings, but he doesn't really like the way he cooks the meat. He makes it all black 'n crunchy, while Mentag prefers his food to have a little blood on it.

Race: Ogre.

Careers: Veteran, (ex-Pit Fighter).

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
51%	21%	51%	61%	39%	22%	50%	20%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
4	30	5	6	6	0	3	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Common Knowledge (Ogres), Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow (+10%), Gamble, Intimidate, Perception, Search, Speak

Language (Reikspiel).

Talents: Disarm, Fearless, Frightening, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Wrestling, Very resilient, Very Strong.

Armour: Full Leather Armour, Sleeved Mail Shirt, Helmet, Plate Bracers.

Armour Points: Head 3, Arms 5, Body 3, Legs 1

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe), Main-Gauche.

Trappings: Half eaten chicken, 12 gc.

Appearance: Big. Really, really big.

Quote: *"I likes a gud fight now an' den, long as its not durin' lunch. Or dinner, or breakfast. Course, used to be tha' lunchin' an' fightin' were one an the same, but Toddles says that migh' upset sum of our more squeamish employers. You hummies don' know a good meal when ye sees one. Is why yur all so skinny!"*

Toddy Shufflefoot

Toddy and Mentag met two years ago. Toddy had been seized by the watch of a small village for selling fake lucky charms (one of his customers was thrown from a horse and died less than ten minutes after buying a "lucky manticore spine" from him). Mentag was in the same small cell, arrested for accidentally snapping the neck of one of the farmers who'd accepted a challenge to wrestle him in a four-on-one fight. Both were scheduled for execution the next morning, but managed to escape using Toddy's quick wits and nimble fingers and Mentag's brute strength (and ability to take a crossbow bolt in the ribs without slowing down). Since then the Shufflefoot has worked as Mentag's agent, making sure he gets a fair price for his services and keeping him out of trouble.

Toddy left the life of a Moot farmer behind eight years ago, determined to see the world. Unfortunately the world turned out to be a fairly unpleasant place and Toddy has the scars to prove it. He's learnt to live by his wits and to never trust anyone. The only people he cares about are Mentag and his pet dog Savage, who he found sitting in front of a ruined farmhouse just before arriving in Kenselheim. He'll leave either of them if it looks like his own life could be on the line, however – better to mourn someone you care about than be the one mourned.

Race: Halfling.

Careers: Charlatan, ex-Rogue.

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WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
28%	54%	21%	33%	57%	60%	40%	63%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	3	4	0	3	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry), Blather, Charm, Common Knowledge (Halflings), Evaluate, Gamble, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Performance (Storyteller), Search, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (Halfling), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Trade (Farmer)
Talents: Flee! Mimic, Night Vision, Public Speaking, Resistance to Chaos, Savvy, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Dagger, Hand Weapon, Crossbow with 20 bolts.

Trappings: Assorted outfits (jumbled mix of common and best craftsmanship clothes, he tends to pick randomly when dressing), Deck of Cards, Wooden Cutlery, Bone Dice, Feathered Cap, Healing Draught, 32s in a pouch tied to his belt, 27gc in three pouches stitches into the lining of his clothing.

Appearance: From a distance Toddy appears to be a wealthy young halfling, his yellow jacket and feathered cap hinting at a carefree, youthful spirit. Once you get closer you notice that the jacket is travelled stained and off-repaired, with many small tears that have been stitched closed, much like his face, which has numerous small scars from previous close encounters. He eyes anyone who approaches him warily, instantly noting any weapons they might have. Only his hat seems new, a fresh peasant feather jutting out at a high angle.

Quote: "It's a good deal. If you want to argue about it some more, maybe you should take it up with Mentag. No? Good. I'll want to see the money up front – we don't work on faith."

Erwin von Oberholtzer

Twenty years ago the von Oberholtzer family ruled the town of Kenselheim and the surrounding lands, until Erwin's grandfather squandered all the families wealth on wine, women and gambling. The von Oberholtzer's were forced to sign over all their lands to a council of merchants, but were given two decades to pay off the debt and have their title restored. Erwin's father worked himself into an early grave to both raise the money owed by the family and ensure his son received the education required of a nobleman. Upon his death Erwin took up the challenge, determined to restore his family to its rightful

place and claim the title of Baron for himself. For the past four years he acted as a liaison between various nobles and merchantmen, securing financing for ambitious military endeavours or winning advantageous trading rights in exchange for a cut of the profits. In pursuit of his goal he has been completely ruthless, betraying friends and family alike. Finally he paid off the debt through a merchant house in Altdorf and returned to Kemselheim, but when he made his claim before the local Magistrate he was refused. He had anticipated that this might happen, however, and had acquired the services of a swordsman to act as his champion should he be forced to challenge the Magistrate's decision. Unfortunately the Magistrate has a champion of his own and Erwin is not sure his man can take him. Not one to give in lightly, Erwin is now looking for some deniable assets (thugs) to help him eliminate the competition and allow him to secure his rightful claim to the Barony.

Race: Human.

