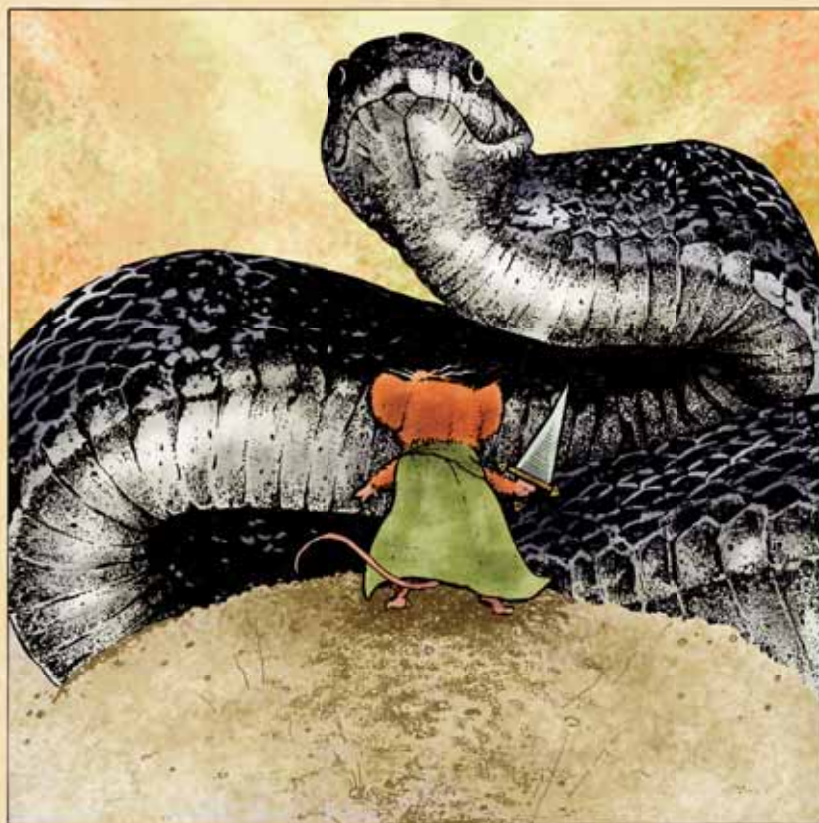
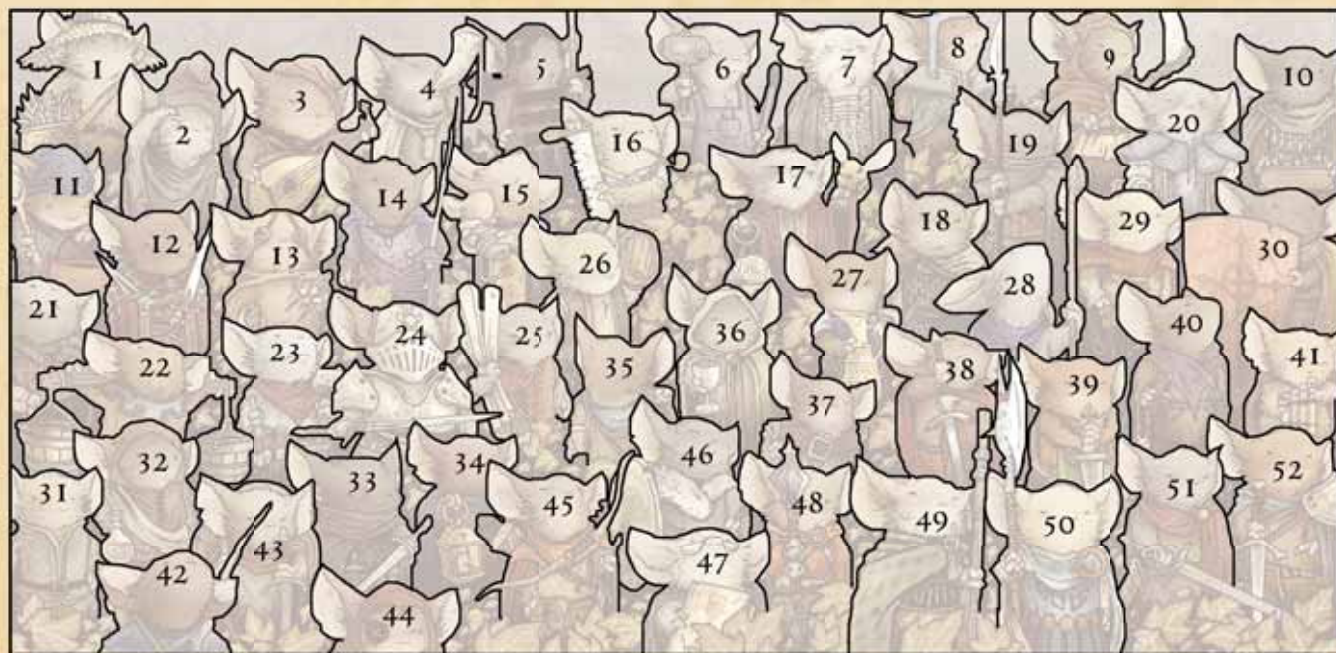


MOUSE GUARD

ROLEPLAYING GAME



FROM THE COVER...



- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1: GRAIN MERCHANT | 9: HARVESTER | 17: APIARY KIEPER | 25: GENEALOGIST | 33: ELYMIS | 41: FAIRFAX | 49: ANNIKA |
| 2: QUIGGLY WILLOWROOT | 10: LANDRA | 18: WALDON | 26: ALE BREWER | 34: NORA | 42: PEARSE | 50: GWENDOLYN |
| 3: LUTE PLAYER | 11: COOK | 19: CEDRIC | 27: JUNE THE INN KEEPER | 35: BERWYNN | 43: EWING | 51: FEAGAN |
| 4: TOOTH HORN BLOWER | 12: CERISE | 20: SPRUCETUCK'S GOVERNOR | 28: KENZIE | 36: ABIGAIL | 44: NIXSON | 52: ERWYNN |
| 5: AXE SOLDIER | 13: CARTOGRAPHER | 21: THORNE | 29: ISABEL | 37: LIETH | 45: BASTIAN | |
| 6: BLACKSMITH | 14: SELA | 22: WATER CARRIER | 30: RAND | 38: SAXON | 46: DELVIN | |
| 7: WEATHER WATCHER | 15: MIRIBEL & BABY | 23: STONE MASON | 31: VINSON | 39: LIEAM | 47: LIBRARIAN | |
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The Mouse Guard Roleplaying Game

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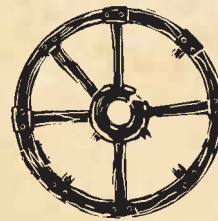
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FOREWORD

On the floor of my childhood bedroom I sketched three mice that would change my life. While I think of the mice as creations of my own, I did base them on my friends' distinct personality traits. Over the course of our teen lives, my friends and I sat in each others' basements and attics rolling dice and imagining worlds far different from that of Flint, Michigan, where we all lived at the time. It was a wonderful escape. We explored playing characters that were sometimes much like ourselves in personality and sometimes vastly different. It was an interactive storytelling device that, I believe, honed my ideas about how to tell a story.

So, it wasn't long before we tried playing *Mouse Guard* as a roleplaying game. I ran the game and offered up situations and opposing characters that have now become fully cemented in the *Mouse Guard* comics. I was able to see how my friends thought my characters would react to a world where everything was larger than them and they were the most sought-after prey.



For me, *Mouse Guard* is about more than surviving in harsh conditions. It's about thriving in them. It's about character: the type of sacrifice that must be given by the exceptional to give peace to the common. It's about relationships: friends who have the same goal, but disagree on how to reach it. And it's about adventure: mice rushing into exciting battles against foes at least twice their size.

Luke Crane was masterfully able to take the things about *Mouse Guard* that are important, at its core, and mold his Burning Wheel roleplaying system around them. His fresh techniques cast off the idea of characters driven by statistics and lucky rolls of the dice, and focus on true character building. This is not a fantasy game in which you just happen to be mice; it is a game that accounts for the ideas of how mouse society is shown in *Mouse Guard*. Luke asked me to flesh out the gaps of information needed for a roleplaying game that were not yet present in the comic series, and I am very pleased to say that those ideas have sparked new stories.

May you, your family and friends enjoy playing in the world of *Mouse Guard*!

—David Petersen, Michigan, 2008





IT REVOLVES ON THIS

Death is as powerful a weapon
as it is an easy escape.
Heroes can pass into legends,
legends into myths,
myths fuel new heroes.

—The last recorded words of the Black Axe, Champion of the Mouse Guard

Welcome to the Mouse Guard roleplaying game. In this game, you take on the role of a mouse hero struggling against the wild, the seasons and his own mouse nature. Using the instructions presented in this book, you and a group of friends can sit down together and play out a series of adventures like those depicted in David Petersen's excellent *Mouse Guard* comic books.

To play the game, you'll need two to six people, some pencils, paper, about 10 six-sided dice and a copy of this book. One player takes the job of playing the antagonists, supporting characters, setting and scenery. This player is called the Game Master or GM. The other players take on the role of individual guardmouse characters. They are the patrol.

The GM's job is to transform the players' guardmouse characters into heroes. How does he do that? By challenging the players with obstacles set in their path. It is only by overcoming difficult challenges and passing through the fire of conflict that the players' characters can become heroes.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

There are 12 chapters in this book. This introduction gets us started and presents the basics of the Mouse Guard game. Next, in the *Mouse Guard* chapter, we look at the Mouse Guard characters in detail. Following that, we delve into what drives the Guard in *It's What We Fight For*. *The Mission* details how to play a full session of the game. *Resolution* describes how to determine the outcome of dangerous situations in which the Mouse Guard are often involved. *The Seasons*, *The Territories* and *Denizens of the Territories* each take a piece of the Mouse Guard setting and present how to use it in the game. *Abilities and Skills* and *Traits* illustrate the rules for individual skills and traits. Those chapters also describe how to improve skills and traits and earn new ones. The *Sample Missions* chapter provides you with three prewritten missions you and your friends can play. It also contains 12 sample characters you can use in the sample

missions or in missions of your own design. Lastly, *Recruitment* gives instructions on how to make your own guardmouse.

Getting Started

In order to play the game, at least one player at the table will have to read the *Mouse Guard*, *It's What We Fight For*, *Mission* and *Resolution* chapters. He can reference the book and teach the other players as the game goes on. I recommend that you also read and use the *Sample Missions* chapter.

You can refer to everything else in play.

Using This Book

This book uses a number of tricks to help you understand and navigate it. The text is written to address the GM or the players at specific times and color-coded references are used to let you know where you need to go.



When you see Celanawe, the text is talking directly to the players. "You" means "you, the player." If you see this icon at the top of a section of the book, the paragraphs that follow are also addressed to the player.



When you see Gwendolyn, the text is talking directly to the GM. "You" means "you, the GM." If you see this icon at the top of a section of the game, the paragraphs that follow are addressed to the GM.

Neither section is restricted. Players and GMs should read all of the sections. The mice are there to help teach you what you need to do during the game.



This icon indicates that the paragraph contains an important game rule. It's a call-out used for easy visual reference.

The unadorned paragraphs are important as well. They contain general commentary and advice for the whole group. They are necessary to play the game and everyone should read them.

References

In addition, when a chapter is referred to in the text, it looks like this: *It Revolves on This*. When a section of a chapter is referred to, it looks like this: **Structure of the Book**. And lastly, when a specific heading under a section is mentioned, it looks like this: **Getting Started**.

ROLEPLAYING

This is a roleplaying game. Roleplaying games are peculiar and unique. They require a lot of imagination and investment from the players. This creative input is also what makes roleplaying games great. We get to wrap our imaginations around a variety of interesting situations and explore them.



Each player takes on a role in this game—the players have their characters, the GM has his antagonists and supporting characters. In play, you decide what your character is doing and who he is talking to. It's sort of like acting

out a part in a play or movie, except there's no script. Between takes, we roll dice and make a few notes rather than sitting in our trailers or waiting off stage.

Performance



When you play your character, decide on a voice for him and an attitude.

Create a unique mannerism that embodies him. Use the voice and mannerism to describe your character's actions in the game.

First and Third Person



There are two ways to describe your character's actions in the game: first person and third person.



First person means you describe your character's actions using *I*, *my* and *me*: "I head up to the inn to meet Kenzie."

Third person means you describe your character's actions using *he* or *she*, *his* or *hers*: "He heads up to the inn to meet Kenzie. He orders a drink and tells him what happens."

Either form of performance or description is acceptable in play.

Rolls and Tests



In addition to acting out how your character behaves, you roll dice to determine the outcome of your character's actions. Dice are rolled when your character is tested—when he has to overcome an obstacle.

In the description of the rules, you'll see the term *test* used. It simply means a roll of the dice.

Control



Most of the time, you're in control of what your character does and doesn't do. You get to describe what he's good at, what his quirks are and what he's not so good at.

Every so often, you're going to lose control of your character for a moment. When you attempt to do something and fail your test, the GM gets to take over and describe something that went

wrong. He can tell everyone about something your mouse did that was misguided or even bad. Or, he can describe an unforeseen effect that your actions caused. He gets to stick it to you for a moment. It's painful, but new problems add to the fun of the game.

Success and failure for rolls are described in detail in the *Resolution* chapter.

Unplanned Stories

When we start a session of play for Mouse Guard, no one knows exactly how it's going to end, neither the players nor the GM. We know we'll be using our characters and that the GM will give us a mission. That's the beginning. From there, the story will twist and turn based on the outcomes of the rolls in the game. Once the mission has been completed (or failed to be completed), we stop and look back at the session. Only then can we see the story we've created.

Taking Turns



As you're playing your character, be polite and respectful to everyone else at the table. If your character is angry, you should not use that as an excuse to be angry or mean to the other players. Make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak; make sure that everyone gets a chance to be in the spotlight.

When someone has the dice and is about to roll, the rest of the table must be quiet and attentive. It's that player's turn to add to the story. Before he rolls, he gets to describe what his character is doing. Everyone stops, listens and supports him.

Passing the Spotlight



It's the GM's job to pass the spotlight around and make sure every player gets an opportunity to contribute and shine.



If you don't have anything to contribute to a particular scene, that's okay. Offer some words of encouragement and ask other players what they're doing.

Table Chatter



When you play a roleplaying game like Mouse Guard, you do not spend the entire session "in character." You have moments of characterization interspersed with listening to the other players, dice rolls, rule checks and table chatter.

Table chatter is our term for giving the other players advice and support about the game. Advice doesn't come from your character, it comes from you!

Table chatter is important to this game. You should give each other advice and talk about the best strategies. However, be polite and respectful. Do not boss another player around. If he doesn't want your advice, let him choose his own course. And never interrupt another player's performance with your table chatter. Always listen first, then discuss.

STRUCTURE OF PLAY

A single session lasts two to four hours. During the course of a session, the players use their guardmice characters to complete a mission presented by the GM. Missions consist of a series of obstacles to overcome and problems to solve. These obstacles and problems are dealt with by testing the characters' abilities. The results of these tests determine where the game goes next.

The seasons of the Territories affect the Guard and its missions. As you play more and more missions across multiple sessions, the seasons in the game change and so do the missions of the Guard.

This game is meant to be played for six to eight sessions of two to four hours each. That should be enough play time to take the characters through one whole year of time in the Territories. You can play fewer or more sessions if you want; that's just a recommendation.

SHEETS OF PAPER

Each player is required to keep a written record of his character. Character sheets are provided in the back of this book and as downloads on burningwheel.com for this purpose. Characters in Mouse Guard evolve and grow as play progresses. Use a pencil to mark the sheet so you can make changes.

As you read the book, have a character sheet handy. It provides a quick reference for how most of the rules of the game interact.

DICE

In order to decide the outcome of the tests in the game, we roll handfuls of dice—usually three to six. The number of dice rolled depend on how skilled your character is in a particular area, how much help you have and a few other factors.

Six-Sided Dice

Mouse Guard uses common six-sided dice for all rolls.

Successes and Cowards



In each roll, every die is counted as its own result. It's either a "yes" or a "no." A yes is called a *success*. The more successes, the better. Any die that comes up as a "no" result is a traitor to your cause and doesn't count toward success. We call those dice *cowards*.



A 4, 5 or 6 result on a die is a success. A 1, 2 or 3 result is a coward!



Successes

When a die comes up a 4 or higher, we call it a success. After the dice are rolled, count up all your successes.

Rolling a handful of five dice, my luck gives me a 1, 2, 2, 4, 5 result. Two of the dice came up 4 or higher, thus I rolled two successes.



When a player rolls dice, he needs successes in order to pass the tests set before him in the game.

The Little S



Sometimes you will see a number listed as “2s.” This is shorthand for “two successes.” Successes represent dice already rolled that came up successes. This is how we



describe bonuses to your rolls. “+ 1s” means that after you’ve rolled, if you’ve passed the test, you add another success.

+ D/-D



+1D, +2D, etc. means you add the indicated number of dice to your ability or skill before you roll the dice.



-1D, -2D, etc. means you subtract the indicated number of dice from your ability or skill before you roll the dice.

Margin of Success

As you read on, you'll see the term *margin of success*. For example:

Reduce your opponent's disposition by your margin of success.



Margin of success is a game term that means "count each extra success over what you needed and use that number."

If you needed three successes but rolled five, you have a margin of success of 2.

Margin of Failure



Margin of failure is the opposite of margin of success. It means that you count the number of successes by which you missed and use that number.

If you needed three successes and you rolled none, you have a margin of failure of 3.

TERMS

I use the term *guardmouse* in the rules text as the generic term for any mouse in the Guard. It does not specifically refer to a mouse of rank.

I also use the male voice—*he, his, him*—in the rules. There are just as many girl players as

boy players of Mouse Guard, but I chose to use the male voice for two reasons. One, it's simple and easy. Two, the main character of the series, Lieam, is a boy mouse.

THE COMICS

When designing and writing this game, I tried to take my inspiration and cues directly from the *Mouse Guard* comics. Comics and games are two different mediums, but in the rules for this game, I pretend that the comics are a game. I imagine the characters are controlled by players. This way, the action in the comics stands as a great example of how you can play the game.

CANON

Canon refers to the story as it happened in the comics. Some things in your game might be different than the comics, or might even change the events or the characters. That's okay!



Once your game has started, it is yours. It does not have to follow the story of the comics. You can use the characters and the events however you wish, so long as it's in keeping with the mood of Mouse Guard as a whole.





THE MOUSE GUARD

Hail all those who are able,
any mouse can,
any mouse will,
but the Guard prevail.

—Mouse Proverb

This chapter details the history and role of the Mouse Guard in the Territories. As you read through, you'll find a history of the Guard; a description of their home base, Lockhaven; the Guard's Oath; and a description of the Guard's various duties.

After that, we break down a Mouse Guard character, describing the elements used in play and giving the basic game mechanics for each bit. This chapter is a primer for play. Many of the rules are described in detail later, but all of the basics of play are provided in the following section. You don't need to read ahead if there's something you don't understand. The rules are introduced bit by bit.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MOUSE GUARD

In the not too distant past, mice lived in tiny tree hollows, under logs, in stone cracks and other wayward, forgotten places. They lived scattered across the wild without community or support. They were hunted by predators, subject to harsh weather, and had few supplies to sustain them in the face of calamity. In fact, these mice were far more likely to perish from depredation, exposure, illness or starvation than live a long, prosperous life.

Against the overwhelming forces of nature, a few disparate groups made a stand. They staked a claim on a handful of safe patches of wilderness. As word of these safe havens traveled, other mice flocked to them. The most famous settlement grew quickly from a hiding place to an outpost to a fortification and finally to a citadel—fortified walls surrounding a prosperous town, defended by a dedicated guard. This place is now called Lockhaven, and it is the center of what is known as the Mouse Territories.

As Lockhaven became more and more secure, its guardians reached out to other settlements. At first, the Lockhavenites tried to bring everyone they found back to the safety of their city. Many came, but many also would not. Other communities, perhaps less safe but still

prosperous, had formed in the wild. They were reluctant to leave what they had begun, despite their precarious position.

There was a debate within the ranks of Lockhaven's guardians. What to do about these other settlements? Should they be forcibly moved? Should they be abandoned?

In the end, the guardians decided there was only one true answer: Lockhaven must use her strength to defend and support these communities. All mice must prosper or all mice will fail.

Therefore, these guardians struck out to the distant settlements, marking paths and noting which directions gave them more cover, better viewpoints and quicker routes.

These brave, selfless mice quickly became known as the Mouse Guard. As their numbers grew and their protection was extended and came to be relied upon, the far-flung settlements did indeed prosper.

Lockhaven itself changed as well. It became less of a bustling city and more of a central hub for the Guard. Eventually, the Guard took over the administration of the citadel completely.

The first mouse to organize the defense of Lockhaven was female. Thereafter, it has remained tradition that the Guard be commanded by a female mouse given the rank of Matriarch.

The Mouse Guard

She is in charge of internal affairs, governing the mice of Lockhaven and setting the Guard's missions and patrols. The Matriarch determines Guard postings, what duties patrols are to complete, and which areas in the Territories need the most attention. Beneath her are a cadre of captains and administrators who assist her in day-to-day operations and long-term plans.

In the wilds between the settlements, all mice agree, the Mouse Guard is the law. But, in the mouse towns, the Guard only has as much authority as that town's government allows. Most settlements welcome guardmice but many defer to their own lawmice and protectors. Some places even force visiting guardmice to turn over their weapons at the gates of their settlement.



The Guard is responsible for its own survival as an organization. While it is supported by various towns with gifts and donations, it takes no tithes or taxes. The Mouse Guard undertakes its duties as sacred obligations. If every mouse in the Territories turned their back on them, these selfless guardians would still spend their last breath defending and protecting them.

LOCKHAVEN

Home of the Mouse Guard, Lockhaven is carved deep into stone. Only the ivy-covered face of Lockhaven is visible from the outside.

Lockhaven serves as a base of operations for the Guard and is no longer a true city. While there are mouse citizens that live there, they are



invited guests of the Guard. The Guard extends its invitations to skilled and trustworthy mice and families.

Staple foods are stored in abundance, while prepared foods are made as needed, as it is unknown how many or few will be fed on any given day. Lockhaven is known for *gabcroon*: a dense bread filled with seeds, fruits, and nuts. It travels well and stays warm long after baking.

Woven and sewn fabrics are important to the mice of Lockhaven. The Guard are known for their cloaks, which need to be both warm and durable, as they are a guardmouse's primary piece of clothing.

Lockhaven is also home to a hive of bees. The mice harvest the honey for food and the wax for goods and medicinal purposes. To do this, the Apiarist uses smoke to charm the bees. The bees also serve as a natural deterrent to other predators.

THE GUARD'S OATH

The following is the oath that all mice must swear when they are inducted into the ranks of the Guard:

**We as Guard offer all
that we are to protect the sanctity
of our species, the freedom of
our kin, and the honor of our
ancestors. With knowledge,
sword, and shield, we do these
deeds, never putting a lone
mouse above the needs of all, or
the desire of self above another.
We strive for no less than to
serve the greatest good.**





THE DUTIES OF THE MOUSE GUARD

Guardmice are responsible for patrolling the Territories, pathfinding, blazing new trails, delivering mail, escorting mice safely between settlements, watching the weather, running off predators, rescuing stranded mice, mediating disputes and maintaining the scent borders.

Patrolling

The Guard never know when they will be needed or where, so the Guard patrol the known paths and visit towns to offer their services. Patrols are meant to survey the Territories and keep the Guard circulating between the settlements. Guardmice often spend more time away from Lockhaven than in it. They live in the open country. They stay for short visits at settlements before moving on. A patrol will normally have a route it follows or an itinerary left at Lockhaven so the gate-watch of Lockhaven can keep tabs on it.

Pathfinding and Clearing

Weather and growth can make a once passable and safe route unusable. The Guard clears paths for mice and makes them less inviting for predators.

Trail Blazing

There are times when new trails and paths need to be made. The Guard sends out mice to not only make the path, but make sure it meets a standard: Paths should provide cover, plenty of places to hide, access to food and water, etc.

Delivering Mail

Messages from heads of town, the Guard's Matriarch or common townsmice need to be delivered. Because there are few means of communication between the settlements, the Guard will carry messages from a town they are leaving to a town they plan on visiting next. They usually do not head to a settlement specifically to deliver a message unless it's vitally important.

Escorting

It is the Guard's duty to ensure safe passage from one settlement to another. The journeys can take several days, so the guardmice must keep watch overnight and be able to forage for food if necessary. Most often they're escorting shipments of goods, but sometimes guardmice will lead mice to other settlements—dignitaries, mice who perform services or just mice wanting to visit another settlement.

Weather Watching

While on patrol, it's the guardmouse's job to keep a close eye on the weather. He's to report any dangerous signs to the nearest settlement, so that all can be prepared for bad weather. The Guard knows that when bad weather comes, there is more chance of trouble.

Hunting Predators

The Guard must deal with the animals who threaten mice. This can mean hunting predators, killing their young or ruining their burrows.

There have been times in the Guard's past (most recently the Winter War of 1149) when the Guard declared war on a species. In '49, a weasel overlord set his sights on invading the Territories. He wanted to capture the mice and breed them for food. Gwendolyn, the current

Matriarch of the Guard, felt that a full-scale war was needed to drive the weasels out of the Territories. It was a hard-won victory.

Rescuing Mice

It falls on the Guard's shoulders to help out or rescue mice who have gotten into trouble out in the wild. Regular mice are not well-trained enough to be in the open for long, so rescue missions are fairly common.

Meditation Disputes

Some governors, mayors and councilmice will call on guardmice to act as mediators and arbiters in disputes between their towns.

Maintaining the Scent Border

The Scent Border is a rough line across the southwest and northeast borders of the Territories. Along these borders, the Guard pour a specially brewed mixture that simulates the



scent wolves and other animals use to mark territory. The sciencemice of Sprucetuck brew an odd concoction to create a scent that the wolves and foxes tend to respect. It is not completely effective, but it works well enough to keep most large predators out of the Territories.

The Guard completely repours it twice a year and performs minor maintenance throughout the year.

THE PATROL

You and the other players are going to choose or create characters and together form a *patrol*. A patrol is our term for a team of guardmice sent out into the Territories to help, rescue, right wrongs and fight the good fight.

As you choose your characters, talk to each other about what roles you're interested in playing. Someone will want to be the tough mouse, and someone else will want to be the scientist. Another player will want to play a leader, while another will be interested in playing a tenderpaw (a rookie in the Mouse Guard).

Try to choose different roles; try not to step on each other's toes. You need to be a tight team in order to overcome all the problems you're going to face on the road.

Kenzie, Saxon, Lieam and Sadie are all part of one patrol. Sadie's player misses the first

session, so she doesn't appear at the beginning of the comic. But we think Sadie is a really cool character in general. We're going to use her as the example throughout the rest of this section.



EXAMPLE GUARDMOUSE

A character in Mouse Guard has a variety of descriptions and abilities attached to him. Detailed below is a sample character:

Sadie

Sadie is a well-regarded patrol guard from Port Sumac. Gwendolyn trusts her with independent and difficult missions.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| AGE: 26 | | PARENTS: <i>Thane & Ilsa</i> | |
| HOME: <i>Port Sumac</i> | | SENIOR: <i>Quinn the Cook</i> | |
| FUR COLOR: <i>Brown</i> | | MENTOR: <i>Leith</i> | |
| RANK: <i>Patrol Guard</i> | | ENEMY: <i>Shane the Trader</i> | |
| CLOAK: <i>Plum</i> | | FRIEND: <i>Bonnie the Innkeeper</i> | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: *A guardmouse needs to be able to think with her head and act with her heart.*

GOAL: *I will discover why Conrad's communications from Calogero have stopped.*

INSTINCT: *Never delay when on a mission.*

SKILLS: *Weather Watcher 4, Survivalist 4, Fighter 3, Pathfinder 3, Scout 2, Haggler 2, Boatcrafter 2, Cook 2, Persuader 2, Coast-wise 3, Star-wise 2, Herb-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Clever (1), Tough (1)*

GEAR: *Sling, stones, a pair of well-balanced knives*



Follow along with a character sheet as we go through this section together.

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NAME

Each character has a unique name, whether it's a player's character or one controlled by the GM. Mice in the Territories tend to have Old English-sounding names: Lieam, Saxon, Kenzie, Sadie, Celanawe, Gwendolyn, Rand and Roibin.

AGE

Mice can enter the Guard as a tenderpaw as early as age 14. They can be officially inducted into the Guard at age 18. Most guardmice retire before the age of 60.

Sadie is 26. Still young in overall terms, but she's no longer a spry, young tenderpaw.

FUR COLOR

There are five fur colors prominent in the Territories: brown, blonde, gray, black and red. Brown is most common, followed by blonde and gray. Black is uncommon and red is rare.

Sadie's fur is a nice shade of light brown.

HOME

Each city in the Territories has a unique feel. Though they are all part of the culture of the Territories, there are local variations on tradition,

craft and trade. Each guardmouse has ties to the town in which he was born. These ties are among the factors that shape who he is.

There are eight cities and towns in the Territories that produce most of the Guard: Lockhaven, Sprucetuck, Barkstone, Ivydale, Copperwood, Port Sumac, Shaleburrow and Elmooss. These settlements and others are discussed in the Territories chapter of this book.

Sadie was born in Port Sumac.

PARENTS

Once inducted into the Guard, a mouse does not get a chance to visit home very often. However, family is very important to the mice of the Territories. Guardmice will attempt to use their patrols as excuses to visit their families during the holidays. Some guardmice even request winter quarters in their home cities so they can spend part of the year with their parents.

In addition to providing guidance and support, a mouse's parents give him his trade. Nearly every mouse in the Territories takes up his mother's or father's work. Though the Guard have more pressing duties, many bring their skills with them when they join and use them to benefit the Guard overall.



Sadie's parents are Thane and Ilsa. Her dad, Thane, is a boatcrafter. Her mom, Ilsa, works at a tavern.

Parents During Play



During play, if you're in your home city, you may call on your parents for aid. You may sleep at their home and eat at their table. Parents will try to provide their sons and daughters in the Guard with supplies as well.

SENIOR ARTISAN

A young mouse seeking to join the Guard applies in either spring or fall. He meets with the guard captain in charge of new recruits and is welcomed into Lockhaven. Raw recruits are distributed among the various tradesmice in Lockhaven to act as assistants, laborers and apprentices. For their first two seasons of service, they are apprenticed to these artisans.

These tradesmice serve the material needs of the Guard. They provide them with weapons, armor, food and other sundry supplies. They are vital to the survival of Lockhaven and the Territories.

Often, but not always, a mouse is placed with a senior artisan whose trade is similar to his own. In this case, he doesn't have to be trained from the ground up; he can aid them with his own knowledge. Sometimes, Lockhaven and the Guard

have needs that overtake such considerations. In times of war, drought, famine or other trials, mice are placed where they are needed most—as laborers, foragers or harvesters.

Sadie trained under Quinn the Cook when she first came to Lockhaven.

Senior Artisans During Play



A guardmouse's senior artisan will provide his former charge with aid whenever the guardmouse is in Lockhaven if he is able. Senior Artisans can provide him with supplies relevant to his trade, basic sundries like food and water, and perhaps a loan.

FRIEND OR ALLY



Each character has a friend or ally whom he may call on for aid. You tell the GM and the other players about your friend's personality and his position—if he's in the Guard or not, where he lives, what his trade is. Thereafter, your friend may be found in this location in play.

Once play begins, the GM controls the friend characters for the players.

Sadie's best friend is Bonnie. She's the owner of the Rustkettle Tavern in Darkwater. They were childhood friends.



Friend characters, if asked, will always try to help. They'll offer whatever they can—time, resources, advice.

ENEMY OR RIVAL

Each character also has an enemy or rival. This is a character whom they know either from before their time in the Guard, or another guardmouse with whom they are not on the best of terms.



You may tell the GM and the other players about your enemy's personality and his position in a similar fashion to the rules for friends.

A trader out of Wolfepointe named Shane considers Sadie his enemy. They had some bad dealings a few years back.



Once play begins, the GM controls the enemy characters for the players. He may have them appear in the story at his discretion.

An enemy character will only help you if it serves his own self-interest—only if it makes him look better than you do in the end.

MENTOR

After his apprenticeship, the recruit is granted the provisional rank of tenderpaw and assigned a guardmouse as a mentor. His mentor slowly introduces the tenderpaw to patrolling and other

Guard duties. The tenderpaw's job is to do the labor and grunt work so the more experienced Guard's paws and mind are free for facing the dangers they encounter. After a few seasons under the tutelage of the mentor, the mentor will recommend the tenderpaw recruit to Gwendolyn for promotion to guardmouse rank.

It is the mentor's role to train the recruit as he sees fit. Some mentors may have more rigorous training methods or requirements than others. Some may focus on different aspects of Guard life—some may emphasize Weather Watching as one of the most important ways to stay free of danger, while others may focus on fighting and some stress scouting and pathfinding.

Patrol guard Leith mentored Sadie when she was a tenderpaw. He taught her how to survive in the wild in nearly any condition.

Mentor During Play



During play, you may call on your mentor for aid. Mentors are busy guardmice with their own duties and missions, but most mentors will do what they can to aid their former students.

Most mentors, unless stationed at Lockhaven, can be found wandering the Territories, rarely in the same place twice. You may tell the GM and the other players about your mentor's personality. Each player may state if he is on favorable or unfavorable terms with his mentor so the GM has a guideline to follow in play. You may also tell the GM where your mentor is most likely to be found in the Territories: patrolling the Scent Border, doing the mail run to Elmoos, on station at Calogero, etc. That's the first place you'll find your mentor.



Once play begins, the GM controls the mentor characters for the players. The student's relationship with his mentor will grow and change. The mentor will watch his student's progress and judge whether he learned the lessons set before him during training.



Mentors will freely give advice, but they will only actively help their student if the student's life is threatened or the fate of a city or the Territories themselves are at stake. A mentor will never undertake his student's duties for him. The student must prove his worth to the Guard!

GUARD RANK

There are five ranks within the Mouse Guard: tenderpaw, guardmouse, patrol guard, patrol leader and guard captain.

Tenderpaws are fresh recruits. Guardmice are the foot soldiers of the Guard. Patrol guard are veteran guardmice responsible for complicated or independent missions. Patrol leaders are patrol guard who have demonstrated that they can think independently and guide other mice. Guard captains are powerful mice appointed to the highest rank in the Guard due to their long-standing commitment and exemplary service.

Sadie is a high-ranking and well-regarded patrol guard. She's been in the Guard for a number of years and has steadily advanced in

rank. Gwendolyn trusts her with independent and difficult missions.

CLOAK COLOR

A guardmouse's cloak is granted to him after he has completed his apprenticeship under his mentor. It is presented at his formal induction ceremony by his mentor. The mentor always chooses the color for his graduating apprentice. The color represents how the mentor views his former student's disposition and personality.

BELIEF

A Belief is an ethical or moral statement that encompasses how the character views his world. It is also a way for the player to explore part of the Mouse Guard world.

In the very first issue of the comic, Kenzie tells Lieam his Belief, taken from one of the Guard's mottoes: "It matters not *what* you fight, but what you fight *for*." This statement informs all of Kenzie's decisions. He is fighting for a higher purpose—not glory or personal success—but for the honor of the Guard and the safety of the Territories.

Sadie: A guardmouse needs to be able to think with her head and act with her heart.



You write a Belief for your character. Beliefs should speak to some higher purpose. They shouldn't be goals you can accomplish; they're ideals you live up to.



Playing your character's Belief is one way to get rewarded in the game. If you're not playing your character's Belief, and subsequently not getting rewarded, you should change it. Beliefs can be changed at the beginning or end of a session. Writing a Belief and earning rewards is detailed in *It's What We Fight For*.

GOAL

Each character has a Goal—a task, mission or vow that he is trying to complete.

I will discover why Conrad's communications from Calogero have stopped.

That's Sadie's Goal for her first mission. A Goal can be accomplished in one session of play. This means that most Goals change every session. You write a new Goal for the session based on the mission handed down from the GM for this session and based on the developments in the previous session.



Accomplishing your Goal earns a reward. You want to be rewarded at the end of every session, so make sure you accomplish what you set out to do!

Writing a Goal and earning rewards is detailed in *It's What We Fight For*.

INSTINCT

An Instinct in this game is a habit or reaction. It's something that the character always does. If someone were describing your character, they'd probably mention this about him.

Never delay when on a mission.



If you play your character's Instinct—if you act out the trigger and condition written there—then you are rewarded. Instincts are also discussed in this chapter and in *It's What We Fight For*.

INHERENT ABILITIES

A Mouse Guard character has five inherent abilities—Nature, Will, Health, Resources and Circles. All mice share these same five abilities.

Nature

Nature stands for the mouse's natural qualities and tendencies. It represents what he was born to do, what helps him survive in the wild and cruel world.

The Mouse Guard

The Nature ability is unique among all the other abilities. While it has a rating like other abilities and skills, it also notes the animal to which it belongs and includes three or four descriptions.

For Mouse Guard characters, it's always Nature (Mouse).

For a snake it is "Nature (Snake);" for a weasel it is "Nature (Weasel)."

Nature is rated from 0 to 7. The higher your Nature rank, the more mouse-like you are. The lower your rank, the more "human" you are.



For mice, there are four aspects that follow: *Escaping, Climbing, Hiding, Foraging*. These describe the situations in which you can use your Nature without penalty. If you use your Nature in situations outside of escaping, climbing, hiding and foraging, you risk losing a bit of it.

Sadie uses her Nature to escape from Calogero after being trapped inside by crabs.

Nature is one of the most important parts of this game. See the **Nature** section in the **Abilities and Skills** chapter for all the juicy details.

Will



The Will ability represents how mentally resilient, sociable and adaptable your mouse is.



Will is rated from 1 to 6. It is tested when you're resisting another character who is trying to convince you of something.

Sadie has a Will of 4. She's well-rounded and tough, but she's not as adaptable or experienced as, say, Kenzie.

Will is also used to overcome the mental trials of life on the road, like anger and illness.

In addition, it is used to break ties in tests requiring mental strength or insight. See the **Resolution** chapter for the rules on ties and breaking them.

Health



Health represents your mouse's physical strength and well-being. Younger mice tend to be healthier than the oldfurs.

The Health ability is rated from 1 to 6. It is most frequently tested when trying to resist the physical trials of life on the road—fatigue and injury.

Sadie's Health is 4. She's solid and in good shape. However, she's not a tenderpaw anymore. So she can't recover from all the bumps and scrapes as fast as a younger mouse like Lieam.



Health is used for any physical test that doesn't fall under Nature or a skill—running for a long distance to deliver a message, for example.

It is also used to break ties for tests requiring physical exertion. Again, see the **Resolution** chapter for the rules on ties and breaking them.

Resources

The Resources ability represents what material resources your character can produce. It can be a measure of resourcefulness or wealth. You get to decide. Either way, your rating in Resources allows you to get stuff for your character.

Resources ratings range from 1 to 10.



If you pass a Resources test, you acquire the item you were looking for. If a Resources test is failed, the standard failure rules

apply or the GM may apply a special condition. See the **Resources** section in the **Abilities and Skills** chapter for details.

After the battle at Lockhaven, Sadie uses her Resources to outfit herself with a new leafboat, new paddles and new survivalist gear.

Circles

The Circles ability determines how well-connected your character is. It is rated from 1 to 10. When you want to find someone in a town, you test your Circles.

When returning to Lockhaven after discovering the nature of the conspiracy, Sadie uses her Circles to make sure Rand is on duty when she arrives.



When Circles is used, new characters or those from the guardmouse's past are introduced into the game.

Testing Circles



When testing Circles, describe who you're looking for. What's the mouse's job? What's his attitude? If you pass your Circles test, your character meets the mouse you were looking for. If you fail, the GM can use the standard failure rules or use a special twist called the *Enmity Clause*. See the **Circles** section in the *Abilities and Skills* chapter for details.

SKILLS

Skills represent your guardmouse's training and experience. Skills are very important to the game. During play, you'll test your skills more than anything else. There are 34 skills in the game: Administrator, Apiarist, Archivist, Armorer, Baker, Boatcrafter, Brewer, Carpenter, Cartographer, Cook, Deceiver, Fighter, Glazier, Haggler, Harvester, Healer, Hunter, Insectrist, Instructor, Laborer, Loremouse, Militarist, Miller, Orator, Pathfinder, Persuader, Potter, Scientist, Scout, Smith, Stonemason, Survivalist, Weather Watcher and Weaver.



Your character can start with as many as twelve skills. The most you can ever have is 24.

Skills are so important they have their own chapter. Each skill has an individual entry in the *Abilities and Skills* chapter at the back of the book.

Sadie makes a Boatcrafter test to quickly reach the Calogero outpost.

Wises

There is a subset of skills called *wises*. Wises reflect bits of specialized knowledge that each guardmouse accumulates throughout his life.

Lockhaven-wise, Weasel-wise, Rain-wise, etc.

On her way up to Calogero, Sadie uses her Coast-wise to find a route that will allow her to approach undetected.



In play, wises are tested and advance just like skills. Wises can be used in three ways: You can test to elicit information about a hidden fact from the GM. You can test to bring in a new fact about something in the game that's relevant to your wise's area. Or you can use a wise to augment a skill test.

NUMBERS AND RATINGS

The number next to your character's abilities and skills—Nature 3, Resources 4, Fighter 5, for example—indicates how many dice to roll when that ability is called upon. We call this a *rating*.

In general, a rating of 1 is bad. 2 is barely skilled. 3 is decent. 4 is good. 5 is excellent. 6 is expert.

Sadie has a Weather Watcher 4 and a Survivalist 4, but her Persuader and Scout are only 2. She's used to running long missions that involve a lot of waiting.

TRAITS

Traits are quirks and special qualities possessed by your character. There are 50 traits to choose from: Bigpaw, Bitter, Bodyguard, Bold, Brave, Calm, Clever, Compassionate, Cunning, Curious, Deep Ear, Defender, Determined, Driven, Early Riser, Extrovert, Fat, Fearful, Fearless, Fiery, Generous, Graceful, Guard's Oath, Innocent, Jaded, Leader, Longtail, Lost, Natural Bearings, Nimble, Nocturnal, Oldfur, Quick-Witted, Quiet, Scarred, Sharp-Eyed, Sharptooth, Short, Skeptical, Skinny, Stoic, Stubborn, Suspicious, Tall, Thoughtful, Tough, Weather Sense, Wise, Wolf's Snout and Young.

Traits help your mouse, but they also trip him up and get in his way. They help us roleplay—they give us guidelines about the character's personality. How would a compassionate mouse behave under pressure? What does being fearless really mean?

Sadie is Tough. No matter what happens, she never gives up. She's also Clever. She always has an idea for a smart solution or interesting ploy.

Traits are super important to the game—possibly the most important part. Not because they're powerful (they're not), but because of the way they influence the decisions you make in play.

Like skills, traits have their own chapter in the back of the book. Each trait has its own description. The chapter also describes how to use your traits in play, and how to gain and lose traits.

The influence of traits in play is discussed in *The Mission* and *Resolution* chapters.

CONTACTS

Use the Contacts area of the character sheet to note characters you've found using your Circles ability. Be sure to write down if they are friendly or an enemy.



You get +1D to your Circles tests when bringing a friendly contact back into the game.

GEAR

Guardmice are self-sufficient. As a group, they're excellent survivalists, foragers and pathfinders. They don't need a lot of gear to get by in the wild.

Sadie uses her Boatcrafter skill to make boats and paddles to aid her in her journeys.

The Mouse Guard



Sometimes a useful item can come in handy and help your guardmouse overcome an obstacle in his way. Gear that's relevant to a problem adds +1D to your roll or gives benefits according to the special conflict rules described in the *Resolution* chapter.

Sadie's paddles give her +1D when she's piloting her leaf boats.

Weapon of Choice

Life on the road is dangerous. Mice are prey to many animals. And they aren't natural fighters—they aren't equipped with the muscles, claws and fangs of a predator. Thus, your weapon is one piece of vital gear. There are 10 weapons

common to the Guard: shield, knife, sword, axe, staff, hook and line, spear, halberd, sling and bow. You get to pick one for your mouse!

Sadie's weapons of choice are her well-balanced knives.

Can Only Carry So Much



Mice are small. They can only carry so much. You are limited in what you can carry by the space in the Gear section on your character sheet. If you run out of space, you have to get rid of something.

You can't use the space in Contacts, Traits or Conditions. Any gear written in those areas is considered dropped and unavailable.

CONDITIONS

Life on the road is hard. If a mouse isn't careful, it'll grind him down. In the game, we represent the toll of the patrols and missions on your mouse with conditions.

There are six conditions: Healthy, Hungry and Thirsty, Angry, Tired, Injured and Sick.

Obviously, being Healthy is the optimal condition. During the course of play, your character will be made Hungry, Angry or Tired. He also might be Injured or fall Sick. Once any other condition is earned, your character is no longer Healthy. You



may return to being Healthy by recovering from your conditions. Recovery is described in *The Mission*.

You may accumulate multiple conditions. You may be Hungry and Tired or Angry and Sick or even Thirsty, Angry, Tired, Injured and Sick!



The Hungry and Thirsty, Tired and Angry conditions affect your mouse during tense, important situations called conflicts. They don't affect every roll.

After she witnesses the death of Conrad, Sadie is upset. This falls under the Angry condition. She doesn't blame anyone for her friend's death. She's simply upset at the cruelty of nature.



Being Injured and Sick affects every roll, except Health and Will rolls to recover from conditions.

REWARDS

At the end of each session, each player can earn rewards. You earn them based on the way you play your character—his Belief, Goal and Instinct—and how you stand up in the face of danger.

There are two types of reward points: fate and persona.

Fate

Fate points represent luck and good fortune smiling down on your character.



Fate points are spent after a roll in which some of your dice came up 6s. If you choose to spend a fate point, count the number of 6s you rolled. Pick up one new die for each 6. Roll those dice and add any successes to the total from the first roll. If you roll more 6s in the second roll, keep going! Pick up another die for



The Mouse Guard

each new 6 and roll again. Keep rolling new dice until you don't roll any more 6s. Count up all the successes you rolled.

Persona

Persona points represent a special reserve of inner strength that your character has built up over the course of his trials in the Guard.



Persona points are spent before you roll. These points can do two things. Each point spent can add +1D to your roll. Add the bonus dice to your total before you roll and then roll like normal. You may spend up to three persona points to add bonus dice at once.

Alternately, persona points can be used to tap your Nature ability.

Tapping Nature



By spending a persona point, the player may add his Nature ability rating to any ability or skill test.

If the test is *within* his Nature and successful, then the Nature ability rating remains unchanged.

If the test is *against* his Nature and successful, Nature is temporarily reduced by 1.

If the test is failed, whether it was with or against Nature, Nature is temporarily reduced by the margin of failure.

Sadie tapped her Nature to outwit and outrun the crabs that attacked her and Conrad at Calogero.

See the **Abilities and Skills** chapter for a detailed look at the Nature ability.

Earning Rewards

Earning rewards is done by playing your Belief, accomplishing your Goal and using your Instinct. This process is described in the *It's What We Fight For* chapter.

KENZIE, SAXON AND ILEAM

Here are the other three members of Sadie's patrol. They'll be used in examples throughout the book, so glance them over. Also, you may play the game using any of these examples as your character.





Kenzie

Kenzie is a patient and calm patrol leader. As a veteran of the Weasel War, he's seen many adventures and hardships in his tenure in the Guard. Kenzie is loyal and devoted to his best friend, Saxon. Though they are of different temperaments, Kenzie always consults his friend before taking action.

AGE: 31

HOME: *Willowroot*

FUR COLOR: *Gray*

RANK: *Patrol Leader*

CLOAK: *Royal Blue*

PARENTS: *Ailfrid & Laurel*

SENIOR: *Fabron the Assistant
Weaponsmith of Lockhaven*

MENTOR: *Odell (deceased)*

ENEMY: *Katllynn the Archivist*

FRIEND: *Jasper the Storyteller*

RAW ABILITIES

RATING

SPECIAL ABILITIES

RATING

NATURE (**Mouse**)

5

RESOURCES

5

WILL

5

CIRCLES

4

HEALTH

4

BELIEF: *It's not what you fight, but what you fight for.*

GOAL: *I must find evidence that will determine if the grain peddler is a traitor or not.*

INSTINCT: *Always consult Saxon when trouble arises.*

SKILLS: *Persuader 5, Fighter 3, Healer 2, Instructor 2, Survivalist 4, Weather Watcher 2, Archivist 2, Smith 2, Path-wise 2, Duck-wise 2, Escort-wise 2, Patrol leader-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Calm (1), Tall (1), Leader (1)*

GEAR: *Staff, map and orders from Gwendolyn*

Saxon

Saxon is a fiery and stubborn mouse, famous in the Guard for his skill in battle. Although he has enough experience to be promoted to patrol leader, Saxon passed up the opportunity in order to remain in his friend Kenzie's patrol.

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------|---|--------|
| AGE: 28 | | PARENTS: Gill & Anne | |
| HOME: Flintrust | | SENIOR: Briar the Textile Master of Lockhaven | |
| FUR COLOR: Brown | | MENTOR: Loukas (deceased) | |
| RANK: Patrol Guard | | ENEMY: Roarke the Smith | |
| CLOAK: Red | | FRIEND: Samuel the Printer | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: The best solution is always found at the point of my sword.