Careers: Courtier, ex-Noble.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
28%	54%	21%	33%	57%	60%	40%	63%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	3	4	0	3	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History), Blather +10%, Charm +10%, Common Knowledge (the Empire) +10%, Gamble, Gossip +10%, Performer (Musician), Read/Write, Ride, Speak Language (Reikspiel) +10%.

Talents: Dealmaker, Etiquette, Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing), Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Suave.

Armour: Leather Jack.

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 0.

Weapons: Foil, Main Gauche.

Trappings: Trunk with 5 sets of Noble's Garb, 112gc, Jewellery worth 30gc, two servants and a valet, Gunther.

Appearance: In his late twenties, all of his clothing is excellent, but he knows he cannot afford to buy new clothes of the same quality until he secures his inheritance, so he usually wears the same simple outfit in the colours of his house, black and dark green.

Quote: "I only want that which is rightfully mine. I will do whatever I must to free Kemselheim from Etzburger's unjust rule."

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Ruben Etburger

The Etburger family were once servants of the von Oberholtzers, one of Ruben's uncles acting as the last baron's steward. It was this steward who negotiated on the von Oberholtzer's behalf to pay off their debts and it was he who arranged for the repayment clause in the agreement. He was a loyal servant and truly fond of the von Oberholtzer family. His nephew cares nothing for the nobility, however. The burghers of Kenselheim have administered the town for twenty years without the aid of some arrogant noblemen. Ironically he has turned the town into his own little kingdom, ruling over it with the surety of any lord. He is not a cruel man and his decisions are for the most part wise ones (though not necessarily popular ones), but he has convinced himself that no one else is fit to rule over the town. To that end he has hired Mentag to defend his position and his rulings, even if it means increasing taxes to pay for his service.

Race: Human.

Careers: Politician, ex-Merchant, ex-Burgher.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
36%	39%	34%	37%	41%	59%	57%	63%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Law), Blather, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (Kislev), Common Knowledge (the Empire) +20%, Drive, Evaluate, Gossip +10%, Haggle, Perception, Performer (Actor), Read/Write, Ride, Search, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Speak Language (Kislevian), Speak Language (Reikspiel) +10%, Trade (Merchant).

Talents: Coolheaded, Dealmaker, Etiquette, Public Speaking, Strongminded, Suave, Super Numerate.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Sword, Best Craftsmanship Dagger.

Trappings: 200gc, 50gc in jewellery.

Appearance: Slightly overweight man in his mid-thirties, his beard and hair are always perfectly groomed. He is always surrounded by at least three town guards and a handful of servants and cronies, various merchants and burghers seeking his favour. (Use the stats on page 235 of the Warhammer Rulebook for the Town Guards.

Quote: "The Oberholtzers had their chance. The people of Kemselheim have prospered in their absence, and I have no intention of handing over the fruits of our labour to a pompous young stranger, no matter what his family name might be."

Savage the Dog

Savage is a small, annoying dog. All that needs to be said really.

Race: Dog

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
18%	-	17%	21%	34%	18%	28%	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	5	1	2	6	0	12	0

Skills: Follow Trail, Perception +20%, Swim

Talents: Flee! Keen Senses, Natural Weapons

Appearance: Very small, with scruffy, flea infested fur. Tends to bark wildly whenever he sees a stranger. Occasionally bites the ankle of any elves he sees.

Quote: "Grrrrrawfff!"

Gunther Faernmaus

Gunther left his home in Salzenmund in Nordland after he killed his brother in a fight over a woman. He fled to the Border Princes where he joined a mercenary band. For the past ten years he has fought, looted and pillaged his way through the Border Princes, Tilea and Estalia. He was in Bilbali in Estalia when he first heard about the Storm of Chaos ravaging the Empire. He returned not out of a sense of patriotism, but because he felt that someone with his skills would probably be in high demand during such troubling times. Taking passage aboard a merchant ship heading north, Archaon's forces had been defeated at Middenheim by the time he reached Altdorf. He was not discouraged, however, as he is experienced enough to know that there will be plenty of opportunities for profit in the near future. He is currently working for Erwin in order to make some quick money, but is merely biding his time until something better comes along. If Erwin does secure his claim he may decide to stay awhile. He's been considering killing him and taking his money, something that would be more worthwhile if Erwin secured his inheritance.

Gunther isn't in the least bit afraid of Mentag. He is utterly ruthless and surprisingly fast with his greatsword, but his one weakness is his overconfidence.

Race: Human.

Careers: Judicial Champion, ex-Veteran, ex-Mercenary.

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WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
51%	49%	47%	48%	44%	33%	47%	23%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	18	4	4	4	0	4	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Common Knowledge (Tilea), Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Gamble, Gossip, Haggle, Intimidate, Perception, Ride, Secret Language (Battle tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Speak Language (Tilean), Swim.

Talents: Disarm, Night Vision, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Specialist Weapon Group (Two Handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Very Resilient, Very Strong.

Armour: Full Mail Armour.

Armour Points: Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3

Weapons: Greatsword, 3 Daggers, Flail, Handaxe.

Trappings: Bottle of Good Craftsmanship Spirits, 10 yards of Rope, Book of Pressed Flowers taken from every battlefield he has ever fought on (worth 10gc to someone interested in botany), 23gc.