GOAL: I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this mission.

INSTINCT: Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble.

SKILLS: Fighter 6, Pathfinder 5, Survivalist 2, Carpenter 2, Weaver 3, Deceiver 2, Weasel-wise 3, Darkheather-wise 2

TRAITS: Short (1), Fearless (1)

GEAR: Sword and a belt





Lieam

Lieam is a young guardmouse who proved himself a determined fighter during the defense of Ferndale in the Weasel War two years ago. Based on his service in the brutal fighting, Saxon and Kenzie took him under their care as a tenderpaw. He was quickly promoted to guardmouse and given a dusty green cloak to represent his ever-renewing spirit.

AGE: 19

HOME: Ferndale

FUR COLOR: Red

RANK: Guardmouse

CLOAK: Dusty Green

PARENTS: Jeph & Jann*

SENIOR: None!

MENTORS: Saxon & Kenzie

ENEMY: Nicoll the Brewer

FRIEND: Maya the Merchant

RAW ABILITIES

RATING

SPECIAL ABILITIES

RATING

NATURE (Mouse)

4

RESOURCES

2

WILL

3

CIRCLES

3

HEALTH

5

BELIEF: A guardmouse never gives up no matter the danger.

GOAL: I will show Kenzie and Saxon that I am a valuable member of the patrol.

INSTINCT: If there's work to be done, always offer help.

SKILLS: Fighter 3, Pathfinder 3, Scout 5, Harvester 3, Laborer 2, Persuader 2, Harvest-wise 2, Hidey-hole-wise 2, Scent Border-wise 2

TRAITS: Determined (1), Defender (1)

GEAR: Broadsword, whetstone

*Lieam's parents are deceased.

*Lieam was inducted into the Guard under special circumstances in the Winter War. He never apprenticed with an artisan in Lockhaven, but he's always willing to help anymouse who asks.



IT'S WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

Heroes fall, heroes break, heroes bleed.
They shed bitter tears, pull themselves up, not to concede.
Often are they waylaid and frequent they mourn.
Heroes are rarely made and even more seldom born.
Not till after they die, do mice sing of their tale.
A job, a duty, a thankless obligation not to fail.
Still many a mouse think only the name is required.
What becomes of them?
They either quit or expire.

—"A Heroes' Warning" by the Scribe Roibin

The Mouse Guard clear paths, patrol dangerous areas, deliver the mail and fight with the enemies of the Territories, but that's not who they are. There is much more to them. These mice fight for ideals. They have a code to which they adhere. This code is what makes them different from all other mice.

This chapter illustrates how to write Beliefs, Goals and Instincts, how to play them, how to change them and how to get rewarded for them.

BELIEF



A Belief is a code or ethical stance. It's a snapshot view of how your character thinks. Sometimes you'll act in accordance with your Belief, sometimes you'll act against it.

Writing Beliefs



You get to decide what your character believes. You get to tell everyone at the table what you're interested in and what you want to explore in the game. Beliefs can be about the Guard, your parents, your friend, your enemy, the Winter War, peace or a particular moral code.

"I believe the Guard is good" is not a strong enough Belief. A better Belief says, "The mice of the Territories must know that the Guard is good and must be supported." It has a little more oomph to it.

Think about what drives your character. What is his higher purpose? Try to distill that higher purpose into a slogan or statement of belief.

Sadie: A guardmouse needs to be able to think with her head and act with her heart.



Lieam: A guardmouse never gives up no matter the danger.

Saxon: The best solution is always found at the point of my sword.

Kenzie: It's not what you fight, but what you fight for.

Playing Beliefs



Your Belief is a powerful tool. It tells everyone at the table what your character is about. And it acts as a helpful reminder for you, too. It's a short, simple guide for the direction of your character. If you're lost in play, if you don't know what to do in a situation, read over your Belief. Think about what the character would do in this situation with his Belief.

"A guardmouse needs to be able to think with her head and act with her heart."

If you wrote this Belief for your character, step up in play and act on it. If the Fall series were a game, Sadie's player would have some tough decisions to make. When Conrad is overwhelmed by the crabs, will she stay and help him, as her heart wants? Or will she return to Lockhaven with her important news as her head tells her to?

Your actions will create an interesting story and they'll get you rewarded.

Fulfilling Beliefs



Sometimes, you reach a point with your character and his Belief where you feel it's not important anymore. It doesn't mean quite so much. Or the character has just, well, *changed*. He's moved on. He believes different things now.

This is a very nebulous point. It's dependent on all sorts of vague, hand-wavey things that happen in the course of your own game. So it's hard to describe, but once you experience it, you'll know the moment precisely: "Hey, I don't believe that anymore!"

If this happens, it's a good sign! You're playing the game. You can change your Belief and watch your character develop and grow.

Changing Beliefs



You may change a Belief at the beginning or end of a session, not during it. Think of how your character has changed. Contemplate his new world view for a moment. Write a Belief to reflect that new outlook. You can base it on your old one or develop a completely new one. Tell everyone that you've changed your Belief.

Challenging Beliefs



This section is for the GM more than the players, but players should read it too.

When the GM puts Conrad's life in danger and presents the choice to Sadie's player—stay and help and possibly be killed or flee to Lockhaven with your news—he's challenging her Belief.



It's your job to challenge that Belief in the course of play. You present the player with situations that say, "You believe that? Cool. How about now? Do you still believe that if I push you?"

Put the character in situations where the reputation of the Guard is at stake: missions with a high public profile, for example.

Sadie's player has to make a difficult choice between what her heart wants and her head tells her. That is precisely the point of a Belief. It makes the situations in the game more gripping.

For even deeper, richer play, tie in other characters.

Saxon and Kenzie are the perfect example of this type of dynamic. Saxon's Belief is very direct: "The best solution is always found at the point of my sword." Kenzie's Belief is more philosophical: "It's not what you fight, but what you fight for."

When they encounter a problem, they both have a different idea of what should be done. This leads to tension, discussions, arguments and sometimes even fights! But it makes the characters rich and engaging.

GOAL



At the beginning of each session, write a Goal for your character. A Goal is some action or deed you want to accomplish in that session.

A Goal must be something appropriate to your missions and duties as a guardmouse. And a Goal must be something you can reasonably accomplish this session. You might not get there, but it's got to be possible if you try.

Writing Goals



A Goal includes a statement about your character, an action, and a target. Really good goals include a condition on top of those.

Kenzie: I must find evidence that will determine if the grain peddler is a traitor or not.

Saxon: I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this patrol.

Lieam: I will show Kenzie and Saxon that I am a valuable member of the patrol.

Sadie: I will discover why Conrad's communications from Calogero have stopped.

A Goal includes one of the following imperatives: I will, I will not, I must, I must not.

A Goal includes an action like these: find, stop, return, rebuild, demonstrate, protect, feed.

It's What We Fight For

These are example targets: *the grain peddler, the patrol, Saxon and Kenzie, Conrad's report.*

These are conditions which will help you accomplish your Goal: *quickly, why they have stopped.*

A Goal is not an immediate or simple action. "I'm going to make a pie!" is not an appropriate Goal for this game. Neither is a Goal a far off wish, "I will bring peace to the Territories!" nor "I will prove that I am worthy of promotion."

Mission Goals



Goals are written after the patrol has received their orders for a session.

Playing Goals



In play, your GM is going to use your Goal as a guideline for what you're interested in playing during this session. Once he knows what you want to accomplish, he's going to throw obstacles in

your way. A hero is defined not by what shining gem he ultimately captures, but by what obstacles he overcomes to reach his Goal.

So, when you see a hurdle in your path, run toward it. Don't avoid it. Those obstacles are the moments when you get to define yourself as a hero. Succeed or fail, it doesn't matter. You must try. And if you keep trying, you'll succeed. The only thing that can stop a guardmouse is death—and even that rarely works!

When Licam confronts the snake, he does so in an effort to accomplish his Goal. If he can defeat the snake, he can prove that he is worthy.

Accomplishing Goals



A Goal is accomplished when the conditions you've written down are fulfilled during play. If there's a question, the other players and the GM can decide as a group if the conditions were completed or not.



"I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this mission." When the snake attacks the patrol, Saxon is the first to leap to the attack. He cleaves out one of its teeth! He's eager to do battle with it, too. Even though he doesn't defeat the snake in battle, he accomplishes his goal by rushing to his friends' defense.

"I will discover why Conrad's communications from Calogero have stopped." Again, this seems like a simple Goal, right? She just needs to find Conrad, right? Sure! But what about that army of crabs? You can't accomplish your Goal if you're torn to shreds first.



You get one Goal per session. If your Goal is not accomplished by the end of the session, you should change it at the start of the next one. Rewrite it to make sure you can accomplish it in the next session. Don't sit on an unaccomplishable Goal.

You want to accomplish your Goals. Achieving your Goal gets you rewarded. Rewards are good! You can use them to help you accomplish your next Goal.

Challenging Goals



A Goal is no fun unless it's challenged. We're getting into actual game play here: when a player writes a Goal and that Goal is challenged, we're going to test the mettle of the character and the luck of the player. We're going to see what he's made of.

Challenging the players' Goals is your prime job as GM. It requires creativity, quick thinking and a bit of stubbornness. It's not hard, though!

A player has a Goal to deliver the mail to Gilpledge. How do you challenge that? Well, it's your job to make sure that it's hard to get the mail to Gilpledge. In fact, you must put the delivery in doubt: Rain, bandits, or hungry animals could



all prevent the patrol from completing its duty. If the guardmouse does not do his duty, then he fails at his Goal. In this case, the mail does not get delivered.

So he must overcome trials—he must negotiate the wilderness, travel in bad weather, avoid getting eaten by predators and deal with the problems of mice he meets en route. It's a hard task!

Sadie and Conrad are attacked by crabs at the Calogero outpost. Conrad sacrifices himself so that Sadie can escape. Sadie's player must make a choice. Does she escape and accomplish her goal or does she risk her own life and her goal by attempting to rescue Conrad from the voracious crabs?

New Goals



After Goals are accomplished, they must be changed. Write new Goals at the beginning of a session, after the GM has assigned you a new mission.

I found it helpful to wait until the beginning of the next session to erase my current Goal. Keeping it until then helps me remember what happened last session.

This new Goal should be based on either the events and loose ends of the previous session, or on the new mission presented by the GM.

Changing Goals



When you need to change a Goal, you do so at the beginning of a session. You may not change your Goal midway through a session. The exact process and timing of the change is discussed in *The Missions* chapter.

Kenzie and Saxon both change their Goals after they discover the traitor. Kenzie's new Goal is, "I must discover who the traitor mouse was giving his secrets to." Saxon's is: "I will force the traitor mice of Barkstone to give up their secrets."

INSTINCT



Your character's Instinct represents a gut reaction or ingrained training. It's something that he does naturally, without even really thinking about it.

In play, your Instinct acts as a juicy piece of characterization. You write it on your sheet, "Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble," and if you bring that into play—if you, the player, have your character perform that action at an appropriate (or inappropriate) time in the game—you're rewarded for it.

Instincts provide a third way for you to define what is important for your character, but they also provide a direct guide to your performance

of your character's role. They are quick actions designed to entertain and inform the other players and the GM.

Writing Instincts



Consider a trademark action, statement or reaction that your character does. If we were reading about your character in a comic book, we'd expect him to do this thing when he got into trouble.

Once you've thought of an action, turn it into a statement that includes *always*, *if/then* or *never*.

Kenzie: Always consult Saxon when trouble arises.

Saxon: Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble.

Lieam: If there's work to be done, always offer help.

Sadie: Never delay when on a mission.

Saxon's Instinct is fun: "Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble." When the patrol encounters even a hint of danger, we know that Saxon's going to unsheathe his sword and look for a target.

An Instinct must be a thought, action or process the character can accomplish rather quickly.

The "Never delay when on a mission" Instinct is interesting because it seems too big. But

it works because it encourages split-second decision making.

Using Instincts



Instincts are a bit deceptive. Sure, in the game fiction, they represent things your character does without a thought, but in play, it's up to *you* to use them. If you use your Instinct in an entertaining and relevant manner, you will be rewarded.

Your character has the Instinct, "Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble." When you're confronted in the game, shout "I draw my sword!" and make a shhhwush! noise as you gesture. If the GM describes a loud noise, "I draw my sword!" If there's something fishy going on, "I draw my sword!" You get the idea.

Going Against Your Instincts

There's no penalty for not playing your Instinct, but it's boring and the other players might boo you! Always try to play your Instinct. You get rewarded for it. See **Earning Rewards** for the mechanics.

Challenging Instincts



Instincts are a big clue for you, the GM. When a player writes an Instinct, he's effectively grabbing you and shaking you, "Please put me in this situation!" So do it! Put the player in situations that trigger his Instinct.

"Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble." Make sure there's lots of trouble for this player to draw his sword at. Then, later on, put him in a situation that is clearly trouble, but it'd be a bad idea to draw his sword, too.

It's easy and appropriate for Saxon to whip out his sword when he finds the overturned cart or encounters the snake. It's a problematic Instinct when his patrol encounters a fellow guardmouse in the wild or when he's conducting a sensitive investigation in a town like Barkstone.

When those problems arise, does the player have his character draw his sword? Imagine everyone staring at him with imploring eyes, saying, "No, no, please, no..." Those are great moments at the table and defining moments for the character.

New Instincts



Your guardmouse is going to grow and change throughout play. For example, if you have an Instinct "Always run and hide when scared," you may find that you don't want to run and hide anymore. You're a brave mouse now! Well, change your Instinct. Erase the old one and write a new one on your character sheet. You can change an Instinct at the beginning of the session or at the end, not during.

EARNING REWARDS



You earn rewards for the way you play your character in a session. Rewards are accrued in points. These points are used to modify dice rolls. There are two types of point: fate points and persona points.

Rewards are distributed at the end of a session. When play has ended, go around the table. Each



player in turn reads his Belief, Goal and Instinct. If the group agrees that the criteria below are met, then the applicable reward is earned.

Earning Fate Points



There are three ways to earn fate points. You may earn up to three fate points in one session.

Acting on Your Belief

If your character's actions in the game reflect his Belief, you earn one fate point. You may get this award once per session.

When Sadie finds Conrad, she feeds him. She feels compassion for him. She acts with her heart. When she's forced to choose between Conrad and the mission, she thinks with her head and leaves Conrad behind while she completes the mission. This dramatic play earns her player a fate point at the end of the session.

Working Toward a Goal

If your characters' actions worked toward your Goal, but did not accomplish it, you earn one fate point. You may get this award once per session.

Playing an Instinct

If you have your character perform the action described in the Instinct at the proper time during the game, you earn one fate point. You may get this award once per session.



After the grain peddler is discovered dead, Lieam offers to haul the cart to the nearest town. This plays into his Instinct and earns his player a fate point at the end of the session.

Earning Persona Points



There are five ways to earn persona points. You may earn up to four persona points in one session.

Accomplishing a Goal

If you accomplished your Goal during the session, you earn a persona point.

Kenzie discovers the grain peddler mouse was indeed a traitor when he searches his cart for evidence and finds the map. He accomplishes his goal for this session and earns a persona point.

Playing Against a Belief

This is a difficult one. It's hard to quantify, but if you play against your Belief in a cool and dramatic fashion—if you make a decision in the game that's counter to what you believe—and you let everyone know about it through your performance of your character, you earn a persona point.

If Sadie had stayed and fought with Conrad, she would have been playing against her Belief. This dramatic moment would earn her player a persona point at the end of the session.

MVP

MVP stands for “most valuable player.” The MVP award goes to the player who made the crucial roll so that the patrol could complete its mission. The group as a whole decides who gets the persona point for being the MVP. Only one player per session can be the MVP.

After defeating a snake in single combat, Kenzie's and Saxon's players agree that Lieam is the MVP for the session. He earns a persona point.



Workhorse

Sometimes, one player carries the group through a lot of tough stuff. His character has all the right skills, and he makes all the rolls to keep things moving. The workhorse award is for him. Award him a persona point.

The group decides who is the workhorse for the session. You can't be both MVP and workhorse. Only one player per session can be the workhorse.

Kenzie's player earns the workhorse award for the session. He leads the group to safety in the snake attack, finds the snake's den and finds the hidden map in the grain cart. He earns a persona point.

Embodiment

If you roleplay in a believable and entertaining manner throughout the entire session—if you use an accent, describe all your actions in vivid detail or bring your Belief, Goal and Instinct into play in a cool way—you earn a persona point.

The group decides who's worthy of this reward. It can be awarded to more than one player, but it cannot be awarded to everyone. If no one really captured their character during this session, this award does not have to be given out.

Kenzie's advice to Lieam while they were hiding in the tree trunk—"It's not what you fight, but what you fight for"—was a very cool moment. All of the players at the table got a good sense of what Kenzie was about. Everyone agrees that he should earn the embodiment award. He receives a persona point at the end of the session.





THE MISSION

The winter skies are dark and drear.
 Once-green land is pale and severe.
 Supplies are short and night is long.
 Time stands still in its bitter song.
 Withered life sits frozen on the vine.
 Is this the end of days for yours and mine?
 'Tis but a season and such things turn.
 Lack of preparation is a cold lesson to learn.

—Poem by the Scribe Roibin in the Winter of 1152



he Mission chapter describes how to play a session of the Mouse Guard roleplaying game.

We get together, gather around a table, form a patrol, choose who will be GM, who will be players and then play out a mission like the stories depicted in the comic books.



THE GATHERING



The first thing you need to do in order to play a mission is to get a group of players together. You'll need two to five players (including yourself). Set a date. Plan ahead; give everyone a few days notice and block out about four hours. This will give you plenty of time to get together, talk for a while, play through a mission and then wrap up and clean up.

We play on Wednesday nights from 7 to 11.

Find a play space with a table and enough chairs to seat everyone. Try to sit facing each other. Print out character sheets—either copies of the sample characters if you're using them, or blank sheets if you're making your own

characters. Print a copy of the rules reference sheet and the GM's mission sheet. You'll also need pencils for everyone and at least 10 six-sided dice. Scrap paper isn't a bad idea. Make sure you have this book, too!

Try to eat before you play. Eating dinner or lunch as a group is definitely the best option, but if that's not possible, remind folks to have a meal before they come to the session. Stopping the game to eat is disruptive. You don't want to do it if you don't have to.

Plan on taking at least one break. After making characters or between the GM's and the Players' Turn are good places to stop for a moment.

FORM YOUR PATROL



Once everyone's together, you need to form a patrol. Decide who's going to be the GM. Which player is going to challenge the mice and see if they are worthy to be called heroes? After you decide on the GM, the players need to get characters.

First Session



If you're playing your first session, you have two options. You can pick characters from our selection of sample characters, or you can make your own. I strongly recommend for your first game that you pick from the sample characters and start playing right away.

If you want, you can tweak the character templates that we provide. That's described in the **Template Tweaking** section of the *Sample Missions* chapter.

If you choose to make characters, do it as a group. Everyone who is playing this session should either make characters together or choose templates together. Do not split the group, one half making characters while the other half waits. It's not fair to the waiting players.

Making a character is described in the *Recruitment* chapter.

Continuing Games



If this isn't your first session, you have the option of picking up where you left off. If you're continuing, then you can use the same characters you used last session.

If you didn't like your character from last session, you can pick a new one from the templates. You may make a new character if you want, but you have to do that in between sessions (like homework). It's rude to make everyone wait for you while you make a new character.

If you have a new player join the group during a mission, have him pick a template and jump into play. Gwendolyn has dispatched some extra help for the patrol on this mission!

GM Notes Beliefs, Instincts and Relationships



Once everyone has chosen a template or completed their characters, the GM notes their Beliefs, Instincts and relationships on his special mission sheet.

Relationships, in this case, mean parents, mentors, senior artisans, friends and enemies.

Use the mission sheet as a quick reference for how to better engage with the players. When in doubt, look at the characters' Beliefs, Goals and Instincts on the sheet and play off of them.

THE PROLOGUE

The *prologue* is something that one player delivers at the start of each continuing session. If this is your first session with this patrol, you can skip the prologue.



When you sit down for a new session of a continuing game, it's sometimes difficult for everyone to remember what happened previously. The prologue helps players get back up to speed.



When you start a session, one player may offer up the prologue. He must describe to the group what happened last session. If the group is satisfied and well-reminded, this player may alleviate one of his own conditions—Hungry



and Thirsty, Angry or Tired (but not Injured or Sick)—or he may recover a point of tax on his Nature. You don't know what those rules are yet, but you will after you read the *Resolution* chapter, so don't fret.

A player may not do a prologue for two sessions in a row. He must share the spotlight.

ASSIGN A MISSION



Once the players have their characters and the prologue has been delivered, the GM assigns a mission to the patrol. The mission can be a new one, or play can pick up right where the patrol left off last session.

Season

In the first session of a new game, the group decides what season they want to start in. It's traditional to start in spring, but summer and fall are acceptable as well. Do not start a new group in winter. Seasons in the Territories are discussed in detail in the *Seasons* chapter.

Missions

The assigned mission should be short and direct. It should include a location, a duty to perform and a time frame.

Track down the grain peddler on the route from Rootwallow to Barkstone.

Deliver the spring mail to Gilpledge.

Help Grasslake with its turtle problem.

See the **Designing Missions** section of this chapter for more details on what really happens on a mission.

Duties

Here's a brief recap of typical Guard duties: patrolling, path clearing, trail blazing, carrying mail, escorting, weather watching, hunting predators, maintaining the scent border, rescuing mice in distress and mediating disputes.

If you need further inspiration, the *Seasons* chapter has a section on the Guard's responsibilities listed with each season.

First Mission

The patrol's first mission should come directly from Gwendolyn, the matriarch and architect of the Mouse Guard. She directly assigns a mission to the patrol's leader.

Gwendolyn

Gwendolyn is a character in this game. She is special: Only the GM gets to play her, and she never goes on missions. She's too busy administering to the welfare of the Guard and the towns.



When you, the GM, issue the first mission to your patrol, do so in the voice of Gwendolyn. Pretend you've

gathered the patrol in your map room in Lockhaven. Give the patrol their orders and offer words of encouragement. Point out where they need to go on the map of the Territories.

Further Missions

Once in the field, additional missions should develop organically from the situation of the patrol. If they stop in a city that trades with other cities, merchants may ask the guardmice for escorts. If they're heading back to Lockhaven



and find a group of stranded, sick mice, it's the patrol's duty to see them to safety. If they've completed a mission which has developed into a problem for a settlement—bandits, a trade dispute, a food shortage—the patrol should endeavor to address the situation. Those are all legitimate follow-up missions. Once you're in the wild, you're on your own recognizance.



If you're stuck for ideas that develop from the patrol's new situation, you can send them a mission from Lockhaven in the form of a letter or a message from another guardmouse. Or, if you have something else planned, you may inform the patrol that they return to Lockhaven between missions in order to get new orders.

The Voice of the Mice

When you assign these missions at the beginning of the session, describe the situation to the players. Set the scene for them. It's okay to roleplay the mouse characters asking for help. Once the mission is clear, stop and move on to the **Write Session Goals** section.

Who Leads Missions?

While there is a definite ranking system in the Mouse Guard, independence and insight are prized over blind obedience. Senior guardmice issue commands lightly and always take advice

from their subordinates. Of course, when an order is given, a senior expects it to be obeyed to the fullest.

Guard Captains

Guard captains rarely go on missions. They stay in Lockhaven and help Gwendolyn administer the Guard and the town. Captains only undertake the most important, complicated and dangerous missions.

Patrol Leaders

Patrol leaders are the field commanders of the Guard. When Gwendolyn assigns a mission, she entrusts it to a patrol leader. The patrol leader chooses the other mice to round out his patrol. (In the game, we skip this step. We assume that the patrol leader has already made his choices—and he's chosen the other players!)

In the field, it's the patrol leader's job to make sure his patrol is safe and well taken care of, and that they complete the mission.

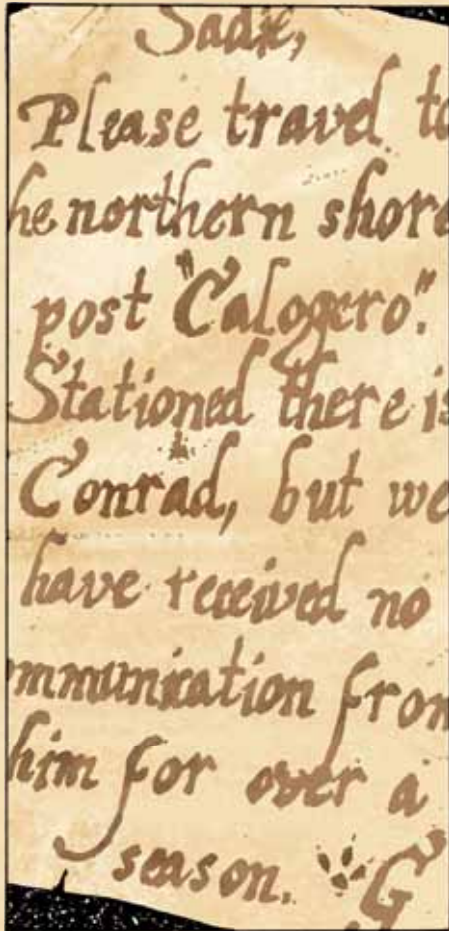
Kenzie fulfills this role for his patrol.

Seniority

Sometimes, there isn't a guard captain or patrol leader available for a mission. If that's the case, Gwendolyn assigns temporary patrol leader status to the most senior mouse in the patrol.

WRITE SESSION GOALS

Once the mission has been assigned, the players all stop for a moment and write their Goals for their characters.



Write Different Goals



It's easy to simply write the mission as your current Goal. After a while, that's going to get boring. Fortunately, Goals are versatile. You have a lot of leeway; you don't have to stick strictly to the mission.

Look at your Goals as a group: One player should always have a Goal about completing the mission. You can color that with conditions or stipulations—how will he complete the Goal? When? Other players can have: a Goal about another member of your patrol, a Goal about seeing something or retrieving something from the place you're going. If your family, mentor, friend or enemy is located near the mission objective, write a Goal about them.

Each of the three mice who are sent out to find the grain peddler have a different perspective on the mission.

Kenzie: I must find evidence that will determine if the grain peddler is a traitor or not.

Saxon: I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this patrol.

Lieam: I will show Kenzie and Saxon that I am a valuable member of the patrol.

GM Notes Goals



Once the players have written their Goals, the GM should note them on his mission sheet.

DESIGNING A MISSION



The assignment of a mission is direct and simple. That's how *orders* work, but that's not how *missions* work! The actual mission will consist of a number of additional problems and complications that the guardmice must overcome.

There are four general hazards that the Mouse Guard must contend with: *weather*, *wilderness*, *animals* and *mice*. These four things represent a magic formula. If you include a combination of problems from these categories, you have a mission for the Guard—and hopefully, an adventure worthy of retelling!



Weather

Rain, snow, extreme heat, freezing cold, floods, droughts: Mice are particularly susceptible to the weather—a bad rainstorm can sweep away the unwary; floods can wipe out a whole town. Therefore, the Guard must be especially careful when out on patrol.



After handing out the mission for the session, describe the weather to the patrol. Use the *Seasons* chapter as a guide to help you pick something appropriate.



During the mission, the weather can change under two conditions: if a player uses his Weather Watcher skill, or if the GM imposes a weather-based twist.

Wilderness

Mud, undergrowth, streams, swamps, sand, fallen trees and many other hazards must be negotiated by the Guard as they perform their duties. A careless mouse can be swallowed up by sucking mud, swept away in a stream or crushed by a falling branch. The Guard must navigate these obstacles as they go about their business.

Animals

Snakes, weasels, skunks, bats, badgers, owls, crabs and many other types of animals threaten the towns and townsmice of the Territories. Predators stalk and kill the mice. Scavengers attempt to burrow into the towns and devour their supplies. Even grazers and plant-eaters can be a problem—they can eat all of the harvest and forage in the area, leaving little for the mice to live on.

It is the Guard's duty to deal with these animals. Many of them are too big or savage to be killed, so clever ploys must be devised to drive the animals off.



Mice

Last, but certainly not least, the Guard must negotiate and treat with the other mice of the Territories—the mayors, magistrates and merchants; the lost, the found and the ne'er-do-wells. Some try to help, some need help and some actively seek to hurt the Guard. These personalities are a day-to-day reality of the job, and they will challenge the abilities of your guardmice.

Pick Two



When thinking of a mission concept, pick two of the four hazards to represent the known problems on the mission. Keep the other two hazards in reserve to act as surprises or in case you need to fill in an unexpected twist.

The mission to find the grain peddler uses wilderness and mice. The peddler is wandering a dangerous route from Rootwallow to Barkstone. That's the wilderness category. But the peddler is actually a spy trying to sell secret information about Lockhaven to Barkstone. That definitely falls into the mice category of problems. Those two hazards are enough to get the mission started.

Now that you have some general problems in mind, you need to focus them so that they directly challenge your players.

THE RIVER IS RISING

It's one thing to have a handful of hazards—starving mice, rain and a rising river—but it's another thing to turn those pieces into a compelling situation for the players to tackle.

Imagine this: It's raining hard. A rivulet has formed outside Elmooss, blocking the main road. This rivulet is rising fast. A grain shipment for the town is stuck on the far side, in danger of being swept away. Your cousin, another guardmouse, is trapped on a branch in the middle of the rivulet. You only have time to save one before the other is swept away. What do you do?

That is a situation in Mouse Guard. What makes that situation compelling? Competing priorities—your cousin's life versus the welfare of a whole town.



To Be a Hero

But there's another level to it—it's not just that life is hard and duty is dangerous. We play to see if our guardmice have the necessary qualities to become heroes. These challenges test their mettle; they provide a chance for the players to prove their characters are heroes.

Being a hero isn't easy in this game. You've got to risk life and limb, work hard and sacrifice much. Heroes care. They want to make a difference. They want to succeed, even when all hope is lost.

How do we make sure the players care enough about the mission so they try their hardest? There's an easy trick to it: Lean on the players' Beliefs; interfere with their Goals, trigger their Instincts and stomp on their traits!

How Strongly Do You Believe?



Set up situations in which players have a chance to prove that their Beliefs are more than just words. Standing up for his Belief is a choice that each player has to make.

Parents, mentors, senior artisans, friends and enemies are very useful when challenging Beliefs. Use these characters to present other opinions. Let them be voices

for other, opposing Beliefs. And take characters with similar outlooks and put them under threat.

How Vulnerable Is Your Instinct?



Instincts are really easy for the GM to use. Each player has written down a specific condition like *danger, each morning, when threatened*. All you have to do is put the patrol in danger, have something happen in the morning or threaten the character. It's very simple. When you bring that hazard into the game, give that player a significant look: "Are you going to do anything about it?" Give them a chance to make a decision. Try to make the decision to use the Instinct a hard one. It's more fun that way.

How Urgent Is Your Goal?



Present obstacles that don't just "get in the way," but threaten the achievement of the characters' goals. Weather, wilderness and animals are all perfect for threatening goals.

Play Goals against Beliefs. Let the players determine which is more important to them at that moment.

Sadie's Goal conflicts with her Belief to act with her heart. She is pulled between competing priorities when Conrad is overwhelmed by a horde of hungry crabs. Does she do her duty or does she save Conrad?

In order to build tension, put the "goal" of a Goal at the end of a mission. Build up to accomplishing a Goal over the course of the session. Put obstacles in the way and make the Goal itself an obstacle. If you follow these steps, the players will get to make some real choices about their characters and get a chance to test their mettle and roll some dice!

Threaten Relationships



The characters' parents, senior artisans, mentors, friends and enemies are a great source of adversity. Characterize them with their own Beliefs and Goals. Either use them to challenge the characters' Beliefs directly or put these relationships in danger so the guardmice have a chance to demonstrate what they believe. You can threaten them with the magic formula: weather, wilderness, animals and mice.

Will the guardmouse save his enemy from being eaten by a fox? It's his duty to do so. Can he overcome his own emotions and still act on that duty?

Use friends, enemies, mentors and parents to exact promises from the players.

Would you chase a weasel into the Darkheather if it was raining, you were lost, days from home and your wife made you promise to come home safely?



Send the guardmice to their hometowns. Send them to the places where their enemies lie in wait. Send them to where their friends live. Travel in the Territories is dangerous. It's always nice to see a familiar face at the end of the road.

And when the heroes are beat up, hungry, tired and in need of solace, let their relationship characters help them. Have them come to their aid with food, shelter and comfort. How does a hero react to such charity? Does he show his vulnerability and accept? Or does he sternly shrug off such aid?

Challenge the Patrol with Weather, Wilderness, Animals and Mice



You have a mission. You have goals. You have weather, wilderness, animals and mice at your disposal. As the GM, you need to place those hazards between the players and their Goals.

Think of three or four things that could get in the way of the patrol accomplishing its Goals. One of them should be obvious—it's raining—while one of them should be a surprise—a snake den!

Use the weather to interfere with their travel or force the patrol to risk travel under bad conditions.

The wilderness is implacable and uncaring. It threatens to swallow up the mice and their culture, and it certainly hinders patrols. Interpose unforeseen obstacles—rushing rivers, steep gullies and dangerous swamps.

Threaten towns with falling trees, heavy snows, floods, wildfire and lightning strikes.

Remember to see the world from the perspective of a mouse. Imagine how threatening and dangerous small events are. We take mud or a rain storm for granted—an inconvenience at worst. For mice, those incidents can be a matter of life and death.

Animals make excellent obstacles as well. Predators eat mice. If one got loose in a town, it'd be a disaster. On the road, the patrols need to avoid predators to complete their missions.

HOW WE PLAY



Once you have characters and the GM has a mission, you're ready to play. If this is your first session, sit down at the table, gather your dice and pencils and listen to the mission assignment from Gwendolyn.

After hearing the assignment, write your Goals for the session. Once the Goals have been written, the GM takes over.

The Mission

He gets to describe where the mission begins, what the players have to do and in what order it must be done. He gets to confront the characters with weather, wilderness, animals and mice.

In order to overcome these obstacles and complete their mission, the players must test their abilities and skills. The GM gets to say which abilities and skills are tested. This part of play is called the *GM's Turn*. (We talk about tests in the next chapter, *Resolution*, so don't worry about specifics right now.)

After he's done beating up the guardmice, usually once they've completed their mission, reached the safety of a town or passed a dramatic moment in the story, the GM hands the reins over to the players.

The game then enters the *Players' Turn*. During this part, the players drive! They get to try to recover from the beating they took in the GM's Turn. They can also try to pursue some of their own personal goals and needs without the GM getting in the way.





THE GM'S TURN



During the GM's Turn, it's the GM's job to beat the crap out of the players' guardmice characters. It's his job to confront them, push them and challenge them. They can't prove themselves to be heroes if you go easy on them. And the game is way more fun if it's challenging. If it's too easy, it's boring.

The GM starts the game with his turn. He gets to set the weather and place the first obstacle in the patrol's path. That first obstacle should be something that directly gets in the way of the patrol fulfilling its mission.

Overcoming Weather, Wilderness, Animals and Mice



Place an obstacle in front of the player. Describe it to them:

It's a long way between Rootwallow and Barkstone. That grain mouse could be anywhere.

The trail to Gilpledge is buried under a layer of melting snow. It's going to be very hard to find the settlement.

A gigantic snapping turtle has lodged itself in the town square of Grasslake. You've got to dislodge it before it snaps up the whole town.

After you've made the situation clear, tell the players what ability or skill they need to use to overcome the obstacle.

You're going to have to use your Scout skill to find that grain peddler out in the forest.

Traveling to Gilpledge requires a Pathfinding test.

You're going to need Hunter and Loremouse to drive off that turtle.

Don't be afraid to give the players options to overcome the obstacle:

You could also use a Trails-wise or Peddler-wise to find likely routes on which you can intercept the grain mouse.

You could try to use your Scientist skill to create a series of traps and levers to dislodge the turtle, too. However, this is going to be very hard.

Pressure's On



The pressure is on the guardmice to complete their mission during the GM's Turn. There's no time to rest, no room to breathe. You must overcome the obstacles set in your path.

Very Limited Recovery

Characters get banged up a bit during the GM's Turn. They're made Hungry, Angry, Tired, Injured and Sick, but hopefully not all at once.



Players cannot recover from these conditions—even if the GM tells them it's okay—unless they spend a special resource called *checks*. Checks are earned from traits. We'll talk about them in the **Players' Role in the GM's Turn** heading.

Obstacles



The GM places obstacles in the patrol's path and determines what is required to bypass them. These challenges can be simple, requiring only a single test to overcome, or they can be complex, requiring a series of interlinked tests.



Obstacles are overcome with tests. A test is a roll of the dice. The rating of the ability or skill indicates the number of dice rolled. The player will either succeed or fail at the test.

Simple Obstacles

The GM places specific obstacles from the general weather, wilderness, animals and mice hazards in the patrol's way—an overgrown path, a rushing river, bothersome bees, an angry merchant. These require a single test to overcome.

Weather- and wilderness-related matters make good simple challenges, but you can resolve short encounters with other mice in one test, too.

Finding a mouse lost on a known trail is a simple obstacle overcome using the Scout skill.

Complex Obstacles

Sometimes an obstacle is too big to overcome with a single test. The GM can call for multiple abilities to be tested to overcome an obstacle.

To navigate the coast, one might use Survivalist to build some oars and floats, Boatcrafter to build a leaf boat and Coast-wise to find a safe port.

Complex obstacles are best used when building something, rescuing someone or executing a complicated plan.

Conflicts

There's a level of play above complex obstacles. Sometimes, a scene needs special attention and detail—a fight, an argument, a chase, for example. These are action scenes where we zoom in on the characters and focus on the blow by blow effects of each action.

Dislodging a snapping turtle from Grasslake will require overcoming a series of obstacles and, finally, a confrontation with the turtle itself.

The exact rules of how to make tests in various situations are described in the next chapter, **Resolution**. We're going to talk a bit about Success and Failure here before moving on.

Success



When a player passes one of the ability or skill tests put in front of him by you, he gets what he wants and overcomes that obstacle. You and the player should both offer a little bit of cool description to celebrate the moment.

Sadie's player decides to set out for Calogero on the water, rather than on an overland route. She must pass a Boatcrafter skill test. She succeeds and arrives at Calogero unharmed.

After that, move on to the next obstacle! The GM gets to describe what happens next. He can ask the players what they are doing, but he can also narrate the patrol's progress to the next obstacle.

Failure



If a player fails an ability or skill test, one of two things can happen. You can decide he fails to overcome the obstacle and throw an unexpected twist into the story or you can allow the player to succeed with a *condition*. He passes but his character is made Hungry, Angry, Tired, Injured or Sick in the process.

Twists usually come in the form of new obstacles to overcome, but sometimes they can just be cool moments you describe.

Kenzie instructs Lieam to climb to a higher vantage point to see if he can spot the missing grain peddler. Lieam tests his Scout skill and fails.

The GM rubs his hands together and chuckles a bit. "You failed?" he asks. "You don't see any mice, but you do see an overturned grain cart." As soon as that test is failed, the GM twists the



story in a new direction. He decides that the patrol is too late; the grain peddler has been eaten by a snake!

If the patrol had to test Nature to escape from a snake and they failed, the GM could allow them to escape, but declare that they're Tired and Angry from the exertion.



In either case, you get to describe the scene and what happens. You even get to describe what the character does to foul up and get tied in knots.

Moving From Obstacle to Obstacle



Whether the players passed or failed their tests to overcome the obstacles, the game must move on. It's your job to introduce the next problem. And the next obstacle should be different than the last.

Using the twists aspect of failure, new, unforeseen obstacles will arise. This is how play happens. This is how missions go awry! Twists can bring in one of the four obstacles you haven't used this session—weather, wilderness, animals or mice. Or twists can be used to bring in new encounters with the same obstacle. In other words, they can be used to make matters worse.

Failing to find the grain merchant doesn't end the adventure. Instead, the failure introduces a new problem—the snake. Once the snake

has been dealt with, the patrol finds the grain mouse—in the snake’s belly.

This is a real twist because now the patrol can’t simply question the grain mouse and find out who he was working for. Now they must take their investigation further and journey to Barkstone to do some legwork there.

Players’ Role in the GM’s Turn



During the GM’s Turn, the players must confront the obstacles placed before them by the GM. Describe your character’s reactions to the obstacles. Describe what he says and does to try to overcome.

“I climb the tree to get a better look around.”

The GM will point to certain tests to overcome obstacles. The players may suggest other tests, other ways to navigate the situation.

The players may make suggestions to one another or the GM as table chatter. Or they may even hatch plans “in character.”

“We’ve been on the road too long. Lieam, you’re a good scout. See if you can spot the grain peddler nearby.”

Plans or suggestions are offered up to the GM. The player describes what his character would like to do and what skill he’d like to use. If the GM agrees, or thinks it’s a good plan, then he may set the obstacle number for the player and have him test. If the GM thinks it’s inappropriate, then he can say no. And for certain actions—like players fighting—the GM can tell you to wait until the Players’ Turn.

Players should help one another and make suggestions about the best course of action. They must also look for opportunities to use their traits.



Traits in the GM's Turn

Players may use their characters' traits to aid and hinder themselves in the GM's Turn.

Incorporating a trait in a beneficial manner earns bonus dice or a reroll.

Lieam has the Defender trait. His player says, "The snake is creeping up on my friends? I must protect them. I use my Defender trait!"

Using one of your traits to get in your own way earns the player *checks* against that trait. These checks are spent during the Players' Turn. So you can hurt yourself a little now for gain later. Earning and spending checks is described in the **Traits** chapter.

Saxon has the Fearless trait. His player says, "I'm Fearless. I want to use that trait against myself as I try to convince Kenzie and Lieam to go out and fight the snake. It's actually a bad idea!"

Checks are very valuable and useful. It's your job to be proactive about earning them. It's not the GM's job to coddle you and provide equal screen time for all players. You must be proactive. A hero risks himself to overcome his own weaknesses and improve the common good with his sacrifice.

Player Versus Player in the GM's Turn

While the players are suggesting different solutions to one another, disagreements may arise. During the GM's Turn, resolve disagreements with a Persuader versus Persuader test, Persuader versus Will test if one character is trying to convince another neutral character that he's right, or even Fighter versus Fighter to settle differences that have come to blows. These are simple obstacles presented to other players. They're not complex obstacles or conflicts.

Saxon and Kenzie argue quite a bit about the direction the patrol should take. These arguments are resolved using Kenzie's Persuader against Saxon's Will.

Other situations may arise as well. Resolve them with quick versus tests. Players may use their traits to help and hinder the roll, but remember that twists and conditions still apply.

Ending the GM's Turn



The GM's Turn ends under one of three circumstances: when the patrol has completed its mission, when the patrol reaches a safe haven or during downtime on an extended mission. At that point, the GM hands the reins over to the players.

The first mission for Kenzie, Saxon and Lieam ends after Kenzie reveals he discovered that

the grain peddler was indeed a traitor. Three of the four problems were presented in the course of play: wilderness (find the mouse), animal (fight the snake who ate the mouse), and mice (the revelation that mouse was a traitor). After that, the GM turns the reins over to the players. It's their turn now.



Note that completing a mission isn't the same as accomplishing Goals. Sometimes, finishing your duty is going to leave your Goal unsatisfied. Use your time in the Players' Turn to complete any unfinished Goals.

Standard Session

A standard session has one GM's Turn that lasts for one to two hours, followed by a Players' Turn that lasts for one to two hours. The switch typically happens when the players complete the mission. They are then free to go about accomplishing their Goals.

Seasonal Sessions



If you're playing a session that will represent a whole season, be sure to use your twists to create long term problems—stuff that will keep for a few months, like rivalries, shortages and epidemics.

Extended Missions and Short Turns

Occasionally, missions will extend for more than one session of play. If, for example, the mice are sent into the Darkheather or the Wild Country, there may be too many obstacles to overcome in a single session.

In this case, the GM may shorten his turns, presenting two or three obstacles, then turning over the reins to the players for a quick Players' Turn. This process gives the game the feel of a long hike—each day can be a new obstacle to overcome, each night a chance to rest.



Once you're comfortable with these configurations, experiment with different pacing on your own.

THE PLAYERS' TURN



It's the GM's job to beat the crap out of your guardmice. It's your job to survive the beating and overcome! During the Players' Turn you may try to recover a bit and build up your resources in addition to taking care of other, miscellaneous business.

After traveling such a long distance and fighting with a snake, Kenzie, Lieam and Saxon are Tired and Angry. They are also far from Barkstone and the conspiracy to overthrow Lockhaven.

Checks and Tests



Tests in the Players' Turn are limited. Each player gets one free test. You can use it for whatever you want—to recover, to find an old friend, to fashion new armor, to pick a fight or buy a gift for your love.

After discovering the traitor, the patrol makes the journey to Barkstone. As they walk and talk, they try to recover from their fatigue and Anger.

Kenzie spends his free check to shrug off his Anger. He talks out his reasons with Saxon and Lieam.

Lieam spends his free check to recover from being Tired. The fight with the snake wore him out. On the walk, he tries to calm his nerves and relax.

Saxon wants to remain Angry—Angry at Barkstone and the traitors. He chooses to spend his check to lead the patrol to Barkstone so that he might have his revenge!



If you want more tests, you must spend the checks you earned against your traits in the GM's Turn. We'll talk more about the nitty-gritty of using your traits in the **Resolution** and **Traits** chapters. Right now, all you need to know is that you use traits both to help you and hinder you. When you use them to get in your way in the GM's Turn, you get to do

more stuff in the Players' Turn. When you've used your free test and run out of checks to spend, you're done for this turn.

Each time you make a test, erase one of the checks next to your traits. Go around the table (in any order you decide) and do stuff. The player starting with the most checks should probably go first.



You cannot spend a check for a test twice in a row. You get to make a test, then you have to let another player go. Sometimes this means you get stuck with extra checks. You've got a ton left, and nobody else has any. What do you do?



Passing the Checks



If you have checks left in the Players' Turn, and one or more of your patrol-mates has none, you can donate your checks to them. When it's their turn, tell them you're giving them a check and erase one from your



character sheet. Then they can take a turn and make a test as normal. Once you're out of checks, you're done. Either the session's over, or it's the GM's Turn now.

If you don't want to donate checks to other players, you don't have to. Just remember, you can't make two tests in a row in the Players' Turn. So if you have a ton of checks and nobody else has any and you don't want to donate, you must discard your excess checks and end the Players' Turn.

One Player and the GM

If you're playing a game that consists of just one player and the GM, the sole player may spend all of his checks during the Players' Turn. He is not restricted to the alternating checks/test rule. There's no one to pass to!

Recover



During the Players' Turn, you may try to recover from one or more of your conditions—Hungry, Angry, Tired, Injured and Sick. Recovery usually involves a test and therefore will either eat up your free roll or cost a check.

Regroup, Reequip

The Players' Turn is also an excellent time to make Resources tests for equipment, Circles tests to find help or allies and craft skill tests to create useful items.

Picking Fights and Stuff in the Players' Turn



During the Players' Turn, you can also get into full-blown conflicts with fellow players' mice, your relationship characters or characters the GM has introduced. It costs one check, just like any other test, to start a conflict.

For example, if you pick a fight with your patrol leader, you must spend one of your checks.

Your victim or target doesn't have to spend anything to fight back.

Playing Nice and Negotiating Goals



Sometimes during play, you can get wrapped up in your character. You want something so badly for him that you're prepared to fight for it, even if that means defying your own patrolmates.

You can and should challenge your patrolmates to conflicts like arguments and fights about your Belief or your Goal, but be nice about it. Be fierce in your description of your character, but as a player, consult the other player and make sure he's comfortable with the direction you're taking. If he's comfortable with it, great; go for it. If he's uncomfortable, negotiate a bit. Explain where you're coming from and what you want. Try to find something that he's interested in fighting for in the conflict,

not simply opposing you, but striving for his own Goal or effect. If you can't find something that you both want to fight over, then there's nothing to struggle over. There's no conflict. You're going to have to let the matter drop and move on.

Traits and Checks in the Players' Turn



You may use your traits for benefit in the Players' Turn (so long as it abides by the standard trait rules, of course). You may not use your traits to hinder your character and earn checks in the Players' Turn.

Failure in the Players' Turn



The GM can apply conditions and twists as per the normal rules in the Players' Turn.

Twists in the Players' Turn



Twists in the Players' Turn are tricky. If you're playing an extended session, and following the Players' Turn immediately with a GM's Turn, then use them as normal—confront the players with new obstacles to be overcome.

If you're ending your session on the Players' Turn, you don't want to use twists to create immediate confrontations. The players won't be able to handle them, and that's not what the Players' Turn is for. In this case, use twists

to create long term problems—new enemies, shortages, epidemics—or use them to create cliffhanger endings. A new problem crops up, but you end the session with “When next we meet, we shall confront...”

If you’re stuck for ideas for twists in the Players’ Turn, don’t hesitate to use conditions. They’re just as satisfying—especially when the patrol just recovered from being Hungry, Angry and Tired!

GM’s Role in the Players’ Turn



The GM doesn’t get to sit around during the Players’ Turn and just watch. He has three very important duties: prompt the players with the rules, play the relationships and stay involved!

Prompt the Players with the Rules

During the Players’ Turn, the players are in control of the pacing. They get to relax and

think about what they need. The GM’s job here is to prompt them and nudge them along. Suggest ways to help them use their checks. If the players are discussing something, invite them to use a conflict or at least a versus test to resolve the matter.