Appearance: 6'1" tall, almost always in his armour and never seen without a weapon. For most of the adventure Erwin has him confined to his room to keep him out of sight, which leaves him in a foul mood.

Quote: "This shouldn't take long."

PLOT SYNOPSIS

As the adventurers arrive in the town of Kenselheim they find a pit fight in progress. The townsfolk are gathered around the pit, cheering on the town champion as he butchers three recently captured deserters from the Imperial army, who had sought trial by combat over hanging. The champion is Mentag, an ogre pit fighter. Also present is Toddy Shufflefoot, Mentag's halfling 'agent' and friend. After the fight Erwin von Oberholtzer approaches the adventurers. He explains that Kenselheim and the surrounding lands once belonged to his family, but that his grandfather lost them twenty years ago due to a gambling problem. His family was given twenty years to pay off their debts or they would lose their lands forever. Erwin has paid off the required sum, but the local magistrate and de facto ruler of the town Ruben Etbzburger refuses to recognise his claim, as he has no desire to give up his power and influence. The magistrate uses his power to force the townsfolk to do his bidding, and without a noble to protect their interests there is no one to intercede on their behalf. Normally anyone who wished to contest

one of the magistrate's rulings could demand trial by combat, but Etbzburger has hired Mentag to be on hand to answer any such challenges. Von Oberholtzer has but three days to have his claim recognised, after that it will be too late. He hires the adventurers to get rid of Mentag, stating that he will then challenge the magistrate himself. He doesn't care how they do it, as long as Mentag isn't able to fight three days hence. He offers them 10gc each in advance, increasing to 50gc each once he is installed as the rightful ruler of Kenselheim. It should be clear to the adventurers that challenging Mentag in the ring would be suicide. Even ambushing him with their superior numbers wouldn't guarantee them success. Other options include attacking him while he sleeps or burning down the barn he lives in with Toddy, then attacking him when he stumbles out, trying to drug his food, hiring him to perform strenuous manual labour (Toddy hires him out to farmers and the like in order to supplement their income) and then attacking him when he is exhausted, or turning the townsfolk against him with a smear campaign. Another option is to work through Toddy, although he won't accept a bribe (the magistrate is paying him too much), the characters could capture him and force Mentag not to fight. Killing Toddy may have the same affect, as Mentag will be overcome with grief and will flee the town (though if he knows the characters are responsible he will do his utmost to kill them first). These options will only become apparent if the adventurers realise how close Mentag and Toddy are.

Assuming the characters succeed in taking Mentag out of the picture von Oberholtzer challenges Etbzburger's refusal to accept his claim over Kenselheim. Without Mentag to fight for him Etbzburger pays one of his guards to answer the challenge. Rather than face him himself, as he said he would, von Oberholtzer reveals his own champion, Gunther, a judicial champion and victor of many battles. The fight is short and brutal and von Oberholtzer is soon clearing out the magistrate's office. He informs the adventurers that he will meet them tomorrow to give them the rest of their pay. Unfortunately by the time he meets with them he has changed his mind, deciding that he no longer needs their assistance. He isn't a fool, however. He makes sure to have Gunther and some of the town guards present when he tells them the bad news. While the guards have no love for their new master, they do like to get paid and all are afraid of Gunther's skill with a blade. The characters will have to accept that they won't be getting their gold.

You've been struggling through the river of mud

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that was a road for over two hours now. Its been raining all day and you're wet, cold and miserable, but thankfully you can see the town of Kenselheim up ahead. A stick-thin figure wrapped in a cloak limps out of the guardhouse as you make your way to the small gate set in the wooden palisade. After looking you up and down he grunts before waving you past and scurrying inside.

As you make your way through town in search of an inn you begin to hear a dull roar above the constant pounding of the rain. Turning a corner into the Town Square, you find what looks like the entire population of the town gathered around a huge pit. On the far side of the crowd a wooden platform overlooks the arena, upon which stand a group of men and women dressed in firs, observing the spectacle below. You make your way through the crowd until you reach the edge of the pit. Within two figures face each other. One struggles through the thick mud at the bottom of the pit, desperately trying to hold onto the rain-slick haft of his halberd. You can barely make out the blue and white livery of a Middenheim guardsman beneath the thick layer of muck covering him from head to toe. Two other men dressed in the same uniform lie against the pit walls. One sits motionless, his head lying lost somewhere in the sludge below. The other struggles vainly to keep his internal organs from spilling form his chest, his pitiful wails barely audible over the roar of the crowd.

Their opponent is a huge wall of flesh and muscle. Two bare scar covered arms wield a weapon in each hand, a short bladed sword in one, a thick, heavy meat cleaver in the other. A rusty and battered breastplate barely stretches over a wide, round belly and an open-faced helmet looks like it was forced onto the warrior's thick, horribly ugly head. Standing almost nine feet tall, the Ogre doesn't seem slowed by the mud at all, or the spear jutting out of his left leg. The crowd screams for the kill, while the richer burghers on the platform look on, wagering on the outcome.