Play the Relationships and Characters

Friends, enemies, mentors and parents are more likely to be called on for help during the Players’ Turn. The GM must be ready to play them in a convincing and believable manner. You’ve got to step up and get into character. These characters do have their own agendas, but aside from enemies, they should all be helpful and reasonable.

Stay Involved

Stay involved in inter-player disputes. If the players engage each other—arguing or fighting—the GM should stay involved. Use a character to play into the situation. The



character can offer his perspective and help. And, as the GM, you should offer advice on the rules.

Other Players' Roles During the Players' Turn



The Players' Turn starts with one player spending a check to bring his character into the spotlight. That player can work to accomplish his Goal. It's his moment to shine. If it's not your turn, what do you do?

Contribute to your friend's turn. Offer to help. If he's stuck for an idea for spending his checks, make suggestions. If he's out of checks, pass him one of yours so he can be a part of the game.

Table chatter is strongly encouraged during the Players' Turn. It's okay to strategize a bit to ensure that everyone can accomplish their Goals. But overall, even if your *characters* are feuding in the plot of the game, strive to be a helpful, contributing player.

Perhaps you could even suggest ways for your patrolmates to get revenge on you for that failed Pathfinding test that caused them so much trouble.

END OF THE SESSION



When is a session of Mouse Guard over? Your session ends when you've either accomplished your mission and played out a Players' Turn, or when the GM has passed control to the players, they've played out their turn, and the GM decides the mission hasn't been completed and you're going to finish it next session.

At the end of the session, there's one important last step. You need to be rewarded for all your hard work!

Rewards for Goals, Beliefs and Instincts

When play has ended, go around the table. Each player in turn reads his Belief, Goal and Instinct. Using the criteria described in the **Earning Rewards** section of *It's What We Fight For*, each player is awarded fate and persona points.

After that, decide who earned the MVP, workhorse and embodiment rewards for the night. Don't vote, decide.

Then you're done. Go home or get some dinner or sit around and talk about how awesome mice with swords are!

Character Sheets

The host for your play space should collect the character sheets and keep them for the group for next session. If that's not possible, the GM should keep them folded in this book and be sure to bring them with him when you play again.

BOTCHING A RULE DURING THE GAME



If you mess up a rule during the game, and you catch it immediately, go back and fix it. It's cool.

If you mess up a rule, but don't catch it until later on, don't worry about it. Move on and try to catch it next time.

MISSING A SESSION



If your group is playing an ongoing game of Mouse Guard, and you miss a session that the group played, you get a little boost to help you catch up when you come back.

First, after the prologue, you have to tell everyone where your character has been. Make up something cool, but keep it short.

Once you've done that, you may do one of the following in this order: alleviate being Hungry/Thirsty, Angry or Tired; recover a point of

tax from Nature; or you may note a test for advancement—pass or fail—for one skill or ability.

You can't get rid of being Injured or Sick by missing a session. Advancement and tax for Nature are described in the *Abilities and Skills* chapter.

LOSING A CHARACTER

There are two instances in which you can lose a character: death and retirement.

Death is usually involuntary and it nearly always sucks. Let the player who lost his character cool off for the remainder of the session.

Retirement can be voluntary or involuntary. If a player wishes to retire his character, he may at any time. He walks off into the sunset.

If a character's maximum Nature rating is reduced to 0 due to tax, the character must retire for the remainder of the year. He may not participate in any of the sessions until the first spring session.

In either case, the player of a retiring character is welcome to create a new guardmouse, either choosing from a template or by using the *Recruitment* process. Or the player may opt to take over GMing for the patrol for a while.

If he chooses to make a new patrolmouse, he should sit with the GM and make up a new guardmouse to join the patrol between this session and the next. The new mouse can either be assigned to the patrol by Gwendolyn, or the players can arrange for their patrol leader to invite him into the group.

Keeping Rewards



If you retire or lose a character who still has fate or persona points left, transfer those points to your next character. Do not take the starting rewards for the new character—take your remaining rewards from last session.

Death and Checks

If your character dies during the GM's Turn, you may distribute any checks you earned to your patrolmates in the Players' Turn.

LOSING A PLAYER

Sometimes, a player will have to drop out of your game for good. When this happens, the leaving player retires his character. The group should make up a cool story about what happened to him and why he can't patrol anymore. Try to make this consistent with his Belief. Perhaps he got promoted to guard captain, maybe family business pulled him away or he just plain retired. Whatever description you choose, the character is out of play. His story is ended for now.

If the leaving player was the seniormost guardmouse in your patrol, the next most senior character becomes acting patrol leader.

If the player who had to go was your GM, it's time for a new member of your group to step up and take over and run a few missions. In this case, the new GM's old character is temporarily retired from Guard life. He can come back, just not while his owner is the GM.



SAMPLE MISSION

I've taken *Mouse Guard* Issue One, *Belly of the Beast*, of the *Fall 1152* series and refigured it as a sample mission for the roleplaying game. Note that many of the cool twists in the story are not preplanned by the GM or the players. In the game, they arise organically from play.

Also, this sample mission is presented before you've had a chance to delve into the mechanics in the next chapter, *Resolution*. Therefore, this sample focuses on the structure of play.

Gather

Gather your friends together to play. For this mission, three players are best, but you can play with two or four as well.

Form Your Patrol

Once you're sitting around the table, decide who's going to be the GM for this mission. Then pick your characters from the four sample templates: Sadie, Kenzie, Saxon and Lieam. You can pick any combination of the four. You can play Kenzie, Saxon and Lieam or Sadie and Lieam or just Kenzie and Saxon. Whatever you want.

Prologue

Since this is your first session with a new patrol, you don't need to do a prologue. Skip this step. If you continue this mission in another session, one of the players will give a prologue then. He'll recount what happened during the previous session—the one you're about to play.

Assign Mission

This mission is called *Find the Grain Peddler*. It starts in Fall 1152. The weather is clear and crisp.

Gwendolyn says, "I need you to patrol the trail between Rootwallow and Barkstone. A grain peddler has gone missing. Find him."



The GM says, “Gwendolyn pulls Kenzie* aside and says, ‘This grain peddler might be a spy selling secrets about Lockhaven. I need you to determine if this is true or not.’”

Everyone at the table hears the special assignment, but it’s understood that it’s an item for Kenzie to worry about, not the rest of the patrol.

*If Kenzie’s not in play, give the special assignment to the mouse leading the patrol.

Write Session Goals

After hearing the mission assignment, you write a Goal for your character for this session. Listed here are the Goals for the sample characters for this mission. You can keep them or change them if you like.

Kenzie: I must find evidence that will determine if the grain peddler is a traitor or not.

Saxon: I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this patrol.

Lieam: I will show Kenzie and Saxon that I am a valuable member of the patrol.

If you’re using Sadie on this mission, you definitely want to change her Goal to something more appropriate.

Sadie: I will discover why Conrad’s communications from Calogero have stopped. (This goal isn’t appropriate for this mission. It’s for Sadie’s solo

adventure in Fall issue 2. You should change it to something like, “I will ensure our tenderpaw is not harmed during our patrol.”)

Designing a Mission

The plan for this mission is for the patrol to track the mouse through the wilderness using the Scout skill. If they find him, they’ll need to interrogate him. A wilderness obstacle and a mice obstacle, that’s all you need to get rolling.

GM’s Turn

The GM starts the game by saying, “You’ve been on the trail for quite a while. There’s no sign of the missing mouse. If you want to catch him before he reaches Barkstone, you’re going to have to make a Scout test.”

Scout is tested against the grain peddler’s Nature 6—searching versus hiding. If the test is passed—if the player rolls more successes than the GM—the patrol catches up to the grain peddler on the trail.

Animals Twist

If the Scout test to find the grain merchant is failed, use an animal twist. Rather than finding the grain peddler, they only find his overturned cart. The grain peddler was eaten by a snake. The snake’s nest is nearby, so it attacks the patrol, too.

At first, the snake just tries to drive the patrol away from its nest: Snake Nature 7 versus Mouse Nature. The patrol may use teamwork.

If the patrol persists in remaining in the area—if they continue to search for the missing mouse—the snake attacks. Use a fight animal conflict to resolve the situation. The snake’s goal is to defend her nest.

Player Suggestions

The players might ask to search the area for clues. Ask them what they’re looking for. They can use Nature or Scout depending on what they’re look for. If successful, they find the map. If unsuccessful, they find the snake’s burrow and her eggs.

Found Mouse

The grain mouse has a cart full of grains and his straw hat. Hidden in the grain is a very detailed map of Lockhaven. In order to find the map, the patrol must do one of two things: They must interrogate the mouse using Persuader or Deceiver or they must dig through the cart searching for it.

To interrogate the mouse, one of the patrol mice must question the GM, pretending he’s interrogating the spy. Make a versus test

between the player’s skill and the grain peddler’s Persuader 4 skill. The grain peddler should try to convince the patrol that he’s innocent.

If searching for the map, one of the players must state that his character searches the cart. It’s an Ob 4 Nature test to find the map. Why? Because it will require a stroke of luck. According to the **Factoring Obstacles** list, tasks that require a stroke of luck are obstacle level 4.

If the interrogation or Nature test is failed, it’s an excellent chance to experiment with using conditions in the game. Try giving the player the map under the condition that his character is made Angry by it.

The Grain Peddler

These ability and skill numbers were pulled from the Peddler listing in the *Denizens of the Mouse Territories* chapter. They were modified to suit this adventure.

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 6 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Haggler 5, Persuader 4, Grain-wise 4

TRAITS: Cunning (1)

The Snake— Nature 7

The snake in this mission is a milk snake. Its Nature aspects are: Hunting, Secretive,

Slithering, Constricting. Its weapons are: Bite— + 1D to Maneuver. Rattle— + 1s to successful Feint. Coils— + 1s to successful Attack.

Weapons are described in the *Resolution* chapter.

Players' Turn

Once the snake has been dealt with and the map discovered, the GM should say, "I'm done. It's your turn. You each have one free check that you can spend, plus any others you earned. You have a lot you can do now.

"You can recover from your conditions, you can head into Barkstone and investigate there,



you can head back to Lockhaven to report or something else that you might have in mind. What would you like to do?"

The simplest option is to try to recover from any conditions and then make a Pathfinder test to head to Barkstone.

End of Session

After the players have spent their checks and played out their scenes in the Players' Turn, the session is nearly over. There's one last bit to do. Each player should read his Belief, Goal and Instinct aloud. The proper rewards should be given for playing Beliefs and Instincts and accomplishing goals. Then the group awards the MVP and workhorse rewards.

In this mission, the player who discovers the map is probably the MVP. The player who defeats the snake is probably the workhorse. Lastly, talk about moments of great roleplaying and give those players an embodiment reward.

After that, you're done!

Continuing the Adventure

Obviously, this adventure isn't over. Someone is trying to find secret information about Lockhaven. What are they going to do with it? Who are they?



If you want, you can play out the continuing adventures of your patrol as you try to answer these questions. Next time you sit down to play, everyone should keep the same roles—the players with the same characters and the same player acting as the GM.

Now that you're in the field, Gwendolyn's not there to help you out. You've got to cut your own path. The players and GM should briefly discuss what direction they want to go in. Then the GM can assign the mission for the night: "Discover the traitors in Barkstone," for example. Once you have your mission, play the session in the same manner described above.

Continue this process until you've played out the season. Once winter comes, you've got to return to Lockhaven. See **Winter** in *Seasons* for what to do then.





RESOLUTION

Send any mouse to do the job,
it may or may not be done.
Ask the Guard to do the task,
even death cannot prevent it from completion.

—Mouse proverb

In this chapter, I teach you how to roll dice to overcome obstacles. To start, I'm going to briefly run down some of the basic game rules so they're fresh in your mind. Then I'm going to get into more detailed stuff like tests, conflicts, gear, conditions, recovery and death.

OBSTACLES



In this game, an obstacle is broken down into three parts. The first part is the problem described by the GM. Second, an obstacle is rated with a number that represents the difficulty of passing the test at hand. Last, an obstacle has an ability or skill that can be used to overcome it.

To cross a frigid stream (the problem), requires the characters to pass an obstacle 3 (difficulty) Health test (ability).



To pass a test, you need a number of successes equal to or greater than the obstacle's difficulty.

My Health is 5, so I roll five dice. I need to roll at least three fours or better on those five dice to pass this test and make it across the stream unscathed.



Setting Obstacles



Obstacle numbers are generated in four ways: either by checking the factors for a skill in the skill list, checking factors in the *Seasons* and *Territories* chapters, by a roll of the dice from another player or the GM, or by the GM winging it and making one up on the fly.

When I'm describing an obstacle's difficulty in the text, I abbreviate the word to "Ob," so you'll see Ob 2, Ob 3, Ob 4, etc.

In very broad terms, Ob 1 is easy, Ob 2 is kinda hard, Ob 3 is hard to most and risky for everyone, Ob 4 is really hard and Ob 5 is a fat bastard!

TESTS



A test refers to a roll of the dice for a single ability or skill. You make tests to overcome obstacles.

Presented with an Obstacle



The GM presents you with a problem—"You've got to get safely across the stream if you're going to make it to Ivydale on time." He then follows his description of the problem with an ability or skill and a difficulty—"It's going to be an Ob 3 Health test to ford the river safely." This is called setting the obstacle.

No Weasels



Once the GM sets an obstacle for a task, the players may not cast about for another, easier way to accomplish what they're after. The GM may suggest an alternate method with an alternate obstacle and alternate conditions. He may also accept suggestions from the players, but once the obstacle for the main task and the alternate are laid out, the players must make the test.

Who Makes the Test?



The player to volunteer first or think of the plan to overcome the obstacle must make the roll. It doesn't matter if he has the lowest ability in the group or doesn't even have the right skill. He's stepped up to the plate and he's got to take a swing.

Table Chatter Discussions

If the group comes up with a plan to overcome an obstacle, and the GM approves it as described in the last chapter, *The Mission*, the patrol leader may delegate who tackles which part of the obstacle. This delegation is subject to GM approval.

Kenzie, Lieam and Saxon can't find their quarry. Their players can stop for a moment and discuss a plan, "Lieam's a good scout. He should try to find this mouse."

The GM says, "Finding the mouse requires a Scout test."

Describe Your Action



Once the obstacle has been set by the GM, the player who's going to make the test describes his character's actions. How is he going to overcome the test?

After the plan has been agreed upon, in character, Saxon says to Kenzie, "We should be pressing on."

Kenzie says, "I agree, but perhaps a view will tell us where to press, eh?"

Lieam's player says, "I climb a nearby tree to get a better vantage point." He then rolls his dice for his Scout skill to make the test.

A good description of your actions goes a long way toward earning rewards at the end of the session.

Two Types of Tests



There are two types of test, one with a fixed obstacle—*independent*—and one where the obstacle is generated by rolling against another player or the GM—*versus*.

Independent Tests



When making an independent test, grab as many dice as your ability or skill's rating and give them a roll. Each die that

comes up a 4 or better counts. We call those dice successes. Dice that come up 3 or lower don't count. They're called cowards.

If you roll a number of successes equal to or greater than the obstacle, you've passed the test!

Rolling your Health against Ob 3 is an independent test. You roll your Health dice against a fixed difficulty—you need three successes to pass the test.

Versus Tests

Versus tests are the best way to quickly resolve any dispute between two parties in the game. They're exciting and tense!

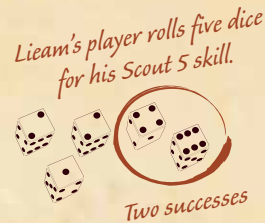


When fighting with, racing against, convincing, pushing or competing with another character in the game, you use versus tests. You also use versus tests when trying to navigate the weather of the seasons with Weather Watching, but that's a special case.

Roll your ability or skill's rating as described under *Independent Tests*. Same rules for successes. In this case, you pass your test if you roll more successes than your opponent does.

If rolling against the GM, the GM always rolls first and shows the player his successes. If rolling against another Mouse Guard player, the senior guardmouse rolls first and shows his results to his junior opponent.

Trying to find that pesky grain peddler, Lieam's going to test his Scout 5. The GM will test for the grain peddler using his Nature 6.



Making Ties

It's possible to use your traits or fate points to create ties.

It looks like the GM has won the versus test to find the peddler. He has three successes and Lieam has two. However, Lieam's player spends one of his fate points. He has one 6 showing, so he grabs one more die. He rolls and gets a 4. Now the roll is tied.

Breaking Ties

If a versus test is tied, there are three ways to break it. They may be used in the following order: A trait may be called on to break a tie in

your opponent's favor, you may spend a fate point if you have sixes and haven't spent one already, or a tiebreaker roll may be made.

Lieam can't spend a fate point to break the tie—he just spent a point to use that 6 to get another die. He doesn't think his Determined or Defender traits are appropriate for him to break the tie in the GM's favor. He's out of options. He's forced to make a tiebreaker roll. However, if he hadn't used the fate point to tie the roll, he would have lost outright.

Tiebreaker Rolls



A tiebreaker roll is a second versus test between the two opponents. If a skill was used in the initial tied versus test, Will or Health must be rolled to break the tie. If the skill is physical, test Health. If the skill is mental- or social-oriented, test Will.

Lieam initially tested his Scout skill. It's a physical skill so he'll test his Health 5 in the tiebreaker.

If Will or Health was used in the initial tied roll, Nature must be used in the tiebreaker.

If Nature was used in the tied roll, Will or Health—as determined by the GM—must be used to break the tie. There's one exception to this rule: Animals other than mice or weasels always test their Nature, even in ties. They only have Nature to test!

The grain peddler tested his Nature to try to hide from the patrol. He's a mouse, so he can't test Nature again; he'll have to test his Health 4 in the tiebreaker.

Whoever wins the tiebreaker roll wins the versus test as per the rules described in **Passed Tests**.



If a second tie comes up, the player may use a trait or a fate point to try to break the tie. If neither of those are available, or if the fate reroll fails, then the roll is considered a stalemate. Neither side succeeds or fails. The GM or the player must think of a new situation to overcome the obstacle. The same tied abilities may not be tested again to overcome the opposition.

If Nature is part of a tie result, it's not taxed. If Nature is part of a tiebreaker roll and fails, the normal rules for tax apply. See *Abilities and Skills*.

Passed Tests



If you passed the test, you've overcome and escaped unscathed! You may describe your success or let the GM embellish your actions with a shiny glow.

Roleplay

After a passed test, the first thing to do is describe your character's actions. What does he do to overcome the obstacle? What does he say? Either way, describe what happened, how you beat the obstacle and how the situation has changed.

You pass the test and your character fords the frigid stream, so you say something like, "I fight the current and emerge shivering on the far

bank. I tie my rope around a branch so everyone else can cross safely."

Fun Once! Let's Not Do It Again

What happens after you've passed (or failed!) that test? The GM sets a *new* obstacle in front of you. He's describes a new hazard or hurdle in your path (or ends his turn). A new set of abilities or skills is called upon to be tested. You've beaten that obstacle, now what will your patrol encounter?



The GM has his four bits of magic formula to work with—weather, wilderness, animals and mice. He typically presents an obstacle from a different aspect. Using twists, the GM can repeat obstacle types in the course of a mission.



Failed Tests



If you do not roll successes equal to or greater than your obstacle, you've failed this test. What happens now? First off, the GM gets control of your character for a little bit. He gets to describe how you misstepped or overreached.

Game-wise, one of two things can then happen, and the GM gets to decide which one he wants: You can fail to overcome the obstacle and the GM can inject a twist into the game, or *you can succeed at your attempt, but at a cost*. The GM can't apply both options to one test.

Twists



If you, the GM, choose to twist the direction of the story or inject a complication into the lives of the patrol, you get to decide on a whole new obstacle for the guardmice to contend with, a brand new problem that's developed because of their bumbling! It must be a new situation and a new obstacle. Don't repeat the same situation twice.

Lieam fails trying to spot the grain peddler. The GM uses this opportunity to introduce a twist: A snake has eaten the lost mouse. The next morning, the snake attacks the patrol to protect its burrow.

As described in *The Mission*, twists can be used to bring in obstacles that you've already used, but as more complicated or more difficult challenges. You can play from twist to twist to twist if you like. That's one way to do it. Twists can develop into their own story arcs. That's okay.

Alternately, if the twist is successfully dealt with, the patrol moves back on track for their mission. They dust off their paws and say, "Now that that's over with, we can get back to business." Move the story forward as if the patrol had overcome the initial obstacle that caused the twist. Either put a new obstacle in their path or move to the completion of the mission—they arrive at the city, they encounter a stranded mouse, they pour the scent, they recover the mail, etc.

After dealing with the murderous snake, the patrol finds the grain merchant. Or rather, they find his body in the belly of the snake. This revelation is presented by the GM. It's very important because it allows the game and story to move forward.

Conditions of Success



Alternately, if you're feeling generous, you can give the player what he was after when he attempted to overcome the obstacle. But this time,

success comes with a price. He gets what he wants, but you get to give him a condition, too. Conditions and their effects are discussed a little later in this chapter.

Lieam escapes the snake, but he's Angry about it.

Or a pathfinder might find the trail despite his bad rolls, but the extra effort makes him Hungry.

Or a guardmouse can capture the bandit, but the rough fight makes him Tired.

Why should you, the GM, give a player what he was after when your other option is to twist the story in a new direction and present a new obstacle? Because conditions are awesome. The chance to make a character Angry is sometimes too juicy an opportunity to pass up.

When applying a condition, the GM gets to state what happens to bring it on and what caused it. In other words, you get to tell the player what he's Hungry for, how Tired he is or who he's Angry at!

Complex Obstacles



Sometimes an obstacle is too complicated to bypass with a single test. The GM can, if he wants, declare that a number of abilities or skills must be tested in order to bypass the obstacle. In this case, he can vary the obstacle

number for the difficulty of the test for each ability. They don't all have to be the same.

For example, if the patrol comes to a rain-swollen creek, the GM might offer: "You can make a Pathfinding test to find a way around, but it's going to be very hard—like Ob 5. Or you can make an Ob 3 Scientist, an Ob 2 Architect and an Ob 2 Laborer test to build a bridge and get your cart of grain across."

I AM WISE



You may have your character use his varied experience to help himself on a test.

Wises Make You Wise



Wises are knowledge skills. When testing a regular skill, you may call on one of your *wises* to help. If the GM agrees that the wise is appropriate to the situation, you may add +1D to your skill test.




The use of *wises* is situational. The players suggest them and you arbitrate which are applicable and which are not. Sometimes they can add the die, sometimes they can't.

Hidey-hole-wise can be added to my Nature when trying to escape a snake burrow, when searching an office for a secret room or when using Scout to find a bandit lair. It wouldn't

be added to Fighter when simply fighting a snake or added to Archivist when searching for missing papers in a scribe's desk.

GEAR AGAINST OBSTACLES

 If a character has a piece of gear that's appropriate to a particular obstacle—a map, a sword, a bit of damning evidence—the GM may grant the character a +1D advantage to overcome the obstacle.

Add the extra die to the ability or skill rating and roll all of the dice together.


Baron uses his Survivalist skill to make a pair of skis in order to complete a dangerous winter mission. The skis provide a +1D bonus to Scout and Pathfinding tests in the snow.




TEAMWORK

Teamwork is important in Mouse Guard. Your patrol needs to work together to overcome the difficult obstacles in its path.

The group can come together and help the person who's making the test. He makes the roll, the helpers give him dice. In the game, the patrol acts as a team to overcome the obstacle.

 In order to help, three conditions must be met: First, the acting player must acknowledge and accept the help from his compatriots. Help cannot be forced or surreptitious; it must be open and agreed upon by the players. If you don't like how your teammate is helping, you can turn him down. Second, any player who is helping must then physically give the acting player one of his dice to roll. This is so we know if you're helpful or not! Lastly, the helping player must now participate in the scene: you *must* describe how your mouse is helping out.

How Can I Help?

 Helping another character allows you to donate +1D to the roll. This is called a *helping die*.

Abilities Can Always Help Abilities

If Nature, Will, Health, Resources or Circles is being tested, anyone can help.

Skills and Wises Help Skills and Wises

If a skill or wise is being tested, you must help with one of your own skills or wises. Your help must be appropriate to the situation—your assistance must add additional insight to the process.

If your friend is building some armor out of a beetle carapace using his Armorer skill, you can



help him with Armorer, Scientist, Loremouse or Insectrist. Baker, Apiarist or even Fighter aren't appropriate for help.

Help is situational; it must make sense to the players. The GM is the final arbiter on who and what can and can't help.

Wises and Help

The best helping dice often come from wises. These skills are left open to interpretation so you can describe how your knowledge applies to various rolls.

You Reap What You Sow

Everyone who donates a die of help for a test is then bound by the end results of the roll. If the test is successful, everyone who participated shares in the result. If the test is failed, all the characters share a similar fate.



If a condition is applied as the result of a failed test, then the player who rolled suffers that condition. The helping players suffer a lesser condition of the GM's choosing.

If you suffer an Injury, your teammates can be given the Hungry, Angry or Tired condition. They can't be Injured or made Sick. If you're made Angry, then your teammates can be made Hungry, and so on.

Recovery Help



You may not help another mouse with a Will or Health test for recovery. All mice are on their own for those.

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Nature can be used as a substitute for *any* ability or skill that you don't have. However, using Nature prevents the character from learning new skills. If you'd like to learn a skill your character doesn't have, you shouldn't use your Nature. Instead, use these Beginner's Luck rules.



If a character does not have an appropriate skill for a test, he may roll his Will or



Health in place of Nature. Total up the dice for the ability, wises, help and gear. Make the test using half *that* number, rounded up. If the skill is physical, use half of Health. If the skill is mental- or social-oriented, use half of Will.

Easy stuff won't be too much of a problem, but more complex tasks will be harder.

Saxon doesn't have the Persuader skill. Even so, he's always arguing with Kenzie about the direction the patrol should take. When Saxon tries to convince Kenzie, he rolls half his Will, rounded up, versus Kenzie's full Persuader skill.

Spending Persona Points on Unskilled Tests

Persona points and tapping Nature are added after the number of dice is halved.



If an ability is at zero due to Injury or Sickness, you cannot test it using Beginner's Luck at this time. You must use your Nature until you've recovered.

Using Beginner's Luck is the first step in learning a new skill. See the **Learning New Skills** heading in the *Abilities and Skills* chapter for the complete process.

CONFLICTS

Obstacles are great for creating hurdles for the patrol to leap, walls for them to climb, and paths for them to navigate. But sometimes those hurdles are not enough. Sometimes a moment is so important, we need to stop and focus on it: intense fight scenes in which we follow every sword stroke, heated arguments in which the fur really flies or breakneck chases that leave us dizzy and breathless.

In the game, we use *conflicts* to create those intense, detailed situations. These are the turning points of a story. Use them for big, important moments.

A conflict scene needs active opponents on at least two sides. Each side must want something. They have to have an immediate goal—something they want to fight for, convince you of or escape from, for example. If one side simply wants to defend against the other side's goal and has no goal of its own, there's no conflict here. You can resolve those situations with versus tests.

In the Fall series of the Mouse Guard comic, there are a number of exciting conflicts played out: Kenzie, Saxon and Lieam's battle with the snake, Sadie and Conrad's tragic escape from the crabs, Saxon and Kenzie's duel to distract the guards at Barkstone, Saxon and Kenzie convincing Celanawe that they are not

part of the conspiracy, the battle at the gates of Lockhaven and Midnight's attempt to capture Gwendolyn.

Conflicts can be part of a mission or arise from twists. Either way, the same mechanics are used to play them out.

All of the basic information you need to play a conflict is described on the back of your character sheet. This chapter discusses the process and gives more detail on some of the elements of the system.

Starting a Conflict

In the GM's Turn, only the GM can start a conflict. As the action in the game builds to a head, he calls for a conflict.

The patrol stumbles across a snake's burrow full of eggs. Two of the guardmice jump into the burrow to dispatch the young. Meanwhile, the remaining mouse is left to stand watch. The mother snake emerges hissing mad and ambushes the lone guardmouse.

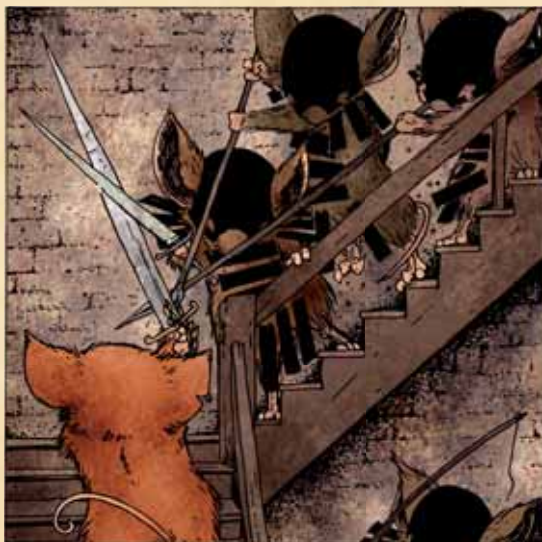
The GM calls for a conflict. This is going to be a fight to the death.

In the Players' Turn, a player may spend one of his checks to start a conflict. His target doesn't have to spend anything. He just gets sucked in.

Procedure for Conflicts

Conflicts are a bit more complicated than testing to overcome obstacles. In a conflict, we make many tests, but how we make them is different. In order to keep the game interesting, each side privately chooses three *actions* to represent their strategy. Then these actions are played against each other and tests are made to determine the results.

The steps for starting and playing a conflict are listed at right. Each step has a detailed description that follows the list. There are some terms in this list that we haven't covered yet. Don't worry, everything gets defined in the next section. It looks like a lot of steps, but once you've played a couple of conflicts, it's easy.



- ✚ Decide the *type of conflict*.
- ✚ Determine *participants* and *teams*.
- ✚ State *goals*. Write yours on your team's sheet.
- ✚ Roll for your starting *disposition*.
- ✚ Check participants' *conditions*. Modify dispositions accordingly.
- ✚ Choose three *actions* in private. The GM chooses his actions first.
- ✚ Reveal first action. The GM reveals his action first. Consult the Actions Table to see how your actions interact.
- ✚ Make Action test. Add any modifiers from *gear* or *weapons*. Change disposition accordingly. If either side's disposition is reduced to 0, stop.
- ✚ Reveal and test for Actions 2 and 3. Same rules as above.
- ✚ After Action 3, all teams who still have disposition of 1 or more privately choose three more actions. The process continues until all the teams on the players' side or the GM's have been reduced to 0 disposition.
- ✚ Once one side has been reduced to 0 disposition, work out a *compromise* appropriate to the damage done to the winning team's disposition.

Determine Type of Conflict



A conflict can be an argument, a fight, a chase or any other action scene.

When you set the type of conflict, you determine what abilities and skills will be tested.

Pick a type of conflict from the following list:

Argument

If you need to convince another character or get information from him, use an argument.

When Kenzie and Saxon are captured by Celanawe, they get into an argument with him in order to convince him they didn't steal his axe.

Actions in argument conflicts are bits of in-character dialogue. We play out the argument, point by point.

Chase

When trying to catch or follow another mouse or an animal, you can use a chase conflict.

In chases, we describe our actions in terms of running, hiding, ducking and doubling back.

Fight

Sometimes a guardmouse has to resort to physical force or violence in order to do his duty.

When the snake ambushes Lieam, he must face it alone in a fight conflict.

Actions in a fight conflict are blow-by-blow descriptions of strikes, blocks, counterstrikes, pushes, cool disarms, diving for cover and general rollin'-around-fightin'!

Negotiation

If you'd like to have a big negotiation about the price of goods or commodities or the nature of a contract, use a negotiation conflict.

In a negotiation conflict, you haggle over the price, complain about or praise the quality, and throw up your hands and wave them about.

Journey

Your patrol will sometimes be called upon to undertake long, dangerous journeys in harsh weather. If the GM decides it's appropriate, he can engage you in a journey conflict. In this situation, the season itself tries to prevent you from accomplishing your goal.

When the patrol sets out for Sprucetuck in Winter 1152, the GM invokes a journey conflict.

Actions are described in terms of survivalism, willpower, fortitude, bad weather, mishaps and wilderness.

Speech

You can use your Orator skill to convince a gathering of mice to follow your thinking, or debate a political adversary in public and convince the audience that you're right. Your

opponent in a speech conflict can be another speechmaker, competing for the attention of the crowd; or it can be a mouse in the crowd, representative of their views. In this case, use his Will or skill as appropriate, but give him a healthy dose of teamwork help.

Actions in a speech or debate involve using rhetoric. We make the speeches!

War

Occasionally, the towns go to war or the mice have to muster against a big animal threat. Characters with the Militarist skill may lead other mice into battle.

Midnight musters his forces and tries to storm Lockhaven. This is most definitely a war conflict.

Actions in wars are described as attacks, subtle feints, holding actions, daring field maneuvers and valiant defenses.

Other

You can use the conflict mechanics here for just about anything that requires competition. If you want a cooking challenge, a science fair or whatever, make a conflict out of it.

Mixing Conflict Types

You cannot mix conflict types. If it's a fight, then everyone fights. If a player engages in an argument, then everyone argues. If it's a chase, we run.



If you have two sides who want really different things, set up two conflicts. Resolve one and then the other: a chase that leads to a fight, for example.

Build From One Conflict to the Next

Don't have an army to fight with? Use a military conflict to raise one. Want to humiliate your enemies? Use a chase conflict to get them stuck in a chimney. Want to apologize to your



enemy? Use an argument conflict to turn them from enemy to friend.

Participants

Often when you get into a conflict, you have multiple players working together toward a goal. Therefore, we break down the participants of the conflict into teams. Use the following guidelines:

- One or two players—always one team.
- Three players—one team. This is the optimal team size. Three players are *rarely* split into two uneven teams.
- Four players—two teams of two or one team of three and one team of one.
- Five players—two teams, one of three players and one of two players.

If necessary, a team may be up to four mice big, but it's not recommended. More than four to a side and you must break down into multiple teams.

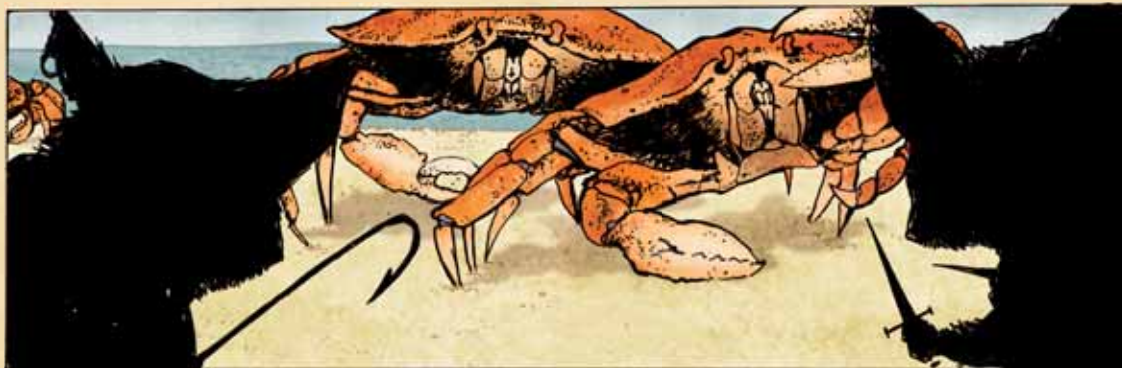
Saxon, Kenzie and Lieam can remain as one team in a conflict or they could break down into two teams—two mice on one team and one on the other.

The GM's characters form teams to oppose the players' teams.

One-on-One

If you're in a one-on-one conflict, you don't have to worry about any of this stuff. You're your own team!

The **Conflict** section describes the rules from the view of one player making the tests. That's rarely the case, but it's easier to explain that way. Check out **Multiple Characters in a Team** later in the chapter. It'll explain how to act as a team in a conflict.



Complement Each Other's Strengths



There are all sorts of methods for deciding who joins whose team. You can go with your friends. You can divide by age, cloak color or fur color. The patrol leader can assign your teams, too. But as you're doing this, you, the player, should be thinking, too. Try to pick teams for the conflict that complement each other. Don't put everyone with the same skill on one team. Spread out the Orators, Persuaders or Fighters so that each team has at least one for this particular conflict.

If you're in an argument and two of your guardmice have Persuader, put them on two different teams.

If you're in a fight with a skunk and you have two hunters and two fighters, split into two teams of a fighter and a hunter each. You'll kick its butt!

The GM's Side



The GM usually forms his own team to oppose the players, but you may join him on his side if you wish. If possible, the GM should divide his characters into a number of teams equal to the players' teams. If he can't, it's not a big deal. He's just got to fight harder and meaner.

If the GM has characters involved who are sympathetic to the players' side, they may help them as per the **Teamwork** rules. However, GM characters may not take actions on the players' side in a conflict.

Buzz the friendly mayor is mediating an argument between two patrols. The GM is playing Buzz and a patrol leader. The patrol leader is the opposition to the players in an argument. Buzz is on the players' side. He can give them a helping die from his Orator skill, but he can't take actions for them in a conflict.

Players may join one of the GM's teams if they feel the need. In this case, they can help and choose actions as normal.

Sitting Out a Conflict

If you're not interested in either side of a conflict, it's okay to sit it out. Relax for a moment and be a good audience. Cheer on the good roleplaying.

Sometimes your character will be separate from the others in the story. It won't make sense for you to be in a certain conflict. Sit out these scenes and be an appreciative listener. You'll have your time in the spotlight next.

When the patrol is investigating Barkstone, Saxon and Kenzie cause a distraction so Lieam can sneak off and do some leg work. Saxon and Kenzie's players play out their scene first.

Lieam's player watches and cheers them on. When it's over, the GM says, "Meanwhile..." and then Saxon and Kenzie's players watch while Lieam conducts his investigation.

Teamwork in Conflicts



You may give your team members helping dice for disposition rolls and tests for actions in a conflict. If you help with a disposition roll for a conflict, you're considered on that team. You take actions and make rolls and are bound by the results.

If you don't want to be on a team, don't help with the disposition roll.

If you're not on a team at all, you can choose to help any team on any side. But if you help a team during the conflict, you're bound by the results. If there's any question, the GM can determine which side's goal and compromise you're subject to.

Conflict Goals



Each team picks a short-term or immediate goal they wish to accomplish as a result of this conflict. Conflict goals are similar to your character's session Goal. Include a statement about your character, an action and a target.

Lieam is ambushed by a snake. He knows the snake is going to try to kill him. He sets his goal: "Kill this snake so that Kenzie and Saxon are safe."

The snake's goal is simple, "Kill this mouse so he cannot find the location of my nest."



Here are some basic goal templates: convince, deceive, escape, capture, injure, kill or survive. But that's just the beginning; be creative with your goals.

Saxon and Kenzie have been captured by the oldfur Celanawe. Celanawe accuses them of stealing his famed axe. His goal: "You thieves will tell me what you've done with my axe!"

The guardmice's goal: "A group of mice is plotting against the Guard. Celanawe must help us stop them."

Fighty Goals for Fighting Conflicts

Goals are specific to the type of challenge. You can't use an argument conflict goal to injure your opponent. You'd use a fight conflict for that. And you can't use a fight conflict to convince someone of something. That's what an argument or speech is for.

Write your goal on the back of your character sheet where it says, "Conflict Goal."

When Is Death on the Line?

In journeys, fights and wars, it is possible to use the death of your opponent as a goal, but there are certain conditions that must be met. See **Death and Killing** at the end of this chapter.

Starting Disposition

To represent how strong your side's position is in this conflict, each team generates a number called *disposition*. This number represents your strength in the conflict. A disposition of 3 or less is low; 4 to 6 is okay; 7 and higher is strong. During the conflict, you use all of your wits, luck and good looks to reduce your opponent's disposition to zero. If you can do that, you've won. Good luck!



To generate your team's disposition for a conflict, consult the Conflict Type on the next page. The player who initiated the conflict tests the listed skill for his team. The other team members may help. The obstacle for the test is 0. Add the successes of that roll to the rating of the tester's base ability listed in table (the minimum value is 1). The seniormost mouse should make a note of that number in the disposition shield next to the Conflict Goal on the back of his character sheet. That's your team's starting disposition.

Lieam versus the snake: The GM rolls for the snake first. He rolls the snake's Nature 7 and gets three successes. He adds those three to the snake's Nature rating for a total disposition of 10.

Lieam tests his Fighter 3 skill. He rolls two successes. He adds those two to his Health 5 for a total disposition of 7.



| Conflict Type | Test Skill | Add to Base |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Argument | Persuader | Will |
| Chase | Scout | Nature |
| Fight | Fighter | Health or Nature |
| Fight Animal | Fighter or Hunter | Health or Nature |
| Journey | Pathfinder | Health |
| Negotiation | Haggler | Will |
| Speech | Orator | Will |
| War | Militarist | Will |
| Other | Attack skill | GM's call |

Using Nature for Disposition

Mice may only use Nature as a *base* for disposition if the conflict is appropriate to their Nature—escaping, climbing, hiding and foraging.

Animals and Disposition

Animals under the GM's control test Nature and add their successes to Nature. It gives them an edge, but it's in their nature!

Season Disposition



If you're starting a journey conflict, or any other conflict that involves struggling against the season, test the season's rating (in the *Seasons* chapter) and add your successes to the season's rating.

If you're doing a journey conflict in summer, you'd roll four dice and add the successes to 4.

Modifiers to Disposition

Be sure to check your character's condition, traits and gear for modifiers to starting disposition.

Lieam is Angry at the start of this fight. Checking the character sheet, I see that the Angry condition doesn't affect fights.

Actions

To play out the tense, tactical nature of a conflict, we use a specific structure. Each team chooses three actions from the following list in advance: Attack, Defend, Feint, Maneuver. Each action has a different effect on how you test. And each action interacts with the other actions in a different way.

Actions are chosen in sets of three, then revealed one at a time. Once everyone's actions are revealed, we play out the interaction—roleplay and make tests.



Here's how it works: Each group privately chooses three actions—1, 2, 3—and notes the choices on the back of the seniormost mouse's character sheet. It's traditional for the seniormost mouse on your team to choose your team's actions and note them on his sheet.

Lieam's player chooses three actions in this order: Maneuver, Attack, Defend.

The GM chooses Attack, Attack, Feint for the snake.

Once everyone's picked, the GM says, "Action 1," and reveals his first action. Then the player teams reveal their first actions. Once all the actions are declared, resolve them according to their descriptions and the interaction chart at the end of this section.

Resolve Actions 2 and 3 in the same way: The GM announces his action, the other groups announce theirs. Roleplay, describe how your characters are undertaking the action, then roll the dice.

Action Abstraction

The four actions—Attack, Defend, Feint and Maneuver—are abstract, so you can apply them to nearly any type of conflict. During play, you get to interpret them and make them fit the situation in your game. Their rules stay the same, but how you describe them and what they mean in the game world is different for each conflict. You'll have to negotiate with each other a bit to figure out which descriptions fit and which don't. Table chatter is an important part of this process. Once everyone is taking turns describing their actions, you'll get into the rhythm of it.

The four actions are described in terms of obstacle, how they interact with the other actions and how to describe them in a conflict.



Attack

The Attack action lets you take a shot at your goal. In a fight, this means whacking away at the enemy, or filling him full of arrows. In an



argument, this means making a strong, direct point. In a chase, it means sprinting straight for the finish. In a negotiation, an Attack exposes your opponent's weaknesses. In a war, an Attack damages your opponent's forces or captures an important objective. On a journey, an Attack action can be used to strike out for your goal, no matter what the weather's like.



Attack played against Attack or Feint is an independent test. When played against Defend or Maneuver, it is a versus test. Attack reduces your opponent's disposition by the margin of success.

Independent Obstacle: 0. Successes from an independent Attack are subtracted from your opponent's disposition.

Defend

The Defend action protects and strengthens your position. In a fight, this can mean blocking your enemy's weapon. In an argument, it can represent an excellent rebuttal. In a chase, a Defend action can represent carefully picking a path or covering your tracks. In a negotiation, a Defend can be used to praise the strengths of what you're offering. In war, use Defend to regroup or even reequip. On a journey, Defend can represent stopping to rest and eat.



Defend played against Attack or Maneuver is a versus test. When played against another Defend, the actions are independent. When played against a Feint, Defend may not test. Feint beats it.

Defend stops or reduces the effectiveness of Attack and Maneuver actions. If Defend successes are greater than the versus action, add the margin of success to your disposition. Disposition cannot go higher than the starting total.

Independent Obstacle: 3. For independent Defends, the margin of success is added to your disposition. Disposition cannot go higher than the starting total. If you don't get more than three successes, nothing happens.

Feint

A Feint represents a sneak attack. It's dangerous to try, but if it works, it's very effective. In a fight, a Feint is a feint! In an argument, it's a misleading point used to get your opponent to say something foolish that you can use against him. In a chase, it's a sudden change of direction to confuse your opponent. In negotiation, it's a temporary reversal—agreeing with your opponent so you can trap him later. In war, Feint is a gambit used to draw your enemy's strength away so you can attack him where he's weak. On a journey, a Feint is a shortcut.



Feint is a special attack. If played against Defend, the Defender may not test. The Feinter makes an independent test; your target's disposition is reduced by your margin of success. If played against an Attack, the Feinting player may not attack or defend. If played against another Feint, make a versus test. The margin of success is subtracted from the loser's disposition. If played against Maneuver, test Feint at Ob 0. Successes are removed from your opponent's disposition.

Independent Obstacle: 0. Successes from an independent Feint are subtracted from your opponent's disposition.

Maneuver

The Maneuver action is used to, well, maneuver, gaining an advantage over your opponent. In a fight, a Maneuver can be a push or a flanking move. In an argument, it's confusing rhetoric. In a chase, a Maneuver is a trip or a dirty trick. In negotiation, a Maneuver reveals new, surprising features about the subject of your haggling. In war, Maneuver is used to march your troops into an advantageous position from which they can better attack or defend. On a journey, the action can be used to set up shelters, forage, find fresh water or other actions that will ward against the harsh conditions further down the road.



The Maneuver action is used to gain a temporary advantage over your opponent. It's the most complex action of the four. The Maneuver action has three possible effects: impede, gain position and disarm. Each effect requires a certain margin of success. You can't use the same effect twice on the same action, but you can use an effect again if you play another successful Maneuver on a subsequent action.



Played against Attack or Defend, Maneuver is a versus test. Played against Feint or another Maneuver, the Maneuver action is tested independently. Margin of success is applied to the effects described below.

Independent Obstacle: 0

📌 Margin of Success 1: *Impede:* -1D disadvantage to your opponent's next action.

If there are multiple characters on the other team, the impede penalty is applied to the character making the test for the next action. If the action interactions means they don't test, this effect is lost.

📌 Margin of Success 2: *Gain position:* +2D advantage to your next action.

If there are multiple characters on your team, this bonus is applied to the character making

the test for the next action. If the action interactions means you don't test, this bonus is lost.

📌 Margin of Success 3: *Disarm:* remove one of your opponent's weapons, a piece of gear or disable a trait for the remainder of the conflict. For animals, you may render one of its weapons useless for the remainder of the fight. If disarmed and you want to draw another weapon, you may switch next time you choose your actions. Alternately, if you win by a margin of success of 3, you may *impede* and *gain position*.

Action Table

Are all of those action interactions making your head swim? You can refer to this handy table after your actions have been announced. It will tell you if you need to make an independent test or a versus test for your action!



| | Attack | Defend | Feint | Maneuver |
|----------|--------|--------|-------|----------|
| Attack | I | V | * | V |
| Defend | V | I | * | V |
| Feint | * | * | V | I |
| Maneuver | V | V | I | I |

I = *Independent test*. Test both actions separately; both actions can succeed or fail.

V = *Versus test*. Roll skills or abilities against each other. Highest successes wins.

***** = *Special*. Feint is a special attack. If played against Defend, the Defender may not test. The Feinter makes an independent test; successes reduce his target's disposition. If played against an Attack, the Feinting player may not attack or defend.

Licam versus the snake Action 1:

The GM says, "Action 1: I have an Attack. The snake slithers out of its burrow, writhes and lunges at you, redfur. What do you have?"

Licam's player answers: "I steel myself and look for a weakness in the snake. My first action is a Maneuver."

Consulting the Action Table, we see that these actions mean the two players make a versus test. Licam rolls his Nature 4 (you'll see why in the next section). He rolls two successes.



The GM uses the snake's Nature 7. He rolls four successes. He beats Lieam's roll by two. The GM says, "The snake's too fast. He's coming on hard. He rears back to strike. You lose two points from your disposition."

Lieam's player reduces his disposition from 7 to 5. The GM continues, "Lieam hesitates and stumbles a bit."

Then the GM says, "Action 2: Attack (again)! The snake lunges!"

Lieam's player says, "I have an Attack, too."

Attack against Attack is independent. The GM rolls the snake's Nature 7 and gets four successes. This reduces Lieam's disposition from 5 to 1. The redfur is in trouble.

"What does your character do?" the GM asks.

Lieam's player thinks for a moment. He's losing 10 to 1. He has to do a lot of damage quickly. He spends a persona point and taps his Nature. He adds his Nature rating, 4, to his Fighter 3. He also adds his Determined trait to this roll and decides to use his +1D Sword bonus, too. (See the *Weapons in Conflict* section for how that works.) He manages to muster 10 dice. That's pretty impressive. Lieam's player says, "As the snake lunges for me, I do the last thing it would expect: I dive into the creature's mouth! And when I do, I drive my sword into its brain!"



Lieam rolls. See the figure above.