Suddenly the Ogre lunges forward, battering aside the halberd with his axe. The Middenheimer barely has time to scream before the cleaver cuts through his helmet and into his skull. Raising one foot the Ogre kicks the corpse free from his weapon, before turning to the still wounded guardsman. With a single thrust of his sword he finishes it, much to the appreciation of the crowd.

As the screams of the crowd die down you spot a small figure moving towards the front of the

observation platform. At first you took him for a child of one of the affluent spectators, but as he pulls himself onto a high stool directly above the pit you realise that he is a halfling. His fine yellow coat and feathered hat make him look a well moneyed, if tasteless man, yet he seems out of place amongst the wealthy townsfolk. His voice carries surprisingly far over the still shouting townsfolk.

"Once again the courageous Mentag the Undefeatable has dispensed the judgement of the gods upon the unrighteous! And once again, goodfolk of Kenselheim, let us show our appreciation for Magistrate Etzburger for providing us with this evenings entertainment!" The crowd roars once more as the halfling turns to a short, piggish looking man standing on the platform. Dressed in heavy robes and flanked by three guards, Magistrate Etzburger gives the crowd a dismissive nod of acknowledgement before turning to leave with the other merchants. "Today we have seen three traitors to the Empire receive their fair punishment for their cowardice. Their trial by combat has only served to confirm their guilt, for would not Morr have stayed his hand, or Ulric strengthened theirs had they been innocent?" The crowd screams again, though with somewhat less enthusiasm – many seem to be drifting back to their homes, though some seem to be staying to watch four men try to help pull the Ogre out of the pit. The halfling seems to realise that he is running out of time, so he starts to speak more quickly as he wraps things up. "Yes ladies and gentlemen, justice is done, and don't forget, should anyone wish to see another demonstration of Mentag's great strength and skill, he is available for hire! Heavy objects moved, stubborn objects smashed, perfect for any of your labour intensive chores!" At this point it is clear no one is listening, so he jumps down from his stool, appearing somewhat dejected.

The PCs may be curious as to what just happened. If they ask of the nearby townsfolk (easy (+20%) gossip test) they will be told that the three men were deserters from the Middenheim Guard, who fled the city when the Storm of Chaos approached. They were found wandering through the woods near the town. The truth of the matter is that the three men were members of a unit that was cut off from the city by Archaon's forces. After struggling through the Drakwald for months, constantly harried by small bands of beastmen and living off what little food they could forage or hunt, the last three survivors were captured and found guilty of desertion two days ago. Knowing they would be executed they demanded trial by combat, an old custom which is recognised in many parts of the Empire.

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Unfortunately for them, the ruler of the town, Magistrate Etburger, has hired an Ogre Pitfighter to answer all such challenges. He has found that it has reduced the number of challenges to his decisions dramatically.

Should the PCs want to talk to any of the other people present at the pit they may attempt to do so now, though you should point out that all seem anxious to get indoors and out of the rain. Magistrate Etburger and the other wealthy burghers have already made their way to his keep on the far side of the town square, and the guards forced to stand watch outside aren't in the mood for casual conversation. Mentag is busy seeing to his after-fight feeding, which seems to consist of most of a large cow (for starters), but his "agent," the halfling Toddy Shufflefoot, is a more talkative mood. A routine (+10%) gossip test with him (or a challenging (-10%) one with one of the guards or the other townsfolk, who want to get home) will yield the following:

Degrees of Success:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 0 | Magistrate Etburger hired Mentag to answer any challenges to his decisions. Shufflefoot deals with Mentag's financial considerations, the Ogre doesn't seem to trust anyone else. |
| 1 | The Magistrate more or less runs the town. He was appointed by the town merchants. The position usually goes to the wealthiest merchant in the area. He's held the position for almost a decade now. |
| 2 | A noble family once ruled the town, but they lost all of their money years ago and had to sell their lands to the local merchants. They left the town soon after. |
| 3+ | Rumour has it that someone claiming to be the rightful ruler of Kenselheim went to see the Magistrate last week, trying to get the family lands back. Supposedly the Magistrate laughed him out of the room. |

The PCs can stay in the Copper Keep, a large inn behind the viewing platform over the pit. Staying in the common room will cost 8p per night, a private room will cost 12s. The Magistrate has increased taxes recently (to pay Mentag's wages, as it happens) so the innkeeper (Erich Steingartmann) has had to raise his prices to

make up for it. The same can be found throughout the town - raise the price of any item the PCs may want by a few coins.

Whether they stay in the Copper Keep or find some other shelter, they are approached about an hour later by Erwin von Oberholtzer. This young nobleman noticed the PC's arrival. He quickly made some inquiries and realised that they are from out of town. He decides to approach them, realising that a small group of mercenaries might be just what he needs. He can't trust any of the locals, as they might go running to the Magistrate. At this point he has nothing to lose.

As you are discussing your plans for tomorrow, a well dressed young man walks up to you. His clothing is well tailored without being extravagant and he lacks the arrogant demeanour you have come to associate with nobles towards commoners, yet he has a sword at his side and the unconsciously graceful stride of a duellist. Reaching your table, he inclines his head slightly before speaking, his accent that of a Reiklander. "Please, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Erwin von Oberholtzer. I was wondering if I might buy you a drink, while you listen to a business proposal I have for you?"

Erwin explains that his family once ruled Kenselheim and the surrounding lands until his fool of a grandfather spent all their wealth on gambling and women. The Oberholtzers were forced into debt, and they had to hand over their lands to a group of merchants as collateral. The family was given twenty years to repay what they owed. Erwin's father worked himself to death trying to pay the debt, at which point Erwin took on the task. Finally he has the gold he needs to pay off the last of the debt, but when he went to the Magistrate to make his claim Etburger refused to recognise it. It would appear that he has grown to like his position of power and has no intention of giving it up. With Mentag working as his champion no one can challenge him. He has increased taxes and enforces his rules ruthlessly. The other merchants toady up to him in order win his favour and avoid his wrath. If von Oberholtzer can't press his claim within the next three days his lands will pass to the merchants for good.

Erwin is willing to pay the PCs 50gc each if they can remove Mentag from the picture. He will give them 10gc each now and the rest once his lands have been returned to him. He doesn't expect them to defeat Mentag in the pit, it should be clear that that would be suicide. In fact, he doesn't care how the PCs get rid of him, as long

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as he is clearly gone. Injuring or delaying him won't be enough, as the Magistrate will just delay the fight until he is able to compete (the Magistrate can postpone the fight for up to a week to find a suitable champion, but von Oberholtzer's claim will still stand). Therefore Mentag will have to be either killed or forced to leave Kenselheim for good. Once this is done, von Oberholtzer will challenge the Magistrate, and fight anyone the Magistrate can find to stand for him (this is a lie. Erwin has hired a judicial champion to fight for him, but he wants to appear more noble and righteous before the PCs).

The PCs may decide to check up on Erwin's story. A standard Common Knowledge (the Empire) test or an easy (+20%) Academic Knowledge (Law) test will tell them that his story is certainly plausible. Enquiring about the Von Oberholtzer family or Magistrate Etbzburger's rule requires a standard Gossip test.

Degrees of Success:

- 0 The Oberholtzers were the rulers of Kenselheim, but few people remember anything about them. Most of the townsfolk were just children when they left. Magistrate Etbzburger has increased taxes and doesn't like people disagreeing with him.
- 1 The Magistrate is hard, but he is fair. His judgements are usually even handed, and the town has done well under his rule. Most folk believe that he is lining his own pockets, however (this is untrue).
- Erwin von Oberholtzer arrived in town a few days ago and immediately brought his claim for the ancestral lands to the Magistrate, who denied it.
- 2 Elsa Steingartmann, the innkeeper's wife, was a young woman when the Oberholtzers left, but she remembers that the last Obholtzer lord was a drunken wretch. He spent a lot of his time away in Altdorf, Middenheim or Talabheim, where it was rumoured he lost the family wealth in gambling dens.
- Von Oberholtzer has a few servants and arrived on horseback, but has no carriage and only a small entourage. He is letting rooms from

Mother Puttkammer, which is cheaper than the Copper Keep.

- 3+ Amongst von Oberholtzer's servants is a warrior, a huge man who has the look of a northerner about him. He was wearing full mail and had a greatsword strapped to his back. This is Gunther, Erwin's bodyguard and champion. Gunther will fight for Erwin if the Magistrate refuses to grant his claim.

It should be made clear to the PCs that attacking Mentag openly would be a bad idea, he is easily dangerous enough to take them all on in a fight. Even if the entire party consists of warriors at least one or two of them will probably be killed (or lose fate points) if they attack him directly. They need to find some way to either weaken him or get rid of him.

Mentag and Shufflefoot live in an abandoned barn outside of town. The townsfolk didn't like the idea of an ogre living in the middle of town ("You might wake up one morn' an' find yourself 'et!"). Shufflefoot keeps a small dog he calls Savage. While Savage is unlikely to scare a snotling, his irritating yapping whenever strangers approach the barn serve as an affective security system. Shufflefoot is no fool, he knows that if the Magistrate has any enemies they might decide to hurt him by removing his champion, which is why he sleeps in the loft above Mentag's stall. When not fighting in the pit or working for one of the local farmers (who sometimes hire Mentag to perform some heavy lifting) both of them can usually be found here. Toddy is usually cooking, roasting a large side of beef over a large fire in front of the barn, with Mentag eating the last serving. Savage can be seen staring at one or the other, hoping for scraps (Mentag never leaves any. Toddy occasionally tosses him a piece or two). If the PCs decide to talk to them Shufflefoot will generally be wary but polite, while Mentag will ignore them, grunt, or tell them to ask "Toddles." He's happy to let Shufflefoot do all of the thinking and talking for the pair, as long as he gets plenty of grub and the occasional chance to beat up or kill someone. He's smart enough to realise that they have a good thing here.

The PCs have three days to figure out how to deal with Mentag. This should give them plenty of time to observe the odd couple and come up with a plan of action. A few possibilities are listed here, but players have the ability to come up with something totally unexpected, so be prepared for the unexpected.