Everyone cheers. The GM deducts 10 points from the snake's disposition. That reduces him to zero. The conflict is over. Action 3 is not played out.

If Lieam had only rolled nine successes, the snake would have had a disposition of 1. Action 3 would have played out: Lieam's Defend against the snake's Feint. It would have been very bad. Lieam wouldn't have been able to test for Defend. The snake would have faked him out of position and won, possibly killing the redfur!



Which Skill Do I Use?

Each type of conflict uses a different skill set. Check out the following list and table. They describe what skill to use for each action.

Argument

One-on-one arguments use Persuader for all actions. Deceiver may also be used for Feints and Maneuvers involving deception, intimidation or manipulation.

Chase

Scout is used for Attack and Maneuver. Pathfinder is used for Defend and Feint.

Fight

A fight uses Fighter for Attack and Feint. Nature is used for Defend and Maneuver.

When fighting animals, Hunter may also be used for Attack and Feint. Loremouse may be used for Defend and Maneuver.

Animals always fight with their Nature ability; they use it for all actions.

Negotiation

Use the Haggler skill for Attack and Defend actions. Use Deceiver and Persuader for Feint and Maneuver.



Journey

The mice use Pathfinder for Attack and Feint. Survivalist and Weather Watcher may be used for Defend and Maneuver.

The weather itself serves as the opponent. In the *Seasons* chapter, each season is described with its own rating. Use that rating for the season for all maneuvers. It's very similar to the way Nature works for animals.

Speech

Convincing a group of mice or giving a speech uses Orator for all actions, but Deceiver may be used for Feint and Maneuver actions.

War

Militarist can be used for all actions. Orator may be used to Defend. Administrator may also be used for Defend and Feint.

Other

You can use the conflict rules for just about anything that requires competition. If you want a cooking challenge, a science fair or whatever, you make a conflict out of it.



When your players want to do a non-standard conflict, assign the conflict actions a set of skills. Usually, two skills or abilities are used. One skill is assigned to making Attacks and Defends, for example, and another to making Feints and Maneuvers. Anyone who participates in the conflict has to test those skills for the appropriate actions.

If the patrol wants to build a bridge across a flooded stream, I can set a conflict that uses Carpenter for Attack and Defend and Scientist for Feint and Maneuver. The river, being a symptom of the season, can use the seasonal rating—6 for Spring in this case.

| Conflict Type/Action | Attack | Defend | Feint | Maneuver |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Argument | Persuader | Persuader | Persuader or Deceiver | Persuader or Deceiver |
| Chase | Scout | Pathfinder | Pathfinder | Scout |
| Fight | Fighter | Nature | Fighter | Nature |
| Fight Animal | Fighter or Hunter | Lore. or Nature | Fighter or Hunter | Lore. or Nature |
| Negotiation | Haggler | Haggler | Deceiver | Deceiver |
| Journey | Pathfinder | See descr. | Pathfinder | See descr. |
| Speech | Orator | Orator | Orator or Deceiver | Orator or Deceiver |
| War | Militarist | See descr. | See descr. | Militarist |

When Conrad and Sadie fight the crabs together, they alternate actions. Conrad takes action 1, Sadie takes action 2, Conrad takes action 3. If they start a second exchange of actions, Sadie takes the first action.

Team Tactics

Take this rule into account when you're planning your tactics. Check your partner's skills. Try to make sure he can make the test for the action so

he can really help your side. If he can't, he's stuck doing it anyway!



Decide who is leading the action for the team and making the test before the GM reveals his action. Other players on the team may help the player who is making the test.

Go Team Disposition!



If you help a team with a disposition roll, you're on that team for the duration of this conflict. You're bound by any results.

If you don't help on the disposition roll, you're not on that team. You can help any character on any action, whether they're on the players' or GM's side.

Multiple Characters in a Team



If you have two or more mice on one team, each player takes turns testing for and describing his actions for the team. Two players alternate back and forth. Three players each get one action out of the set of three. If you have four players on one team, which I recommend against, the fourth player starts the next exchange of actions. Then you go around the table again.

You're free to shuffle around the order in which players take actions each time you choose, but no player on a team can take two actions in a row. And if there are three players on a team, each player gets one action out of the three.

Multiple Teams, Multiple Actions



You can start a conflict involving multiple *teams* per side—two teams against one team, two on two, three on two, etc. During multiteam conflicts, all teams choose their actions as normal. Everyone reveals in the normal sequence. Once actions are announced, compare who's making versus tests and who's making independent tests against their targets.

If two teams have the same target and choose actions that are both versus their target's action, they must help each other rather than roll separately. Use the **Teamwork** rules described earlier in this chapter. Same goes for choosing independent actions: If two teams on the same side both choose actions that are independent to their opponent's action, they don't roll individually, they help each other. Choose which team and which action you're playing, and which team and which action is just helping. The helping team's action is like any other help; describe it, and pass one die over. If two teams are fighting against a common enemy and one has a versus action while the other has an independent, then they roll on their own.

Two teams of mice are fighting a single team of weasels. The mice teams choose Attack and Maneuver; the weasels choose Defend. Attack and Maneuver make versus tests against

Defend. The mice teams must help each other make one test. The weasels test for Defend once against the combined teams of mice.

The rules for helping each other with rolls are described in the **Teamwork** section of this chapter.

Winning a Conflict



If you reduce your opponent's disposition to zero, you win the conflict. You achieve your goal.

Lieam wins the conflict against the snake. He reduces the GM's disposition to 0 while his disposition is 1. He accomplishes his goal; he kills the snake.

However, if you lost points from your own disposition, you have to *compromise* with the loser. See the **Compromise** heading.

Losing a Conflict

If your disposition is reduced to zero while your opponent has points left, you have lost. You do not accomplish your goal as stated.

The snake does not kill Lieam or drive him away from its nest.

Tying a Conflict



If both sides are reduced to zero disposition in the same action, the conflict is a tie. *Both* sides accomplish their goals. This is a very dangerous outcome!

If Lieam and the snake had reduced each other to 0 disposition on the same action, the conflict would have been a tie. In this case, they both could have died. It would have been a dramatic and heroic end to the redfur!

Compromise



If you lost, but took points off your opponent's disposition, he must offer you a compromise.

Compromises are like twists, but in this case they are the result of the whole conflict, not just a failed roll. And players also get to introduce compromises, not just the GM.

Once the conflict has ended, the first thing you do is compromise. The loser makes an offer to the winner, "Fine, you win, but..." The degree of the compromise should be appropriate to how much disposition the winner lost.

The results of the conflict are set—the winner achieved his goal, the loser did not. Now discuss an appropriate middle ground for compromise.

The whole group must decide if the compromise is appropriate. If everyone complains that the compromise is too much or inappropriate, the loser can change his terms. If no consensus can be reached, the GM can approve the compromise or ask the loser to modify his terms.

This negotiation takes place as table chatter—a brief conversation between the players.

There are three grades to compromises—a minor compromise, a compromise and a major compromise.



Minor Compromise: Lost a Little



If the winner lost less than half his disposition, he owes the loser a minor compromise. The loser may ask for a small part of his goal or something related to it. Minor compromises can be used to set up a follow-up conflict or to apply changes to the winner's condition—tiring him out or making him Angry, for example.

Compromise: Lost About Half



If the winner comes out of the conflict with only half of his disposition, he owes the loser a significant concession. The loser doesn't get his goal, but imagine he got halfway there.

Or the loser could accept defeat, but introduce a new, unforeseen complication that has arisen due to the winner's victory. This is how a player creates a twist.

Alternately, the loser could offer a compromise in which he gets nothing, but the winner only got halfway to his goal. Good luck convincing the winner to agree!

Major Compromise: Lost All but a Few



If the winner's disposition is reduced to just a few points, he has won a very narrow victory indeed. He must grant a *major* compromise to the loser. Imagine the loser

nearly accomplished his goal, but was only thwarted at the end. What would that look like?

Or what major new twist could be introduced because of this victory?

Lieam lost all but one from his disposition. This means the GM gets a major compromise out of him. The GM says, "You won, but you're trapped in the snake's mouth. If Saxon and Kenzie don't rescue you, you're done—you'll die of thirst."

That's a pretty tough compromise.

Compromises can be used to extract promises, change the way a character feels about you, or throw a wrench in the works. They can be used to hurt your enemy, too. But you can't use a compromise to accomplish your conflict goal. If you didn't win, you don't get your goal.

Conditions in a Compromise

Conditions like Hungry and Thirsty, Angry, Tired, Injured and Sick may be applied as part of a compromise in a conflict. In a conflict, everyone on your team suffers the same condition. This is discussed in more detail under the **Conditions** heading of this chapter.

The GM also says to Lieam's player, "In addition to being stuck, you're also Tired from the exertion." Lieam's player must check off his Tired condition on his character sheet.

Binding Results



Conflict results, victories and compromise are binding results. Your character is convinced, captured, tricked or whatever result came up in play. That result stands until challenged by another conflict.

Surrender

You may surrender during a conflict. This is an optional rule. In order for it to be invoked, you must agree to use it in your game at some time before the current conflict. You can't bring it up for the first time just because you're losing or winning or whatever.

Surrender allows you to give up during a conflict. It must be announced before the action for that segment is announced. The surrendering player hands total victory to his opponent. There is no compromise.

If at all possible, a challenge should be played out to its conclusion. Players who are losing should fight for a compromise.

Pass and Fail in Conflicts

Individual tests matter less in conflicts. You're fighting for big stakes here. When you make a roll, you only count if you passed or failed—usually by how much. The twist and conditions of success rules are not in effect for every test.

GEAR FOR CONFLICTS



In conflicts, gear behaves a little differently than it does against basic obstacles. It doesn't give a flat bonus die to your rolls. Instead, your gear has qualities that can help with specific actions or particular conditions.

Fighting Weapons

Fighting weapons provide useful bonuses, but can also impose penalties to some actions. Be sure to look closely at your weapon.

Weapon Length and Ranges

Fighting weapons have a handful of qualities that describe their length or range in a fight. They are as follows: normal, spear, thrown and missile. Normal is the shortest length.



These weapons don't have any special considerations. Spears are longer than normal weapons. Thrown weapons have a longer range than spears and normal weapons. Missiles have the longest range. That's all you need to know right now. I'll describe exactly what they do below.

Axe

Deadly: + 1s after a successful Attack. *Slow:* -1D to Defend or Feint.

Bow

Missile: Against short-ranged weapons, your Attack action counts as a versus action (rather than independent) against Attack and is independent against Maneuver. *Long Range:* + 2D to Maneuver against normal, spear or thrown weapons. *Hard to Defend:* Add + 1D to your Attack versus Defend.

Halberd

Versatile: Halberds are versatile polearms. They can be used either as a *spear* or an *axe* in order to use that weapon's qualities. Choose which mode you're using *before* announcing your first action.

Hook and Line

Hooked: + 1D to Maneuver, + 1s after a successful maneuver. *Unwieldy:* -1D to Attack.

Knife

Short and Quick: Any successful Maneuver when fighting with a knife, against a spear, thrown or missile weapon counts as the *disarm* effect. This effect happens *in addition to* your margin of success for the maneuver action. *Thrown:* When throwing a knife against a spear or normal weapon, your Attack action counts as versus against an opponent's Attack and is independent against Maneuver. Once you throw your knife, it's gone!

Shield

Protection: + 2D to Defend. *Heavy:* -1D Health to recover from fatigue if the shield was used in a fight during the last Turn. Shields are generally used on their own—as defense *and* a weapon.

Sling

Missile: Against shorter-ranged weapons, your Attack action counts as a versus action (rather than independent) against Attack and is independent against Maneuver. *Medium Range:* + 1D to Maneuver.



Spear

Spear: Your Attack action counts as a versus action against Attack and is independent against Maneuver. This only applies against spears and normal weapons. The spear also gets a +1D to Maneuver actions against normal weapons.

Staff

Handy: +1D to Feint actions. May also be *thrown*. When throwing a staff, your Attack action counts as a versus action against an opponent's Attack and is independent against Maneuver. This only applies against spears and normal weapons. Also, once you throw your staff, it's gone!

Sword

Useful: +1D to one action of your choice in a fight. You may choose the action at any point during the conflict. Once chosen, the bonus die sticks to that action for the remainder of the fight.

When Lieam fights the snake, he applies his sword's Useful trait to the Attack action.

Choose your Weapon

Sometimes guardmice carry multiple weapons—a sword and shield, a sword and knife, a bow and a sword. Choose which weapon you're using before you start choosing actions. You must stick with that weapon for a

whole set of three actions. This counts for the halberd's versatile quality, too. If you want to change up, you can do so when you choose a new set of actions. Declare that you've switched weapons before you announce your first action.

Armor

Armor may be worn in fights. It offers a degree of protection for your mouse, but it is also heavy and cumbersome. To gain the benefit of armor, it must be worn at all times. You can't just throw it on right before a fight. Armor worn during the previous Turn imposes a penalty to recover from the Tired condition. If you don't want to suffer the penalty, you have to keep your armor off for the whole Turn.

These penalties are cumulative with shields and conditions.

Light Armor

+1D to your disposition roll for the fight.

Heavy: -1D to Health tests to resist fatigue.

Heavy Armor

+1s to your disposition roll in a fight. *Clumsy:*

-1D to Maneuver tests. -1D to Scout or Nature

for sneaking or hiding. *Heavy:* -1D to Health tests to resist fatigue.

Weapons of Wit

Weapons of wit are “weapons” you can use in an argument or speech. These are mostly roleplaying cues. They give you guidelines on what to say and how to say it.



Intimidation or Deception

+ 1s to a successful Feint or Maneuver. The intimidation or lie must be played out to gain the benefit.

Evidence

+ 1s after a successful Attack. If the character has preestablished evidence to support his side, he can display it and explain it on his Attack actions to gain benefit.

Roleplay

The roleplay bonus is granted to players who deliver their lines in character.

Add + 1D to one action of your choice in the argument or speech. You may choose at any point during the conflict. Once chosen, the bonus die sticks to that action for the remainder of the argument. If playing in a team, it sticks to that action for the team, not just the character.

Promises

+ 1D to Defend. If you make promises to the other side, you can gain this benefit. The promises aren't binding (unless they come back to haunt you in the compromise).

Repeating Yourself

-1D to any action. If you repeat the same points over and over, you're weakening your side. You suffer a penalty for repetition.

You may combine the roleplay die with any of the other bonuses. Repeating yourself can also be combined with any of the other effects, including roleplay.

Military Weapons

Military “weapons” are materials, organizations or tactics that the military leader must acquire, muster or devise before the battle. You can’t make these up on the fly!

Supplies and Ammunition

+ 1D to Defend. If you’ve laid in supplies and ammunition for your troops before the battle, you’re better on the defense.

Combined Arms

+ 1D to Maneuver. If your forces consist of a combination of close-in weapons and missiles, you are more free to maneuver on the field.

Properly Equipped

+ 1D to disposition roll. If your force is better equipped for the terrain and weather than your opponent, you earn an advantage. Better equipped doesn’t always mean heavy armor and halberds. If you’re fighting in mud or confined spaces, the lighter-armed troopers have the advantage.

Command Structure

+ 1D to Attack. If your force has a commander, subcommanders and messengers to run



between them, you're more agile and organized on the attack.

Hero in the Fore

+ 1s to successful Attack actions if your force is being led from the front by a formidable hero.

Strategy

+ 1D to Feint. If you planned ahead for this battle, developing a strategy with your commanders based on your troops and supplies, then you're better prepared to think on your feet once the fight is on.

Fortifications

+ 1D to Defend. It's always hard to dislodge a force defending a fortified position. This bonus can combine with Supplies and Ammunition.

Cut to the Chase

If you're playing out a chase conflict, you can use the following effects to gain advantages. They are essentially weapons for a chase.

Locals or Smart Mice

+ 1D to one action of your choice in the chase. You may choose to apply the bonus at any point during the conflict. Once chosen, the bonus die sticks to that action for the remainder of the chase.

Mice who are chasing around their home turf earn this bonus. Also, mice who have a wise

appropriate to the terrain or locale may also take the bonus.

Maps

+ 1D to the disposition roll. Maps help you plan your escape better, but they don't help much in the heat of the moment. There's little time to consult them once the chase is on.

Dirty Tricks

+ 1s to a successful Feint. Dirty tricks like tripwires, sand in the face or even a rock to the back of the head earn you the element of surprise. The dirty trick must be described by the acting player. Dirty tricks can be invented on the fly or set in advance.

Right Tools for the Job

+ 1s to Attack. If your team is equipped for the terrain and weather, you earn an advantage. Equipment like rope, a ladder, camouflaged netting, snow shoes, skis or a boat can all be used

t o



earn this bonus. It's dependent on the situation.

CONDITIONS

The life of a guardmouse is tough. There are long marches in bad weather, hard work with no rest and rough treatment from bad characters. All of this can wear a mouse down. He's got to keep his mental and physical health up in order to survive the rigors of the road. If he falters, he'll fall, and if he falls, the Territories will fail. Guardmice never fall!

To represent the toll of life on the road, there are six *conditions* in the game: Healthy, Hungry and Thirsty, Angry, Tired, Injured and Sick.

Healthy

All mice start their first adventure happy, healthy and fed. This is the condition you want your mouse to be in. There are no penalties for being a Healthy mouse. Once all other conditions are alleviated, a mouse returns to being Healthy. If any other condition is checked, the mouse is no longer considered Healthy. He must deal with that condition (and suffer its penalties) before he can return to being Healthy.

Hungry and Thirsty

Being Hungry and Thirsty can impair your guardmouse when it's time for him to step up and face danger. A wise mouse once said, "The Guard fights on its stomach." A well-fed guard is a brave guard.



Hungry and Thirsty subtracts 1 from disposition for any conflict.

Angry

Life in the Guard can be frustrating. The Guard are caretakers and problem solvers; mice from all over the Territories seek them out and lay problems at their paws. It's important for a guardmouse to keep a cool head and an objective viewpoint.



Being Angry subtracts 1 from your disposition for any conflict that uses Will as its base.

Saxon and Kenzie are both Angry when Celanawe confronts them in his home. In the argument conflict, they suffer -1s to their disposition.

Tired

The labors of the Guard are ceaseless and exhausting. The work is never done, but it's important to get enough rest. Otherwise, an exhausted guardmouse could jeopardize the whole mission.



Tired subtracts 1 disposition from all conflicts.

Injured

The Guard put their very lives on the line every day. They're often Injured in their efforts. Injuries are difficult things. They don't take a Guard out of action, but they reduce his overall effectiveness.



Being Injured imposes a -1D penalty to Nature, Will, Health and skill tests. This penalty is *not* applied to Resources and Circles tests, nor to Will and Health tests for recovery.

Rand's Fighter is normally 5. He's Injured, so his skill rating currently counts as 4.



Rand's Health is 4. If he were to use his Health as tiebreaker while he's Injured, the ability would count as 3. If he uses his Health to try to recover from the Injury, he tests the full ability rating.

Sick

Being out in the cold and wet, exposed to the raw edge of nature, a guardmouse is always at risk of falling ill. It's important to eat right and keep warm and dry lest you get Sick.



Being Sick imposes a -1D penalty to Nature, Will, Health and skill tests. This penalty is *not* applied to Resources and Circles tests, nor to Will and Health tests for recovery.

Rating 0



If an ability or skill rating is reduced to 0 by being Injured or Sick, you cannot test that ability while you suffer that condition. You cannot get benefit from teamwork, you cannot help yourself and you cannot spend persona points on that skill or ability.

Multiple Conditions



It is possible to suffer from multiple conditions at once. A character can be Hungry, Angry *and* Tired. He can be Sick *and* Injured, or any combination of the conditions. Apply the effects to the appropriate situations. If the effects double up for a particular situation, apply both penalties.

For example, if a Guard is Angry and Tired, he has -2s to his disposition for Will-based conflicts—one from Angry and one from Tired—whereas he only subtracts 1s from his disposition for fights from being Tired; Angry doesn't apply.

All conditions are singular. You can't be Tired twice or Angry times three. Once you're Angry, you're Angry. Once you're Tired, you're Tired. You don't have to worry about getting that condition again until after you've recovered from it.

Conditions of Failure



The GM can apply conditions to a character who fails a roll but is allowed to pass the test. Here are some suggestions for applying conditions to certain tests.

- ❖ Hungry and Thirsty may be applied as the result of any failed test.
- ❖ For Orator, Deceiver and Persuader tests, apply the Angry condition to the character.
- ❖ For Pathfinder, Hunter, Scout or Nature tests involving escape or climbing, apply Tired or Injured.
- ❖ For mouse trades like Smith or Baker, apply Angry or Tired.
- ❖ For academic skills like Cartographer, Scientist or Archivist, apply Tired. All that research and reading is hard work!

- ❖ For Fighter or Nature tests involving fighting, apply the Injured condition.

Conditions and Seasons



In the *Seasons* chapter, you'll see that harsh weather can increase the danger to the patrol. Weather and wilderness increase the frequency and severity of conditions.

When using weather, the GM may impose the conditions for failure as described under the specific seasons. When using extreme weather, the GM can call for Health tests to resist the effects of the weather. Failure for these tests imposes conditions, too.

Conditions in a Conflict

Conditions play a big role in conflicts. They affect your disposition, they can be a part of your goal, and they can be applied in compromises.

Conditions in Disposition



Make your test to generate your disposition (be sure to add any bonuses) and then subtract your condition penalties from the result.

Being Hungry or Thirsty, Angry or Tired affects the disposition of some conflicts.

Being Injured or Sick affects all rolls except for Resources and Circles, or Will and Health tests for recovery. Since being Injured or Sick

imposes a -1D penalty on Will and Nature, it also reduces your starting disposition for all conflicts.

If you're part of a team, all of the unique conditions of the mice on that team hurt the team's disposition.

So if you're Angry and your partner is Tired, then you lose 2 points from your dispositions for arguments.

If you're both Angry, the Angry penalty only counts once.

Applying Conditions as Part of a Compromise

Conditions may be applied as a compromise or as part of a compromise in a conflict.

After a fight, Tired or Angry can be applied as a minor compromise. Injury can be given as a compromise. Two of the three, Tired, Angry or Injured, can be applied as a major compromise.

Alternately, Tired or Angry can be part of a compromise containing other terms. Injury alone can be part of a major compromise and be combined with other terms or conditions.

For an argument or speech, Tired or Angry can be applied as a minor compromise. Thirsty and Angry can be applied as the conditions of a

compromise. Sick and Tired can be applied as the conditions of a major compromise.

Alternately, Tired, Thirsty or Angry can be part of a compromise containing other terms. Sick can be part of a major compromise and be combined with other appropriate terms.

RECOVERY

Suffering under a condition is burdensome. It hinders the guardmouse's effectiveness. It behooves the guardmouse to rest up and deal with his problems. The recovery rules describe the obstacles and situations necessary to alleviate conditions. These tests may be made in the Players' Turn at the cost of one check each or in the GM's Turn for two checks.



The obstacles for recovery are also listed in the center column on your character sheet.

You may make one recovery test per condition per turn—one shot at recovering from Angry in the Players' Turn, for example, but you can try again in the next GM's Turn if you spend the checks.



If your recovery test is successful, erase the check mark next to the condition. You no longer suffer from that penalty, at least until you get hit with it again.



If you have recovered from all of your conditions, check off your Healthy condition. You're back in top form!

Recovery Order



Conditions are pernicious. You must relieve them in order: Hungry and Thirsty first, then Angry, then Tired, then Injured and then Sick.

You've got to deal with being Hungry and Thirsty before you can let go of your Anger.

Hungry and Thirsty

You can only alleviate the Hungry and Thirsty condition by eating and drinking! You may test Harvester, Cook, Brewer, Baker or Resources to acquire a meal or a drink. It's generally an Ob 1 test, but the GM may increase that based on factors like the weather or scarcity of supplies.

If the test is passed, the character eats and drinks to his heart's content. The condition is alleviated.



The GM may use his characters to feed the players as he sees fit, too. Family, friends and mentors will feed the character if he calls on them and they are able to help. When these characters feed the player's character, he may alleviate his hungry condition—he's fed!

If your character is Hungry and Thirsty you may not alleviate any other condition until Hungry and Thirsty is taken care of.

If the test to acquire good food and drink fails, the character remains grumbly and cranky through another GM's Turn. He may test to recover again at the next appropriate juncture.

Angry



Mastering your anger requires an Ob 2 Will test. If you succeed, your anger fades. The condition is alleviated. If you fail, your anger sticks with you. You may test again to recover when appropriate—either in the GM's Turn if you spend checks or if you buy a recovery test in the next Players' Turn. Describe what you did to help the anger pass—took a walk, read poetry, kicked a beetle!

Kenzie is upset about discovering that someone is selling Lockhaven's secrets. He has the Angry condition checked on his character sheet. During the Players' Turn, he uses his free test to make a Will test. He rolls his 5 dice against Ob 2. If he's successful, he overcomes his anger. If he fails, he's still upset about the whole affair.

Tired



Fatigue can be dealt with in two ways: either a good night's rest, or with an Ob 3 Health test. If you pass the Health test, you shrug off your fatigue and soldier on. You may alleviate this condition. If the test is failed, the Tired condition remains with you through the next GM's Turn.

You can a good night's rest from the generosity of your friend, your parents, Gwendolyn or through an Ob 2 Resources test for a night at the

inn. Sleeping out in the wild doesn't count as a good night's rest. If that's how you want to rest, you've got to make the Ob 3 Health test.

Injured



Injuries are difficult to deal with. You can make an Ob 4 Health test to overcome the pain and discomfort. If the test is successful, the penalty is removed and the condition alleviated. If the Health test fails, the character keeps the penalty until he finds the attention of a healer.

Rand is Injured in the Winter War. He makes an Ob 4 Health test to try to recover. He fails the test. He's stuck with the Injury until he can see a healer.

To treat an injury, the Healer must make an Ob 3 skill test. If the healer test is successful, the penalty is removed and the condition alleviated. If the healer fails his test, the Injury condition is removed, however the Injury *permanently* reduces one ability or a skill (except Resources and Circles) of the GM's choosing. You may later advance this depleted ability using the Advancement rules described in **Abilities and Skills**.

Gwendolyn sends a healer to tend to Rand. The healer tests her skill against an Ob 3. She fails! Rand suffers a permanent injury. The GM takes Rand's character sheet and deducts one point from the mouse's Health. He says, "You've got

a permanent limp." Rand's Health goes from 4 to 3. However, he now no longer suffers the -1D penalty to all his abilities.

If Rand or the healer had passed their tests, then the -1D penalty would have been alleviated and Rand would not have lost a point from his Health.

Alternately, after being Injured, the player may choose to have his character skip the attentions of a healer. In this case, the condition is removed, and the player suffers the permanent injury described above. This can only be done during the Players' Turn. It doesn't cost a check.

Sometimes when you're in the field, there's no time to wait to see a healer. It's better to suck up the permanent injury to remove the blanket penalty to all abilities and skills.

Sick



Sickness requires an Ob 4 Will test to fight off. If that test is successful, the illness fades and the condition is alleviated. If the Will test is failed, the Sickness condition remains until the character seeks the attention of a healer.

The healer must pass an Ob 3 test to alleviate the condition. If he's successful, the Sickness is cured and the condition is alleviated. If the healer fails his test, the Sickness *permanently* reduces one

ability or a skill (except Resources and Circles) of the GM's choosing. You may later advance this depleted ability using the Advancement rules described in the **Abilities and Skills** chapter.

Alternately, after falling ill, the player may choose to have his character waive the attentions of a healer. In this case, the condition is removed and the player suffers the permanent injury described above. This can only be done during the Players' Turn. It doesn't cost a check or a test.

Twists, Conditions and Recovery



Recovery tests are *not* subject to the twists and conditions rules for failure. If the player passes the test, the





condition is removed. If he fails, he has to continue to deal with his condition as described above.

DEATH AND KILLING



Your guardmouse character could be killed in the line of duty. It's a real risk.

And your guardmouse character might be forced to take another life while in service to the Guard. It's a tragic fact.

Death cannot be the result of a single independent or versus test. A character or his opponent may only be killed as part of the goal of a conflict. You've got to tell your opponent outright that you're trying to kill him.

The Limits of Mousehood

As a mouse, what you can kill is rather limited. In the *Denizens* chapter, there's a nifty graphic that shows a sort of food chain of all the critters

in the Territories called the Natural Order. Using fight conflicts, you can only set your sights on creatures that are lower than, equal to or one level higher than you in the Order. War and special science conflicts allow you to injure and kill animals that are much higher than you in the Natural Order.

Death and Compromises

There are special rules for killing mouse and weasel characters. These are imposed in addition to standard compromises.

- ✳ If you're trying to kill your opponents in a fight, you've got to win with little or no compromise. If you win with no compromise, you've done the deed. It's over.
- ✳ If you win with a minor compromise in a one-on-one confrontation, your opponent gets one last act before he dies. It can be then and there, or he can stagger back to town or whatever.

- ❏ If you win with a minor compromise in a group battle, then one or two of your opponents have been killed. The others are injured, but alive.
- ❏ If you win with a compromise in a one-on-one confrontation, there are two options. The victim can beg for mercy as the whole of his compromise. You bestow mercy based on his pleadings. Or you can finish the job and the player can ask for a fat compromise from you—maybe everyone knows you're a murderer now.
- ❏ If you win with a compromise in a group conflict, one character takes it for the team. Everyone else is Injured and Tired.
- ❏ If you win with a major compromise, the characters are alive, but left for dead. Check off all of their conditions and reduce their Circles and Resources by one! Everyone thinks they're gone, but they're not truly dead. They can recover.

Losing a Character



Losing a character sucks. First, you're out of the game until the end of the session. Second, it just sucks! Your character is removed from play permanently.

After you've recovered from your loss, you have two options. Make a new character and rejoin the game in the next session, or offer to start up a new mission as the GM. Sometimes the best way to work out your grief is to play in opposition to the patrol for a while.

Your patrol should hold a funeral for your mouse and say a few words. During the winter, there's a ceremony at Lockhaven where the Guard remembers all of the mice who gave their lives in service. Next winter in your game, you and your group should play that scene out. See **Losing a Character** in *The Mission* for additional thoughts on this.



CLEARING UP CONFUSION



Sometimes, when everyone is excited and shouting, it's hard to figure out what's going on. It's easy to get confused.

If this happens, the GM should stop the action and ask everyone to be quiet. Then he should go around the table and ask each player the following questions: "What is your character doing?" and "Why? What are you trying to accomplish?"

If you're a player, answer as succinctly as you can. Describe your character's action and tell the GM why you, the player, want him to be doing that.

If you're a player and you're confused, you can take this opportunity to ask the GM and the other players some questions about what's happening in the story. Don't bog the game down, just get caught up.



Once everyone is caught up, the GM may reassess any obstacles if he needs to. After that, roll the dice and keep going!

BEHIND THE SCENES



It's vital that you present a rich, colorful and consistent world to the players. This effect is generated through vivid descriptions, but even more so by bringing to life engaging characters.

Make the characters under your control vibrant, even if they're only in the game for one scene. Give them a voice and a manner. Pause for a moment and try to imagine what the character's Belief, Goal and Instinct might be. Keep that in mind as you play him.

It's the GM's job to test the mettle of the players' characters and provide them with a chance to become heroes. One of the ways to do that is through opposition by rival characters or mistakes made by friendly characters. You want those characters to be engaging and challenging, but it's impossible to manage the lives of all of the characters the players will meet.

To alleviate the burden of managing all of the challenges the players will face, the GM has a special rule for his characters. Unless faced with a Healer test, a versus test against a player



or unless they're in a conflict with a player character, they always succeed or fail at the GM's discretion.

The blacksmith can make his pots and pans; you don't have to roll for it. The armorer makes his swords without any problems. The harvesters bring in the grain. Et cetera!

This trick for the GM helps keep the world of Mouse Guard running without forcing him to roll for every little thing. The challenges are for the *players*, not for the supporting cast.





-Petersen



SEASONS

Clouds, leaves, soil and wind
all offer themselves as signals
of changes in the weather.

However, not all storms of life can be predicted.

—Excerpt from “Weather Watcher’s Field Guide” distributed to all guardmice

The seasons are very important to mouse life. This section describes what the individual seasons are like and offers a variety of details like the weather, animals one might encounter, the state of the wilderness, Guard duties by season, important happenings in mouse life and an assortment of common problems that arise.

This chapter makes reference to a lot of animals, mice and weasels. Everything referred to here is detailed in the *Denizens of the Mouse Territories* chapter. This chapter focuses on a bigger picture—the climate and how it affects mouse life.



This chapter is mostly useful to the GM for setting up obstacles for the players, but everyone should read it if possible. It will make you a better guardmouse.

SEASONAL WEATHER

Each of the seasons has its own character. Spring is volatile, summer is docile, fall is unpredictable and winter is steady, but deadly cold. In the following section, each season is described in terms of common and unseasonable weather patterns—clear skies, rain, snow, etc.



The GM sets the weather at the beginning of the session. Thereafter, the weather changes when one of two things happens: Either a player uses his Weather Watcher skill or the GM uses a weather-based twist due to a failed test from a player.

The Power of a Season



In order to represent how volatile a season is, each season is given a rating. It's listed in parentheses next to the season's weather heading and is also the large number at the center of each season in the chart on the next page. When testing Weather Watcher, make a versus test between this rating and the mouse's skill. See the Weather Watcher skill for more on how that works.

CHANGING SEASONS



There are two methods for determining when and how the seasons change. The first is very straightforward. You decide before you start playing how many



missions you want to play per season. The other method uses the Seasons Scale found on the GM's mission sheet and on the next page.

Missions and Seasons



The simplest method for changing seasons is to play one mission per season. Play a mission in the spring, then play one in the summer, then finish out your patrol season with a mission in the fall. Play a winter session last and you'll have played a whole year of life in the Guard in just four sessions. Winter is the season of rest. You usually don't do a mission in winter, you recuperate.

If that's too short, you can alter the number of missions per season. Say, two in the spring, two in the summer and one in the fall. I recommend having three or fewer missions per season.

Seasons Scale



Using the Seasons Scale method, you play out the seasons in a variable amount of time. The length of each season is represented by a number of dots: Spring three, Summer four, Fall two, Winter five.

The Seasons



The dots in the chart below indicate how many weather-based twists the GM can use before the season turns. If, in the event of a failure, the GM decides to bring weather into the picture—it begins to rain or snow, it gets warmer, colder or whatever—that counts as a weather-based twist. (The number is separate and different from the rating you use to roll against the Weather Watcher skill.)

For example, fall is worth 2 on this scale. In the course of play, the GM can invoke two weather-based twist before fall turns to winter.

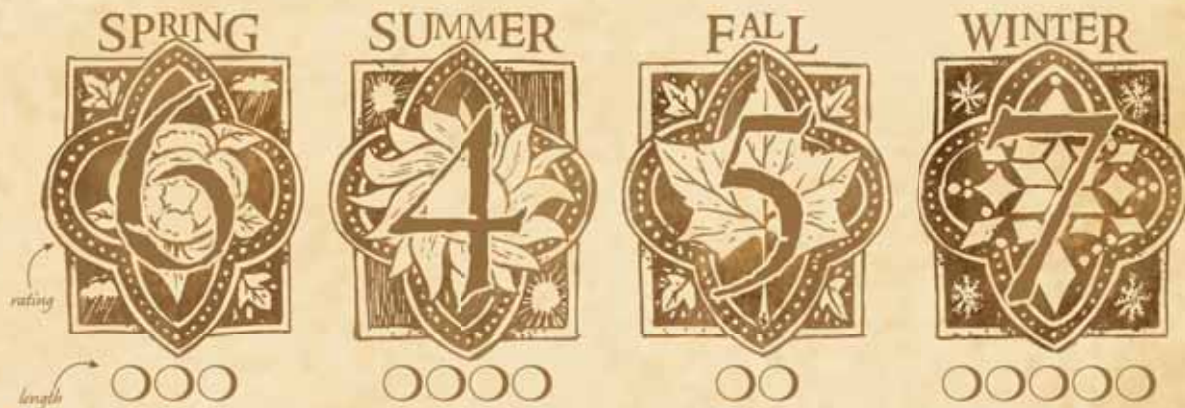
Spring is worth 3 on this scale. After three weather-based twists, summer comes. These twists usually come about one per session, but it could happen all in one session!



Weather twists are accrued across multiple sessions of play. You can earn one this week, and another one next week. When you earn your quota for the season, the next session you play uses the weather for the next season.

If you're in the middle of a moment-to-moment mission and the season ends, stay with your current season until the mission's over. The next mission will start in the next season.

This rule is meant to give the feel of the seasons inevitably turning. The GM should use the number of twists on the seasons scale to judge how severe the season's weather currently is. The closer fall gets to winter, for example, the colder and more snowy it becomes.



SPRING

Spring is a busy time for the mice, and dangerous. The whole of the Territories—both animals and mice—emerge from their winter retreats and search for food and warmth.

Spring Weather (6)

Spring in the Mouse Territories is short and cool. It snows in the early spring and then rains as spring turns to summer. Wedged between the snow and rain are days of sunshine.

Clear and Warm

While the spring weather is often harsh and unpredictable, the season gently fades into a calm warmth that grows into summer's heat. These clear, balmy days of spring are some of the most beautiful weather in the Territories.

Spring Snow

After a month of calm, dry, cold weather at the end of winter, spring is typically ushered in with a spate of snow storms.



Snowfall can factor into any outdoor skill or ability tests.



Failed tests taken in the snow should grant the Tired, or if appropriate, Sick condition if the GM opts not to use a twist.



The GM may demand the players pass an Ob 3 Health test for spending extended time in the snow. Failure imposes the Sick condition.

Spring Rain

As the weather warms, spring snow turns to spring rain. The rain is usually cold and heavy, but it doesn't last for more than a day or two.



Spring rain is a factor in any test involving outdoor activity.



If the patrol travels, fights or works in the rain, the GM may demand Ob 3 Health tests. Failure imposes the Tired condition.

Spring Storms

Late in the spring, as the cool air begins to collide with warm winds moving up from the south, the Territories are rocked by volatile thunderstorms.

While the forests and fields of the Territories are still too wet with snow for lightning strikes to be a fire hazard, errant strikes can sunder trees, damaging mouse settlements.

Spring storms also carry the risk of flash flooding. The sudden influx of rain over still-frozen ground that can't absorb the water is very dangerous to mousekind. Flash floods can damage or destroy entire towns; they wash out



bridges and destroy trails. In the wake of such flooding, there's always work for the Guard.



Storm weather factors into any skill test made while outdoors. Injury can be imposed as the condition for failure for any skill.

Unseasonably Cold

Unseasonably cold temperatures keep rivers frozen and snow on the ground. Harvest and forage are all but impossible to find. Use the weather as a factor for these tests. During an unseasonably cold period, the weather conditions for winter apply instead of those for spring.

Unseasonably Warm

On occasion, the spring will warm early and suddenly. While it's a welcome respite to the frigid temperatures of winter, spring rain and quickly melting snow combine to cause viscous mud, dangerously swollen rivers and widespread floods.



During such flood conditions, the mice require alternate modes of transport, such as rafts or boats, in order to traverse what they could typically walk. Crossing floodwaters is dangerous. Conditions of failure always include the possibility of drowning, Sickness or Injury.



Spring Animals

Springtime is a riot of activity. Animals who have been hibernating emerge from their dens with insatiable appetites. Predators who have gone hungry all winter are on the prowl. Many animals are in search of mates—and are therefore quite dangerous!

Animals who mated in the fall or winter are now tending to their young. Wolves, foxes and coyote have young to feed. This makes them territorial and defensive, as the presence of their weak and vulnerable young attracts predators as well.

Later in the spring, birds return in flocks, migrating back to their northern homes. They come in force and swarm available food sources. A flock of birds will devour all of the seeds and harvest in an area, leaving little behind for mice and other grazers.

Spring Wilderness

The spring wilderness is treacherous, especially in the early part of the season. Mice must navigate the remnants of winter—ice and snow—while contending with explosive plant growth, sucking mud and swollen, frigid streams.

Plant growth destroys trails. Beating or clearing new trails requires Pathfinding.

Clearing shoots and roots from the foundations of outposts, towns and cities requires Laborer.

Traversing swollen streams requires Boatcrafter or very difficult Pathfinding tests.

Navigating half-frozen swamps can be done with Pathfinding or Nature, but the conditions of failure (if chosen by the GM) always include the risk of Injury or Sickness.

Spring Duties and Tasks

For the mice, spring is a time for maintenance of both the exterior and interior of their homes. The settlements must also resupply themselves with wood and early growth like buds and shoots. There are many more specific duties:

Scent Border

Over the winter, the scientists of Sprucetuck brew the next year's batch of scent for the border. In the spring, Gwendolyn dispatches patrols to retrieve the barrels of scent and pour it at the proper locations along the border.

This is a vital mission. It must be done at the proper time during the season or large predators will invade the Territories soon after. Pouring the border requires a Pathfinder test to identify the proper locations and a Scientist test, helped with Loremouse and Hunter, to properly distribute the stinky stuff.

Apiaries

As the bees start a new colony, the hive needs attending by the Apiarist.



Planting

The soil of the Territories is inhospitable to crop plants. However, some settlements are home to determined mice who plant and tend crops despite the difficulty. Planting a field of seeds for later harvesting is an Ob 6 Harvester test. Scientist and Laborer may help.

Rebuilding

Winter weather takes its toll on the mouse settlements. During the spring, the tradesmice and laborers emerge to repair the damage. Use Carpenter, Stonemason and Scientist to repair structural damage. More importantly, these work crews must be watched and protected from the hungry predators and scavengers ranging the Territories.

Replenishing Stores

Those mice who aren't repairing and rebuilding are out on a feverish hunt to scavenge all of the seeds, shoots and soft bark they can find. Once again, it is the Guard's job to protect these mice.

If one settlement fared better than another during the winter, stocks will be traded for services and money. The Guard are often called upon to mind these caravans as they make their way through the snowy, muddy trails.

Rescue Operations

Between all the work that must be done, the volatile weather, the floods and aggressive depredation, sometimes mice simply get trapped or stranded. It's not uncommon for a patrol on another mission to stumble upon a group of civilians stranded on a root in the middle of a rising stream, or to find a furious skunk trying to burrow its way under a fallen log to get at some trapped mice. And, of course, it's the Guard's duty to rescue those in need!

Mail Delivery

Over the winter, mice write letters to their loved ones in faraway cities. Businesses accrue logs of transactions that must be submitted to investors or partners. And birthday presents for nieces and nephews born over winter in far-off cities pile up. It often falls on the Guard to deliver the mail in the spring time. As Gwendolyn dispatches patrols to their spring missions, she'll often give them a bag of mail to take to their destination.

Spring Celebrations

Vernalstar

Throughout the Territories, mice await the coming of spring. They celebrate the rebirth of the land and its promise of bounty. It is the first time since the first frost that many mice are able to travel or visit friends and family

in other settlements. It's a time of looking forward and making resolutions. Every settlement welcomes travelers and offers open doors to mice from throughout the territories. The first fresh brews and soups are the taste of the celebration. Its coming is marked by the Vernalstar rising in the south.

SUMMER

After the hectic energy of spring, the summer season is when life is as normal as it can be for the mice. Days are long and warm. There's plenty to do, but there's also an unhurried attitude in the Territories. The official first day of summer is the summer solstice.



Summer Weather (4)

Summers are warm and short, with an intense heat spell at the very peak.

Warm and Humid

Most summer days in the Territories are warm and humid without a cloud in the sky.



You may use the warm weather to impose the Hungry and Thirsty and Tired conditions as a result of failure.

Summer Rain

Summer rain is common in the early part of the season. It grows more sparse as summer wanes toward autumn.



Summer rain factors into Pathfinding and Scout tests, but it is otherwise mild and warm enough not to cause any other adverse effects.

Thunderstorms

Spectacular thunderstorms crash across the Territories in the late summer. They are sudden and fierce. They dissipate as quickly as they come. Lightning strikes from thunderstorms can touch off brush fires if the summer has been unseasonably dry. Thunderstorms can also cause flash floods if the conditions have been dry and the storm is sufficiently severe.

See **Summer Wilderness** for more on brush fires and flash floods.



Thunderstorms factor into any activity performed during the storm. They're loud, windy and wet. Mice can literally be blown away. The conditions of failure for activity during a thunderstorm can always include Injury.

Heat Waves

The Territories are usually hit with at least one heat wave during the summer.



If mice perform strenuous activity during the day in a heat wave, the GM may force an Ob 3 Health test. Failure imposes the Sick condition.



Summer Wilderness

During the summer, the underbrush grows thick. It becomes a heavy, low-hanging canopy, impassable to larger creatures. Mice have no problem traversing it, but landmarks vanish in all the growth and it is easy to get disoriented. The GM may invoke heavy undergrowth as a factor in a Scout or Pathfinder test. On the other hand, the GM may grant bonus dice for mice using the underbrush to stay undetected for Nature, Scout and Hunter tests. This acts like the bonus dice from gear.

Droughts

A summer without rain can cause droughts. The earth becomes dry and hard, and plants become brown and brittle.



Droughts are a factor in Harvester and Nature foraging tests.

Flash Floods

Thunderstorms can bring flash floods with them. If the rain falls faster than the ground can absorb it, the runoff flows to low-lying areas. As the volume of water grows, it picks up speed and force, carrying branches and debris with it.

Flash floods are so named because of the suddenness of their onset. They usually come and go in an afternoon, with the bulk of the water sweeping through an area in a matter of minutes.





There's no fighting a flash flood. Mice caught in one must pass an Ob 4 Nature test. Failure can impose the Tired or Injured conditions, or in a twist, the GM can sweep the patrol away.

Brush Fires and Forest Fires

Brush fires in the Territories are devastating—they can consume a whole town in a matter of minutes.

Brush fires can be set off by lightning strikes from thunderstorms, or as part of a twist from a failed Survivalist, Cook, Scientist or Militarist test involving fire in the outdoors.



Any activity spent fighting or traversing a burning area forces a Health test at Ob 4. Failure imposes the Sick or Injured condition.

Summer Animals

The summer is an active time for animals in the Territories.

Owls and hawks are hunting for mice to eat. Coyotes and foxes are always on the prowl for easy pickings, though wolves are off after bigger game. Bears are active and causing trouble, but there is plenty of forage in the summer so they don't specifically target mouse stores.

Flying squirrels and ground squirrels are not above stealing away a few baby mice to eat as they forage for nuts.

Wolverines and badgers are always a problem. In the summer they can be encountered prowling around looking for new hunting grounds.

And, of course, snakes and bullfrogs are always hungry and mice are at the top of their list of prey.

Summer Duties and Tasks

Travel

Mice take advantage of the warm, clear weather to travel to other settlements and visit family and friends. Caravans frequently make runs between the cities. It's common for these civilians to be accompanied by guardmice who are en route to, or returning from, other missions.

Work

Stone, sand, wood, clay and metal are all gathered during the summer. Carpenters, stonemasons, millers and smiths are very busy. Town officials will request aid from visiting patrol leaders, asking them to guard their crews out in the wild.

Building

Large-scale projects, like building bridges and outposts, and major settlement repairs

are started at the beginning of the summer. Gwendolyn has been known to assign patrols to watch over certain key projects.

Transport Escorts

Trade goods are shipped between the larger settlements during the summer. Huge, tottering, overloaded caravans are easier to transport during the mild summer months, but these shipments make ripe targets for scavengers and predators alike.

Birds will descend en masse and attempt to raid grain carts. Squirrels will dash out of hiding and attempt to steal from the seed carts. Raccoons and skunks will bully their

way into the lines and try to steal the whole thing. Shipments across water are at risk from otters, pike and snapping turtles.

It is up to the Guard to protect these shipments and the mice who haul them, and to make sure everything and everyone arrives safely at their destination.

Summer Celebrations

Musfire

The long warm days of summer beg to be enjoyed. The mice of Copperwood, Lillygrove and Elmwood celebrate with four-day-long festivals. Merriment is the focus of the



activities; with the harvest season coming, it provides a wonderful distraction.

Competitive games and tournaments for swordmouseship, archery, climbing and boating are common. The end of each day is marked with a bonfire lit outside the city's doors, where high achievers in competitions are fêted.

FALL

Fall sweeps away summer with cold rain and gray skies that quickly turn to frost and snow. Fall is one of the busiest times in the Territories. The mice must quickly harvest all of the supplies they can and prepare for winter before the snow comes and blankets the land.

Fall Weather (5)

Fall starts off very pleasantly. The summer heat dissipates and the air turns crisp rather than cold, but this is quickly followed by tempestuous rains, frost and snow.

Autumn Storms

Autumn storms are longer and more severe than their summer counterparts. Storm weather factors into all outdoor obstacles.



The GM may force an Ob 3 Health test on any character traveling or working outside during a storm. Failure brings on the Tired or Sick conditions.

Cold Rain

Cold autumn rain hinders travel and generally drives mice indoors. Factor the rain into Pathfinding and Scout tests.



If the patrol travels for an extended time in the rain, the Survivalist skill must be tested to ensure the mice do not become demoralized or sick. If the Survivalist fails to provide for his patrol, the GM may force Ob 2 Health tests for all of the mice in the patrol. Failure brings on the Angry or Sick conditions.

Unseasonably Warm

Some years, the fall is unseasonably warm. It's nice at first, but extended periods of unseasonable warmth increase the insect pest population and can cause sickness in whole settlements and blight harvests. During unseasonably warm fall conditions, use the weather and conditions for summer.

Unseasonably Cold

Sometimes winter comes early. It is devastating. Early frost and snow kills the harvest before it can be taken in. During unseasonably cold



periods, autumn storms and cold rain become snow storms and snow flurries.

Fall Animals

Fall is a dangerous and trying time for the mice. They are in competition with scavengers, like squirrels and birds, and grazers, like deer, for scarce resources. The Guard may be called in to clear an area of birds or squirrels so that harvesters and foragers may move in and gather from the area.

Clever squirrels will follow mice to their settlements and watch how they store their grain. Later, they'll come back and try to break into the stores and steal all those delicious nuts and dried berries.

Predators are also on the prowl, looking to build up their fat stores for winter. Foxes, badgers, and wolves are all hungry and willing to eat mice!

Owls and hawks still patrol the forest. Snakes, bullfrogs and snapping turtles are winding down and looking to hibernate through the cold.

Fall Wilderness

As the leaves turn and fall in the autumn, the world of the mice changes. On one hand, it's a simple matter to use the leaves as cover to get from one location to another undetected. That works for one mouse or small groups, but travel for caravans or large groups becomes very

difficult. The leaves are slippery and noisy when traveled over. Mice on that surface are easy targets for predators.



Grant an advantage to mice who are using the leaf cover to their benefit.

But factor the leaves into Scout or Nature tests to move undetected *across* the surface.

Frost

Fall brings the first frost. Mostly frost and temperature are part of the weather, but frost also affects how the mice deal with the wilderness. A sudden cold snap can be deadly. Frost can be used by the GM to invoke Survivalist tests. Failure conditions can include being Sick or Injured.

Frost can also make food and water scarce. Frozen lakes or puddles are difficult to get adequate water from. Ice has to be melted or chipped away. Survivalist covers this process, but it should be tested in these circumstances.

Fall Duties

The duties of the Guard in the fall are focused on protecting the mice who are vital to the Territory's winter survival—harvesters, laborers, carpenters, stonemasons—and preparing themselves for winter.



Guard Business

In addition to all its myriad duties, the Guard has its own business and problems. The fall is the last chance to take care of loose ends before returning to Lockhaven for the winter. Gwendolyn will often send patrols out on special, secret missions of vital importance during the fall months.

Harvest

Mice are quickly harvesting, storing and curing their hauls. The Territories depend on them for the winter months!

Escorting

Last-minute trade and distribution are undertaken, despite the difficulty of travel. Sometimes, due to the ground conditions, water travel will be risked—barges full of supplies sent downstream, watched over by fearless members of the Guard.



Refresh the Scent Border

Gwendolyn usually dispatches a handful of patrols to replenish and reinforce the Scent Border before winter settles in.

Fall Celebrations

Morten-Harvest

All mice celebrate the autumnal equinox with a large multiday festival. This is the largest and longest holiday in the Territories. The Morten-Harvest celebration focuses on the land's offerings. Every grain store, larder, mill, stock house and cask is replenished. As a reward for their hard work, and to take joy in the bounty they collected, mice in every settlement feast on a sampling of their efforts. Thanks is given to the mice who work in the trades that make living possible.

The week-long event is named after Morten, a harvestmouse who always shared his bounty with all the mice of his village. His generosity is now linked with the gifts that grow from the land. Gifts are exchanged as tokens of friendship and generosity.

WINTER

Winter is long, cold and snowy. It is the hardest season for the Mouse Territories. The towns, cities and settlements must hold together during the cold, ice and snow and try to persevere until spring. If a disaster strikes during winter, its effects are magnified by the cold and lack of easy access to fresh food and supplies.

Typically, Gwendolyn does not send patrols out in the winter. Most guardmice are called home to Lockhaven to rest and prepare for spring. In the game, this is represented by the Winter Session.

If need demands it, Gwendolyn will dispatch patrols for vital missions in the winter. Rather than issuing orders for a mission, she calls for volunteers. Despite the danger, there are never a lack of paws raised.



If you choose to play a winter mission, play out the season and mission as per the normal rules. Use the winter season write up to help flesh out the situation. If you decide not to play a winter mission, skip to the **Winter Session** section. I recommend doing a Winter Session over playing the winter season.

Winter Weather (7)

Winter is cold and snowy. It's very harsh weather. Long trips in the winter should be undertaken using the journey conflict mechanics. The GM can set his objective to: freeze the patrol to death, get them caught in a snow drift, get them lost or any number of evil things.



Also, Harvester tests cannot be made to acquire food from the land during the winter.

Clear and Cold

Some winter days are simply clear and cold. It's brisk weather that makes a mouse feel alive. There's no hazard associated with traveling when it's clear and cold.

Snow

It snows a lot in the Territories during the winter.



Factor snow into Pathfinding, Scout, Nature and Health tests.

Blizzard

Once or twice a winter, there's a massive blizzard that blankets the Territories in a couple of feet of snow. A blizzard factors into *any test* made outdoors during or immediately after the storm.



Going anywhere in a blizzard requires a Pathfinder test. Failure is bad; twists should be catastrophic. The GM may also force Ob 4 Health tests on the patrol. Failure indicates the character is Sick or Injured.

Cold Snap

It's possible for the Territories to get wrapped up in a blast of arctic cold. This extreme cold is dangerous.



Failure conditions for any outdoor activity should be disastrous—Sick or Injured.



Use the extreme cold as a factor in any test that requires delicate use of the paws—they go numb!

Ice Storm

Ice storms are the most deadly of all winter weather. They count as a factor for every test made while out and about. Also, if a journey conflict is undertaken during an ice storm, the GM may include the death of the patrol in his goal.

Unseasonably Warm

Perhaps once a winter, the Territories will experience an unseasonably warm period of weather. These warm spells are welcome breaks from the harsh winter. However, during these periods, any precipitation counts as

rain rather than snow. And any rain causes flooding and thick mud.

Winter Wilderness

The wilderness is deceptively peaceful in the winter. Snow cover blankets the land and makes it all seem so simple and beautiful.

Snow Cover

Mice can walk on the surface of the snow with shoes—Celanawe uses acorn caps, for example—or burrow below the snow surface using Nature, Pathfinder and Scientist (for elaborate structures).

Tunneling makes them less visible to predators, but it is slow, tiring, dangerous work. If a tunnel collapses, mice could be trapped.

Traveling on the surface makes them vulnerable to depredation.



Mice without proper snow gear—shoes, skis, cloaks, snow goggles—must count snow cover as a factor in tests surrounding travel. If you've got proper gear, this isn't a factor.

Ice

Ice is generally not a hazard for mice. They are light enough that even thin ice won't crack under their weight. Heavier predators do not have this luxury, so mice can flee across icy





areas to escape capture and let the predators break through the ice.

On the other hand, a dunk in frigid water is much worse for a small mouse than it is for a hungry wolverine.



Any mouse that gets submerged in frozen water must pass an Ob 4 Health test or become Sick.

Winter Animals

Animal encounters are more rare in winter, but also fraught with more danger. The stakes are higher. Everyone's hungry and there's not enough to go around.

In the Territories, if the Scent Border wasn't properly maintained, wolves will range in looking to eat anything they can find. They prefer bigger game like moose, deer or even foxes, but they are not above easy prey like mice. Be wary!

Foxes, badgers and wolverines also prowl the winter forests. Foxes and wolverines in particular seem to enjoy the winter months. The forest is quiet and they can be kings for a little while.

However, winter is when the scavengers like raccoons and skunks are the biggest threat. These creatures are persistent and intelligent—at least about food. They'll stake

out a mouse settlement and look for ways to break in and steal the stores. A settlement ripped open and robbed like that will not survive the winter months.

Winter Duties

Most mice hunker down for the winter. While there's little commerce and communication between settlements, the individual cities and towns are internally bustling with life.

Weavers, potters and glaziers ply their trade, preparing for next spring. Laborers pick up odd jobs where they can, spending their meager earnings at the local tavern. Tradesmice like smiths, stonemasons and carpenters content themselves with small jobs until the spring comes and the big work projects start up again.

Even the Guard gets a little rest, provided there's no trouble that winter.

Rescue

If a settlement is attacked by a scavenger like a raccoon or skunk, the refugees will often flee to Lockhaven for solace. If news of the disaster reaches Gwendolyn, she will dispatch patrols to aid the survivors as best they can.

Message Running

On occasion, urgent business must be conducted over the winter. Patrols are dispatched to ensure these messages get to where they need to go.

Escort

Once in a while, visiting officials will find themselves trapped by early snows in a foreign city at the beginning of winter. When the weather settles into being cold and clear, these officials need to be escorted back to their home cities.

Emergency Shipments

Lockhaven contains reserve stores of food and water in case of emergency. If disaster strikes another city, and it doesn't have enough supplies to make it through the winter, Gwendolyn and her captains will negotiate a shipment to be dispatched to the ailing city. And, of course, it's up to the Guard to get it there!

Winter Celebrations

Yulefrost

Yulefrost is a time for mouse families to gather and feast on warm foods in spite of the weather's harsh offerings. All mice celebrate this holiday, but full-fledged festivals are held in Barkstone, Ivydale, and Burl.

The spirit of the celebration is at the heart of mouse culture: not merely surviving, but overcoming seemingly impassable obstacles.

This is also a time when mice honor their dead by sharing recollections of them in tales and songs, or in quiet reflection.

WINTER SESSION



Winter is harsh, but you don't have to go out in the cold if you don't want to.

Once winter's come, your patrol should head back to Lockhaven to make their final reports for the season and the year.

Once your last fall mission is done and winter is on its way, your group should decide if they're going to do a winter mission or if they're going to rest up and stay indoors for the winter. If you rest up, you have what we call a *winter session*. I strongly recommend you do not go on a winter mission. The winter session is a lot of fun and really useful for the characters.

Why go on a winter mission then? Well, if your patrol is in good shape at the end of the fall missions—no tax on Nature, no outstanding conditions—then you should volunteer. You're in good condition, you can handle it! But if you're beat up and tired, then take the winter off.

In the winter session we go through a few bookkeeping steps, take a look at how the characters were played in the last mouse year and then take care of any unfinished business.

If you're not going on a mission, go through the following steps in order:

Return to Lockhaven



Talk about your patrol's return to Lockhaven from your last mission. Report in to Gwendolyn.

Rest and Recover

Guard get leave when they return to Lockhaven in the winter. The people of the city bring them gifts in the form of food and drink. Gwendolyn pays guardmice their wages. There is much eating, drinking and sleeping.



If your Nature is taxed, you may restore it to its current maximum. If your starting maximum rating was reduced during the year's patrol, that rating is gone. You don't recover that. You only recover what's currently taxed.

Age

Not every mouse has his birthday during the winter, but this is a convenient time to remember that your character has aged. Advance his age by one year.

Practice

During the winter, Gwendolyn wants her guardmice to stay sharp. Practice is mandatory for guardmice wintering in Lockhaven.



You practice three skills. When your character practices something, note a test for advancement on his sheet. You may choose

a pass or fail result as needed. If this test fills an advancement requirement, you may increase the skill to the next rating.

- Practice one patrol skill. A patrol skill includes all of the skills listed in the left-hand column of your character sheet. Not the ones you wrote in yourself, but the ones that were already there.
- Practice one non-patrol skill. The skill can be any skill that's *not* from the previous list.
- Practice one skill you don't have. It can be a completely new skill or a skill you're currently trying to learn. Look through the skill list and choose one that interests you. It can be a patrol skill or a wise or anything.



When practicing the skill you don't have, if the practice test fills your requirement for learning a new skill, you may learn the skill right there.

The rules for advancement and learning new skills are described in the *Abilities and Skills* chapter.

I practice my Hunter skill, my Carpenter skill and Insectrist, which I don't have.

I log a pass for Hunter, because I need two more passed tests before I advance. My Carpenter 3 only needs one more failed test to advance, therefore I use my practice to take a failed test for the skill. That means the skill advances from 3 to 4 during the winter. I may have made a mess in Lockhaven, but at least I learned from it.

For Insectrist, I just note a test next to the skill. Learning new skills is explained later.

One more thing: You must account for what your character has learned while out on patrol. Gwendolyn asks the guardmice to write reports



on previously unknown elements encountered while on patrol. For the character, this means he gets a new wise skill.

- Think about what your character has experienced during his last year of patrol. Reflect on some defining or dramatic moments of his experience. Make up your own wise to encompass that experience. The wise starts with a rating of 2.

Reflection

While in Lockhaven, the guardmice reflect on the trials and triumphs of the last year. Some tell joyful recollections. Others reflect darkly on the events that befell them.



As players, this is our opportunity to look at how we played with each other over the past few sessions. And it's a way for other players to tell you how they saw you in the game.

In game terms, three things happen during the **Reflection** portion of the Winter Session: You're going to get a new trait. One of your extant traits is going to be changed or elevated. And another one of your traits is going to be removed or changed to something different.

The New Trait

To start this process, each player picks another player at the table whom they

wish to represent. Each player must have a representative. No representing yourself. If you represent someone, they don't necessarily have to represent you.

In turn, each representative then discusses how his friend played his character over the course of last year's missions. The other players should chime in with stories, reflections and recollections.





After that discussion, the representing player chooses a new trait for his friend's character. The trait must be based on the group's reflections. It can come from the list in the book, or the representative can make up a new trait on the spot. Write the new trait on the character sheet. It starts at level one.

Go around the table until everyone has a new trait.

Thor is representing Mayuran's character, Robin. After much discussion with the other players, he decides to give Robin the Idealistic trait based on how he thinks Robin was played.

Change or Elevate a Trait

After everyone has earned a new trait, each player has the chance to elevate or change another one. In turn, each player nominates one of his own character's traits to be changed or elevated.



Pick one of your traits—not the one you were just given—and talk about it with the group. Make a case for how you invested in the trait and played it into your character or how you think the trait no longer fits and how it should be changed.



If the group agrees you may elevate it one step on the trait scale or change your trait to a different one, either made up on the spot or chosen from the book.

If the group does not agree, no change or elevation is made. You only get one shot at making your case.

Mayuran wants his Fearless trait upgraded from level 1 to level 2. He talks about all the times he hurled himself into danger for the sake of the patrol. We all agree and he upgrades the trait on his character sheet.

Change or Remove a Trait



You, the GM, get to discuss each player and his character in turn.

Recall specific heroic or unheroic actions the character undertook. Talk about what happened in the missions.



You may then change one trait to another trait of your choosing—either from the book or made up on the spot—or you may remove a trait from the character. A removed trait is erased, gone. You may not change or remove a new trait that was added in this session or a trait that was elevated or changed.

During the Reflection part of the session, I listen to the players as they discuss their experiences. I make notes based on what they say and I use them as the basis on whether or not to remove or change a trait.

If I were Lieam's GM for the adventures described in the Fall 1152 series, I'd change his Defender

trait to Guard's Honor. He internalizes Kenzie's lessons—it's not what you fight, but what you fight for—and turns from being a selfish young mouse to being a determined member of the Guard.

After that's all done, take a deep breath and relax for a bit. It's an intense process!

Five Traits Max



Your character can only have five traits. If you're playing in a long-term campaign, you might reach this limit. If you have five traits at the start of the Reflection session, you cannot earn a new trait. You may represent another player and give him a new trait, however. You may still change, elevate and remove traits.

Promotion

After the **Reflection** portion of the session, we move on to **Promotion**. Around mid- to late winter, after having the time to review all of the reports and conduct interviews, Gwendolyn gathers all of the mice of Lockhaven together and presents the year's promotions. Occasionally, the ceremony is broken down into two days—one day for tenderpaws and guardmice, and one day for patrol guard and patrol leaders.



In the game, the patrol leader or senior member of the patrol may make recommendations to Gwendolyn. The GM, in the role of Gwendolyn, then makes promotions as he sees fit.

Promotion criteria are as follows:

Tenderpaw to Guardmouse

The tenderpaw represents a special case. His mentor may recommend him for promotion. If his mentor is not available in Lockhaven that winter, then Gwendolyn makes the call herself based on reports and recommendations.

A tenderpaw is promoted if he has shown that he is competent in the field, willing to learn and, most importantly, capable of upholding the honor of the Guard. A guardmouse must do his duty at all costs. If the tenderpaw exhibited this quality, he should be promoted.

A tenderpaw who is promoted in the game receives a cloak from his mentor at the time of his promotion. If his mentor is unavailable—due to death or a mission—the tenderpaw's patrol leader or senior guardmouse may give him his cloak. The color of the cloak is chosen carefully. It is to represent the tenderpaw's disposition and temperament, but also to guide him in his new role as a guardmouse.

Give three cheers to the newly promoted guardmouse!



If a tenderpaw fails to be recommended for guardmouse rank, he has two options. He may retire from the Guard. Gwendolyn and the other guardmice thank him for his service and return him to his parents. No hard feelings, no harm done. Alternately, the tenderpaw may choose to do another year of patrol with his mentor. At the end of the year, he will once again be considered for promotion. If he fails to make promotion this second time, he is quietly retired by Gwendolyn and sent home to his family.

Guardmouse to Patrol Guard

Guardmice are promoted to patrol guard when they have been in service of the Guard for a couple of years and when they have exhibited independent thinking while on a mission and clear mastery in multiple areas of the patrol's needs.

In other words, a guardmouse can't specialize in just one or two skills. He needs a broad base of patrol, social and craft skills. And he needs to step up and take the lead during certain dangerous segments of missions. Gwendolyn is not looking for suicidal bravery. She wants initiative and independence.

Guardmice who show insubordination, fearfulness, disloyalty or a disregard for the values of the Guard will not be promoted to patrol guard.

Patrol Guard to Patrol Leader

Patrol guard are veteran guardmice. They have been in the service for a number of years, and they represent the pool of the next crop of leaders. Their promotion is highly situational.

In times of need, Gwendolyn is forced to trust her instincts and simply choose from the most promising candidates.

In better times, patrol guard are given the chance to prove themselves, undertaking and leading missions for Gwendolyn. This process can take a number of years. If a patrol guard can demonstrate that he can receive orders and complete his missions in an accurate and timely fashion, he'll be considered for promotion.

If a patrol guard can demonstrate that he is adaptable, flexible and capable of handling unforeseen situations when in the field, he's nearly guaranteed a spot as a patrol leader.

A patrol guard will not be promoted if he has demonstrated recklessness while on patrol, callousness to other mice or disregard for the spirit of the Guard's Oath.



Patrol Leader to Guard Captain

Patrol leaders may be promoted to the rank of captain after many years of service. If a patrol leader has demonstrated ability and initiative beyond the scope of simple patrols—if he has shown proficiency in matters administrative, military, political or even archival—Gwendolyn will mark him as a candidate for captain.

There are only about a half-dozen captain positions at any one time. Captains see to the defense and supply of Lockhaven proper. They also act as liaisons with other militia forces in other towns, coordinating training and supply.

Gwendolyn attempts to keep the positions staffed, allowing older captains to retire in the winter and immediately promoting patrol leaders to fill the vacancies.

Retirement



If you wish to retire your character, now is a good time to do it. You may exit the Guard in your new rank if you have been promoted. Gwendolyn provides a pension and support for all who served. Experienced help is always needed, but none begrudge those who have no more to give.

You might retire your character because you can't play with your group anymore, or simply

because you want a change of pace and wish to try playing a different character.



A retired character exits play. Neither the GM or another player may take up his role. Talk about him, tell stories about him and write him letters, but try to leave him out of the game. We've found it awkward to include retired characters in play. However, the retired character may reenter play (and service to the Guard) if his original player returns to the table or wants to take up his mantle again. So keep those old character sheets handy.

If you retire a character and want to keep playing, either use *Recruitment* to create a new character with your GM before the next session, or pick a template to play in your next game.

Benefits of Promotion



Once promotions are done, increase the Resources and Circles of each promoted character by one. You get a raise and your new rank gives you more influence!

Erase any tests you had accumulated toward advancing Resources or Circles.

Memorials



If your patrol lost a member due to tragedy during the last year, hold a brief memorial ceremony. Say a few words of remembrance for the departed mouse and raise a toast to him.

Unfinished Business

The last part of the winter session is called Unfinished Business. The bookkeeping, traits and promotion should not take more than 90 minutes. Unfinished Business will take another 90 minutes. Play it out if you have the time. If not, wrap up the session and get ready for next time—spring! If you have time for Unfinished Business, read on.





During this portion of the game, the players take over. Unfinished Business is like a big Players' Turn. The players drive all the action; they don't earn checks, but neither do they count tests. They can make as many tests and get into as many conflicts as they need to. There is one restriction: They may not make recovery tests for conditions. So be careful.



To start your Unfinished Business, each player should think for a moment about something he felt he missed out on in play. Think about your friends, enemies, senior artisans, parents and mentors. Think about things you've wanted to make. Think about conversations you've wanted to have with other members of your patrol.

Each player gets to pick one thing he wants to explore. It must be something you can accomplish from Lockhaven. No going out on patrol. Also, do not write goals for this. This part of the game is about focusing on Beliefs and Instincts.

In turn, each player announces to the GM what he wants to accomplish. Play out the scenes. Get everyone involved if you can.

Unfinished business can lead you to: get advice from friends and mentors, settle old scores with enemies, research mysteries in the archives or make yourself a needed piece of equipment for next year's patrols.

Stretch your creative muscles and surprise the other players at the table. Remind us all of what we've been forgetting about your character.



The GM should use this player-driven time to take notes. What areas are the players interested in? What characters do they want to see in play that have been backgrounded or forgotten? Use those ideas to seed your missions for the coming year.

Finished!

After each player has had a chance to take care of some unfinished business, the session is done. Review Beliefs and Instincts for rewards. Vote for MVP, workhorse and embodiment. Talk about your new traits and plan for your next session. Spring is coming, and with it, a whole host of new challenges and adventures.





THE TERRITORIES

Our place in the world:
Should it be as small as we stand, or as large as we desire?
A question only answered by our willingness to find out.

—from a speech made by Talor, last mouse to journey east from Wolfepointe

The Territories are, for the most part, rocky and rough. The soil is unsuitable for agriculture, but it is heavily forested and blanketed with thick underbrush.

The following section details a few of the major mouse settlements of the Territories, describes the Wild Country and the Darkheather, and talks about using Wilderness in your game.

WILDERNESS

The mouse settlements are nestled in dense, rugged terrain. This section describes the variety of terrain types the mice travel through and what they can expect to encounter there.

Wilderness is one of the obstacle categories for the game. This section also outlines a series of suggestions for obstacles in each terrain type.

Forest

The forest of the Territories grows so thick during the summer, the canopy prevents the rays of the sun from reaching the forest floor. It's cool, humid and dim beneath the forest boughs.

Sable, martens, woodpeckers, hawks, owls, pine snakes, bats, foxes, porcupines, skunks, raccoons, chipmunks and squirrels of all types prefer the thick forest for their homes.

Obstacles for the Forest



Navigating around a difficult root system, roots invading and damaging a settlement, avoiding fallen trees, using animal trails, foraging, harvesting, searching for new locations suitable for settlements, negotiating



thick underbrush and climbing ant-infested trees can all be used as obstacles in your game.

Lakes and Ponds

There are three main inland bodies of water in the Territories. Together, these three lakes essentially create the eastern border of the mouse lands. Mice don't often have cause to venture out into the open water because it's dangerous, and they aren't suited to waterborne adventures.

Frogs, bullfrogs, mink, herons, turtles, snapping turtles, newts, beavers, geese and otters, in addition to many different types of fish, can all be found on the shores and in the open waters of these lakes.

Wolves, deer, moose, foxes and coyote all frequent the shores to stop and drink.

Obstacles for Lakes and Ponds



Building dikes, using boats and barges to cross, gathering water, building docks or piers, and hunting and rescuing stranded or drowning mice can all be used as obstacles involving lakes and ponds in your game.

Streams

Uncounted streams crisscross the Territories. Some run to the shore, some run to the lakes, others run into the Darkheather or Wild Country. Streams are home to frogs, bullfrogs, mink, herons, turtles, snapping turtles, newts and beavers, among other animals.

Traversing a shallow, slow-moving stream is merely an inconvenience. Fording a fast-moving or deep stream is a dangerous operation.

Obstacles for Streams



Fording streams, navigating rising waters from dams or debris and rescuing stranded or drowning mice can all be used as obstacles involving streams in your game. Also, mills and workshops need a steady flow of fresh water to run. Streams can be harnessed to fuel these operations. In this case, the obstacle would be about building something rather than patrolling.

Tall Grass

Tall grass in clearings and meadows can be found in the Northeastern Territories, between Wolfepointe and the Wild Country. Tall grass is a boon for mice, because it's easy to hide in. It slows down travel, because it's difficult to navigate the roots and stalks. And though it hides the mice, it also conceals many other animals.

Deer, snakes, foxes, whistle pigs, moose, wolves and hares can all be found prowling about in tall grass.

Obstacles for Tall Grass



Trail-blazing, getting lost, fleeing or fighting brush fires, foraging, harvesting and unexpectedly finding empty animal nests are all possible wilderness obstacles for tall grass.

Swamps

The land of the Territories turns to swamp on the eastern shores of the lakes. The swamps are shallow and thick with grass and moss. This dangerous terrain is difficult to traverse—the water is choked with weeds and the hummocks of land are small and scattered.

Newts, salamanders, snapping turtles, bullfrogs and frogs all populate the swamps.

Obstacles for Swamps



Dangerous crossings, quicksand, overgrown and wild vegetation, getting lost and rescuing stranded mice can all be used as wilderness obstacles for swamps.

Mud

After heavy rains or a quick spring thaw, the dirt beneath the trees and along animal paths turns to mud.

Newts, salamanders and earthworms all come out to play in the mud, but for mice it's hazardous. Mud makes it more difficult to travel from settlement to settlement.

Obstacles for Mud



Crossing mud, getting stuck, sinking foundations and mud slides into settlements are a few possible wilderness obstacles for mud.

Brambles and Thorns

Blackberries, raspberries and dewberries grow wild throughout the Territories. These plants hold delicious fruit in the summer, but their stems are covered with prickles and thorns. Many animals—like hares, deer and birds—feed on these berries.

This attracts predators, of course. But one predator in particular is attracted to thorns and brambles: the shrike. This bird uses thorns and spines to impale its prey. It's very gruesome!

Obstacles for Brambles and Thorns



Traversing or climbing through brambles and thorns is dangerous. Rescue operations for mice who've been lured into the brambles by the berries and become stuck are common.

Savvy mice can also use brambles as cover from larger predators. Foxes and badgers

won't chase mice into the briars. Of course, savvy predators like snakes use brambles as traps for overconfident mice. It's a dangerous world!

Leaf Cover

During the autumn, the forest floor is littered with heavy leaf cover. It provides excellent protection for mice. They can travel under leaf cover through burrowed tunnels. However, they must beware of ground-dwelling predators, like snakes.

Obstacles for Leaf Cover



Leaf cover can be used for obstacles like tunneling under to create safe routes and navigating giant leaf piles.

Rocky Terrain

The majority of the land of the Territories, if not forest, is rocky. Shale, hematite and granite formations burst through the forest floor, creating rough travel and lots of hiding places for predator and prey alike.

Skinks, toads, milk snakes and wolverines, in particular, favor the rocky terrain.

Obstacles for Rocky Terrain



Rocky terrain obstacles can include the following: climbing sheer surfaces, exploring cracks and crevices and avoiding rock slides.



The Coast

The northern coast of the Territories is very rough. High walls of rusty shale drop off into an unquiet sea. Behind these rocky outcroppings crouches thick forest.

Crabs populate the cold waters, hiding among rocks and boulders. Shore birds hunt the crabs.

Obstacles for the Coast



Navigating the coast, collecting shells, exploring shore crab tunnels, rough surf, strong winds, dunes, rocky cliffs, buried treasure and shipwrecks can all be used as wilderness obstacles on the coast.

Open Ground

There are a few bald patches of ground in the Territories, where there's no grass, no tree cover and no rock formations. The open ground is covered in moss and scrub or hard-packed earth.

In winter, the meadows, brambles, lakes and clearings all become open ground—they're covered in snow and ice.

Turkey vultures, shrike, kestrels, coyote, whistle pigs, moose, wolves and hares can all be spotted crossing or prowling open ground.

Obstacles for Open Ground



Wilderness obstacles on open ground can include crossing quickly, building

camouflage, building shelter, foraging, harvesting, star-gazing and picnicking.

MAJOR TOWNS AND CITIES

There are eight principal settlements in the Territories. In alphabetical order, they are: Barkstone, Copperwood, Elmoos, Ivydale, Lockhaven, Port Sumac, Shaleburrow and Sprucetuck.

Barkstone

Barkstone is a working-class town. In addition to the shops and tradesmice, there is an inn for travelers, a bar for locals, a well-maintained archive of written records and quite a few harvesters.

Barkstone is located on the west side of the Territories. At one time, a few other cities like Woodruff's Grove and Ferndale were between Barkstone and the Darkheather. Now that those cities have fallen, Barkstone's surroundings are more at risk of predatory attack than before.

Location/Structure

The gates are in a locust tree, and a path wends through a hollow between the rock and the tree. Barkstone currently has one well.

Size

Town



Government

Barkstone is led by a mayor elected from the artisans. He deals with internal disputes and trade from other cities. Commerce is conducted mainly through bartering goods and services. Barkstone does not have its own money, but accepts most other cities' coin. Barkstone also has its own armored mice who defend the harvesters in open country. It was under the disguise of that armored group that Midnight was able to start his rebel army in Fall 1152.

Major Trades

Pottery, woodwork and glasswork

Import/Export

Barkstone imports some grain and food. It mainly exports handmade goods.

Copperwood

Copperwood is one of the largest and oldest cities in the Territories. It has many trades represented and also does a fair share of harvesting, milling and carpentry. Its largest trade is the mining and smithing of metals, mainly copper. If Copperwood was not so large, it would be completely self-sufficient.

Ironwood and Copperwood are responsible for most of the metal goods of the Territories. The smiths and armorers of Copperwood are

known for making all manner of metal items and weapons, as well as the coins used by Sprucetuck and Elmoos—and Walnutpeck before it fell.

The city sprawls up inside a large oak to its tallest branches. Lookouts watch for predators, the comings and goings of mice, and most of all, the weather.

Location/Structure

Copperwood is housed in and under a mighty oak with tunnels leading behind a waterfall—six times the height of a mouse—and into the mines.

Size

City

Government

Copperwood is a democratic bureaucracy led by a governor who is elected by a council of elders representing the different trades in Copperwood.

Major Trades

Copper ore, metal smithing

Import/Export

Copperwood imports food, clothing and other refined goods. The city's main export is metal.

Elmoss

Elmoss is named for the moss that grows on the trunk of the oldest elm in the Territories. The moss is renowned for its healing properties. The mice of Elmoss harvest and deliver most of the moss to Sprucetuck, but trade some of it as a raw commodity. The wood collected from the surrounding elms is also a prized item. Elm is water-resistant and strong. There is a fair amount of harvesting near Elmoss as well: oats, wild carrots and tubers.

Some crops are planted and cultivated, but most are harvested wild. Elmoss is a medium-sized town that is home to trades dealing with carpentry and woodcrafts. It once was a hub of food trade, but after Walnutpeck, Ferndale, and Woodruff's Grove fell, its importance has declined.

The family who rules Elmoss employs a group of armed mice to protect laborers as they harvest in the open country.

Location/Structure

Elmoss is built under and inside a massive elm tree in a small grove of elms.

Size

Town (was once a city)

Government

Family rulers govern over lords of trades—Wood, Moss and Harvest. The system's complexity is outdated and burdensome on the population.

Major Trades

Grains, harvested moss, harvested vegetables and wood products like furniture and carts



Import/Export

Elmoss imports metal goods, paper and medicine. It exports finished wood products and its moss.

Ivydale

Ivydale is a very hardworking town that harvests most of the grain in the Territories. All of Ivydale's residents, young, old, male and female, sit and separate husks from grain during harvest time. Some of the fibers harvested are woven into cloth, often too rough for clothing, but suitable for tarps, bags and insulation.

Other duties include tool mending and sharpening, baking, milling, weaving baskets for storage and transportation of grain and goods.



Guardmice are ever-present in Ivydale because so many of the grain shipments need escorts.

Location/Structure

Located in a shallow, ivy-choked valley, the town is made up of several small settlements hidden away in trees and rocky outcroppings. Four trees house most of the lodgings and storehouses. Some of the wheat, rye and buckwheat sprout up through the settlement walls.

For water, Ivydale relies on rain collection and a well inside the base of one of the trees.

Size

Town

Government

Ivydale has an elected governor who oversees the trading with other cities and a magistrate who handles internal disputes and labor quotas.

Major Trades

Grain harvesting, baked goods

Import/Export

Ivydale exports grain. It imports various household goods and tools.

Lockhaven

Home of the Mouse Guard, Lockhaven is carved deep into stone. Only the ivy-covered face of Lockhaven is visible from the outside.

Lockhaven serves as a base of operations for the Guard and is not an open city. While there are mouse citizens that live there, they are invited guests of the Guard. The Guard extends invitations to skilled and trustworthy mice and their families.

A full-time armorer is kept on hand at Lockhaven to maintain an armory for the Guard.

Staple foods are stored in abundance, while prepared foods are made as needed, as it is unknown how many or few will be fed on any given day. Lockhaven is known for *gabcroon*: a dense bread filled with seeds, fruits and nuts. It travels well and stays warm long after baking.

Woven and sewn fabrics are important to the mice of Lockhaven. The Guard are known for their cloaks, which need to be both warm and durable, as they are a Guard's primary piece of clothing.

Lockhaven is also home to a hive of bees. The mice harvest the honey for food and the wax for goods and medicinal purposes. To do this, the apiarist uses smoke to charm the bees. The bees also serve as a natural deterrent to predators.



In the past, Lockhaven has acted as a sanctuary. It's one of the most fortified and central locations in the Territories. While home to about 70 guardmice, these protectors are rarely found in the city itself. They are busy with missions and patrols throughout most of the year.

Location/Structure

Lockhaven is built of stone blocks and wood, but mainly carved deep into a large stone outcropping. Lockhaven has a very large cistern that collects water from a fresh spring deep under the larder.

Size

City

Government

The Matriarch keeps a secret document with the name of her successor written on it. The document is only to be opened in the event of her death.

The Matriarch operates as strategist, ambassador and administrator. She has several captains and administrators beneath her, including a scribe, a castellan and a quartermaster.

Major Trades

Textiles, weapons and armor, prepared foods, honey and wax. Harvesters, masons and carpenters live at Lockhaven as guests of the Guard to keep it running and self-sufficient.

Import/Export

Lockhaven is sustained by donations. Many cities give grain as thanks to the guardmice at harvest time.



Port Sumac

Port Sumac is a remote seaside town overlooking a calm bay. The port is a resupply point on the Darkwater to Rustleaf trade route.

Location/Structure

The port town is located on a rocky shelf, nestled under a granite outcropping and a thatch of staghorn sumac trees. The town itself sits on the shelf, while the port rests between two arms of granite, sheltered and secure.

Size

Town

Government

Port Sumac is ruled by a council of ship captains. The captain with the most profitable trade in the last year heads the council. The council has no fixed size. New members may be inducted by a majority vote of the council. Councilmice determine the laws of the port, set the taxes and perform other administrative duties. For their trouble, each councilmouse earns a share of all goods collected from imports and exports.

Major Trades

Port Sumac is inhabited by families of laborers, boatcrafters, weather watchers, weavers and merchantmice. Anymouse who could serve

on board ship or service a ship in port can be found in this small, bustling port.

Import/Export

The town imports a variety of goods—cloth, worked metal and grains are of primary importance. It exports its services in the shipping trade, but it's famous for a drink called *rhus* juice made from the berries of sumac trees. Port Sumac also exports dark maroon dyes and tannins for leather.

Shaleburrow

Built in flaky shale, the mice of Shaleburrow use access to an underground spring and the cool underground stone to store perishable foods. They harvest many fruits and nuts using handmade shale tools. They also brew and ferment a variety of beverages. They make many of their structures and items from wood collected west of the burrow's opening. Many mice families live here because of the abundance of food, the protective nature of the town and its proximity to Lockhaven.

Location/Structure

Shaleburrow is a subterranean town built into shale.

Size

Town

Government

Three mice act as the governing body: the female mouse most recently with child, the eldest male mouse and the mouse with the largest fruit harvest of last season.

Major Trades

Water, fruit harvest, stone tools, and food storage are the major trades of Shaleburrow.

Import/Export

Shaleburrow exports fermented beverages. The city relies on Ivydale for one-third of its grain needs.



Sprucetuck

Harvesting sap from the spruce trees in the area, the sciencemice of Sprucetuck brew various beers and elixirs. They infuse them with many natural remedies.

In the winter, the mice stay warm by utilizing hot stones they place on a central fire and carry to their apartment dens.

There are a few laborer jobs at Sprucetuck, including sap harvesting, central fire tending and hot rock delivery, but most of the work done here involves more thought. Mouse science is focused on mouse health, crop health, pest control, some metallurgy and the study of the heavens.

Location/Structure

Sprucetuck is part of a hollow spruce tree. Inside, the mice built a multileveled dwelling. Supplies are shuttled to the upper levels using a series of counterweighted lifts. Rainwater is collected held in a cistern in the roots of the tree.

Size

Village

Government

Sprucetuck is managed by a governor with a lifetime term. The governor names his successor upon stepping down from the office. Monetarily, Sprucetuck uses a coin shared by



Elmoss and Copperwood (and Walnutpeck before it fell). They are leery of coin from too far away, as few mice from Sprucetuck travel and they have little use for “foreign” coins.

Major Trades

Scientific work: apothecary, science, mathematics

Import/Export

Sprucetuck imports almost all grain and food. It exports medicines, elixirs and poisons.

LESSER-KNOWN TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS

The following section divides the rest of the villages, towns and cities of the Territories into two categories, those with brief descriptions and those that we’ve left open for you to flesh out.

Appleloft

This idyllic town is surrounded by a grove of apple trees.

Blackrock

Blackrock has the largest archive of mouse history next to Lockhaven.

Calogero

Calogero is an outpost for shore watch. The outpost consists of a pleasant, round stone house on a beach.



Darkwater

Darkwater is a major shipping city. It's the water gateway to Port Sumac, Calogero and Rustleaf.

Dorigift

Dorigift is named after the settler Dorice who, with her husband, founded Appleloft, Dorigift and Gilpledge.

Flintrust

Flintrust has a tradition of sending her sons and daughters to join the Guard. This is Saxon's hometown.

Frostic

Frostic is a Mouse Guard outpost for shore watch. It consists of a stone pier and an underground, single-room chamber.

Gilpledge

Gilpledge is named for the settler Gilburt who, with his wife, founded Appleloft, Dorigift and Gilpledge.

Ironwood

Ironwood rests amidst red soil, rich in iron. Next to Copperwood, it's the Territories' other major metal mining town.

Mapleharbor

Mapleharbor is a trading hub for the Eastern Territories.

Pebblebrook

Pebblebrook is known for its stonemasons.

Rootwallow

Rootwallow is home to a family of silk harvesters.

Rustleaf

Rustleaf is known for having a grove of trees with leaves that all turn to a rusty orange early in fall.

Sandmason

Sandmason is home to a sizable glassworks. It exports glass jars to all of the surrounding cities.

Shorestone

Shorestone boasts a large sandstone quarry and a tradition of hardy stonemasons.

Windselm

Windselm, not featured on the map, is a newly formed town west of Elmwood, near the coast. It was founded by a smith, a miller and a baker in 1151.

Wolfepointe

Wolfepointe is the last stop before the Wild Country. It's known for grizzled townsmice who prefer to remain cut off from society.



Undetailed Settlements

The following list of settlements are left open for you to detail in the course of play. You can consult the **Creating Your Own** section for more instructions: Oakgrove, Birchflow, Burl, Lillygrove, Lonepine, Grasslake, Elmwood, Whitepine, Dawnrock, Thistledown and Wildseed.

CREATING YOUR OWN



We've provided you with some detail about the makeup of the mouse settlements. It's far from comprehensive. Feel free to devise your own settlements as you play the game. Use the following guidelines to help you set one up.

Each settlement is established based on two factors: its resources and the protection or shelter it can provide. When creating a new settlement to be used in play, ask yourself the following questions: Where is it located? What

is the terrain like? What natural resources are nearby? What makes this area a good place for mice to congregate?

Settlement Resources

Settlements have at least one mouse doing some harvesting, baking, milling, carpentry, etc. It may be on a very small scale, and not enough to sustain the entire settlement's needs. Just as settlements are rarely self-sustaining, they are rarely completely dependent on trade.

Settlement Governments

Every settlement has absolute governing power over its own community. Each locale has differing laws on curfew, currency, taxes, rationing and law enforcement.

Settlement Armies

Each settlement typically has a band of armed mice. Some groups are organized as protectors or soldiers, while some are just a group of tradesmice that are called to arms if need be. Some are just groups of armed thugs who've decided to make sure their laws are obeyed.

Settlements and the Guard

Most settlements need the Guard to survive because of trade routes. That can cause the mice to alternately resent or feel blessed by the Guard. A few settlements don't need the Guard. They too can have varying feelings on the guardmice.

PROBLEMS IN THE TERRITORIES

Life in the Territories isn't grim or grueling, but neither is it idyllic. Weather and animals are constants threats, but there are also calamities like supply shortages, famine, drought, plague, rebellion, and war can erupt with little warning.

Shortages

Weather, bad luck and even trade deals can all cause shortages of materials or food. Shortages act as a factor when determining the obstacle for a Resources test.

For example, if there's a food shortage in the town, increase the obstacle for using Resources to recover from Hunger. If Copperwood is withholding its metal from trade with Ivydale, perhaps seeking a higher price, factor that into the Resources obstacles for acquiring supplies in Ivydale.

During a shortage, Gwendolyn will dispatch Guard patrols to be of assistance. If she can alleviate the shortage directly, she will. The Guard might be dispatched with caravans of stocks to help an ailing city. If the shortage is due to political or economic causes, patrols may be called on to act as mediators.



Drought and Famine

A famine is a severe shortage of food that causes malnutrition and starvation in a populace. Famine is usually brought on by drought, pestilence or mousemade factors like embargoes or war.

During a famine, Hunger conditions are difficult to alleviate. The price of all food-related items is multiplied by four. Harvester obstacles are increased by 3. This, in turn, increases all Miller and Baker obstacles by 3 as well.

There's no food to be easily found. Mice of the cities must go out into the countryside and try to forage food for themselves and their families. Work stops in nearly all of the city's trades.

Most every mouse of a famine-stricken city will be found Hungry or Thirsty. Only the most wealthy and most careful will have enough food to keep themselves Healthy.

During a drought or famine, there's little anymouse can do. Gwendolyn will always try to dispatch relief from Lockhaven's stores, but it's rarely enough. Those supply trains must be guarded carefully, because hungry mice will resort to desperate measures to ensure their survival.

Epidemic

Epidemics can ravage the Territories. An infectious disease can catch hold in a mouse town and infect many members of the populace. It spreads from one settlement to the next, wreaking havoc, before dying out.

Most epidemics aren't deadly. A cold or flu can sweep through towns in the fall. Occasionally, there will be an outbreak of a plague that leaves many dead mice in its wake.

For non-fatal epidemics, assume that every mouse in the town is either Tired or Sick for the duration of the outbreak. If a mouse isn't Sick himself, he's taking care of another mouse who is. This usually causes the quality and speed of work in the town to drop.

In the case of deadly plagues, matters are worse. Towns struck by plagues can't feed or take care of themselves, let alone keep their trade obligations. The disease consumes every resource.



If your guardmouse comes into contact with infected mice, whether for an illness or a plague, you must pass an Ob 3 Health test to resist its effects. Failure indicates you've fallen Sick.

During such epidemics, other towns will refuse entry to travelers who are coming from infected locations. This can lead to problems, delays and unsafe conditions as mice are trapped in the wild, days from home.

Under the worst conditions, whole towns are quarantined until the plague passes. This unsavory duty falls on the shoulders of the Guard. For the good of the Territories, the sickness must be contained.

Rebellion

Life is not always peaceful in the towns. Shortages, drought, famine and epidemics can lead to townsmice becoming angry and disaffected. The townsmice want the situation changed, and they often place blame on their leaders' shoulders—whether the leaders are responsible or not.

It's not unknown for a mouse to rise from the fold and give leadership to those disaffected voices. The group of angry mice tries to depose the town's leaders and install their own.

Rebellions can be peaceful. The mice can overthrow their leaders and simply remove them from power and declare themselves the new law. Unfortunately, rebellions are more often bloody affairs. Mice in power want to fight for what they have, and the rebels are all too willing to oblige.

Sides are drawn and the factions will resort to theft, propaganda, murder and arson in order to win.

During a rebellion, the rebels are always Angry. This condition is in addition to anything else the town is currently suffering from, like Hunger or Sickness.

The Guard have a difficult role in a rebellion. Technically, what happens inside a city is beyond their jurisdiction. They have no right to interfere. However, guardmice are torn between duty, loyalty and kinship when their own friends and family are caught up in or threatened by the rebellion.



During a rebellion, if demonstrations or fighting break out, no work gets done. This can lead to shortages or even famines in nearby towns.

War

To date, the only war the Territories has experienced has been an invasion from the weasels. During the war, every town gave mice to a general army of conscripts who were assigned to defend cities and important trade routes. Gwendolyn acted as commander-in-chief, and the Guard were her elite soldiers.

It was a difficult time for the Territories. Supporting the army in the field came at great cost in labor, food, supplies and medicine. Every town was required to give so the army could fight. This caused hardship and shortages in the towns themselves, but the alternative was far worse—the weasels would have enslaved and slaughtered every mouse in the land.

While unlikely, there also exists a possibility that two towns could go to war with one another. In fact, recently, a rebellion in Barkstone led to the mice of that town mounting a concerted and well-executed attack on Lockhaven aimed at deposing Gwendolyn and the Guard.

Wars can be spawned by shortages, famines, epidemics and rebellions. Wars can also cause all of the above as well. Any cities surrounding the conflict will feel the full effects—there will be refugees, wounded mice and interruptions in trade and communications. Cities on the periphery of the conflict will suffer shortages of food and supplies due to interruptions of trade. Only the most remote and self-sufficient cities won't feel the effects at all.

During a war, the Guard's duty is unequivocal. They are to stop the hostilities with all due haste. If two towns are at war, they'll have to cross the wild to field their troops against



one another. If the Guard is able, they must negotiate a settlement between the two forces. If negotiations fall through, the Guard must capture and arrest the leaders of both factions. These leaders would be taken to Lockhaven and judged by a council of all of the other heads of towns and cities.

DARKHEATHER AND THE WILD COUNTRY

Beyond the western and eastern borders of the Territories lie two dangerous and unknown lands: the Darkheather and the Wild Country.

Darkheather

Prior to 1149, there was a weasel community living within the Mouse Territories. Their underground network of tunnels was called the Darkheather, named after the lush covering of a deep-colored heather surrounding the original and main entrance. After the War of 1149, the population was forced to abandon the Darkheather and live beyond the borders of the mice. Some weasels still live and hunt within the Mouse Territories, but for the most part they are rogue or with a very small group.

Most mice know little about this weasel domain. The underground tunnels that make up the Darkheather were originally thought to be concentrated in the west and only extend

underneath some of the most western cities. However, the network of tunnels spans more than halfway across the Territories. Most of the tunnels were not created by the weasels themselves. Many were abandoned homes, passages and underground chambers made by other animals, but were eventually taken by the weasels. They created connecting tunnels between existing tunnels as they seized them, adding them to the Darkheather. The weasels adorned the tunnels themselves with stone carvings and tile work, and draped them with the skins of their slain prey. They also altered doorways to be lower than weasel height. This way, the weasel entering the room or passage had to bow to enter. This showed respect and vulnerability to the weasels already in the room or passage.

In the War of 1149, a weasel leader named Rampaul saw the mice thriving and smelled opportunity. He declared war on the mice and seized them as property. The weasels stockpiled mice and kept them. Mice were slain, their bodies cured and stored. Other mice were kept as prisoners in hopes that they would breed and continue the prosperity Rampaul was growing accustomed to. Having live mice captive in the Darkheather also proved useful

as bait for would-be-rescuers. Until the Winter of 1152, only three mice had ever been known to enter the Darkheather and leave alive.

The Darkheather is large enough that tunnel sections are each overseen by weasel lords. Tunnel Lords are granted their positions by the Weasel Overlord.

Wild Country

Wild Country is unexplored land. Few mice have journeyed there and returned. The terrain in the Wild Country is less dense; there's more space between the trees. Therefore, it is home to the more dangerous animals and their prey: wolves, wolverines, bears, moose and deer.

Scent Borders

The scent borders aren't actual geographical features. They are territorial markings manufactured by the mice in order to ward off predators.

Many mice don't even know about the scent borders' existence, and only a few living mice have ever gone beyond their bounds.

With the help of the scientists at Sprucetuck, the scent borders are repoured at least twice a year. This is one of the most vital duties of the Mouse Guard. Its execution is placed into the paws of only the most trusted patrols.





DENIZENS OF THE MOUSE TERRITORIES

Take not the duty of the Guard lightly.
Friends must not be enemies
just as enemies must not be friends.
Discerning the two is a life's work.

—from the writings of Laria, 4th Lockhaven Guard Matriarch

The Territories are a populous and vibrant place. In addition to the mice and their settlements, the land is populated with a bewildering variety of insects and animals. This chapter describes the mice, weasels, weasel allies, mouse livestock and wild animals.