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Bribes/Threats: Bribing Mentag won't work, as he'll just ask Toddy what to do. Shufflefoot is making a lot of money here, so much that it is unlikely the players will be able to convince him to leave town without a fight. Trying to bribe him will only tip their hand, making the halfling more cautious. On the other hand, Toddy has been expecting trouble like this for some time now. If he thinks that they are in any real danger he'll leave rather than take the risk. It will take more than a threat to convince him, but if it is backed up with an attack at some later point, the PCs may be surprised to find that Mentag and the halfling had skipped town the next day.

Drugging/weakening Mentag: The PCs may try to weaken Mentag before going up against him. This can be done in a number of ways. Drugging Mentag will be difficult, as Shufflefoot prepares all of their food himself, and they get their water from the stream that runs behind the barn. Any poison added to their food raw will probably be destroyed during the liberal roasting the halfling gives it (requires a very hard (-30%) Prepare poison test). If the PCs don't have any poisons with them they could search the nearby wood, a challenging (-10%) Outdoor Survival or Prepare Poison test will allow them to find some herbs and fungi which can be mixed together to create a mildly annoying toxin. Anyone ingesting this foul paste must make a Challenging (-20%) toughness test or take a -5% penalty on all Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill and Agility tests, as well as suffer the need to move one's bowels at least once every ten minutes. Usually the taste and smell would be sufficient to warn someone not to eat anything this had been added to (though a Very Difficult (-30%) Trade (Cook) test could disguise it somewhat), but Mentag will eat anything.

If the PCs can distract Toddy long enough they can easily convince Mentag to eat anything they offer him. This is especially true of lightly cooked meat, preferably still bloody. Mentag is tired of Toddy's fondness for overdone food, and will gobble down any rare meat presented to him, even if Shufflefoot objects.

Another way to sap some of Mentag's fighting strength would be to hire him to perform an exhausting task, such as helping them cut down and move trees from a section of the forest. Mentag is strong enough that he can keep on working for hours without getting tired, but even he will start to feel the strain if they hire him for an entire day or two of work. Working with him in such a situation would also be the perfect opportunity to slip him some poison in his food or drink, as Toddy will quickly grow bored watching Mentag work and will drop his guard. If the PCs

can keep Mentag working through one day (about ten hours) without much rest he will suffer a -5% penalty to his Strength and Agility. If they can keep him working for two days the penalty increases to 10%, and he will also suffer a -5% penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill. If the PCs can find a particularly inventive method of increasing Mentag's exhaustion, you might consider increasing the penalties to 15% and 10% respectively and 1 Attack. Hiring Mentag will cost 6s a day, but if one of them can Charm Shufflefoot they can convince him to allow them to overwork Mentag, making him work for more hours and with fewer breaks. The difficulty of the Charm test to bribe him depends on how much extra they offer him, every extra shilling giving them a +5% bonus to the test. If they succeed increase the penalties for each day by 5% and also reduce his attacks by 1.

Mob Rule: The PCs could try to turn the townsfolk against the Ogre. Some are angry because of the increase in taxes, others just don't like the idea of having an Ogre living amongst them... and eating enough meat a day to feed a family for a week. Many are just looking for an excuse to lash out - tensions in the town have been growing of late. Convincing enough of them to riot will take time and subtlety, however. A few harsh words about Ogres at a tavern, a complaint about rising prices at the marketplace, anything to increase the discontent amongst the locals will help, but if they aren't careful either Toddy or Magistrate Etzburger might realise that someone is stirring up trouble.

Starting a riot will require a total of 10 degrees of success on Gossip tests. You should make the tests easier if the PCs can think of any particularly malicious rumours to spread about either the Ogre or Shufflefoot, or even Magistrate Etzburger. Each character can make one test each day. If any character fails by more than 20% the Magistrate or Shufflefoot notice something is wrong. If the PCs can distract Shufflefoot (by hiring Mentag, for example) then they are only noticed if one of the PCs fails by more than 30%. If they are noticed, the Magistrate sends three of his guards with orders to give them a good beating and kick them out of town. Should the PCs overcome the guards they will have to go into hiding or flee Kenselheim, especially if they kill one of them.

If the PCs do manage to raise an angry mob, they will have to lead it to Mentag. If they do not do so themselves the crowd will falter at the sight of the gigantic warrior. A single bellow from the Ogre will be enough to send them scurrying back to their homes. A few hours later the PCs will

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receive a visit from the town guards, as described above. If the PCs do lead the mob they will have to get past Toddy, who will try to reason with the crowd. He has no wish to unleash Mentag on his employer's subjects, especially as he isn't sure the Ogre would win. If one of the PCs has the Public Speaking or Mass Orator Talents they can try to make an opposed Charm test against Toddy. Other PCs can help (supportive comments, yelling "death to the Ogre!" etc), each successful charm test giving a 10% bonus to the opposed test. If the PCs win, the crowd charges forward, catching Toddy by surprise. Mentag will start lashing out left and right, killing people indiscriminately.

You may want to run a few rounds of combat between the PCs and either Mentag or Shufflefoot, but the force of the mob will quickly force them apart. Unless the PCs strike a particularly telling blow against Mentag he will survive, but Toddy will be killed by the mob. Seeing his only friend killed will send Mentag into tears. Knocking the nearest villagers aside he will pick up the halfling's severed head and run bawling into the woods.