This chapter also contains information on how mice communicate with other creatures and the natural order of life in the wild—who eats whom.



GUARDMICE



Here are ability and skill ratings for Gwendolyn, Matriarch of the Mouse Guard, and a selection of generic guardmice.

You may assign them gear as you see fit.

Gwendolyn

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 10 |
| WILL | 6 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Persuader 6, Orator 4, Administrator 5, Healer 4, Fighter 4, Militarist 4, Mouse Guard-wise 6, Patrol-wise 5, Town Problem-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Graceful (2), Compassionate (2), Determined (3), Wise (2)*

GEAR: *Halberd, Light Armor, Map Table*

Guard Captain

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 6 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: *Militarist 5, Orator 4, Deceiver 2, Instructor 4, Fighter 4, Pathfinder 3, Scout 3, Smith 2, Potter 3*

TRAITS: *Independent (1), Stubborn (1), Brave (1)*

Patrol Leader

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Hunter 4, Persuader 4, Fighter 4, Scout 3, Pathfinder 5, Harvester 2, Archivist 3*

TRAITS: *Hard Worker (1), Quiet (2)*

Patrol Guard

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Miller 4, Fighter 4, Deceiver 2, Pathfinder 4, Hunter 3, Weather Watcher 3

TRAITS: Steady Paw (1), Tough (1), Stoic (1)

Guardmouse

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: Persuader 2, Fighter 4, Instructor 2, Survivalist 4, Armorer 4, Smith 3

TRAITS: Guard's Honor (1), Bodyguard (1)

Tenderpaw

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 1 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

SKILLS: Scientist 3, Cartographer 2, Insectrist 4, Orator 2, Hunter 3, Scout 3, Healer 2

TRAITS: Inquisitive (2), Lost (1)

MICE OF THE TERRITORIES

This section provides ability and skill ratings for common mouse occupations and trades.



The skill and trait lists attached to each character are not definitive. If you need to modify them on the fly, by all means do so.

The ratings provided for these characters are not representative of the average skill of all mice of this type. Instead, in order to provide meaningful opposition to the guardmice, I've skewed the ratings a little higher than you might find in every mouse. It's a bit odd, but it's a necessary step to providing adequate challenges for the patrol.

Administrator

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 7 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Administrator 4, Archivist 3, Hometown-wise 4, Law-wise 4

TRAITS: Skeptical (2)



Apiarist

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: *Apiarist 5, Loremouse 3, Queen Bee-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Cautious (2)*

Archivist

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: *Archivist 5, Administrator 2, Records-wise 3, Archive-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Nocturnal (1)*

Armorer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Armorer 5, Smith 3, Weapon-wise 3, Armor-wise 3, Hagglor 4*

TRAITS: *Steady Paw (1)*

Denizens of the Territories

Baker

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Baker 5, Cook 3, Haggler 4, Bread-wise 4

TRAITS: Fat (1), Scarred (1)

Bandit

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: Scout 5, Fighter 4, Deceiver 3

TRAITS: Young (1), Driven (1)

Barmouse

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Haggler 5, Persuader 4, Deceiver 3, Eavesdropping-wise 4

TRAITS: Jaded (1), Deep Ear (1)

Beetle Wrangler

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Insectrist 5, Lovemouse 3, Beetle-wise 4

TRAITS: Curious (1)

Boatmouse

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Boatcrafter 5, Carpenter 3, River-wise 4

TRAITS: Fearless (1)

Brewer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Brewer 5, Miller 2, Beer-wise 4

TRAITS: Short (1)

Carpenter

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: Carpenter 5, Stonemason 2,
Wood Grain-wise 3, Hagglar 4

TRAITS: Skinny (1)

Cartographer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 2 | | |

SKILLS: Cartographer 5, Archivist 3, Map-wise 4

TRAITS: Oldfur (2)

Charlatan

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Deceiver 5, Persuader 3, Scam-wise 4

TRAITS: Clever (1)

Cook

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Cook 5, Harvester 3, Baker 2

TRAITS: Bitter (1)



Forager

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 1 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Harvester 5, Laborer 3, Underbrush-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Quiet (1)*

Glazier

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 2 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Glazier 5, Haggler 4, Miller-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Thoughtful (1)*

Harvester

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Harvester 5, Scout 2, Grain-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Early Riser (1)*



Healer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 10 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Healer 5, Scientist 2, Sickness-wise 4

TRAITS: Calm (1)

Hermit

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 6 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Survivalist 5, Harvester 3, Cook 2,
Strange Happenings-wise 4

TRAITS: Deep Ear (2)

Hunter

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 2 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: Hunter 5, Lovemouse 3, Scout 3, Trail-wise 4

TRAITS: Natural Bearings (2)

Laborer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 1 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Laborer 5, Job-wise 3, Haggler 2

TRAITS: Bigpaw (1)



Denizens of the Territories

Merchant

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 10 |
| WILL | 6 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Hagglar 5, Administrator 4, Persuader 3,
Coin-wise 4, Trade Route-wise 3

TRAITS: Early Riser (2)

Miller

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Miller 5, Hagglar 3, Brewer 2,
Grindstone-wise 4

TRAITS: Compassionate (1)

Muscle

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 1 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

SKILLS: Fighter 5, Hagglar 2, Hometown-wise 4

TRAITS: Tall (1), Bigpaw (2), Bodyguard (1)

Naturalist

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Lovemouse 5, Harvester 3, Weather Watcher 3,
Hunter 2

TRAITS: Lost (2)

Peddler

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Hagglar 5, Orator 3, Trinket-wise 4

TRAITS: Cunning (1)

Politician

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 6 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Orator 5, Hagglar 4, Administrator 3, Half-
truth-wise, 4

TRAITS: Quick-Witted (1), Extrovert (1)

Potter

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: Potter 5, Haggler 3, Carpenter 2

TRAITS: Stoic (1)

Scientist

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 2 | RESOURCES | 7 |
| WILL | 6 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 3 | | |

SKILLS: Scientist 5, Healer 3, Weather Watcher 3, Loremouse 2, Chemistry-wise 4

TRAITS: Curious (2), Oldfur (2)

Soldier

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: Fighter 5, Scout 3, Duty-wise 4

TRAITS: Stubborn (1)



Denizens of the Territories

Smith

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: *Smith 5, Haggler 3, Precious Metals-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Fiery (1)*

Stonemason

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: *Stonemason 5, Miller 3, Laborer 2*

TRAITS: *Big Paw (2)*

Teacher

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Instructor 5, Persuader 4, Complaining-wise 3*

TRAITS: *Wise (1)*

Town Captain

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Fighter 4, Orator 3, Haggler 4, Instructor 3, Soldier-wise 3*

TRAITS: *Defender (2)*

Wanderer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 6 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

SKILLS: *Pathfinder 5, Harvester 4, Weather Watcher 3*

TRAITS: *Skinny (2)*

Weaver

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Weaver 5, Haggler 4, Cloak-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Long Tail (1)*



WEASELS

Dwelling on the southwestern border of the Territories in a land known as the Darkheather, weasels possess language, culture and technology. They are also natural enemies to mice. They will kill (and even eat) mice without provocation or hesitation. Only three years ago, the weasels made incursions into the Territories and a great war was fought. The mice prevailed, but only narrowly. Many mice were lost. During the struggle, the weasels managed to capture a handful of border towns.

There's no telling when they will muster again and attempt to wipe out the Territories once and for all.

Weasels are long, slender creatures growing two to four times the size of a mouse. Their sinuous bodies allow them to follow their prey into burrows and narrow places.

Weasels are ruled by an Overlord and a series of lesser Tunnel Lords. Titles are achieved either by slaying the weasel currently occupying the position, or by being appointed and supported by another more powerful weasel. Lords are well-off, never lacking for wealth or comfort. However, they are rarely at ease. There is always fear, political struggle and danger within a weasel community.

Weasel Nature



Mouse Nature is quite different from Weasel Nature. Their Nature does not encourage them to hide and flee. Instead, it drives them to trick their prey, kill them, take their stuff and gloat about it. Their Nature descriptors are: *Aggressive, Gloating, Clever* and *Burrow Stealer*.

Weasel Peasant Conscript

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Weasel) | 4 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: *Laborer 4, Hunter 2, Deceiver 2*

TRAITS: *Fearful (1)*

GEAR: *A shovel*

Weasel Soldier

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Weasel) | 4 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: *Fighter 5, Deceiver 4, Hunter 3*

TRAITS: *Cunning (1)*

GEAR: *Light armor, a sword, an empty sack*

Weasel Spy

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Weasel) | 5 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

SKILLS: *Fighter 5, Scout 5, Pathfinder 4, Hunter 4, Deceiver 4, Persuader 4, Brambles-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Jaded (1), Cunning (2)*

GEAR: *A pair of knives, maps of the Territories*

Weasel Captain

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Weasel) | 5 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

SKILLS: *Fighter 5, Orator 4, Deceiver 4, Militarist 4, War-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Suspicious (2), Cunning (2)*

GEAR: *Heavy armor, axe*

Weasel Tunnel Lord

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Weasel) | 6 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 7 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

SKILLS: *Fighter 5, Orator 5, Deceiver 4, Militarist 5, Hagglor 4, Pathfinder 4, Hunter 5, Tunnel-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Independent (2), Suspicious (2)*

GEAR: *Heavy armor, halberd*

Weasel Overlord

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|-----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Weasel) | 7 | RESOURCES | 10 |
| WILL | 6 | CIRCLES | 8 |
| HEALTH | 7 | | |

SKILLS: *Fighter 6, Orator 5, Militarist 5, Persuader 4, Deceiver 6, Weasel-wise 5, Warrior Mouse-wise 3*

TRAITS: *Leader (1), Jaded (2), Suspicious (3)*

GEAR: *Heavy armor, halberd, knives*



WEASEL ALLIES

The ferret, the marten, the mink and the sable are close cousins to the weasel. They can often be found among the weasels acting as laborers, scouts or advisors.

Ferret

While they are a part of the weasel family, ferrets are looked upon as inferior and treated as second-class citizens by their weasel cousins.

Ferrets provide most of the labor for weasel culture, while weasels themselves are often warrior captains, leaders of a tunnel section, or bureaucrats. There have been a few stand-out ferrets who rose above their station to gain the respect of weasels. Most notable is Annivory. She was the chief captain in the Winter War and took orders directly from Rampaul.

Ferret Nature 5

Clever, Stealing, Hiding

Marten

The marten is a larger cousin of the weasel. They have short brown fur and look like a cross between a fox and a weasel.

Martens live near pine trees, because they like to eat the pine seeds. They hunt rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks and mice. They're active year-round.

Marten Nature 6

Climbing, Swimming, Predator, Nest Stealer

Mink

Minks are weasels who've taken to living more in the water than on land. Their fur is thick and oily and they have webbed toes. Minks are larger than weasels, but smaller than otters.

Minks are active year-round. They produce young in early spring. They're expressly carnivores; they'll attack just about anything they can get their jaws around. They prefer mice, rabbits, whistle pigs and squirrels.

Mink Nature 6

Swimming, Predator, Burrow Stealing

Sable

Sables are the largest cousin to the weasel. They are about the same length as a fox, but with shorter legs. They have soft, deep brown fur and long bushy tails. They have a much longer snout than weasels and retractable claws.

Sables are rare in the Territories. Occasionally, they'll be found prowling around during the winter looking for food. They eat just about anything, from mice to fruit. However, they're famous for their love of porcupine meat. They'll hunt and kill porcupines, rarely suffering from the animal's quills.

Sable Nature 7

Climbing, Swimming, Predator, Porcupine Killin’

Sable Weapons

Snout—as spear. Retractable Claws— + 1s to successful Attack.

LIVESTOCK

The mice keep three types of insects as livestock: beetles, bees and crickets. Mouse insectrists have managed to breed and train these creatures to serve mousekind.

Beetles

Beetles are used to carry small loads, like messages, and are kept as pets.

Beetle Nature 3

Hauling, Leaf Chewing, Carapace

Bees

Bees are kept in apiaries. Apiarists harvest honey and wax from the beehives.

Bee Nature 2

Buzzing Around, Pollen Hunter, Swarm

Crickets

Crickets, like beetles, are kept as pets. They are said to be useful in determining the coming weather, but most mice keep them for their songs.

Cricket Nature 2

Chirping, Weather Watcher, Hopping

WILD ANIMALS

Animals are listed by name. Their descriptions offer details about the animals, including the problems they pose for mice. Animal Nature gives the critters’ Nature rating and three or four descriptors. Some animals are also listed with animal weapons—special advantages they have in fights, chases or other appropriate conflicts. Animal weapons are described in terms of the weapon qualities as presented in the **Weapons in Conflict** section or with a specific bonus.

Badger

Badgers have coarse fur that ranges from gray to yellowish brown. They bear a distinctive white stripe that runs from the snout up across the skull. They have a broad, flat body, short powerful legs and long, scythe-like claws.

Badgers are tough, mean, voracious predators. They eat anything and they’re active year-round. They dig dens in grassy hillsides. The dens are used for wintering and for raising their young.

Badgers are a real problem for mice in the Territories. If one finds a mouse settlement, it will devastate it—tearing through the defenses and devouring the mice within.

Denizens of the Territories

Badger Nature 8

Powerful, Nocturnal, Keen Smell, Predator

Badger Weapons

Scythe-like claws— as spear and as axe.

Bat

The Territories are home to many different types of bats—brown bats, red bats and hoary bats to name a few. None of these creatures are directly harmful toward mice. They are all nocturnal insectivores.

Bats roost in caves and tall trees, making sorties at night to hunt. During the winter, they hibernate.

Bat Nature 5

Flying, Insect Hunting, Nocturnal

Beaver

Beavers are massive rodents with large, flat tails. They live on lakes or rivers and do not directly compete with mice for food. Beavers eat bark, green leaves and aquatic plants, which are all plentiful in the Territories.

The problem beavers pose is that they fell trees to build dams on rivers and lodges on lakes. The trees could be home to mice or fall on a nearby mouse settlement. Even if that's not the case, a beaver dam can block the flow of a river and ruin mouse industry downstream.

Beavers are active year-round.

Beaver Nature 7

Gnawing, Building, Swimming, Tunneling

Bird

There are many species of bird common to the Territories, like starlings, grosbeaks,



yellowthroats, grackles, sparrows, towhees and cowbirds. Most birds eat seeds and insects, chirp pleasantly, fly about, migrate in the winter and hang about in flocks.

Some specific types of birds are described in individual entries in this list, use this entry for all others.

Bird Nature 5

Flying, Chirping, Eating Stuff

Black Bear

Bears are rare in the Territories themselves, but they are common in the lands surrounding them. The Scent Border keeps them from wreaking havoc on mouse life.

Bears are curious, smart and always hungry. They eat anything. To a black bear, the towns and cites of the Territories are a series of delicious, gift-wrapped presents for him to unwrap and dig into at his leisure.

Bears are active from the late spring to the late fall. They hibernate for the winter.

Black Bear Nature 12

Powerful, Curiosity, Voracious Appetite, Destructor!

Black Bear Weapons

Bear claws— + 2s to Attack. Thick skin— + 2s to disposition in a fight. Massive—the range of a bear attack is longer than bows.

Blue Jay

Blue jays are intelligent birds known primarily for their brilliant plumage. They are problem solvers and are known to gather and cache food for the winter. Blue jays also have a piercing screech and can imitate the calls of predator birds to scare away other birds.

These birds will eat just about anything, but they're not dangerous predators and they don't hunt anything bigger than beetles.

Blue Jay Nature 5

Flying, Screeching, Intelligent, Talkative

Bullfrog

Bullfrogs are massive frogs notorious for their distinctive croaking. These frogs are territorial, squatting in the shallows of rivers and ponds. They'll eat any small animal that will fit into their gullet, including mice.

Bullfrogs are active from spring to fall. In the winter, they hibernate by burrowing into the mud beneath ponds and lakes.

Bullfrog Nature 5

Leaping, Croaking, Camouflage, Predator

Chipmunk

Chipmunks are small, distinctive squirrels. Rather than living in trees, they dig extensive burrow systems containing multiple chambers—for living, storage and waste.

Denizens of the Territories

Chipmunks will eat anything they can get their little teeth around—seeds, fruit, nuts, eggs, baby animals and flowers.

Chipmunks generally don't pose a problem for mice, but in lean times, they can compete with mice for sparse pickings.

These animals are active from spring to fall. They hibernate in the winter.

Chipmunk Nature 5

Foraging, Burrowing, Cheek Pouches

Coyote

Beyond the Scent Border, a number of dangerous animals roam. Driven by scarcity during the long winters, coyote will make forays into the Territories in search of food.

Coyotes are bigger than foxes, but not as big as wolves. They're clever omnivores who would gleefully gobble up a town full of mice or simply snap up a stray mouse or two.

Coyote Nature 8

Intelligent, Adaptable, Unpredictable, Tenacious

Coyote Weapons

Snapping Jaws—as spear and as sword.

Crab

Living among the boulders and crags on the hardscrabble shoreline, crabs are determined scavengers. Though rarely encountered by mice, any meetings are fraught with danger. Crabs are greedy and will fight with mice for scavenged bits.

Crab Nature 6

Scavenger, Greedy, Rocky Camouflage

Crab Weapons

Armored Shell— + 1D to Defend. Graspy Claws— + 1s to successful Attack. Decapod— + 1D to Maneuver.



Crow

This jet-black bird is a scavenger and a predator. He'll eat insects, carrion, berries and even the odd mouse. Crows build platform nests in which they store bright shiny objects they've collected in their travels.

Crows are playful to the point of mischievousness—they provoke and chase other birds and animals. At night, murders of crows roost together, but during the day they usually disperse to hunt.

Crow Nature 7

Mischievous, Predator, Stealing, Flying

Crow Weapons

Wings— + 1D to Maneuver.



Deer

Deer are lithe ungulates that keep to herds. For the most part, they are kept from the Territories by the Scent Border. Every few seasons, a herd will be forced across the border by hunger or predators. Though they pose no physical threat, these herds of deer will devour all of the harvest and forage in the area and leave the mice bereft.

Deer Nature 7

Foraging, Fleeing Wolves, Moving Unseen

Deer Weapons

Long Legs— + 1D to Maneuver. Hooves— + 1s to Feint or Defend.

Flying Squirrel

The flying squirrel seems to be a harmless, spectacular oddity. In fact, it's quite dangerous. Mice of the Territories refer to this animal as the Flying Devil! Mouse children are warned that if they do not behave, the Flying Devil will swoop into their room at night, carry them off and eat them.

The flying squirrel is an omnivore, and young mouse pups are among its favorite prey. Given its rather unusual nature, it's a difficult creature to defend against; it can attack from unexpected angles.

Denizens of the Territories

Flying squirrels are nocturnal and active year round. They prey on mice the most during the winter, when other food supplies are scarce.

Flying Squirrel Nature 6

Gliding, Baby Mice Stealing, Climbing

Flying Squirrel Weapons

Gliding Wings— + 2D to Maneuver actions.

Frog

The most common frog in the Territories is brown or green and spotted like a leopard. They live near rivers, lakes and ponds, feeding on beetles, crickets and even other small frogs. Frogs are about as big as a large mouse, but they don't pose a threat. They might eat your pets, though!

Frog Nature 4

Leaping, Croaking, Swimming, Beetle Eating

Fox

Foxes are smaller than coyotes and wolves and tend to live by their wits.

Solitary creatures, except when rearing pups, foxes are very dangerous to mice. Mice are, in fact, part of their preferred diet. Foxes enjoy hunting and playing with them as much as they enjoy eating them.

The scent border keeps out most of these predators, but they are fast learners and a few figure out the trick every season. These wayward predators must be dealt with by the Guard.

Fox Nature 7

Fast Learner, Predator, Trickster

Fox Weapons

Snapping Jaws— Long (as spear), Useful (as sword).

Goose

During the summer, families of geese will alight in the Territories to raise their young. At the same time, the adults molt their feathers. This process keeps the families relatively sedentary. Female geese will tend to the young, while males stand guard around the family. Males are extremely aggressive. They'll hiss, honk and charge anything they think is threatening the family, including armed mice.

Goose Nature 8

Flying, Aggressive, Swimming

Great Horned Owl

Great horned owls are dangerous predators who hunt mice, rabbits, skunks, porcupines, snakes and even other birds.

While its “horns” are just tufted feathers, the great horned owl has excellent hearing. It hunts year-round and it doesn’t build its own nest; it captures the nests of crows and hawks.

Great Horned Owl Nature 8

Silent, Excellent Hearing, Flying, Predator

Great Horned Owl Weapons

Talons— + 1s to a successful Attack. Silent
Wings— + 1D to Maneuver, + 1s on successful
Maneuver.

Green Snake

The green snake is a beautiful snake named for its brilliant scales. It hunts insects, but is otherwise harmless. They grow to about three mouse lengths, so it can be frightening to wake up and find one curled around your campfire!

Green Snake Nature 4

Insect Hunting, Hiding, Slithering



Ground Squirrel

Ground squirrels are cousins to the chipmunk and the flying squirrel. They dig extensive, sinuous burrows deep under the ground where they cache seeds and plant matter for the winter.

These animals are another example of a seemingly harmless creature that preys on mice. Ground squirrels love to steal and eat baby mice!

Ground Squirrel Nature 5

Burrowing, Stealing, Sneaking

Hare

The hare is a large rabbit. In the summer, his coat is dark brown. In the winter he molts and his fur turns brilliant white with black-tipped white ears. Hares are sapient and peaceful, but they don't wear much in terms of clothing or use tools or weapons.

From time to time, hares and mice ally. The hares allow the mice to use them as mounts and are paid for their services in food or manufactured goods.

Not all mice understand hares. These creatures speak softly and with few words. In fact, many mice fail to notice hares even speaking at all. Those that take the time find hares to be spartan, stoic and reserved. There are a few guardmice who have been trained to work with the hares.

They have fashioned tack and harness to fit the bodies of hares for riding or towing. It is not easy to ride hares. Unless trained in how to address them, most mice will have no luck getting hares to listen to them, let alone ride on them.

Hare Nature 6

Running, Hiding, Foraging

Hare Weapons

Burst of Speed— + 2D to Maneuver, + 1s successful to Feint.

Hawk

The hawks common to the Territories have short, rounded wings that enable them to navigate the tight confines of the forest beneath the canopy. Hawks are voracious raptors who prey on mice and birds.

During the winter, hawks migrate south to warmer climes and better hunting grounds. They return in the spring to hunt and raise their young.

Hawk Nature 7

Predator, Flying, Screeching

Hawk Weapons

Short, Rounded Wings— + 2D to Maneuver in the forest. Raptor's Beak— + 1D to Attack. Talons— + 1s to successful Attack.

Heron

Hérons are giant birds who stalk marshlands, streams and ponds on long, stilt-like legs. Only present in the Territories during the summer, they are a challenge for the Guard. Their plumage is so beautiful that many townsmice will try to get a closer look. Herons are not picky eaters. They'll just as soon snap up an awestruck mouse as a wriggling fish.

Heron Nature 7

Stalking, Flying, Barking

Heron Weapons

Long Beak— counts as spear with + 1s to Attack.

Kestrel

Kestrels are falcons sometimes known as sparrow hawks. These raptors are smaller than hawks and owls, but no less deadly. They prey on anything that they can get their talons around. Unlike the hunting hawks found in the forest itself, kestrels are more likely to be found hunting in clearings and meadows.

During the winter, the kestrels fly south and the mice are free to keep their attention trained on other predators, like owls and foxes!

Kestrel Nature 6

Predator, Flying, Noble

Kestrel Weapons

Raptor's Beak— + 1D to Attack. Talons— + 1s to successful Attack.

Killdeer

Killdeer can be found nesting in fields and other areas with gravel. It's a distinctive bird known for its "kill-deer" call and its broken wing ploy. If a predator gets too close to its nest, the killdeer will begin twittering, limping and feigning a broken wing. The bird will continue the act until it leads the predator away from the nest, at which point it takes flight and flees.

Killdeer hunt insects in the summers in the Territories. In the winter, they head south.

Killdeer Nature 6

Flying, Insect Eater, Deceiver

Milk Snake

The milk snake is a terrifying predator. It strikes quickly from ambush with its bite while rattling its tail. Its bite is not venomous, however. It is only used to grasp hold of its prey so the snake can wrap its coils around its victim and squeeze him to death.

Milk snakes hide in deep burrows during the winter, but during the rest of the year, they can be found hunting mice, newts and birds.

Denizens of the Territories

Milk Snake Nature 7

Predator, Secretive, Slithering, Constricting

Milk Snake Weapons

Bite— + 1D to Maneuver. Rattle— + 1s to successful Feint. Coils— + 1s to successful Attack.

Moose

Moose are like unto gods: impossibly massive, implacable and stoic. Rarely seen in the Territories, when they do cross the Scent Border it is the closest the mice come to an earthquake.

Moose and mice get along just fine. There are few problems between them. It is what the moose bring with them that is dangerous to the mice. Wolves are never far behind. It behooves the Guard to do all in their power to lead moose out of the Territories and to keep the Scent Border in good repair.

Moose Nature 12

Eerily Quiet, Hooves and Antlers, Gigantic, Grazer

Moose Weapons

Sharp Hooves— + 2D to Defend, + 1D to Feint. Antlers— + 2D to Maneuver. Giganticness—the range of a moose attack is *longer* than mouse bows.

Newt

Newts are found in streams and ponds year-round. They are odd creatures—some newts transform themselves from their aquatic form into a land-dwelling form. Adults grow to about the same length as a mouse.

Newt Nature 3

Swimming, Hiding, Mosquito Eating

Newt Weapons

Secreted Toxin— + 2D to any action once per fight.



Otter

Otters are relatives of the weasel who make their homes in dens along rivers and lakes. They are playful, intelligent animals with rather expressive faces.

Otters and mice are not natural enemies, but should a mouse venture out into otter-inhabited waters, the animal has no compunction about having a mouse snack.

Active year-round, otters are most active mid-spring when their young are born.

Otter Nature 7

Swimming, Fishing, Playing, Whistling

Owl

In addition to the great horned owl, the Territories are home to another species called the barred owl. The barred owl hunts and eats anything it can kill with its talons, including plucking fish out of the water. Unlike the great horned owl, the barred owl has no “ear” tufts. Its plumage is a shadowy mix of light and dark gray.

Owls nest in the hollowed-out cavities of trees. The entrance is small, but leads to a larger inner chamber.

Barred Owl Nature 7

Predator, Flying, Camouflage

Barred Owl Weapons

Powerful Wings— + 2D to Maneuver in the forest. Tearing Beak— + 1s to successful Attack. Grasping Talons— + 1D to Attack.

Pine Snake

Native to the Territories, the pine snake is similar to the milk snake—it’s a non-venomous constrictor that prefers to eat mice and birds. It differs in that it’s an excellent climber and has an appearance and manner similar to a rattlesnake.

Pine Snake Nature 7

Predator, Climbing, Hiding, Constricting

Pine Snake Weapons

Bite— + 1D to Maneuver. Musk— + 1s to Defend. Coils— + 1s to successful Attack.

Porcupine

Porcupines have short legs, an arched back and a blunt tail, all lined with white-tipped quills.

They are not dangerous to mice, but they are stubborn creatures. Porcupines feed on bark, green plants and leaves. Dislodging this obstinate critter can prove to be a problem.

Porcupines are active all year round.

Porcupine Nature 6

Stubborn, Slow, Sleepy, Quilled

Denizens of the Territories

Porcupine Weapons

Quills— + 2D to Defend, + 1s to Attack, Maneuver and Feint.

Raccoon

Raccoons are dangerous foes of mousekind. They are smart animals who are adept at gaining entry to locked or sealed areas. These solitary prowlers eat anything, including mice. A mouse town is a dream come true for these creatures—it's breakfast, lunch and dinner, all in one hole.

They're active throughout the year, except for the very dead of winter, when they hole up and wait out the worst of the cold.

Raccoon Nature 8

Smart, Nimble Paws, Climbing, Devouring

Raccoon Weapons

Sharp Claws—as spear.

Raven

Ravens and crows are often mistaken for one another. Ravens are bigger than their crow cousins, and have a longer, thicker beak. They also have a ruff of feathers at the throat that crows do not.

Ravens are present year-round in the Territories. The birds mate for life and tend to keep the same nests. Therefore, a pair of ravens might be a

common sight for certain towns. Eventually, the townsmice might even come to know the ravens a bit.

In addition to hunting small animals and insects, the raven is perhaps more famous for its role as a scavenger. In that capacity, it loves to trick and steal and play. The bird is known to associate with wolf packs, befriending them, playing with them and leading them to profitable hunting grounds or carrion.

Raven Nature 8

Scavenger, Acrobat, Trickster, Flying

Raven Weapons

Wheeling Wings— + 1D to Maneuver or Defend. Poking Beak— + 1s to Feint.

Salamander

Small, slender, dark red and black amphibians, salamanders prowl the dark, wet places of the Territories hunting insects and spiders.

Salamander Nature 3

Sneaking, Insect Hunting, Burrowing, Climbing

Shrike

The shrike is a deceptive creature. It looks like a small gray songbird, apparently harmless. In truth, it's a cunning predator. Shrike watch for prey atop high branches. When they detect

movement, they swoop down and capture their prey in their claws. They then fly their victim to a nearby thorn bush, or a sharp branch, and impale him. Once impaled, the shrike can use its hooked beak to kill and eat its prey or leave him to die slowly and be eaten later.

Shrike hunt mice, snakes, frogs, lizards and insects. They can be found year-round in the Territories, but are less common in the summer as they often migrate north.

Shrike Nature 6

Predator, Impaling, Flying

Shrike Weapons

Wings— + 1D to Maneuver. Grasping Talons— + 1D to Feint. Hooked Beak— + 1s to successful Attack.

Skink

There is one lizard native to the Territories, the five-lined skink. This small lizard grows up to about two and a half mouse-lengths. It's mainly an insectivore, eating crickets, grasshoppers, spiders and sometimes snails. It can dig rapidly and efficiently, so skinks have been known to raid mouse beetle and cricket farms when they're hungry.

They prefer to sun themselves on rocks in the morning before hunting. They winter in deep

burrows. Their tails can detach and act as a decoy to help them escape a sticky situation.

Skink Nature 4

Digging, Cricket Hunter, Running, Climbing

Skink Weapons

Detachable tail— + 2D to one Maneuver once per fight.

Skunk

Skunks are yet another stubborn scavenger who prowls the forests surrounding the Territories. The scientists of Sprucetuck do their best to mix the concoction for the scent border to keep these creatures out, but their formulas are rarely entirely successful. Solitary skunks can be found wandering the Territories at all times of year, but especially in early spring when forage is scarce elsewhere and the scent border is at its weakest.

These waddling, obtuse creatures seem more of a nuisance than anything else, but they are dangerous to mice—they eat them! In addition, the skunk's spray is potent enough to make a mouse violently ill.

Skunk Nature 6

Waddling, Scavenging, Stubbornly Not Doing What You Want It to Do

Skunk Weapons

Musk Spray— + 3D to Maneuver, Missile.

Denizens of the Territories

Snake

The most common snake in the Territories is the garter snake. It's slender, black with yellow lateral stripes. A typical specimen is about five mice long. Though not venomous, this snake does hunt and kill insects, squirrels and mice.

In the spring, one can find up to 20 snakes mating in a writhing mass—one female at the center. In the winter, they can be found hiding in large groups deep in captured animal dens.

Snake Nature 6

Predator, Hiding, Slithering

Snake Weapons

Fangs— + 1D to Attack. Musk— + 1D to Defend.

Snapping Turtle

Snapping turtles are gigantic monsters who look like they've crawled straight out of the prehistoric past. They have tough, thorny skin, a long tail, stubby legs, claws and a bony snout all set under a ridged shell.



Snapping turtles have a notoriously bad attitude. They'd sooner take a bite out of something than look at it. They'll eat anything! Fortunately, they're big and slow-moving and they stick close to water. So they're easy for mice to avoid. But if a snapping turtle should get the drop on a mouse, he's doomed!

Snapping Turtle Nature 8

Mean, Swimming, Snapping

Snapping Turtle Weapons

Surprisingly Long Neck— + 1D to Attack. Bony Jaws— + 1s to Attack. Ridged Shell— + 3D to Defend.

Star-Nosed Mole

The star-nosed mole is a bizarre-looking creature. Instead of typical nostrils at the end of its snout, it bears a pink, flower-like set of nasal rays. This creature creates burrows and tunnels near bodies of water from which it hunts worms, insects and fish. These animals are most active in the spring and early summer.

Generally not a problem for mice, star-nosed moles have been known to tunnel into mouse holds to plunder beetle and earthworm farms.

Star-Nosed Mole Nature 6

Tunneler, Swimmer, Sensitive Nose, Insect Eater

Star-Nosed Mole Weapons

Digging Claws— + 1s to successful Attack.

Toad

Toads are the cousins to frogs. They're about the same size as the common frog, but they live on land, not in the water. They're also uglier, covered in dry, warty flesh.

Toad Nature 4

Insect Hunting, Camouflage, Hopping

Toad Weapons

Evil Secretions— + 1D to Defend, Feint and Maneuver

Turkey Vulture

During the summer, at the sites of deer and moose carcasses, one can find turkey vultures picking over the remains. These large birds have distinctive red-fleshed heads, large nostrils and hooked beaks. They're carrion eaters and are no threat to mice in general, but they're often seen as an ill omen. The presence of a turkey vulture means wolves or wolverines soon follow.

Turkey Vulture Nature 7

Flying, Keen Smell, Carrion Eater

Turtle

The turtle most commonly found in the ponds and streams of the Territories is the painted turtle. These small, slender turtles are known for the yellow striping that runs down their snout, neck, legs and tail.

Turtles eat fish, crayfish, snails, tadpoles and insects. They're active in the spring and summer. When the weather turns cold, they rest at the bottom of lakes or burrow into the mud.

Turtle Nature 5

Swimming, Hiding, Turtling

Turtle Weapons

Turtle Shell— + 3D to Defend.

Whistle Pig

Whistle pigs, or woodchucks as they are also known, are a massive breed of ground squirrel. They are herbivores and generally have no truck with mice—they do not compete or conflict.

However, whistle pigs do pose a problem for mice in general. They are dedicated burrowers, tunneling up to 30 feet for just one burrow. In and of itself, this isn't a problem. But whistle pigs are peaceful and non-aggressive and their burrows are often captured by more aggressive creatures like weasels, raccoons and foxes. In this case, the whistle pig is killed or chased off, and suddenly the mice have a labyrinthine burrow filled with aggressive predators beneath their feet.

This scenario poses a problem for the Guard. Do they leave the animal alone and hope for the best? Or do they attempt to drive it off and seal off the tunnels themselves?

Denizens of the Territories

Whistle pigs hibernate in the winter. They get their name from a distinctive whistling call they issue when in danger.

Whistle Pig Nature 5

Tunneling, Digging, Burrowing, Foraging

Wolf

Wolves are the ultimate predators. A pack of these beautiful, savage creatures can bring down any other creature in the Territories—even bears and moose.

Mostly, wolves leave mice alone. There are bigger, richer meals to hunt outside the Territories. Inevitably, though, a local wolf pack will fall onto hard times and suffer from a lean year. At this point, the wolves turn to nearly anything that moves to sustain themselves. Gobbling up mice is certainly not beneath them!

Bigger than coyotes and foxes, wolves hunt in packs. This enables them to bring down still larger prey—moose and deer. They are, in fact, unparalleled hunters. Patient, skilled and cunning, to watch them hunt is to witness an act of terrible beauty.

Wolves are active year-round, but since the pack needs so much food to sustain itself, they rarely remain in one place for long.

Wolves hunt in packs of three to seven. In the game, the pack will act as a team. They *will* help one another.

Wolf Nature 10

Predator, Scavenging, Howling, Playing

Wolf Weapons

Snapping Jaws—as spear and as sword. Loping Legs— + 1D to Maneuver.

Wolverine

Wolverines are aggressive predators. They are similarly shaped to badgers, but they are larger and have longer legs. Wolverines prefer to hunt and kill squirrels, hares, whistle pigs, skunks, foxes, porcupines and even deer. In that regard, they can be a friend to mice, driving off other troublesome animals. But a wolverine will not pass up a tasty mouse snack if one wanders by.

Wolverines are active year-round, preferring the cold, snowy months over the warm, summery ones.

Wolverine Nature 9

Fearless, Predator, Stronger than He Looks, Climbing

Wolverine Weapons

Retractable Claws—as spear. Tearing Jaws— + 1s to a successful Attack.

Woodpecker

Woodpeckers pose no threat to mice. In fact, they're generally beneficial. They eat all manner of destructive and dangerous insects. Unfortunately, they're also a nuisance. If a woodpecker nests in the same tree as a mouse settlement, the residents are blasted with its incessant pecking and hammering.

The Guard are often called in to get rid of the bird because no one in the town can concentrate in all the racket!

Woodpecker Nature 5

Flying, Pecking, Insect Eater

Woodpecker Weapons

Hardened Beak— + 1D to Attack.



COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Most animals have no culture to speak of. The mice in Mouse Guard are special. Other animals exist as animals do. The mice may communicate with them, but each animal speaks its own "foreign tongue." The closer to mousedom the animal is, the easier it is to understand that language.

Weasels, like mice, have speech and culture. They are the dark mirror in which the mice are reflected—mice are peaceful and wish to survive, weasels are rapacious and wish to conquer and enslave.

Animal Lore

Animals are studied by loremice in order to discover their habits, instincts, personalities and how they communicate.



If a guardmouse wishes to know something about or communicate with one of these animals, he must make a Loremouse test. See the *Abilities and Skills* chapter for the Loremouse skill description.

NATURAL ORDER

Mice may be intelligent and able to use tools to solve problems, but there is a natural order to life in the Territories that they must obey. Compared to a fox or an owl, a mouse is still a mouse—and a mouse is prey.



The Natural Order chart illustrates which animals may prey on each other. Animals may kill an animal that is one rank higher, equal to or lower than them on the scale.

Mice, for example, may kill a weasel, a bat, a small snake and insects.



Animals that are two or more ranks higher than you on the scale may not be killed by your hand—not using Fighter or Hunter.



Animals that are two ranks higher (or less) may be captured, injured or run off using Fighter or Hunter.



Animals that are more than two ranks higher on the scale may only be run off. They may not be captured or injured using Fighter or Hunter.



Militarist and Scientist

Under special circumstances, the Militarist and Scientist skills may be used to kill, injure or trap bigger animals.

War with Animals

Generals and commanders may band their soldiers together and attack en masse in hopes of driving off or killing predators.



The Militarist skill may be used to engage in a conflict to kill an animal that is two or more steps higher than mice on the Natural Order scale.

This conflict requires an army that must be somehow raised during the course of the game. The army must be of a sufficient size to match the target animal. Two steps higher—beavers, etc.—requires a force of at least 20 armed mice. Three steps up the scale—fox, etc.—requires a force of at least 100 mice. Four steps up the scale—coyote, etc.—requires 200 armed mice. Five steps higher—wolves, etc.—require 2,000 mice. A war with an animal six steps higher on the Natural Order scale—bears and moose—requires 20,000 mice.

Obviously, it's difficult to mobilize that many mice to do anything, let alone fight a war to slay a rampaging bear. Gathering an army of any size should be the focus of many juicy conflicts.

Blinded with Science!

The Scientist skill may be used to capture or injure animals that are two or more steps higher than the mice on the Natural Order scale. This process differs from the Militarist angle in that it's not about numbers. It's about ingenuity and supplies.



In order to build a better mouse trap, the mouse Scientist or one of his compatriots must pass a Resources test with an obstacle equal to the target animal's Nature. This represents the cost of all of the supplies to build the trap for the animal.



If the Resources test is successful, the mouse Scientist must engage in a special conflict with the animal. The sciencemouse may choose his goal, while the GM chooses an appropriate goal for the animal. Scientist is used for Attack and Maneuver. Another craft or trade skill that is appropriate to the type of giant trap the sciencemouse is building may be used for Defend and Feint—Smith, Carpenter or Loremouse could all be used depending on the situation.



The animal tests Nature and adds it to Nature for his disposition. He tests Nature for all actions in the science versus Nature conflict!

Natural Order Scale

The natural order scale is as follows, lowest on the scale first, highest last.

- ☞ Insect, Baby Snake, Tadpole
- ☞ Young Mouse, Small Snake, Small Fish
- ☞ Mouse, Bat, Chipmunk, Young Weasel
- ☞ Star-Nosed Mole, Weasel, Mink, Rabbit, Flying Squirrel, Ground Squirrel, Snake, Bullfrog
- ☞ Beaver, Hare, Skunk, Porcupine, Owl, Whistle Pig
- ☞ Fox, Badger, Raccoon, Marten
- ☞ Coyote, Otter, Sable
- ☞ Wolf, Wolverine, Deer
- ☞ Black Bear, Moose





BLACK BEAR, MOOSE



WOLF, WOLVERINE, DEER



COYOTE, OTTER, SABLE



FOX, BADGER, RACCOON,
MARTEN



SKUNK, BEAVER, HARE,
WHISTLE-PIG, PORCUPINE, OWL



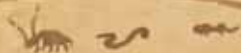
WEASEL, STAR-NOSED MOLE, MINK,
SQUIRREL, RABBIT, FLYING-SQUIRREL,
SNAKE, BULLFROG



MOUSE, BAT, CHIPMUNK,
YOUNG WEASEL



YOUNG MOUSE, SMALL SNAKE,
SMALL FISH



INSECT, BABY SNAKE, TADPOLE



ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Time moves along. Forever will its cycle span.
Unyieldingly forward, in spite of anymouse's plan.
“All fur becomes gray” is the unstoppable truth,
One that is rarely observed while still in one's youth.
Collect all of what you can while along life's route:
Friends, mentors, loves and truths worthy of pursuit.
They offer no guarantee to remain if missed once before.
Death can come quickly and with no return from its shore.

— ‘A Mouse's Eulogy for Life’ by Roibin the Scribe

This chapter looks at abilities and skills in an in-depth manner. Rules for advancement, learning new skills and factoring obstacles are provided. Nature, Will, Health, Resources and Circles are detailed. The chapter ends with an extensive skill list.

ADVANCEMENT

Abilities and skills can improve during the course of play. On the character sheet, each skill and ability has a series of bubbles to the right of it. One row is listed *P*, the other is listed *F*. This stands for *Pass* and *Fail*.



You don't have to play with these rules, but we recommend it. They make the game a bit more tactical. We like tactical games.



An ability or skill advances when you pass a number of tests equal to its current rating *and* fail a number of tests equal to one less than its rating.

My Carpenter skill is 3. I need to log three passed tests and two failed tests—five tests total.



Rating 0 and 1 abilities and skills only require one passed test to advance.

If I have a Fighter 1, I need to pass one test to advance it to Fighter 2. It's harder than it looks.



When you've met the requirements, the ability or skill increases from its current rank to the next highest—from 1 to 2, 3 to 4 or whatever's appropriate. Advancement happens as soon as the test requirements are fulfilled—after a roll against an obstacle, after a test in a conflict or after earning a test from practice.



After I log the last test I need to advance, my skill rating increases by one. This happens immediately in the game—in the middle of a fight, due to practice or whenever!

Advancing Taxed Nature

Nature advances using the requirements for its current maximum rating, not its current taxed rating.

If my Nature is 5, but taxed to 3, I need five passed tests and four failed tests to advance.

If you advance Nature when it's taxed, advance the maximum rating *and* the current rating by one each.

If my Nature is 5, but taxed to 3, and I advance the ability, my ratings become Nature 6 maximum and Nature 4 current.

No Converting Tests



Tests may not be converted from passed to failed or vice versa. If you have 10 passed tests and 1 failed test, you still need to fill the failed requirement. You need to push your character harder and try more difficult and daring acts!

Clean the Slate

After the ability or skill has advanced, all extra tests are discarded. Once the requirements to advance are met, you start over with a clean slate.

If an ability or skill's maximum rating is reduced due to depletion, Injury or Sickness, its tests for advancement for the current rating are erased.

Conflicts Earn One Test per Ability or Skill



Occasionally in play, we have situations where a player tests the same ability over and over again—conflicts, for example. Any time an ability is tested multiple times to determine the outcome, only one test is earned toward advancement. The guideline is: *one test for advancement per scene per skill.*

Log the first test you earn. That's the one that counts for this conflict. Don't worry about noting the rest of your tests.





There's one exception to the "note the first test" rule: If you only need one more of a particular type of test to advance, you can hold off noting your test during a conflict to see if you get the pass or fail that you need to advance.

Lieam needs one failed test to advance his Fighter skill. He's in a conflict and he makes multiple tests against his skill. His player doesn't have to note the first test for advancement unless it's a failure. If he gets a failure during the conflict, Lieam's skill advances and he logs no more tests.

Disposition Roll

The disposition roll does not count toward advancement, since it has no success or failure.

Ties and Advancement

A tie result does not count as advancement. There is no pass or fail, so there is no advancement. If you want to earn a check for advancement for that skill or ability, you must break the tie with a trait or a fate point. If you make a tiebreaker roll, you earn a test for the ability or skill that breaks the tie.

If I break the tie with a trait, I earn a failed test for the skill that I tested. If I spend a fate point and reroll a 6 and break the tie in my favor, I earn a passed test for the skill I tested. If I use a

tiebreaker roll, I do not earn a test for the ability that tied. I earn a test for the ability or skill I use to break the tie.

Obstacle 0 Tests

Obstacle 0 tests—independent tests in conflicts—count as successful so long as one success is rolled. If no successes are rolled, the test counts as a failure.

LEARNING A NEW SKILL



Your characters can learn new skills in the course of the game. In fact, any character can try to test for any skill he doesn't have using the Beginner's Luck rule described in the *Resolution* chapter.



Once you use Beginner's Luck, note the skill you attempted to use on your skill list. Don't put a rating next to it, put an X instead. Check off one of the Pass bubbles—it doesn't matter if you passed or failed that particular test. You need to keep a record of how many times you tried to use that skill, so fill in an additional bubble each time you try to use it.

My character doesn't have the Insectrist skill. During the patrol, we find a beetle nest. I try to tame one of the wild beetles. I test my Will, but roll half the dice due to the Beginner's Luck rule. If I want to learn Insectrist, I write down the skill on my character sheet. I put an X for

the rating and log a test. Pass or fail doesn't matter when learning new skills, though, just the number of tests.



Once you have attempted to use that skill a number of times equal to your current maximum Nature rating, you open the skill at a rating of 2. Erase the X rating and all the check marks toward learning it. Write 2 as the rating. You can now test the ability as normal.

In other words, if my Nature is 5, I need to try the skill five times using Beginner's Luck. After that, I start Insectrist at rating 2.

If you're using Beginner's Luck, do not mark the test to advance Will or Health.

24 Skills



Your character sheet has space for 24 skills and wises. That also represents the

maximum number of skills and wises your character can learn. You can't have more than 24 total. This includes skills being learned, too!

If you reach your maximum, and you want to learn a new skill, you can erase any skill or wise you don't want anymore. It's permanently forgotten by your character. Replace it with the skill you're learning as per the instructions above.



FACTORING OBSTACLES



The number attached to your obstacle indicates how difficult it is to overcome.

Obstacles can range from 1 to 10. Most will range from 1 to 6. The range of difficulty for abilities and skills is described below.

Range of Difficulty

Here's a very rough look at how the obstacle scale works:

- **Ob 1** situations are easily overcome by a single guardmouse.
- **Ob 2** situations are the bulk of the Guard's work. Any single mouse should be able to do it alone, but there's a slight risk involved.
- **Ob 3** situations are challenging. You might need help to overcome this problem. You'll encounter a lot of situations like these during your time in the service.
- **Ob 4** situations are downright hard and all but require teamwork, if not a stroke of luck.
- **Ob 5** situations are very difficult. Overcoming them requires dedicated teamwork or a combination of Nature and skill.
- Obstacles can be 6 or higher, but those are for extreme circumstances and will only rarely occur.

Skill Factors

The exact rating of an obstacle depends on the situation. The skill descriptions contain a heading called **Factors**. Each Factors heading has a number of items or possibilities listed under it. These are broken down into categories and the items in each category are listed in order of difficulty.



When a skill is called for a test, the GM should consult the description to determine the obstacle rating. He chooses which categories are applicable to the situation. Pick a factor from each appropriate category.



Count where each factor falls in its list, from left to right. The first item in the list is worth 1, second is 2, third is 3, and so on.



Add the value of each factor from each applicable category. That's your obstacle for the test!

The factors for the Administrator skill are:

Type: Report, budget, law, rationing orders

Breadth: Mouse, patrol, outpost, business, neighborhood, town, city

If an Administrator wanted to write a report (1) about a single mouse (1), it'd be the total of those two factors—obstacle 2. If he wanted to write a budget (2) for an outpost (3), it'd be Ob 5.

Time, Weather and Night Factors

There are a handful of factors that are not included with each skill: time, weather and night. Usually, these factors aren't important for a test. However, if a situation should arise where one of these things is making it harder for the guardmouse to get his job done, you may factor them in. Each adds one to the obstacle of the test.

Winging It



You'll probably find uses for each skill that are not included in the sample factors. You will need to be able to judge obstacles for yourself. Use the existing examples as a guideline. Try to find where this new situation fits on that scale.



NATURE

Nature stands for the mouse's natural qualities and tendencies. It represents what he was born to do, what helps him survive in the wild and cruel world.