Even if Toddy and Mentag should somehow survive or escape, they decide that they have clearly outstayed their welcome and leave town as soon as they can.

Shufflefoot: If the PCs realise how important Toddy is to keeping Mentag under control they may decide to take him out. More morally inclined PCs might decide to kidnap him and hold him until von Oberholtzer has a chance to make his claim, this is actually a more reliable alternative, as once Toddy is killed they will have no leverage over the Ogre. If they hold him hostage Mentag will refuse to fight under any circumstances.

If Shufflefoot is killed Mentag will go into mourning, hiding in the barn and refusing to leave. However, once von Oberholtzer makes his challenge the Magistrate will try to convince Mentag to fight for him, telling him that von Oberholtzer murdered Toddy. The gullible Ogre will believe him, charging into town and bellowing in rage. Von Oberholtzer will flee in terror, last seen galloping away on horseback with Mentag right behind him.

If instead Shufflefoot is 'disappeared,' (whether dead or alive), without revealing what had happened to him, Mentag will be filled with worry and will mope around the barn and town. If the PCs leave him be the Magistrate will convince him to fight, telling him that it's what Toddy would

want him to do. The PCs could convince him to leave town, however. A successful easy (+20%) Charm test would be enough to get him to head for the next village, "where Toddy is waiting," if they can come up with a plausible reason for him to have left without saying goodbye.

Assassination: Of course, the simplest option is to attack Mentag and kill him. Martialy inclined players may decide to make an all out attack, but hopefully the demonstration at the start of the adventure will be enough to convince them that that would not be a good idea. Hopefully they will have found some way of weakening him, but even if they haven't there are a number of ways in which they can tip the odds in their favour.

The most obvious approach would be to kill Mentag while he is sleeping. The biggest obstacle to this is Savage. The little mongrel is a light sleeper and will start barking madly if he notices anyone approaching. If he succeeds on any of his opposed Perception tests to notice the PCs entering the barn, but not by enough to beat their Silent Move tests, then he has woken up and will not suffer any penalties on further tests. Shufflefoot also sleeps in the barn and has set up some simple security precautions. The main doors of the barn are shut and barred at night and two ropes attached to a collection of pots and pans are tied to them. The bar can be removed with a Average Pick Lock check, with a Challenging (-10%) Silent Move test opposed by Hard (-20%) Perception tests from Mentag, Shufflefoot and Savage. Opening the doors without raising a racket requires another opposed test, but this time the Silent Move test is Very Hard (-30%). If the players somehow find out about the makeshift alarm beforehand and have access to the right tools (Lock Picks) they can try to remove the ropes with a Challenging (-10%) Pick Locks test. The planks of the main doors are far enough apart that they can slip some of the tools through to cut the ropes.

Instead of coming in through the main doors they could try climbing up to the loft entrance, where Toddy sleeps. Climbing up is Easy (+20%) and the entrance isn't locked (Toddy plans to use it as an escape route if there is any trouble), but it is rigged with the same alarm system as the doors below. Trying to remove this alarm will be a Very Hard (-30%) Pick Lock test, as the character will have to do so while somehow bracing himself against the outside of the barn. If the player fails by more than 30% he should make an Agility test to avoid falling.

If they manage to sneak up on Mentag they get to make an attack against him while he is Helpless,

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doing an extra d10 damage. While this would usually be sufficient to kill a human, Ogres are far tougher creatures. Mentag may well survive and will not be in the best of moods.

If a fight breaks out Toddy will stay in the loft, firing his crossbow from above after lighting up his lantern. If Mentag goes down or if someone climbs up into the loft he will escape through the loft entrance. If he makes it to the woods (ninety yards distant) he is unlikely to be caught, but he will have no intention of returning to Kenselheim. He could turn up some point in the future though, in an effort to gain some measure of revenge against the PCs.

If the players find the prospect of sneaking into the barn to daunting, they might try setting it on fire and waiting for Mentag to come out. Unfortunately the recent rains have left the wood of the barn damp and difficult to light. Even if they do set the roof or outer walls on fire, this will only warn Mentag and Toddy that they are under attack. They will ready their weapons and charge out the main doors, Toddy firing his crossbow while Mentag charges the nearest visible opponent. If the characters think to block off the main doors then they will try to escape through the loft entrance or if necessary Mentag will try to hack his way through the barn wall. Once the fire has been started anyone inside the barn will have to start to make Toughness tests after three rounds (see page 136 of the Rulebook for details of Suffocation).

If the PCs can get inside the barn they can quickly set fire to the straw piled high inside. Mentag uses a pile of straw as a mattress, and if the PCs can catch him while he is still sleeping they might be able to set him ablaze. They could then retreat outside, possibly blocking off the main doors as they go (possibly with a cart "borrowed" from town). Anyone inside the barn will have to make Toughness tests against Suffocation, and may suffer damage from the Fire. See the rules on page 136 of the Rulebook for details of fire damage.