The Nature ability is unique among all the other abilities. While it has a rating like other abilities and skills, it is tagged by the animal it belongs to and includes three or four aspects or descriptions. For Mouse Guard characters, it's *Nature (Mouse)*.



For mice, there are four aspects to their Nature: Escaping, Climbing, Hiding, Foraging. These aspects describe the situations in which you can use your Nature without penalty. If you use your Nature in situations outside of escaping, climbing, hiding and foraging, you risk losing a bit of it.

The higher your Nature rank, the more mouse-like you are. The lower your rank, the more "human" you are.

Acting with Your Nature



When action in the game involves escaping, climbing, hiding or foraging, you can roll your Nature instead of a skill at no cost. It's very useful!

Nature cannot be used to substitute for wises.

Acting Against Your Nature

A mouse may use his Nature as a reservoir of strength to help him over difficult hurdles.

If your character is in a situation that is against his Nature—fighting, researching, arguing, etc.—and doesn't have the proper *skill*, he may make the test using his current Nature rating.

This is not Beginner's Luck. The player may roll his full current Nature rating, not half.

However, if you're testing to overcome an obstacle that's outside of your Nature, your ability rating could be *taxed*.

Taxing Nature



If Nature is used in a situation outside of escaping, hiding, climbing and foraging and the roll is failed, the rating is reduced by the margin of failure. We call this *tax*.

When your Nature is taxed, note your current Nature rating in a slash next to your original Nature rating on your character sheet. Any further tests involving your Nature use the reduced number. Nature can be restored back to its original rating. See the next heading, **Recovering Nature**.

Recovering Nature

Nature can be recovered in three ways: during the winter session, by delivering a prologue or returning from an absence.



During the winter session, each character's Nature is restored to its current maximum.



If a player delivers a prologue, he may recover one point of his taxed Nature.



If a player was away from the game and returns, he may opt to recover one point of his taxed Nature.

Please see **The Mission** for details on the prologue and returning to a game.

Depleting Nature



If your Nature is taxed, instead of waiting to recover, you can choose to reduce your current maximum rating. When you reduce your current rank by one, restore one point of tax.

If your Nature is taxed by two—from 5 to 3—you can reduce your original ranking to 4. You knock that point off, and you also recover a point of tax. Your current rating bumps from 3 to 4. Now you're up to your new maximum of 4.

You can deplete your Nature in this manner at any point, even if it's right before a test.

There are a couple of reasons to reduce your Nature. Read the **Nature 0**, **Nature 7** heading in this chapter.

Tapping Your Nature



You may tap your character's Nature to perform a heroic act. By spending a persona point, you may add your Nature ability rating to your ability or skill test (except Resources or Circles). Persona points are described in the **Rewards** section of the *Mouse Guard* chapter and the *It's What We Fight For* chapter.



If the test is *within* his Nature and successful, then there is no tax.



If the test is *against* his Nature and successful, Nature is taxed by one.

For example, you're fighting a snake. It's in your Nature to run away. It is certainly not in your Nature to dive into the snake's mouth and stab it in the brain.



If the test is *failed*, whether it was with or against Nature, Nature is taxed by the margin of failure.

If a test is outside of the character's Nature, even if he succeeds, he deducts one from his Nature rating. If he fails, he deducts the margin of failure. He's going to lose at least one point.

Double-Tapping Nature

If you're acting within your Nature, you may test your Nature ability (even if you have a relevant skill) and use a persona point to

add your Nature rating on top of that roll. Essentially, you're doubling your Nature. Escaping mice are hard to catch!

However, if you fail this test, your Nature is taxed as per the rule in **Tapping Your Nature**.

Nature 0, Nature 7



You never want your character's Nature to rise too high or fall too low. It's important to strike a balance.

If Nature drops to 0 due to tax, the Mouse is strongly affected. He becomes unlike other mice. Perhaps he's too thoughtful or too fixated on his ideals. Whatever's happened, he's become distinctly unmouse-like.

Nature Taxed to 0



If your current Nature rating drops to 0 due to tax, one of the character's traits is immediately changed to a trait like Outcast, Odd, Faded, or something else appropriate to the test that taxed him. The group should make something up on the spot!

In our group, Dro was playing his character Quentin and he taxed his Nature to 0 during a Scientist test. He was trying to manufacture weasel musk. We decided to give him the Musky Smell trait. He smells like a weasel. Sometimes this is useful!

After earning the trait, reduce your maximum Nature rating by one and erase your tax. You can't have a 0 Nature in play—you just lose a point from your maximum Nature.

If you had a Nature of 5 reduced to 0 by tax, you'd take your trait—perhaps Musky Smell—reduce your Nature rating from 5 to 4 and remove your tax. Now you can roll four dice for the ability until it advances or is taxed again.

Nature Maximum Rating 0

If your maximum Nature rating drops to 0—for example, if you have a 1 maximum and you're taxed—you're in trouble! Your character goes a little crazy. He starts to see the world differently and doesn't want to be in the Guard anymore. At the end of this mission, your character must retire until at least next spring. You may play another character until then.

This is what happened to Celanawe before we meet him in the Fall 1152 series. He spent his Nature being a hero for the Guard and eventually had enough. He retired until he met Saxon and Kenzie and they told him they would help him recover his stolen axe.

Nature 7

If Nature advances to 7 and remains at that rating at the end of your current session, the character has become too mouselike. He's too settled and cautious for adventure. To

represent this, one of his traits is changed to something like Settled, Oldfur, or Skittish. The GM may pick the trait to be changed.

Nature Foraging Factors

A mouse forager can find sustenance for himself no matter where he is in the wild. He can also scavenge up useful bits and materials.

Food: Self, additional mouse, patrol

Stuff: Natural but useful (for Hunter, Survivalist), natural but rare (for aiding in building something), mousemade or medicinal

Terrain or location: forest and fields, rocky ground and swamps, open ground and rivers

Extreme conditions: Flood, drought (only use this set of factors if they're active in your game)

For tests when Nature acts as a replacement for a skill, consult the skill that's being substituted and use the factors described there.



WILL

Will is an ability that represents how mentally resilient and adaptable your mouse is. This ability is rated from 1 to 6.

It is tested when you're trying to resist being convinced of something. Will is also used to overcome the mental trials of life on the road like anger and illness.

In addition, it is used to break ties in tests requiring mental strength or insight. See the *Resolution* chapter for the rules on ties and breaking them.

Will Obstacles



Will is tested to recover from Anger (Ob 2) and Sickness (Ob 4). It may be used in versus tests to resist the effects of the Persuader,



Orator or Deceiver skill. In this case, you may test your Will to say no. You don't need a skill to do this.

Kenzie, the patrol leader, determines the patrol will head secretly to Barkstone. Saxon wants to rush into the city directly. He wants to convince Kenzie to use his plan. Kenzie resists Saxon's attempts to convince him with his full Will dice. He doesn't have to convince Saxon of anything—he's issued an order as patrol leader. Saxon's the one who needs to do the convincing.

Other Will obstacles are derived from using the ability for Beginner's Luck tests for the following: Administrator, Apiarist, Archivist, Baker, Cartographer, Cook, Deceiver, Hagglar, Healer, Insectrist, Instructor, Loremouse, Militarist, Orator, Pathfinder, Persuader, Scientist, Weather Watcher and Weaver.

HEALTH

Health represents your mouse's physical strength and well-being. Younger mice tend to be healthier than the oldfurs. The ability is rated from 1 to 6.

It is most frequently tested when trying to resist the physical trials of life on the road—fatigue and injury. Health can be used for any physical

test that doesn't fall under Nature or a skill—running for a long distance to deliver a message, for example.

It is also used to break ties for tests requiring physical exertion. See the **Resolution** chapter for the rules on ties and breaking them.

Health Obstacles



Health is tested to recover from being Tired (Ob 3) and from being Injured (Ob 4). You may also use Health in versus tests involving raw physical strength or endurance. Most of those situations will be covered under Nature or a skill, but every so often you may be called on to lift something heavy. Use Health for that.

As the GM, I could call on the guardmice to test their Health abilities to safely cross a swiftly flowing stream.

Health may also be called on for Beginner's Luck tests when you don't have skills like: Armorer, Boatcrafter, Brewer, Carpenter, Fighter, Glazier, Harvester, Hunter, Laborer, Miller, Potter, Scout, Smith, Stonemason and Survivalist.

RESOURCES

The Resources ability represents what material resources your character can muster. It can be resourcefulness or wealth. You get to decide. Either way, your rating in Resources allows you to get stuff for your character.

Resources ratings range from 1 to 10.

Hometown Advantage



You get a +1D advantage when you're using your Resources in your hometown.

Common Resources Obstacles



Test Resources to find or purchase stuff. Your character can acquire food, lodging, a weapon or extra equipment.





Resources is used in independent tests, not versus tests.

This list covers some commonly requested items. They are “priced” according to the factors in the next section, **Resources Factors**.



A good meal or a couple of drinks, Ob 1. Restful lodging for the night, Ob 2. A cloak, Ob 2. A trinket, Ob 2. A nice present, Ob 3. Tools, Ob 3. A musical instrument, Ob 4. Fancy or expensive items like silk or jewelry, Ob 5.



A small or simple weapon like a sling or a knife, Ob 3. Light armor, Ob 3. An expensive weapon like a sword or bow, Ob 4. Heavy armor, Ob 4.



Raw materials like seeds, grain, wool or fiber, Ob 1. Raw materials like leather, wax, wood or clay, Ob 2. Raw materials like metal or honey, Ob 3.



A small business, Ob 6. A safe place to retire, Ob 6.

Resources Factors



If what you’re looking for isn’t on the common Resources obstacles list, choose from the following factors to devise an obstacle for the test.

Commonality: Common, uncommon, rare

Quality: Cheap, well-made or complicated, luxury

Quantity: More than one, a lot

Visual Appeal: Plain, pretty, beautiful

If your character was in Barkstone and wanted to purchase a cart, the GM could set the obstacle with the following factors: common and well-made. That’d be 1 for common and 2 for well-made—Ob 3. The visual appeal and quantity aren’t factors for this particular roll—you’re only buying one item and these items generally all look the same, like a wooden cart!

Depleting Resources



If a Resources test is failed, the GM can use the standard condition or twist rules for failure or he can use a special condition for Resources called *depletion*.

If the GM wishes, when a player fails a Resources test, instead of making the character Hungry, Angry or Tired, he may deplete the character’s Resources by 1. As per the standard condition rules, the player gets what he was after in addition to having his Resources depleted. No other conditions or twists are applied if Resources is depleted.

After depletion, Resources may be advanced as normal.



0 Resources

If Resources is depleted to zero, the character may not make Resources tests unless he gets help from another character. Unless he gets help, he may not use persona points to augment the 0 ability. If he passes one Resources test with the ability at rating 0, his Resources advances to 1.

CIRCLES

The Circles ability determines how well-connected your character is. Use Circles to bring other characters from your guardmouse's past into the game. It's a special ability for the player that allows him to try to find allies.

Doing leg work in Barkstone, looking for members of a conspiracy, Lieam's player says, "I want to test my Circles to track down a mouse who is in on the plot."

Circles can be rated from 1 to 10.

Testing Circles

When testing Circles, describe who you're looking for. What's the character's job? What's his attitude? Roll your Circles rating plus your hometown advantage plus the friendly contact bonus, if applicable.

The GM says, "Okay, be a little more specific. What kind of mouse are you looking for?"

Lieam's player responds, "I guess someone who's involved with the conspiracy and knows where the next move is going to be. Doesn't have to be a boss, though."

Hometown Advantage



You get a +1D advantage when you're using your Circles in your hometown.

Circles Factors



When testing Circles, use the following factors to generate an obstacle. If looking for a guardmouse, use the Guard list. If you're looking for any other mouse, use the Professions, Power and Attitude factors.

Guard: Same rank, lower rank, higher rank.

Use this category on its own. You don't have to factor anything else in when trying to find a fellow Guard.

Professions: laborer, common in town, uncommon in town, rare in the Territories overall

Power: No power to speak of, mid-level, topmouse

Attitude: Neutral, willing to help in some capacity

The GM determines that Lieam's request requires an Ob 5 Circles test—uncommon profession and mid-level power. He decides that, behind the scenes, a local cartographer has been instrumental in aiding Midnight's conspiracy.

Circles Success



If you succeed at your Circles roll, your character finds the character you were looking for. You get to name him or her.



Write the name on your character sheet in the **Contacts** section. Next time you look for this same character, you can add +1D to your Circles test.

Against all odds, Lieam passes his Circles test. The cartographer welcomes him into the secret army of Midnight, bent on capturing Lockhaven.

Circles Twist—The Enmity Clause

When a Circles test is failed, the GM can use twists and conditions as per the normal rules or he can use a special twist result called the *Enmity Clause*.



When you fail a Circles test, instead of finding who you were looking for, you find an enemy—a character who feels insulted, mocked, intimidated, cheated or scorned by you. The GM gets to name him. Add the character to the Enemy section on your character sheet.

If Lieam had failed his Circles test, the GM could have invoked the Enmity Clause twist. He could have had the cartographer recognize him as a guardmouse and order him captured by Midnight's own soldiers.



Enemies gain +3s to their disposition in arguments and speeches made against you. See the **Resolution** chapter for details about arguments and speeches.

The inimical character does not have to be an outright enemy. He can pretend to work with you. Of course, the information that he feeds you can be full of lies and half-truths. He can even attempt extortion and blackmail. That's half the fun of having an enemy!

Enemies to Friends, Friends to Enemies



The attitude of an enemy can change. If, through play, you manage to convince an enemy that you are on the same side, that's cool. You can move him to the Friend section of your sheet.

And, similarly, if you wrong one of your friends, the GM may have you move him from the Friend section to the Enemy section. If you feel betrayed by one of your friends, you may move him from the Friend list to the Enemy list yourself.

Circles and NPC Tests

Characters who are brought into the story via a successful Circles test may make tests on the player's behalf. They may do so in the GM's Turn or the Players' Turn. If your new friend helps you out by making a skill test or something similar, it doesn't cost you a check.

SUPPLIES



We assume that a crafts- or tradesmouse has the bare minimum supplies and tools needed to ply his craft. If another mouse can supply a crafts- or tradesmouse with tools or raw materials for his project, the crafts- or tradesmouse gains a +1D advantage to his roll to create.

A Harvester can go out in the spring or fall and gather herbs. These can be given to a healer mouse to aid him in a Healer skill test.

ELEMENTS OF A SKILL

The skill list details the individual skills used in Mouse Guard. Each entry consists of a description, a suggestion for useful supplies, a list of factors and a handful of other skills that are commonly used to help that skill.

The descriptions of these skills are left purposefully broad. Use these skills to overcome obstacles directly related to their purpose, and also for related situations.

An Apiarist can harvest his honey and raise his bees, but he can also make candles from wax.

ADMINISTRATOR

An administrator manages towns, cities and other groups of mice. He writes laws, allocates money for budgets, files reports and distributes resources.

Administrators can be provided with supplies in the form of records and documents from Archivists.

Administrator Factors

Type: Report, budget, law, rationing orders

Breadth: Mouse, patrol, outpost, business, neighborhood, town, city

Suggested Help for Administrator

Archivist, Orator and appropriate wises

APIARIST

An apiarist is a specialist who raises bees and harvests their honey and wax.

Apiarist Factors

Bees: Drones, workers, queen, hive

Product: Honey, wax

Action: Placate, anger, swarm

Suggested Help for Apiarist

Scientist, Insectrist, Loremouse and appropriate wises

ARCHIVIST

An archivist is a mouse who specializes in writing accounts of events for historical records. They are also adept at plumbing the depths of archives and libraries for information.



Archivists can be provided with supplies in the form of paper from millers and ink from insectrists.

Archivist Factors

Writing: Accuracy, clarity, simplicity

Researching: Specific, obscure, lost, damaged

Suggested Help for Archivist

Cartographer, Administrator and appropriate wises

ARMORER

Armorsmiths forge armor and weapons for the Guard and town militias.

Armorsmiths can be provided with supplies from insectrists, smiths and weavers.

Armorer Factors

Armorsmiths use some special factors so you can build your own weapons in play.

Paw-to-Paw (start counting at 1): Short and Quick, Useful, Deadly, Versatile, Hooked, Hard to Defend

Spears and Missiles (start counting at 2): Spear, Thrown, Missile

Armor and Shields (start counting at 2): Protection, Light Armor, Heavy Armor

If the armorsmith fails, the GM may add one or two of the following conditions to the creation: *Clumsy:* +1 Ob to Defend or Feint. *Heavy:* +1 Ob to Health tests to resist fatigue. *Slow:* +1 Ob to Defend or Feint. *Cumbersome:* +1 Ob to Maneuver tests. +1 Ob to any attempt at sneaking or hiding.

Suggested Help for Armorsmith

Smith, Scientist and appropriate wises

BAKER

A baker makes savory bread, delicious cookies and sweet cakes.

A baker can receive supplies from brewers, millers and apiarists.

Baker Factors

Materials: Milled grains, harvested seeds, foraged materials

Breadth: One mouse, two mice, a patrol, a household, a bakery

Suggested Help for Baker

Scientist and appropriate wises

BOATCRAFTER

A boatcrafter specializes in all things boats! He can make a variety of craft, from leaf boats to wooden plank boats. He can also use his knowledge to navigate waterways.

Boatcrafters can use supplies from carpenters or hunters (for skins) for their more durable craft.

Boatcrafter Factors

Use: One use, multiuse

Size: Mouse, two mice, patrol, cargo, a dozen mice

Suggested Help for Boatcrafter

Carpenter, Scientist and appropriate wises

BREWER

The brewer's always a popular mouse. He makes beer for the towns to drink. In some towns, the water is not good to drink, so beer's all there is!

A brewer can use ground grain from a miller and honey from an apiarist as supplies.

Brewer Factors

Quality: Typical brew, good brew, excellent brew

Breadth: A group, a tavern or restaurant, a town

Suggested Help for Brewer

Scientist and appropriate wises



CARPENTER

A carpenter makes useful items out of wood, like chairs, doors, cabinets, ladders, joints, pulleys and levers.

Supplies of wood from harvesters or laborers are always welcome, as are tools from a smith.

Carpenter Factors

Type: Household items (like bowls) and boards and building materials, pulleys and ladders, furniture, small structures like a shack, a room or large exterior wall, a small house

Suggested Help for Carpenter

Scientist and appropriate wises.

CARTOGRAPHER

A cartographer creates and interprets maps.

Supplies of paper from millers and ink from insectrists are always welcome.

Cartographer Factors

Complexity: Simple map, detailed map, accurate map

Information: Area personally surveyed, information transmitted by notes (from a non-cartographer), information transmitted by word of mouth

Suggested Help for Cartographer

Archivist, Pathfinder and appropriate wises

COOK

Every patrol needs a cook. Your cook can make that hunger go away when you're out in the wild, far from home or a cozy pub.

Cooks can receive supplies from harvesters and millers and forage from Mouse Nature.

The Cook skill can be used to alleviate the Hungry condition. Test the skill against the appropriately factored obstacle.

Cook Factors

Feeds: One mouse, two mice, the patrol, a big family, a restaurant, the neighborhood

Suggested Help for Cook

Baker and appropriate wises

DECEIVER

A deceiver uses lies, half-truths, ugly truth, soothing platitudes and intimidation to get what he wants.

Deceiver Factors

Deceiver is used in versus tests against your opponent's Deceiver, Persuader or Will. It can also be used in certain conflicts for independent actions.

Suggested Help for Deceiver

Persuader and appropriate wises

FIGHTER

Mice are not natural fighters. The Fighter skill teaches them to overcome their natural inhibitions so they can capture, disable or even kill an opponent—using their bare paws or any of the variety of weapons available.

Fighter Factors

Fighter is used in versus tests against another character's Nature or Fighter skill. It can also be used in certain conflicts for independent actions.

Suggested Help for Fighter

Hunter and appropriate wises

GLAZIER

Glaziers make glass vessels, window panes and lenses. The works of glaziers are rare and highly sought after—they're fragile and expensive to make.

Glazier Factors

Quality: Simple, functional, pretty

Size: Small, medium, large

Suggested Help for Glazier

Scientist and appropriate wises

HAGGLER

Haggler is a specialized social skill used for bargaining over prices of goods and services. Haggler can be used to reduce the obstacle of a Resources test, increase the price of something you're selling or to convince someone that your services are worth paying for.

Haggler Factors

Haggling is nearly always used as a versus test against Haggler or Will. It can also be used in a negotiation conflict.

Passing your Haggler test can raise or lower the Resources obstacle by one, depending on what you were after.

If you fail your Haggler test, your opponent can raise or lower the obstacle of the Resources test, too. But he does it to make it worse for you, not better.

Suggested Help for Haggler

Persuader and appropriate wises

HARVESTER

Harvesters are very important to the towns and cities of the Territories. These mice make forays into the wilds to gather grains, seeds, roots, herbs and other necessities.

Abilities and Skills

Harvesters can use jars made by potters to store their finds and prevent spoilage. These clay pots count as supplies.

Harvester Factors

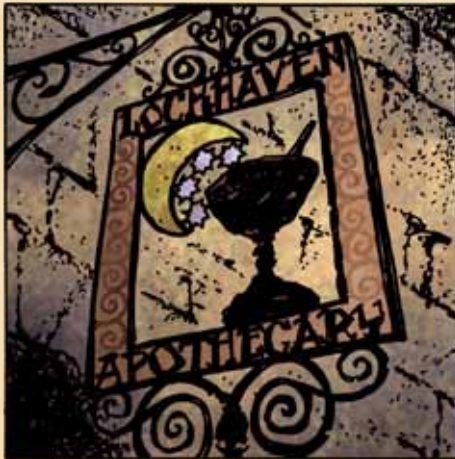
Time: Late summer and early fall, early summer and late spring, late fall, winter

Feeds: The patrol, a big family, a bakery or restaurant, a neighborhood, a town, a city

Extreme conditions (only use this additional set of factors if they're active in your game): Flood, drought

Suggested Help for Harvester

Weather Watcher and appropriate wises



HEALER

The healer keeps mice whole and healthy.

A healer can take supplies from harvesters and scientists in the form of herbs and medicine.

A healer can also create poultices and potions to aid mice in recovering from being Tired and Angry. These count as supplies for Will and Health tests for recovery.

Healer Factors

Healer uses a special, set factor of Ob 3 for tending to the Injured and Sick.

Poultices: Tired, Sick, Injured, Hungry, Angry

Suggested Help for Healer

Scientist and appropriate wises

HUNTER

The hunter is an intrepid mouse who journeys out into the wild and confronts animals—grazers, scavengers and even predators. He uses his skill and cunning to stalk, trap, drive off or kill his quarry.

Hunter Factors

Hunter is used in versus tests against Nature or in independent tests in conflicts involving fighting animals.

Hunter can also be used to find information about an animal—where it likes to eat, what it eats, what its weapons are.

Habits: Trails, food/prey, weapons and nests

Suggested Help for Hunter

Loremouse and appropriate wises

INSECTRIST

The insectrist is a specialist who uses insects—beetles, caterpillars, worms, etc.—for a variety of purposes. He trains beetles to act as labor, uses caterpillars and spiders to spin silk, and worms to aerate soil for the harvesters. Crickets can be taught to act as weather watchers and trains of ants formed to transport small goods.

Insectrist Factors

Type: Crickets, beetles, silkworms, ants, spiders



Amount: One, many, too many

Result: Labor (hauling), control (obeying), production (making something for you)

Suggested Help for Insectrist

Loremouse and appropriate wises

INSTRUCTOR

An instructor knows how to transmit skills to another character.

Using this skill, you can give your student a test for advancement in a skill. You must have the skill you're teaching at a higher rating than your student, or you must have another guardmouse on hand with that skill. In the latter case, the two of you teach your student together, as a team.

If your Instructor test is successful, you may give your student a passed or failed test for advancement. It's your choice. You may also use the Instructor skill to grant your student a test toward a skill he's learning.

Instructor Factors

The obstacle for instruction is equal to the student's current Nature rating. If Nature is taxed, use the taxed value as the obstacle. If it's untaxed, use the full value.

Suggested Help for Instructor

The skill being taught may be used to help.

LABORER

Laborers are the bulk of the workforce for the mouse towns and cities. They gather wood for the carpenters, stone for the masons and metal for the smiths. They dig ditches, carry stuff and generally just do what they are told.

Laborers need tools from a smith.

Laborer may be used to help the following trade or craft skill tests: Apiarist, Armorer, Baker, Boatcrafter, Brewer, Carpenter, Glazier, Harvester, Healer, Insectrist, Miller, Potter, Scientist, Smith, Stonemason and Weaver.

Laborer Factors

Labor: Gathering wood, cutting stone, mining metal

Suggested Help for Laborer

Appropriate skills and appropriate wises

LOREMOUSE

Lozemice study the ways and habits of animals. Using their knowledge, they can perform rudimentary communications and discern the Nature of the animal.

Lozemouse Factors

Communication (start counting at 2; this is a hard thing): Beasts of feather, beasts of fur, scaly beasts, beasts of water

Nature: You may read the aspects of a creature's Nature using the Loremouse skill. Make a versus test between Loremouse and the creature's Nature. Success indicates that the GM informs the loremouse of the aspects of the creature's Nature.

Suggested Help for Loremouse

Hunter, Scientist and appropriate wises

MILITARIST

A militarist is one who understands how to organize, supply and command a force of mice for battle.

Militarists are rare among the mice. It is against mouse nature to gather in force and hurl themselves into the slaughter in an ordered fashion.

Militarist Factors

Militarist is used primarily in conflicts and versus tests. Other tests can be made using the following factors:

Tradition: Populace with military tradition, warlike populace, peaceful populace

Size: Outpost, fort, town, city, castle

Action: Destroy, defend or reinforce

Suggested Help for Militarist

Administrator and appropriate wises

MILLER

A miller uses a millstone to grind substances into powders so they can be used in cooking, brewing and industry.

Miller Factors

Type: Milling grain, milling mortar, milling paper

Amount: For a patrol, a household, a business or large structure, a town, a city

Suggested Help for Miller

Scientist and appropriate wises

ORATOR

An orator makes speeches to sway crowds. This skill isn't for convincing your friend, it is for moving a group to action.

Orator Factors

Orator is primarily used in versus tests against Orator and Will. Orator versus Orator would be used for competing with another person to get the attention of a crowd. Orator versus Will would be used to fire the crowd up. Orator can also be used in independent tests in a conflict.

Suggested Help for Orator

Deceiver or appropriate wises

PATHFINDER

A pathfinder makes and marks paths between the mouse towns and cities, and to various resources and landmarks like streams, springs, lakes or fields of herbs. The Pathfinder skill is one of the most important skills.

Pathfinders can use maps from cartographers as supplies.



Pathfinder Factors

Trying to arrive at a destination before another group or patrol requires a versus test with the other group.

Destination: Nearby, a short journey, a long journey, remote or isolated

Route: Well traveled, infrequently used, overgrown or washed out, blazing a new trail

Suggested Help for Pathfinder

Scout, Hunter, Weather Watcher and appropriate wises

PERSUADER

A persuader convinces another mouse to do what he wants in a friendly manner. A persuader shows you why it's in your own best interest to help him out.

This skill is not for speech making. You may only use it in small conversations.

Persuader Factors

Persuader is used in versus tests against your opponent's Persuader, Deceiver or Will. It can also be used in certain conflicts for independent actions.

To convince another character that it's in his own best interest to act, test Persuader versus Will. In other words, if you're trying to convince a target who is simply saying "no," it's Persuader versus Will.

To convince another character that you're right when they're trying to convince you of something else, test Persuader versus Persuader. In other words, if you're arguing and trying to prove who's right, test Persuader versus Persuader.

Suggested Help for Persuader

Deceiver and appropriate wises

POTTER

Potters create a variety of vessels for drinking, cooking and storing food.

Potter Factors

To store: Dry goods, liquid goods

Type: Simple, functional, pretty

Size: Small, large, bulk

Suggested Help for Potter

Glazier, Baker and appropriate wises



SCIENTIST

Scientists are learned mice. This skill combines astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth science and physics.

Scientists can use records from archivists or extractions from insectrists as supplies for their experiments. They can also use moss from Elmooss and the spruce sap from Sprucetuck to make medicines.

Scientist Factors

Field: Geological/mineral, chemical, physical/
engineering, biological, astronomical

Desired Effect: Harmful, beneficial

Suggested Help for Scientist

Appropriate wises

SCOUT

A scout is adept at spotting predators on the prowl, sneaking behind enemy lines, trailing targets and finding hidden things.

Scout Factors

Scout is almost always used as a versus test:
Scout versus Nature or Scout versus Scout.

If looking for evidence or some other unsuspecting object, use the following factors:

Size: Big, mouse-sized, small, tiny

Location: Location known, location roughly known, location is “in that direction over there”

Time: Left this season, left last season, left last year

Suggested Help for Scout

Pathfinder, Hunter and appropriate wises

SMITH

Smiths make tools—needles, cutting implements, cooking implements and craftsman tools—and other hardware like hinges, bearings and nails. Smith is not a weapon-making skill.

Smith Factors

Type: Hardware, cooking implements, craftsman tools, small structures like a gate, large structures like a fence, floor or portcullis

Suggested Help for Smith

Laborer, Armorer and appropriate wises

STONEMASON

Stonemasons cut stone and use it to make walls, bridges, arches and buildings.

Stonemasons are always in need of good tools from smiths to make their work easier.

Stonemason Factors

Complexity: Simple structure like a wall, moderately complex like a column, complex like an arch, reinforced like fortifications

Size: Small like a bench, moderately-sized like a wall, big like a foundation or a house

Suggested Help for Stonemason

Laborer and appropriate wises



SURVIVALIST

The survivalist knows how to make shelters, find water, build fires and jury-rig tools.

This skill also has a special condition attached to it. A mouse with this skill cannot be made Angry due to a failed Survivalist test.

Survivalist Factors

Action: Building a shelter, locating water, starting a fire in bad conditions, emergency tool-making, jury-rigging a boat

Breadth: One mouse, the patrol, a large group

Suggested Help for Survivalist

Hunter, Weather Watcher and appropriate wises



WEATHER WATCHER

The Weather Watcher skill is about spotting clouds, noting the direction of the wind, and detecting the amount of moisture in the air, correlated with celestial phenomena and signs present in soil and flora.

Weather Watcher Factors

Use of the skill in game is very powerful. A weather watcher may test to determine the weather. If he's successful, he gets to determine the weather for the next leg of the journey.

The weather watcher must make a versus test with the season's current weather: Winter 7, Spring 6, Summer 4, Fall 5. The GM rolls for the weather.

If the player wins, he can predict what the next change in the weather will bring. He may choose from the seasonal options given in *Seasons*. If he wins by two or more, he may choose an unseasonable option for that season.

The predicted weather takes hold at the start of the next session, or due to a weather-based complication this session. The predicted weather lasts until another weather-based complication is brought into the game or until the end of the session. If no weather has been predicted, the GM gets to set the weather at the start of the session and due to weather-based twists.

This ability is powerful, but it can have interesting side effects. For example, if a player brings too much unseasonable weather into play, it could have long-term effects in the form of droughts, floods, blight or even pestilence. Those extreme variations in the weather will usually be brought into the game by the GM based on the state of the weather in the recent seasons.

Suggested Help for Weather Watcher

Scientist and appropriate wises

WEAVER

A weaver can manufacture fabric and create cloaks, aprons, blankets, sheets and tapestries.

The products of a weaver can be used as supplies to recover from Tired conditions gained from being cold and/or wet.

Weavers can take fur from hunters, fibers from harvesters or silk from insectrists. Dyes come from stonemasons, scientists or insectrists.

Weaver Factors

Type: Blankets, bedding, cloaks, clothing, tapestries

Suggested Help for Weaver

Appropriate wises

WISES

A wise is an area of knowledge or experience. Wises can be tested like skills to find out information about a specific topic. The topic is limited by the name of the wise, not by a skill description like other skills.

Wises are not, in fact, individually described. They are meant to be defined by their name. The GM and the players may interpret the wises themselves to determine how and why they think they are appropriate to a situation.

Wises Factors

Depth of information: Common knowledge, an interesting fact, details, uncommon knowledge, rare information, bizarre or obscure, specific and detailed data

Suggested Help for Wises

Appropriate skills related to the wise, and other wises, of course.





TRAITS

Who can claim another mouse's qualities
to be for benefit or detriment?

Those who overcome their own obstacles have a wealth of spirit
richer than those who rely solely on their strengths.

The better mouse uses his faults to his advantage.

—Allyson, Guard Matriarch from 1071-1099

Traits are personality quirks or unusual physical attributes that help make your character an individual. This chapter describes the rules for using your character's traits in play. Traits offer a chance for you to get into your character and distinguish his personality from that of his peers.

ELEMENTS OF A TRAIT

A trait is broad and applicable to many situations. Traits are used to both help and hinder your character.



The individual trait entries include a general description of the trait. Based on the name and the description, each player gets to bring his trait into the game when he feels it's appropriate. If the group, including the GM, agrees with his approach, he may use the trait. If they don't think it feels right for this part of the game, they can politely ask the player to save that trait for another situation.

The Determined trait could be used when trying to defeat a snake in single combat: "I'm determined to defeat this beast and prove to Kenzie and Saxon that I'm worthy of being in the Guard." The trait could also be used in social situations: "I'm determined to convince Gwendolyn that I should lead this mission."

If the group agrees with my interpretation, I get a bonus.

This same logic applies to using my traits to hinder my character, too. I can describe my Determined trait getting in my way as I try to convince Gwendolyn: "I'm so determined to convince her, I'm rude and interrupt her."

City Trait Descriptions



When you make a character, you choose traits that represent which city he was born in. Though these traits are described in terms of those cities, don't be

put off. Any mouse can take those traits if they're available to him during recruitment or they may be assigned during the Winter Session.

You don't have to be from Barkstone to have Steady Paws. Any mouse could be born with the attribute or earn it in play.

USING TRAITS TO HELP YOURSELF



In order to gain the benefit of using your trait, you must incorporate it into your description of your character's actions in the game. Tell everyone what your character is doing and, if it's not clear, why the trait you want to use is helping.

Each trait is ranked from 1 to 3 to represent its level.



You may only use one trait to help yourself per test.

Level 1 Trait



Calling on a level 1 trait grants a 1D bonus to a test appropriate to the trait. Before the roll is made, the player must describe how the trait is influencing and benefiting his character's action. If the group agrees that the description is cool and the trait applies, the player may roll the bonus die with the ability or skill.

If the GM and the other players agree with my description of Lieam's Determined trait, I gain a +1D to this roll.

Level 1 traits may be used once per session unless they are recharged.

Since Lieam's Determined trait is only Level 1, I can only use this bonus once per session.

Level 2 Trait



A level 2 trait grants a +1D bonus to all tests to which the trait applies. Before the roll is made, the player must describe how the trait is influencing and benefiting his character's action. If the group agrees that the description is cool and the trait applies, the player may roll the bonus die with the ability or skill.

If Lieam's Determined trait were Level 2, I could add the bonus die to as many tests as I like so long as I include a description of my determined actions and the group agrees with me.

Level 3 Trait



A level 3 trait is special. This trait allows a player to reroll any dice that come up as failures on a test appropriate to the trait description. The test itself can be successful or failed, it doesn't matter. The player picks up all dice that failed and rerolls them. Successes are added to the total for the first roll. Any fate points spent on these tests must be used after the reroll. Level 3 traits may be used once per session unless they are recharged. See the **Recharge a Trait** heading in the **Spending Trait Checks** section.

I am testing my Scout 5 versus the Nature 7 of an Owl. I roll three successes and two cowards. The GM rolls four successes. I can use my level 3 Alert trait to reroll the two cowards.

If you wish to spend a fate point on a roll and use a level 3 trait, use the trait first, then spend the fate point to roll new dice for all the sixes.



USING TRAITS AGAINST YOURSELF

Traits may also be called on to impede or interfere with your character's actions.

A Compassionate mouse might hesitate in killing, for example.



Invoking a trait to impede your actions follows a similar process as calling on a trait to help. Describe your character's actions and include an indication of how your trait is hindering you.

My determination could cause me to be rude or inconsiderate. My fearlessness could cause me to take rash action. My calm demeanor could cause me to delay.

If your group agrees that the trait is applicable, then you may choose an effect from the **Invoking the Negative Aspect** list.



You may only use one trait to hinder yourself per roll. You may help and hinder yourself on the same roll. You may not use the same trait to do both at once.

Kenzie can use his Calm trait to help himself, while using his Tall trait to hinder himself on the same roll.

Kenzie cannot use both his Calm and Tall traits to hinder himself on one roll.

Kenzie cannot use his Calm trait to both help and hinder himself on one roll.

Invoking the Negative Aspect



You may use a trait against yourself to impede any test. Or you may use a trait to give your opponent a bonus to his roll in a versus test. Or you may use a trait to break a tied versus test in your opponent's favor.

Each time you use a trait to hinder or hurt your character, you earn a number of checks. These checks can be spent to earn benefits later in the game—especially in the Players' Turn.

You may choose one of these effects per test. Choose if you're going to impede or hurt yourself before either of you roll. Modify your dice or your opponent's as appropriate.

You can decide if you're going to use a trait to break a tie in your opponent's favor once a tied roll is on the table.

The rationale for using a trait to hinder your character must be agreed to by the group, just like using traits to help.

Impede: Earns 1 Check



You may invoke a trait to impede yourself. Subtract -1D from your current roll. You may use this for independent or versus tests. Impeding yourself earns one check.

Kenzie's player says, "When I'm arguing with Saxon about how to approach Barkstone, I remain calm. I know it infuriates Saxon when I don't show any emotion. I'm going to take a -1D penalty to my Will for that."

Hurt: Earns 2 Checks



You may call on a trait to give your opponent an advantage. Add +2D to his current roll. You may only use this effect on versus tests. Hurting yourself in a test earns two checks.

Conrad has the Scarred trait. He's in a fight with crabs. His player says, "I climb onto the beast's back, but my peg leg slips on the hard shell! I give the crab +2D to his Attack action."

In this case, the GM adds those two dice to the crab's Nature when he rolls for his action.

Break Tie: Earns 2 Checks



You may break a tie in your opponent's favor. He passes the test. You fail. You may only use this with versus tests. Breaking a tie in your opponent's favor earns two checks.

If you wish to use this effect, you must invoke your trait before spending any fate points and before calling for a tiebreaker roll.

If this effect is used to break a tie for a roll that generates a margin of success result, the margin of success is always 1.

Saxon and Kenzie are dueling in the town square of Barkstone. Saxon is trying to distract the guards. Kenzie is trying to teach Saxon a lesson. They tie for a Fighter test in the conflict. Kenzie's player says, "Even though Saxon needs to learn to keep his head, I know he's right: Lieam needs a distraction. This causes me to lower my guard at the last moment. I use my Leader trait to break the tie in his favor."

SPENDING TRAIT CHECKS



Once you have used your traits to get in your way, you've done two things. Most importantly, you've shown everyone a deeper side of your character. But it also translates into a bit of a reward. You can spend your checks to gain tests and tweak your traits.

Free Test

Each player starts the Players' Turn with one free test, regardless of how many checks he has. You can always do at least one thing.

Tests in Players' Turn: 1 Check



It costs one check to buy a test in the Players' Turn. You may buy a second, third or however many you need and can afford.

So if I invoke my Curiosity to break a tie in my opponent's favor (2 checks), I can make a recovery test to alleviate a condition (1) and make a Circles test to find a healer for my wounded companion (1) in the Players' Turn. That still leaves me with my free test. Maybe I'll work on accomplishing my Goal.

Recover Quickly: 2 Checks



You may buy a recovery test in the GM's phase for the cost of two checks. Once you spend the checks, you can make an attempt at recovery, even if it's right before a test.

After getting beat up by the guards in Barkstone and tossed into the forest, Saxon and Kenzie are both Tired and Angry. When Celanawe finds them, he accuses them of being thieves. The GM challenges the players to an argument conflict. Kenzie realizes that being Tired and Angry is going to hurt them in the argument. He spends two of his checks right then and makes an Ob 3 Health test to recover from the Tired condition. He says, "This oldfur's accusations clear my head of cobwebs. I realize the danger Lockhaven is in if we should fail!"

Charge a Trait: 3 Checks



If you need extra oomph, you may spend three checks to boost one of your traits to the next level for the remainder of the session. A level 1 trait becomes level 2. Level 2 traits become level 3. The standard rules for that level then apply.

Lieam spends three of his checks to charge his Determined trait from level 1 to level 2. Now he gets the bonus die for each roll in which his determination is a factor.

You may only charge a level 1 trait before you use it this session.

Recharge a Trait: 2 or 4 Checks



If a level 1 or 3 trait has been used to help you this session, you may spend two or four checks, respectively, to reactivate it. This effect can be bought at any time. It allows the trait to be reused at its normal value on your next roll.

You may recharge and charge a trait or vice versa.

Fighting for her life, Gwendolyn uses her level 3 Determined trait to reroll a failed test. She then spends four checks to recharge it. Now she may reroll the failures on another roll in which determination is required. This is a very powerful combination.

ALERT

Most residents of Elmooss earn their keep as harvesters. They scour the surrounding forest and bring its fruits back into the city for sale. While at their labors, they must remain alert for predators and bad weather. Those that keep at it for too long become paranoid and skittish.

BIGPAW

Mice with this trait have big paws. They're good at physical tasks requiring sturdy, broad paws like Stonemason or Carpenter or Laborer. They're a bit clumsy with tasks requiring fine or delicate work.

BITTER

Some guardmice grow bitter in the field. They feel all their efforts are for nothing. This may protect them from the many and varied disappointments

of life in the Guard, but it also burdens them. They have trouble taking an optimistic course.

BODYGUARD

The bodyguard is trained to protect his charge from harm, danger and exposure. Bodyguards are often a valuable asset, but they can become overprotective and hinder or impede the one they are to protect.

BOLD

The bold rush into action without a thought for their own safety. Daring stratagems and reckless abandon are hallmarks of the bold. Forethought and caution are not for these mice.

BRAVE

The brave never hesitate to step into the unknown. They are susceptible to wild tales of



far-off places and dangerous adventures. Brave mice almost universally detest being called cowards. It's the surest way to earn their ire.

CALM

Calm mice are difficult to anger and are adept at shrugging off any emotion that does manage to burden their heart. However, they risk becoming too sedate and perhaps missing a threat.

CLEVER

Clever mice are useful in all fields. They are adept at figuring answers to pernicious problems. However, the Territories are rife with tales of clever mice who were too smart for their own good.

COMPASSIONATE

Compassionate mice are able to see and understand a problem from their opponent's viewpoint. This is a great benefit in many situations, but it makes duty difficult when ruthless action is called for.

CUNNING

Cunning mice are adept at deceit and plotting traps. They are often either arrogant or, if caught at their games, known as dishonest.

CURIOUS

Curious mice are always eager to learn and on the lookout for new aspects to life in the Territories. But there's a cautionary saying in Lockhaven, "Curiosity killed the mouse first," that all mice should keep in mind.

DEEP EAR

Mice with the Deep Ear trait have keen hearing, but it does make them susceptible to loud noises and the general din of the big cities.

DEFENDER

During the Winter War of 1149, certain civilian mice were called upon to defend their homes from the invasion. They were civilians without training, support or even proper equipment. These mice now know the value and cost of defending one's home.

DETERMINED

Determined mice focus their energies on accomplishing their goals. While this is a useful characteristic, it can turn from determination to tunnel vision.

DRIVEN

Driven mice follow their beliefs no matter what the cost. However, if they are not careful, that cost can prove to be very dear.

EARLY RISER

Early risers are up first in the morning. Awake before the sun, they're clear-headed and sharp while everyone else is bleary-eyed and sleepy. Of course, they must be early to bed to be so early to rise.

EXTROVERT

Extroverts are adept at meeting mice or introducing themselves to strangers. However, they often lead public or semipublic lives and are easy to track down, even when they don't want to be.

FAT

Times are lean in the Territories, but a few mice manage to put on the stones, usually by hanging around the bakery.

FEARFUL

There was an adage in Walnutpeck, "A fearful mouse is a wise mouse." In other words, it's better to flee a potential predator than wait

around to be surprised. Of course, this instinct preserves mice who live in dangerous areas, but it hurts them when they come into the more civilized towns and have to deal with polite society.

FEARLESS

Fearless fighters charge into the face of danger without a thought for their own safety. However, they tend to forget when discretion should come before valor.

FIERY

Fiery mice know how to stir up a crowd, but they are quick to anger.

GENEROUS

Generous mice always seem to have something to give to others, even if it means going without themselves.

GRACEFUL

Some mice possess a poise and grace like unto a stalking cat or wheeling jay. However, these mice must take care not to be injured or hurt, lest they lose their youthful gifts.

GUARD'S HONOR

Those who live or were raised in Lockhaven have a special relationship with the Guard. They know its inner workings, its needs and travails. Living so closely with the Guard earns these mice a trait called Guard's Honor. They are more intimately connected to the financial and social body of the Guard and are trusted to a greater degree. Should a mouse ever betray that trust, he is cast out—out of Lockhaven and perhaps even beyond the scent border.

HARD WORKER

The mice of Ivydale are renowned for their work ethic. No mouse works harder or labors longer than an Ivydaler! Of course, these same hard workers rarely take a holiday, and some work themselves right into the grave.

INDEPENDENT

Copperwood's residents are known for their strong independent streak. They prefer to do things on their own, their way. They feel that helping paws just get in the way.

INNOCENT

Innocent mice have an honesty and simplicity about them that makes their requests difficult to deny. However, they are often naive to the world's true nature.

INQUISITIVE

The learned mice of Sprucetuck are renowned for their inquisitive nature. They are always searching for meaning and truth. Which, of course, leads them into all manner of dangerous situations.



JADED

Life in the Guard hardens some mice and makes them callous. This protects them from the folly of youthful ideals and heroism, but it also makes them stubborn regarding new ideas.

LEADER

The Guard is always in need of strong leaders. Such mice have a rare quality that inspires groups of mice to listen to them, even when they speak softly or indirectly. But it is important that these leaders do not abuse their powers and remain capable of following orders themselves.

LONGTAIL

Occasionally, a mouse is born with an abnormally long tail. With a little practice, he can train himself to do all manner of tricks with

it. Of course, it's forever getting caught in doors, wrapped in wheels, trodden upon and yanked.

LOST

Some mice have no sense of direction. They're useless at Pathfinding, but conversely, their wandering treks make them difficult to track down.

NATURAL BEARINGS

Quite the opposite of Lost mice, those with natural bearings always seem to know where they are. They also tend to have a wanderlust that makes them uncomfortable when in cities or towns for too long.

NIMBLE

A nimble mouse is adept at leaping and climbing. When out of the spotlight, though, they can be just as clumsy as everyone else, if not more so.



NOCTURNAL

Certain mice retain nocturnal habits. When others are asleep, they're awake and prowling about, clear-headed and sharp-eyed. Of course, come noontime the next day, you'll find them fast asleep.

OLDFUR

An oldfur is a mouse who's past his prime physically. Even so, oldfurs hold the collected wisdom of generations who have gone before.

OPEN-MINDED

The culture of Shaleburrow is very liberal and forward-thinking. They are an open-minded people. This is reflected in their democratic government and proliferation of many different types of schools.

QUICK-WITTED

A quick-witted mouse acts on instinct, without need for thought or consideration. While this attribute is clearly useful, it can lead to difficulties when patience and planning are required.

QUIET

Mice are quiet by nature, but these mice are even more so. They're quiet in everything they do—the way they speak, the way they work and the way they walk. Some sink so far into quietude, they have difficulty coming out of their shells.

RATIONAL

Sprucetuck's schools teach a tradition of steady, rational thought. Mice taught in those schools are persuasive when using their logic and reason. But they lose their veneer of education if they let emotion get the better of them.

SCARRED

Mice in the Guard who lived through the Weasel Wars are often scarred by their experiences. They're tough, and not easily flustered by injury or fear, but they are also maimed or psychologically scarred by their experiences.

SHARP-EYED

A sharp-eyed mouse is always welcome on patrol. He makes a good scout or hunter. Sometimes, after staring at the brush for days on end, the sharp-eyed mouse can get a little jumpy.



SHARPTOOTH

Certain mice have naturally sharp teeth, and they're not above using them in a fight or another close situation. These mice also have problems with bruxing—grinding their teeth. They can keep their fellow patrol mice up all night when they grind their teeth in their sleep!

SHORT

Some mice are shorter than others. They are particularly adept at slipping through cracks and getting into hard-to-reach places. Of course, they have a difficult time getting the plates and jars out of the cupboard.

SKEPTICAL

Skeptical mice are always watching for lies and deceit, a good quality. It can go too far when the skeptic thinks even the truthful are liars.

SKINNY

It's always good to keep a slim build, but it's important for mice to stay healthy, too.

STEADY PAWS

The steady paws of Barkstone come from a tradition of skilled labor in the city, specifically smiths. Some smiths value their hands so highly, they've taken out insurance policies with local banks!

STOIC

A stoic mouse never complains about the hardships of life in the Guard. He accepts them and soldiers on. However, this same quality makes him emotionally remote and difficult to reach in matters of empathy, love and compassion.

STUBBORN

It is good to stand for what you believe in, just be careful of taking too hard a stance. Other mice may dismiss you as being intractable and unhelpful.

SUSPICIOUS

Life among the mice of the Territories is not one of complete harmony. There are schemes and plots hatched. The suspicious mouse is always on the watch for such plots. Of course, he's also much more prone to seeing a plot even when there is none.