There is a decent chance Mentag or Toddy will make it out of the barn alive, at which point the PCs will probably have a fight on their hands (unless they choose to flee). The fire will have attracted attention from the town, and in four minutes two of the town guards will arrive, followed two minutes later by three more. At this point it doesn't matter however, as Toddy (assuming he is still alive) will have decided that Kenselheim has gotten too hot. He'll take the next opportunity he can get to leave town with Mentag and will refuse to let him fight in the

meantime, insisting that his wounds are too serious and that he needs time to heal. He will even disguise Mentag's injuries to make them look worse than they are, wrapping him in bloody bandages until he looks more like a Mummy than an Ogre. Whether he is dead or alive, the PCs will have taken him out of the fight.

Von Oberholtzer's claim: On the third day Erwin will challenge Etburger's ruling against him, invoking his right to trial by combat. If the PCs have removed Mentag from the picture (one way or another) the Magistrate will desperately seek someone to fight for him, even offering one of them 30gc if one of the PCs looks particularly tough. Eventually one of his guards volunteers (his greed overcoming his common sense). In response Erwin reveals Gunther, his own champion. Gunther will quickly cut down the hapless guardsman, who fails to get past Gunther's guard even once. As soon as the duel is concluded Erwin will strip the Magistrate of his position and will order him exiled from Kenselheim. He will then begin to move into the keep. If the PCs seek to pressure him for the remainder of their payment he will assure them that it will be forthcoming. He just has to finish securing his new position as lord of the town, go over the book, find the key to the treasury etc. He will ask them to come to the keep the next morning, when he will give them the rest of their reward.

If Mentag still lives and is willing to fight, things go rather differently. Erwin still makes his challenge out of desperation. If Mentag has been weakened seriously (actually wounded) the Magistrate will schedule the challenge to take place in a week's time in order to give him time to recover. He cannot delay the challenge by more than a week, and Erwin's claim will still be valid, despite the fact that the deadline for him to make his claim will have passed. If the PCs weakened Mentag through some other less obvious means (tiring him out through work, poison etc) the fight will go ahead immediately. Either way, Erwin will not be pleased, and will refuse outright to pay the PCs. The fight will be close, especially if Mentag was weakened, but eventually the Ogre's strength and size will win out. Magistrate Etburger will order Erwin and his followers to leave Kenselheim and never return.

Payment: Assuming the players go to the keep the next day to receive the remainder of their payment they will be met by one of Erwin's servants at the front entrance. They will be escorted up to Erwin's new office by two of the town guards (Erwin retained their services after exiling Etburger) – after they give up their

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weapons. The PCs will probably be upset about this, but they will not be granted an audience unless they do so. The guards don't bother searching them for hidden weapons, however. They aren't particularly fond of their lord and don't feel inclined to be overly thorough.

If they agree to give up their weapons read the following:

Von Oberholtzer's servant leads you up to the next floor of the keep. Two of the town guards follow behind you, though they look more bored than intimidating. You find another guard sitting on a stool outside Erwin's new office, his halberd leaning against the wall. The servant stops and stares at him expectantly. The guardsman gives him a blank look until he realises that he is expected to open the door. Muttering something under his breath he stands slowly, snatches up his halberd in one hand while pushing open the door with the other.

Entering the room you find Erwin sitting behind a massive oak desk, which is absolutely covered in ledgers and books. He glances up at you and indicates you should take one of the seats placed in the centre of the room before going back to the accounts before him. Standing in his armour to your left is Gunther, his greatsword strapped to his back. He gives you a cold smile as you move to your seats before moving to the door to close it behind you.

As the last of you sits down Erwin finishes reading and sighs. "I'm afraid I have some bad news," he says. "I know I promised to pay you more money upon completion of your services, but I fear I must beg your forgiveness. It would seem that I was a little rash in allowing Ruben Etzburger to leave town so quickly. After looking at his records it would seem that he has embezzled a great deal of money from the town coffers while in office, clearly one of the reasons he raised taxes so much recently. I seem to be in the unenviable position of inheriting a town in debt." He smiles wanly. "It would seem that my family is cursed to be forever in arrears. As it is I will have to raise taxes beyond those demanded by Ruben just to maintain the status quo. Obviously there is absolutely no way I can pay you the remainder of your fee, my duty to the town outweighs my own financial obligations. I am so very dreadfully sorry."

Von Oberholtzer is lying through his teeth. Ruben never stole any of the town's money, Erwin just made up an excuse so he wouldn't have to pay the PCs. He does intend to raise taxes though – he wants to increase the guards

pay and numbers in order to buy their loyalty. If the PCs ask him when he will be in a position to pay them he'll become evasive, insisting that there is no way to know when he'll have the money.

"There are too many variables, you understand. How well the harvest is this year, whether the troubles with the forces of chaos continue next year and how badly it will influence trade etc. It will probably be years before I can reasonably afford to pay you."

At this point it should become clear to the PCs that Erwin has no intention of ever paying them. If they continue to press him he will insist that there is unfortunately nothing he can do. He will maintain an easygoing manner as long as they don't become abusive, at which point he will have them thrown out.

The players may harbour thought of revenge, but Erwin is now safely ensconced inside his new keep, surrounded by the town watch and his clearly lethal bodyguard. If the players are smart, they'll accept it as a typical day in the Old World. If they're not smart they'll probably end up in the pit facing Gunther...