TALL

Most mice in the Territories are about the same height. Every so often, a proud mother bears forth a strapping young mouse who sprouts up taller than the rest. Certainly a useful attribute for helping mum get the jam down from the cupboard or bossing around brothers and sisters. Not so useful when it's time to duck into that tiny little bolt hole.



THOUGHTFUL

A thoughtful mouse will ponder all of his options and all possible courses of action before making a decision. This is very useful when there's time to plan or ponder, but useless when it's time to act with haste.

TOUGH

Some mice are built tougher than others. They're better at coping with injury and sickness, but this quality also leads to a certain hubris. They're vulnerable to another mouse who plays into their strength.

WEATHER SENSE

Some mice are born with an innate sense of the weather, others learn it through experience—they feel it in their bones. Of course, when you can accurately predict the weather, everyone blames the rain on you.

WISE

Wisdom is a rare thing in this day and age. Many mice are quick to judge and don't remember the lessons of the past. This mouse carries wisdom with him that helps him see truth and the right

path to action. But he must constantly fight his own inner demons lest that wisdom turn to arrogance and pride.

WOLF'S SNOUT

Some mice have an extremely keen sense of smell. These mice are said to have the "wolf's snout," a reference to the mouse's most feared enemy and the most dangerous predator. The trait is useful when hunting, but a mouse with this gift must take care that he does not become savage and bestial like the wolves.

YOUNG

This mouse, no matter his actual age, is vigorous and youthful. He's healthy and rarely gets tired or sick. The youthful exuberance often comes with a youthful impatience.





SAMPLE MISSIONS

The paths between our settlements are where the Guard live.
They find the open space, the freedom and the danger
to be more of a home than the secure doors
and stone walls of any town or village.

—a statement made to all tenderpaws upon joining the Guard

Three sample missions are presented in this section: *Find the Grain Peddler*, *Deliver the Mail* and *Trouble in Grasslake*. You and your group can play Mouse Guard right away by using the sample characters and playing out a sample mission.

Each sample mission is designed for four players and one GM. If you have more players, pick sample characters from other patrols and change their goals. If you have fewer than four players, it's okay to leave out characters. If you do either, check your Beliefs and Goals before you start and make sure to modify them to reflect the characters in play if necessary.

CHOOSING TEMPLATES

When you play Mouse Guard you may quickly jump into a game by choosing one of the 12 character templates provided in this section. If you're playing a sample mission, I recommend you choose characters linked to that mission. However, it isn't a requirement. You may choose characters from any set for any mission. Players may even choose the same template and modify it to suit their individual tastes.

You may modify the character template before play begins. See the **Template Tweaking** section for guidelines.

TEMPLATE TWEAKING

Sample character templates may be used as is or they may be tweaked and modified to suit your taste. This section describes how the templates may be modified.

Beliefs

You may keep the guardmouse's Belief or you may change it to something more suited to your style of play.

Goals

Goals *must* be changed to relate to the mission you are playing.



Sample Missions

Instincts

Instincts may be kept as is or changed to something you'd prefer.

Name

Names may be kept or changed. If you change your name, make sure you tell everyone so they can modify their Beliefs, Goals and Instincts appropriately.

Age

Age may be increased or decreased by a few years.

Cloak Color

Cloak color may be changed or kept as depicted.

Fur Color

Fur color is up to the player. You can keep it as is or change it to something more to your taste.

Gear

You may change the character's weapon to one that you prefer.

Skill and Wise Ratings

You may change the ratings of your skills and wises by taking points from one skill and transferring them to another. A rating may not be reduced below 2 and may not be raised higher than 5.

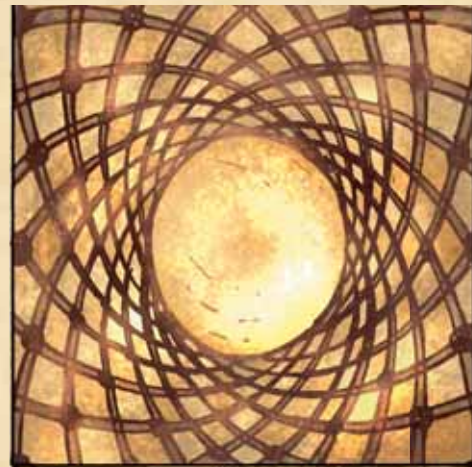
For example, the Kenzie template has Persuader 5, Healer 2 and Instructor 2. I could take two points from Persuader and add one to Healer and one to Instructor. I'd then have Persuader 3, Healer 3 and Instructor 3.

Parents, Mentor, Senior Artisan, Enemy and Friend

These characters may be changed if the player so chooses. Change the names and occupations if the character template is being used by more than one player in your game.

Set in Stone

The template rank, hometown, Nature, Will, Health, Resources, Circles and traits may not be changed. New skills may not be added. Existing skills and wises may not be taken away.





FIND THE GRAIN PEDDLER CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Kenzie

Kenzie is a patient and calm patrol leader. As a veteran of the Winter War, he's seen many adventures and hardships in his tenure. Kenzie is loyal and devoted to his best friend, Saxon. Though they are of different temperaments, Kenzie always consults his friend before taking action.

AGE: 31

HOME: Willowroot

FUR COLOR: Gray

RANK: Patrol Leader

CLOAK: Royal Blue

PARENTS: Ailfrid & Laurel

SENIOR: Fabron the Assistant
Weaponsmith of Lockhaven

MENTOR: Odell (deceased)

ENEMY: Katlynn the Archivist

FRIEND: Jasper the Storyteller

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: *It's not what you fight, but what you fight for.*

GOAL: *I must find evidence that will determine if the grain peddler is a traitor or not.*

INSTINCT: *Always consult Saxon when trouble arises.*

SKILLS: Persuader 5, Fighter 3, Healer 2, Instructor 2,
Survivalist 4, Weather Watcher 2, Archivist 2, Smith 2,
Path-wise 2, Duck-wise 2, Escort-wise 2, Patrol leader-wise 2

TRAITS: Calm (1), Tall (1), Leader (1)

GEAR: Staff, map and orders from Gwendolyn

Saxon

Saxon is a fiery and stubborn mouse, famous in the Guard for his skill in battle. Although he had enough experience to be promoted to patrol leader, Saxon passed up the opportunity in order to remain in his friend Kenzie's patrol.

| AGE: 28 | | PARENTS: Gill & Anne | |
|--------------------|--------|---|--------|
| HOME: Flintrust | | SENIOR: Briar the Textile Master of Lockhaven | |
| FUR COLOR: Brown | | MENTOR: Loukas (deceased) | |
| RANK: Patrol Guard | | ENEMY: Roarke the Smith | |
| CLOAK: Red | | FRIEND: Samuel the Printer | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 3 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: *The best solution is always found at the point of my sword.*

GOAL: *I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this mission.*

INSTINCT: *Always draw my sword at the first sign of trouble.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 6, Pathfinder 5, Survivalist 2, Carpenter 2, Weaver 3, Deceiver 2, Weasel-wise 3, Darkheather-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Short (1), Fearless (1)*

GEAR: *Sword and a belt*





Sadie

Sadie is a well-regarded patrol guard from Port Sumac. Gwendolyn trusts her with independent and difficult missions.

AGE: 26

HOME: Port Sumac

FUR COLOR: Brown

RANK: Patrol Guard

CLOAK: Plum

PARENTS: Thane & Ilsa

SENIOR: Quinn the Cook

MENTOR: Leith

ENEMY: Shane the Trader

FRIEND: Bonnie the Innkeeper

RAW ABILITIES

RATING

NATURE (Mouse)

5

WILL

4

HEALTH

4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

RATING

RESOURCES

2

CIRCLES

3

BELIEF: A guardmouse needs to be able to think with her head and act with her heart.

GOAL: I will discover why Conrad's communications from Calogero have stopped.

INSTINCT: Never delay when on a mission.

SKILLS: Weather Watcher 4, Survivalist 4, Fighter 3, Pathfinder 3, Scout 2, Hagglar 2, Boatcrafter 2, Cook 2, Persuader 2, Coast-wise 3, Star-wise 2, Herb-wise 2

TRAITS: Clever (1), Tough (1)

GEAR: Sling, stones, a pair of well-balanced knives

Lieam

Lieam is a young guardmouse who proved himself a determined fighter during the defense of Ferndale in the Weasel War two years ago. Based on his service in the brutal fighting, Saxon and Kenzie took him under their care as a tenderpaw. He was quickly promoted to guardmouse and given a dusty green cloak to represent his ever-renewing spirit.

| AGE: 19 | | PARENTS: <i>Jeph & Jann*</i> | |
|---------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------|
| HOME: <i>Ferndale</i> | | SENIOR: <i>None!†</i> | |
| FUR COLOR: <i>Red</i> | | MENTORS: <i>Saxon & Kenzie</i> | |
| RANK: <i>Guardmouse</i> | | ENEMY: <i>Nicoll the Brewer</i> | |
| CLOAK: <i>Dusty Green</i> | | FRIEND: <i>Maya the Merchant</i> | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

BELIEF: *A guardmouse never gives up, no matter the danger.*

GOAL: *I will show Kenzie and Saxon that I am a valuable member of the patrol.*

INSTINCT: *If there's work to be done, always offer help.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 3, Pathfinder 3, Scout 5, Harvester 3, Laborer 2, Persuader 2, Harvest-wise 2, Hidey-hole-wise 2, Scent Border-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Determined (1), Defender (1)*

GEAR: *Broadsword, whetstone*

*Lieam's parents are deceased.

†Lieam was inducted into the Guard under special circumstances in the Winter War. He never apprenticed with an artisan in Lockhaven, but he's always willing to help anymouse who asks.



FIND THE GRAIN PEDDLER

The *Find the Grain Peddler* mission is repeated here for convenience. This mission is designed with beginners in mind. It focuses on the structure of a session of the *Mouse Guard* roleplaying game.

Gather

Gather your friends together to play. For this mission, three players are best, but you can play with two or four as well.

Form Your Patrol

Once you're sitting around the table, decide who's going to be the GM for this mission. Then pick your characters from the four sample templates: Sadie, Kenzie, Saxon and Lieam. You can pick any combination. You can play Kenzie, Saxon and Lieam or Sadie and Lieam or just Kenzie and Saxon. Whatever you want.

Prologue

Since this is your first session with a new patrol, you don't need to do a prologue. You can skip this step. If you continue this mission in another session, one of the players will give a prologue for that session. He'll recount what happened during the previous session—the one you're about to play.

Assign Mission

Find the Grain Peddler starts in Fall 1152. The weather is clear and crisp for this mission.

Gwendolyn says, "I need you to patrol the trail between Rootwallow and Barkstone. A grain peddler has gone missing. Find him."

The GM says, "Gwendolyn pulls Kenzie* aside and says, 'This grain peddler might be a spy selling secrets about Lockhaven. I need you to determine if it's true or not.'"

Everyone at the table hears the special assignment, but it's understood that it's an item for Kenzie to worry about, not the rest of the patrol.

*If Kenzie's not in play, give the special assignment to the mouse leading the patrol.

Write Session Goals

After hearing the mission assignment, write a Goal for your character for this session. Listed here are the Goals for the sample characters for this mission. You can keep them or change them if you like.

Kenzie: I must find evidence that will determine if the grain peddler is a traitor or not.

Saxon: I will protect Kenzie and Lieam on this patrol.

Lieam: I will show Kenzie and Saxon that I am a valuable member of the patrol.

Sadie: I will discover why Conrad's communications from Calogero have stopped.

If you're using Sadie on this particular mission, you definitely want to change her goal to something more appropriate.

Designing a Mission

The plan for this mission is for the patrol to track the mouse through the wilderness using the Scout skill. If they find him, they'll need to interrogate him. A wilderness obstacle and a mice obstacle, that's all you need to get rolling.

GM's Turn

The GM starts the game by saying, "You've been on the trail for quite a while. There's no sign of the missing mouse. If you want to catch him before he reaches Barkstone, you're going to have to make a Scout test."

Scout is tested against the grain peddler's Nature 6—searching versus hiding. If the test is passed—if the player rolls more successes than the GM—the patrol catches up to the grain peddler on the trail.

Animals Twist

If the Scout test to find the grain merchant is failed, use an animal twist. Rather than finding

the grain peddler, they only find his overturned cart. The grain peddler was eaten by a snake. The snake's nest is nearby, so it attacks the patrol, too.

At first, the snake just tries to drive the patrol away from its nest: Snake Nature 7 versus Mouse Nature. The patrol may use teamwork.

If the patrol persists in remaining in the area—if they continue to search for the missing mouse—the snake attacks. Use a fight animal conflict to resolve the situation. The snake's goal is to defend her nest.

Player Suggestions

The players might ask to search the area for clues. Ask them what they're looking for. They can use Nature or Scout depending on what they're looking for. If successful, they find the map. If unsuccessful, they find the snake's burrow and her eggs.

Found Mouse

The grain mouse has a cart full of grains and his straw hat. Hidden in the grain is a very detailed map of Lockhaven. In order to find the map, the patrol must do one of two things: They must interrogate the mouse using Persuader or Deceiver or they must dig through the cart searching for it.



To interrogate the mouse, one of the patrol mice must question the GM, pretending he's interrogating the spy. Make a versus test between the player's skill and the grain peddler's Persuader 4 skill. The grain peddler should try to convince the patrol that he's innocent.

If searching for the map, one of the players must state that his character searches the cart. It's an Ob 4 Nature test to find the map. Why? Because it will require a stroke of luck. According to the **Factoring Obstacles** list, tasks that require a stroke of luck are obstacle level 4.

If the interrogation or the Nature test is failed, it's an excellent chance to experiment with using conditions in the game. Try giving the player the map under the condition that his character is made Angry by it.

The Grain Peddler

These ability and skill numbers were pulled from the Peddler listing in the *Denizens of the Mouse Territories* chapter. They were modified to suit this adventure.

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 6 | RESOURCES | 3 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Haggler 5, Persuader 4, Grain-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Cunning (1)*

The Snake— Nature 7

The snake in this mission is a milk snake. Its Nature aspects are: Hunting, Secretive, Slithering, Constricting. Its weapons are: Bite— + 1D to Maneuver. Rattle— + 1s to successful Feint. Coils— + 1s to successful Attack.

Weapons are described in the *Resolution* chapter.

Players' Turn

Once the snake has been dealt with and the map discovered, the GM should say, "I'm done. It's your turn. You each have one free check that you can spend, plus any others you earned. You have a lot you can do now."

"You can recover from your conditions, you can head into Barkstone and investigate there, you can head back to Lockhaven to report or something else that you might have in mind. What would you like to do?"

The simplest option is to try to recover from any conditions and then make a Pathfinder test to head to Barkstone.

End of Session

After the players have spent their checks and played out their scenes in the Players' Turn, the session is nearly over. There's one last bit to do. Each player should read his Belief, Goal and Instinct aloud. The proper rewards should be given for playing Beliefs and Instincts and accomplishing goals. Then the group awards the MVP and workhorse rewards.

In this mission, the player who discovers the map is probably the MVP. The player who defeats the snake is probably the workhorse. Lastly, talk about moments of great roleplaying and give those players an embodiment reward.

After that, you're done!

Continuing the Adventure

Obviously, this adventure isn't over. Someone is trying to find secret information about Lockhaven. What are they going to do with it? Who are they?

If you want, you can play out the continuing adventures of your patrol as you try to answer these questions. Next time you sit down to play, everyone should keep the same roles—the players with the same characters and the same player acting as the GM.

Now that you're in the field, Gwendolyn's not there to help you out. You've got to cut your own path. The players and GM should briefly discuss what direction they want to go in. Then the GM can assign the mission for the night: "Discover the traitors in Barkstone," for example. Once you have your mission, play the session in the same manner described above.

Continue this process until you've played out the season. Once winter comes, you've got to return to Lockhaven. See **Winter** in *Seasons* for what to do then.



DELIVER THE MAIL CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Deliver the Mail uses a four-mouse patrol consisting of Dain, Quentin, Baron and Robin.

Dain

Dain is a senior member of his patrol. Together with his lifelong friend, Quentin, he serves the Guard in the name of reason and right action.

AGE: 25

HOME: *Sprucetuck*

FUR COLOR: *Brown*

RANK: *Patrol Guard*

CLOAK: *White*

PARENTS: *Damon & Dara*

SENIOR: *Darrow the Insectrist*

MENTOR: *Conrad*

ENEMY: *Tuk the Bandit*

FRIEND: *Kenzie*

RAW ABILITIES

RATING

NATURE (**Mouse**)

4

WILL

4

HEALTH

4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

RATING

RESOURCES

5

CIRCLES

4

BELIEF: *Reason is the best guide to right action.*

GOAL: *I will ensure the mail is safely delivered to Elmoos, Sprucetuck, Dorigift and Gilpledge.*

INSTINCT: *Check the weather early each morning.*

SKILLS: *Lovemouse 3, Fighter 2, Hunter 2, Instructor 2, Pathfinder 3, Scout 3, Survivalist 3, Weather Watcher 3, Persuader 2, Archivist 2, Insectrist 2, Snow-wise 3, Owl-wise 3*

TRAITS: *Rational (1), Stoic (1), Weather Sense (1)*

GEAR: *Sword, lyre, spectacles*

Quentin

Quentin is a lifelong friend of Dain's. He's a self-educated mouse from Sprucetuck. When he was young, he wanted to be a scientist. He was on the path to a life of learning and research when his young friend convinced him to join the Guard.

| AGE: 28 | | PARENTS: <i>The Von Rods</i> | |
|---------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| HOME: <i>Sprucetuck</i> | | SENIOR: <i>Konard the Scientist</i> | |
| FUR COLOR: <i>Amber</i> | | MENTOR: <i>Julian the Scout</i> | |
| RANK: <i>Patrol Guard</i> | | ENEMY: <i>Firbean of Sprucetuck</i> | |
| CLOAK: <i>Fiery Red</i> | | FRIEND: <i>Marcus (guardmouse)</i> | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 6 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: *All possibilities should be explored for the well-being of the Guard.*

GOAL: *I will map our route from Lockhaven to Gilpledge.*

INSTINCT: *Always draw maps of all the new locations through which our patrol travels.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 3, Instructor 3, Scout 3, Survivalist 2, Weather Watcher 2, Scientist 3, Cartographer 3, Cook 3, Deceiver 2, Owl-wise 2, Bonehead-wise 2, Rain-wise 2, Grain-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Inquisitive (1), Quiet (1), Brave (1)*

GEAR: *Bow, pipe, paper, ink and pens*





Baron

Baron is a tough and a skilled survivalist with a heart of gold.

AGE: 22

HOME: Elmoos

FUR COLOR: Brown

RANK: Guardmouse

CLOAK: Gold

PARENTS: Ma & Pa Twistwood

SENIOR: Feris the Carpenter

MENTOR: Gavin

ENEMY: Paul (guardmouse)

FRIEND: Tuk the Bandit

RAW ABILITIES

RATING

SPECIAL ABILITIES

RATING

NATURE (Mouse)

4

RESOURCES

3

WILL

3

CIRCLES

2

HEALTH

5

BELIEF: I'll build a good name for the Mouse Guard.

GOAL: I will ensure that none of my patrolmates come to harm on this mission.

INSTINCT: Anticipate what the patrol leader needs.

SKILLS: Fighter 4, Hunter 3, Survivalist 3, Scout 2, Deceiver 3, Carpenter 4, Lockhaven-wise 2, Governor-wise 2

TRAITS: Compassionate (1), Alert (1)

GEAR: Halberd, wood carving knife

Robin

Robin is a tenderpaw from Barkstone. Fresh out of his artisan apprenticeship in Lockhaven, Gwendolyn has assigned him to learn under the steady and reliable Quentin. Robin has a fearless heart and steady paws. He's ready to prove his worth to the patrol!

| AGE: 17 | | PARENTS: Kem & Bram | |
|------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| HOME: Barkstone | | SENIOR: Vernon the Weaver | |
| FUR COLOR: Light Brown | | MENTOR: Quentin | |
| RANK: Tenderpaw | | ENEMY: Thom (Patrol Leader) | |
| CLOAK: None | | FRIEND: Curran | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 4 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 2 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

BELIEF: *I must embody the true ideals of the Guard.*

GOAL: *I will prove to Quentin that I am a worthy tenderpaw on this mission.*

INSTINCT: *Always create useful things in my free moments.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 3, Pathfinder 2, Scout 2, Survivalist 2, Weather Watcher 2, Orator 2, Persuader 2, Potter 2, Cartographer 2, Smith 2, Weaver 2, Snakes-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Fearless (1), Steady Paw (1), Generous (1)*

GEAR: *Spear, knitting needles, mason's tools and rope*



DELIVER THE MAIL

The sample mission for spring is called *Deliver the Mail*. It's a simple mission. Dain and Quentin's patrol must set out from Lockhaven with a bag of mail. They must deliver portions of it to Elmooss, Sprucetuck, Dorigift and, finally, Gilpledge. Most of the action takes place in the final run from Sprucetuck to Gilpledge.

GM's Turn

The GM's Turn for this mission is very direct. The GM plays out Gwendolyn handing off the mail and issuing her instructions. It's a routine spring mission. Normally, the players would now write their Goals, but in this sample mission, all the Goals have already been written.

The GM starts with a description of the journey. He may also describe briefly visiting Elmooss and Sprucetuck. Then he presents the wilderness obstacle. If that test is passed, he should congratulate the excellent pathfinders and move on to the mice obstacle.

Once both of those have been presented, end the GM's Turn and begin the Players' Turn.

If the test to overcome the wilderness obstacle is failed, the GM can hit the patrol with conditions and move right into the mice obstacle, or he can introduce a twist. I recommend a twist. Once the twist has been resolved, move the patrol straight to Gilpledge and end the GM's Turn.

Sample Mission Obstacles

Wilderness Obstacle

The Territories in the early spring are covered with patches of snow, pools of melt water and stretches of mud. A Pathfinder test must be made to complete the mail delivery circuit. The obstacle is 6.

Mice Obstacle

Gilpledge is one of the most remote settlements in the Territories. In addition to its small native population, there is a large refugee population from Walnutpeck. They were driven out of their homes during the Winter War of 1149. One of the refugees is a famous carpenter named Martin. Martin's daughter has recently been engaged to a politician's son from Ironwood. Martin wants to include in his daughter's dowry a family heirloom that was lost when Walnutpeck fell. He's about to set out on the dangerous journey himself. When the patrol arrives, he'll ask them to help him recover it. After some inquiry, Martin will engage the patrol in an argument. His goal for the argument: *Please help me journey to Walnutpeck to recover my grandmother's rocking chair*. Martin has no skill, so he's bound to lose, but he's got to try.

After the argument, whether Martin wins or not, end the GM's Turn right there.

Sample Mission Twists

Use the animals twist on the road to Gilpledge in the GM's turn. Use the mice twist in the Players' Turn once the mission has been completed.

Animals Twist

If the Pathfinding test fails, the patrol stops at sunset to camp in a hollow stump. Inside, they find a rather surprised raven. The bird squawks and flutters. It instantly spots the mail bag and it wants it bad! Must have mail bag! The raven initiates a fight animal conflict against the patrol. Its goal is: *Steal the mail bag and fly off!*

If the raven wins, the patrol must track him down and retrieve the mail. Tracking the raven requires a Hunter versus Nature 8 test. Stealing the bag back from the raven requires a Scout versus Nature 8 test.

If the raven loses, possible compromises include stealing a portion of the mail—even just one letter—or stealing another important item from the patrol like Baron's cloak, Quentin's bow or Dain's sword. Since none of these items are necessary for the completion of the mission, the GM can move the game along to Gilpledge. The items can be recovered after the mail is delivered in the Players' Turn.

Weather Twist

The GM can use a weather twist to bring in cold spring rain. The rain causes the patrol to make an Ob 3 Health. Failure can make them Sick or Tired. The rain also acts as a factor in all further Pathfinding, Scout and other outdoor activity tests for the rest of the session.

Mice Twist

One of the residents of Gilpledge, Loretta, is eagerly awaiting a letter from her beloved, Gunnar. Last spring, Gunnar moved north to Darkwater in search of work. He promised to send word the next spring to tell Loretta if she should join him.

If a portion of the mail is lost due to a twist, it's Loretta's letter that's gone missing. She stands sad and bereft as the mail is distributed and her letter isn't there. She's the last to leave the town square once the mail has been dispersed.

Loretta will not ask the patrol for help, but it's obvious that's she's in need. If her letter was lost, she'll gather her belongings and set out for Darkwater at first light alone—determined to join her love. If she received her letter (which tells her to wait until summer to make the dangerous journey), she'll try to arrange passage in a caravan or shipment leaving Gilpledge. There are no such caravans scheduled to leave until the fall.

Sample Mission NPCs

For Martin, use the stats for the Carpenter.

For Loretta, use the stats for the Harvester.

The raven's stats are listed in the **Wild Animals** section of *Denizens of the Territories*.

Players' Turn

The Players' Turn begins once the patrol has arrived in Gilpledge and distributes the mail and has dealt with Martin, if he's in play.

The players each have one free check plus any that they've earned from their tests in the GM's Turn. Here are a number of suggestions for spending their checks:

- They may spend their checks to recover from their conditions.
- They may spend their checks to recover any items stolen by the raven.
- They may use their checks to sneak into Walnutpeck with Martin and retrieve his grandmother's rocking chair. This requires an Ob 4 Pathfinding test to find Walnutpeck and a Scout versus Weasel Scout 5 to find the chair. Failure can apply conditions or result in a twist. I recommend the twist be that Martin and the patrol are captured by weasels.

- The patrol can use their checks to escort Loretta to a nearby city or even Darkwater itself. Escorting Loretta to Copperwood or Rootwallow is an Ob 3 Pathfinding test. Escorting her to Darkwater is an Ob 4 Pathfinding test. If the test is failed, allow the patrol to escort her to her destination but make the player who made the test Tired and any who helped Hungry. If you wish to use a twist in this case, use a weather-based one—turn the spring unseasonably cold.

Continuing the Adventure

Any of the issues left unresolved in the Players' Turn can crop up in future missions—for example, Martin's chair or Loretta's missing letter.

You can also use the raven as a twist on future missions. He makes an excellent recurring villain.

One possible twist for the future is to decide the raven has stolen something very important from a group of weasels. The weasels have crossed into the Mouse Territories to hunt down the raven and retrieve what was stolen. Does the patrol help them get rid of this pest or do they stop the weasels? There's a lot of potential to spin that scenario into other future adventures.

TROUBLE IN GRASSLAKE CHARACTER TEMPLATES

The patrol used for *Trouble in Grasslake* is a bit darker and quirkier than the other patrols.

Thom

Thom is an older guardmouse. He's been in the Guard since before Gwendolyn was its matriarch. Like many valiant mice, he was wounded in the Winter War and now bears the scars.

| AGE: <i>40</i> | | PARENTS: <i>The Huckabees</i> | |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|--------|
| HOME: <i>Lockhaven</i> | | SENIOR: <i>Wembleyshire</i> | |
| FUR COLOR: <i>Gray</i> | | MENTOR: <i>Oswald</i> | |
| RANK: <i>Patrol Leader</i> | | ENEMY: <i>Red Darbey</i> | |
| CLOAK: <i>Red</i> | | FRIEND: <i>Harold the Brewer</i> | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 5 | CIRCLES | 5 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: *One day I'll be done with this, but for now, once more into the fray.*

GOAL: *I must save Harold's brewery from the monster.*

INSTINCT: *Always protect the tenderpaw.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 4, Instructor 2, Pathfinder 2, Scout 2, Survivalist 2, Weather Watcher 3, Orator 2, Persuader 3, Loremouse 2, Armorer 3, Stonemason 2, Brewer 2, Adage-wise 2, Leaf-wise 2, Beer-wise 2, Mushroom-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Guard's Honor (1), Stubborn (1), Scarred (1)*

GEAR: *Sword and a bottle of brew*





Kyle

Kyle is a well-rounded, capable guardmouse. Uncomfortable in the cities and towns, he prefers to be out in the open country, fending for himself under the sun, rain and stars.

AGE: 28

HOME: Elmooss

FUR COLOR: Brown

RANK: Patrol Guard

CLOAK: Green

PARENTS: Bill & Jenny

SENIOR: Singer the Weaver

MENTOR: Chauncy

ENEMY: Jeremiah (patrol leader)

FRIEND: Cheksa the Peddler

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 4 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

BELIEF: *The place for the Guard is in the wild, not in Lockhaven.*

GOAL: *I will determine what exactly is behind this attack.*

INSTINCT: *Never trust a rich mouse.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 3, Harvester 3, Hunter 2, Instructor 3, Pathfinder 2, Scout 3, Survivalist 3, Weather Watcher 2, Deceiver 2, Persuader 2, Weaver 2, Rock-wise 3, Wild Radishes-wise 3*

TRAITS: *Alert (1), Suspicious (1), Natural Bearings (1)*

GEAR: *Spear and a sewing kit*

Nathaniel

Nathaniel is an odd mouse. He is a capable healer, sworn to the Guard and dedicated to protect and rebuild. However, his stubborn and independent nature makes him prone to explosive outbursts. Once his temper flares, he's the first into the fray with his axe!

| AGE: 25 | | PARENTS: <i>Lin & Ber</i> | |
|-------------------------|--------|---|--------|
| HOME: <i>Copperwood</i> | | SENIOR: <i>Muhle the Carpenter</i> | |
| FUR COLOR: <i>Red</i> | | MENTOR: <i>Christopher</i> | |
| RANK: <i>Guardmouse</i> | | ENEMY: <i>Peder (Christopher's son)</i> | |
| CLOAK: <i>Blue</i> | | FRIEND: <i>Saxon</i> | |
| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
| NATURE (Mouse) | 5 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 3 |
| HEALTH | 5 | | |

BELIEF: *Build, do not destroy.*

GOAL: *I will aid the dispossessed of Grasslake in their time of need.*

INSTINCT: *Defend others in danger.*

SKILLS: *Fighter 2, Healer 4, Orator 2, Hagglar 2, Pathfinder 3, Survivalist 3, Militarist 2, Carpenter 3, Transport-wise 2, Axe-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Stubborn (1), Independent (1), Thoughtful (1)*

GEAR: *Axe, healing herbs, mending kit*





Sloan

Sloan is a quiet, clever mouse. She's sneaky and perceptive. If she can overcome her own secretive nature, she'll make an excellent guardmouse.

AGE: *15*

HOME: *Barkstone*

FUR COLOR: *Gray*

RANK: *Tenderpaw*

CLOAK: *None*

PARENTS: *Pim & Toby*

SENIOR: *Gregor the Smith*

MENTOR: *Thom*

ENEMY: *Lester the Ex-Tenderpaw*

FRIEND: *Joshua the Potter*

RAW ABILITIES

RATING

SPECIAL ABILITIES

RATING

NATURE (**Mouse**)

6

RESOURCES

4

WILL

2

CIRCLES

1

HEALTH

6

BELIEF: *I am superior to all other mice in the Territories.*

GOAL: *I must ingratiate myself with Thom so that he considers me for promotion to guardmouse.*

INSTINCT: *Always seek revenge.*

SKILLS: *Scout 4, Survivalist 3, Weather Watcher 3, Deceiver 3, Archivist 3, Glazier 2, Smith 2, Poison-wise 2*

TRAITS: *Graceful (1), Steady Paw (1), Cunning (1)*

GEAR: *Shield and a locked bag*

TROUBLE IN GRASSLAKE

Thom's patrol has been laying the Scent Border out past Wolfepointe when they return to Grasslake at the beginning of the summer. As they approach the town, Thom's friend Harold, who lives in Grasslake, comes running through the marsh grass, howling for help. He tells the patrol, "A giant monster! A monster in Grasslake! Tearing down the town, eating mice, crushing my brewery!"

Tell the players that Sloan's enemy, Lester the Ex-Tenderpaw, is in Grasslake.

That's the mission assignment! Have the group write their Goals for this session based on that information.

Trouble in Grasslake combines mice and animal obstacles in a particularly fun way.

GM's Turn

A gigantic snapping turtle has crawled up out of the lake and beached itself in the town square of Grasslake. It's crushed the wharves, sunk a bunch of fishing boats and wedged itself between Harold's brewery and Grasslake's bakery, run by the baker Honeywind. Currently, it appears to be sunning itself as well as basking in the heat of the bakery.

The mice of Grasslake have gathered in a hushed and horrified crowd at the far end of the town square. The smug old monster is eyeing the mice, clearly thinking about its next meal.

The patrol must dislodge the beast! The GM may allow them to formulate a plan, or he can have the beast attack right away.

Mice like Lester, Harold, Honeywind and perhaps the mayor should get in their way and offer various protests. Once the turtle has been roused and Lester dealt with, the GM may end his turn.

Sample Mission Obstacles

The Turtle

The turtle can move in a number of directions. It doesn't have to begin devouring mice just yet. As the noon sun passes over, it can crack open the bakery to try to get closer to the ovens, for example. If the patrol wants to stop it, they'll have to use an appropriate skill versus its Nature 8.

Once the patrol is ready to dislodge the snapping turtle, they must use a conflict to enact their plan. The conflict can be a fight or an "other" conflict using Scientist or even Militarist if they can convince the people of the town to fight.



The turtle will fight hard and fight dirty. If it manages to injure a mouse, be sure to snip off tails and ears! If it can, it will definitely try to snap up as many mice as possible.

The Rival

Sloan's rival Lester was recently dismissed from service in the Guard. His mentor felt he was unsuited to the task. Sloan and Lester apprenticed together in Lockhaven. Lester blames her for getting him dismissed. He's moved to Grasslake to start work as a smith to get as far away from Sloan as possible.

He'll do everything he can to help Thom, Kyle and Nathaniel get the turtle out of the town. He won't help Sloan unless he's forced to. He will also try to explain to Thom that he thinks Sloan is a rotten apple. He wants to get her kicked out of the Guard!

Sample Mission Twists

Destruction

Compromises or twists involving the turtle should result in the destruction of the bakery and the brewery or any other available buildings! Think Godzilla!

Not the Eggs!

If the patrol uses Hunter or Loremouse to find out more information about the turtle, the GM may use a twist to make the turtle a pregnant female! It's here to lay its eggs in Grasslake's sandy town square.

The patrol might let the turtle lay her eggs as part of a ploy. She'll lay the eggs and then be off, never to return. If she's allowed to lay her eggs, she'll destroy all of the buildings in the town square! The mayor's residence, the bakery, the brewery and the smithy will all be torn apart.

Once her eggs are deposited, she will depart. The patrol may wish to dig up the eggs and move them or destroy them. This calls for an Ob 4 Nature or Hunter test. If the test is failed, one egg is left behind under Grasslake. It'll hatch in the fall as Baby Gojira!

The Young Miss

If Kyle or Nathaniel is injured in the defense of the bakery, Honeywind's daughter, Flower, will rush to their aid. She'll instantly become smitten with the injured mouse. She'll invite the patrol back to her family's home at the far end of the town. She'll feed them and let them rest—all except the mouse with whom she's fallen in love, of course. She'll dog his every step and do everything she can to get him to propose to her! If possible, she will initiate a very gentle argument against her target and try to convince him to take her paw in marriage.



Sample Mission NPCs

Lester

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 2 |
| WILL | 2 | CIRCLES | 1 |
| HEALTH | 6 | | |

SKILLS: *Smith 3, Boatcrafter 2, Haggler 3, Persuader 3, Hunter 3, Scout 3, Healer 2*

TRAITS: *Bitter (2), Steady Paw (1)*

Miss Flower

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 5 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 4 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Baker 3, Cook 3, Persuader 3, Healer 2, Haggler 3, Bread-wise 3,*

TRAITS: *Skinny (1), Pretty (1)*

Harold the Brewer

| RAW ABILITIES | RATING | SPECIAL ABILITIES | RATING |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| NATURE (Mouse) | 4 | RESOURCES | 6 |
| WILL | 3 | CIRCLES | 6 |
| HEALTH | 4 | | |

SKILLS: *Brewer 5, Miller 2, Beer-wise 4*

TRAITS: *Short (1), Drunk (1)*

Snapping Turtle Nature 8

Mean, Swimming, Snapping

Snapping Turtle Weapons

Surprisingly Long Neck— + 1D to Attack. Bony Jaws— + 1s to Attack. Ridged Shell— + 3D to Defend.

Players' Turn

During the Players' Turn, the patrol may, of course, recover from any bumps and scrapes.

They may also use their checks to try to repair the town, pursue the turtle, dig up the turtle's eggs, marry Miss Flower or settle matters with Lester.

Repairing the town will require Carpenter tests. Harold and Honeywind will both be eternally grateful for any help.

Pursuing the turtle will involve a very dangerous chase conflict across Grasslake itself.

Digging up the eggs, as discussed earlier, will require a Hunter or Nature test.

Marrying Miss Flower will require permission from Ma and Pa Honeywind. Convincing them will require some doing! They do not want a son in the Guard. In an argument, they'll try to bribe the guardmouse to leave and never come back.

If Lester can't convince Thom that Sloan is a cunning and manipulative mouse, unworthy of the Guard, he'll swear that the Guard itself is corrupt! If his new smithy wasn't destroyed, he'll try to resume his life, vowing never to aid the

Guard again! If the patrol wishes to convince him otherwise, it'll require a Persuader test versus his Will. If they want to convince him to help or really change his mind about Sloan, it'll require a full-blown argument.

Continuing the Adventure

Thom's patrol is rough and tough! From Grasslake they can visit Burl, Lonepine or Sandmason to see what problems await. But their real mission is Sloan. She's a tenderpaw. Thom and the rest of the patrol must test her and make sure she's ready to join the Guard in earnest this winter.

In this regard, the GM should be sure to put Sloan in the spotlight at least once per mission. He should encourage the patrol mice to assign her tasks so that she can prove herself—even if the mice could better complete the tasks themselves.





RECRUITMENT

Let this stone always stand for
safety and prosperity.
Let it be your conviction, your pride, your home.

—Dedication recited by all Mouse Guard Matriarchs to new guardmice upon entering Lockhaven

This section describes how to create a character for the Mouse Guard roleplaying game. It isn't necessary to play the game. It's for advanced or curious players only. The templates provided in the Mouse Guard section of the book should provide plenty of fodder for play until you're comfortable enough with the game to create your own characters.

Creating a character is done in 21 easy steps. In these steps, the player makes choices and answers questions about his character's concept, rank, age, Nature, hometown, life experience, Resources, Circles, traits, name, fur color, parents, senior artisan, mentor, friend, enemy, cloak color, Belief, Goal, Instinct and gear. It sounds like a lot, but it's not. Most of the steps are very short.

ALL TOGETHER NOW



When creating characters, read each step and its instructions aloud to the players. Take the process question by question. We do it this way for two reasons: It's faster, and it creates a full-fledged patrol rather than a collection of oddballs.

CONCEPT

Before we start, think about what kind of character you want to play in the world of Mouse Guard: A grizzled veteran, a young upstart or something in between. What's his personality like? What's his specialty?

Chris wants to make a tough guardmouse. He's a fighter, but he doesn't like fighting.

GUARD RANK



What level of experience or rank would you like to play? There are five ranks for the Mouse Guard: tenderpaw, guardmouse, patrol guard, patrol leader and guard captain. All have their benefits and drawbacks.

Tenderpaws are fresh recruits. Guardmice are the foot soldiers of the Guard. Patrol guard are veteran guardmice responsible for complicated or independent missions. Patrol leaders are Patrol guard who have demonstrated they can

think independently and guide other mice. Guard captains are powerful mice appointed to the highest rank in the Guard due to their long-standing service and exemplary valor.



Except for special circumstances, there can only be one patrol leader player in your group. Guard captains are rare and may only be played at the discretion of the group. If a guard captain is allowed, there may only be one per group. If a tenderpaw is played, one of the other players must be his mentor.

Chris decides his character will be guardmouse rank. He wants to keep it simple.

Two Patrol Leaders in a Patrol



In groups of four players, there can be two patrol leaders if the other two players wish to take on the roles of tenderpaws.

MOUSE AGE AND ABILITY



Your starting Will and Health scores are determined by your Guard rank. Choose an age based on your rank.

| Guard Rank | Age | Will | Health |
|---------------|-------|------|--------|
| Tenderpaw | 14-17 | 2 | 6 |
| Guardmouse | 18-25 | 3 | 5 |
| Patrol Guard | 21-50 | 4 | 4 |
| Patrol Leader | 21-60 | 5 | 4 |
| Guard Captain | 41-60 | 6 | 3 |

Chris decides his guardmouse is a young 22 years old. His Will is 3. His Health is 5.

MOUSE NATURE



All characters have a base Nature of 3. Answer the following three questions to determine your final starting Nature score. The choices will limit some of your skill and trait choices later. Note any restricted items on your character sheet list for now.

- ❑ Do you save for winter even if it means going without something now? Or do you use what you have when you need it?

If you save for winter, increase your Nature by 1. You may not take the Bold or Generous traits.

- ❑ When confronted, do you stand your ground and fight or do you run and hide?

If you run and hide, increase your Nature by 1. Decrease your starting Fighter skill, if you take it, by 1.

- ❑ Do you fear owls, weasels and wolves?

If you do, increase your Nature by 1. You may not take the Fearless trait.

Chris decides that his character does not save for winter. He stands his ground when confronted, but he does fear owls, weasels and wolves. His starting Nature is 4.

WHERE WERE YOU BORN?



Choose a mouse town or city in which your character was born. Each city has its own culture as represented by the skills and traits it provides.

Barkstone

A busy working-class town.

Skills: Carpenter, Potter, Glazier

Traits: Steady Paw

Copperwood

One of the oldest cities and home to one of the two mines in the Territories.

Skills: Smith, Haggler

Traits: Independent

Elmoss

A once prosperous city, known for its medicinal moss.

Skills: Carpenter, Harvester

Traits: Alert

Ivydale

Renowned for its bakers and bread.

Skills: Harvester, Baker

Traits: Hard Worker

Lockhaven

The home of the Mouse Guard.

Skills: Weaver, Armorer

Traits: Generous, Guard's Honor

Port Sumac

A busy little port town between Darkwater and Rustleaf.

Skills: Boatcrafter, Weather Watcher

Traits: Tough, Weather Sense

Shaleburrow

A simple town known for its delicious drinks!

Skills: Mason, Harvester, Miller

Traits: Open-Minded

Sprucetuck

Known for its scientists, medicine and scent concoctions.

Skills: Scientist, Loremouse

Traits: Inquisitive, Rational



Choose one trait and one skill from the city in which your character was born. Note them on your character sheet and put a check next to them.

Chris decides that his guardmouse is from Elmooss. He notes the Carpenter skill and Alert trait on his character sheet in the appropriate spaces. He puts a check next to them both.

LIFE EXPERIENCE



You will be given a number of choices in each of the following sections. Each time you choose a skill, check it off or note it on your character sheet. You may choose or check a skill multiple times, either using multiple choices from one section or from various sections.

Each time you check a skill, you're making your character more experienced in that area.

Starting Skill Ratings



To determine your starting ratings in the skills and wisdes you chose, count up the number of times you checked each one and add 1. That total is your starting rating for that skill. Note the rating on your character sheet next to the skill.

Checking a skill three times gives a starting rating of 4—three checks plus one.

The maximum starting rating for a skill is 6.

Choosing Skills



The character sheet lists a number of skills that are most common to guardmice. Your character probably won't start with ratings in all of those skills. Most likely, you'll choose to focus on a handful of skills. That's okay. You can learn those others during play, or rely on your patrolmates to pick up your slack.

If you want to choose a skill that's not listed on your sheet, write it in an available space and place the appropriate number of check marks next to it: one, two, three or whatever.

Pick an area in which you're naturally talented.



Tenderpaws and guard captains choose two. Guardmice, patrol guard and patrol leaders choose one.

| | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| Administrator | Glazier | Pathfinder |
| Apiarist | Haggler | Persuader |
| Archivist | Harvester | Potter |
| Armorer | Healer | Scientist |
| Baker | Hunter | Scout |
| Boatcrafter | Insectrist | Smith |
| Brewer | Instructor | Stonemason |
| Carpenter | Laborer | Survivalist |
| Cartographer | Loresource | Weather |
| Cook | Militarist | Watcher |
| Deceiver | Miller | Weaver |
| Fighter | Orator | |

Chris chooses Deceiver. He puts a check next to it on his character sheet.

What was your parents' trade?



Tenderpaws choose two; all others choose one. Also, note this skill next to your Parents on the character sheet.

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Apiarist | Carpenter | Potter |
| Archivist | Cartographer | Smith |
| Armorer | Glazier | Stonemason |
| Baker | Harvester | Weaver |
| Boatcrafter | Insectrist | |
| Brewer | Miller | |

Chris chooses carpenters for his parents. He puts a check next to the Carpenter skill on his character sheet. He already wrote it in when he decided he was from Elmoos.

How do you convince people that you're right or to do what you need?



Patrol leaders and guard captains choose two; all others choose one:

Deceiver
Orator
Persuader

Chris chooses Deceiver again. He wants his character to be able to intimidate people. He puts another check next to it on his sheet.

With whom did you apprentice for the Guard? What was that mouse's trade?

A young mouse seeking to join the Guard applies in either the spring or fall. They meet with a guardmouse in charge of new recruits

and are welcomed into Lockhaven. These raw recruits are then distributed among the various tradesmice in Lockhaven to act as assistants, laborers and apprentices. For their first two seasons of service, they are apprenticed to these senior artisans. In this capacity, they help see to the material needs of the Guard.



Check one skill from the list below. In addition to checking a skill, note the choice next to the Senior Artisan.

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Apiarist | Carpenter | Miller |
| Archivist | Cartographer | Potter |
| Armorer | Glazier | Smith |
| Baker | Harvester | Stonemason |
| Brewer | Insectrist | Weaver |

Chris's character's senior in Lockhaven was a Carpenter. He checks the skill again.

What did your mentor stress in training?

After his apprenticeship, the recruit is assigned a mentor. This guardmouse slowly introduces the tenderpaw to patrolling and other Guard duties. The tenderpaw's job is to do the labor and grunt work so the mentor's paws and mind are free for facing the dangers they encounter. After a few seasons of tutelage, the mentor will recommend the mouse recruit to Gwendolyn for promotion to full guardmouse status.

It is the mentor's role to train the recruit as he sees fit. Some mentors may have more rigorous training methods or requirements than others. Some may focus on different aspects of Guard life—some may emphasize Weather Watching as one of the most important ways to stay free of danger, while others may focus on Fighting and some stress Scouting and Pathfinding.



Each guardmouse is trained by a mentor. Tenderpaws and patrol leaders choose two; all others choose one:

| | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| Fighter | Instructor | Survivalist |
| Healer | Pathfinder | Weather |
| Hunter | Scout | Watcher |

Chris's character's mentor stressed the Survivalist skill during training.

What kind of experience do you have in the Guard?

All guardmice have a range of training and experience in skills important to their role. Within that training, some mice specialize in just one or two areas while some try to keep a broad skill base.



You may choose from the following skill list based on your experience with the Guard. You may make a number of checks based on your ranking as follows: tenderpaw 3, guardmouse 6, patrol guard 8, patrol leader 9, guard captain 12.

| | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| Fighter | Instructor | Survivalist |
| Healer | Pathfinder | Weather |
| Hunter | Scout | Watcher |

Tenderpaws may consider Laborer part of the above list.

Guardmice may consider Haggler part of the above list.

Patrol guard may consider Cook part of the above list.

Patrol leaders consider Persuader and Loremouse part of the above list.

Guard captains may also consider Orator, Militarist and Administrator part of the above list.

As a guardmouse, Chris has six checks to spend. He puts three checks next to Fighter, two next to Hunter and one next to Scout.

What's Your Specialty?



Each player, except for tenderpaws, may add one check to a skill from the list below. Each player must choose a unique specialty—no two players can have the same skill as their specialty.

| | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| Fighter | Instructor | Survivalist |
| Healer | Pathfinder | Weather |
| Hunter | Scout | Watcher |

Chris chooses Survivalist for his specialty. He places another check next to it on his character sheet, for a total of two checks.

Tally



Count check marks made for each skill and add 1. That total is your starting rating for that skill.



The maximum rating for a skill is 6.

When everyone has tallied their skills, continue on with the next set of questions.

Chris's skills look like this: Fighter 4, Hunter 3, Survivalist 3, Scout 2, Deceiver 3, Carpenter 4.

What are you particularly knowledgeable about?

There is a special subset of skills known as *wises*. These skills represent pure knowledge and experience.



You start with a number of checks in *wises* in proportion to your rank. You may only spend these checks on *wises*. Tally your *wises* checks when you're done—count the checks and add one to determine the starting rating.

| Rank | Checks for Wises |
|---------------|------------------|
| Tenderpaw | 1 |
| Guardmouse | 2 |
| Patrol Guard | 3 |
| Patrol Leader | 4 |
| Guard Captain | 6 |

Mouse Guard Wises



Choose from the alphabetized list below or read the *Specific Wises* headings for guidelines on creating your own wises:

Wises A

Apiary-wise, Armor-wise, Autumn storm-wise

Wises B

Badger-wise, Barkstone-wise, Bird-wise, Blizzard-wise, Bramble-wise, Brush fire-wise, Burrow-wise

Wises C

Celebrations-wise, Clear and warm weather-wise, Coast-wise, Cold rain-wise, Cold snap-wise, Copperwood-wise, Coyote-wise, Craft-wise, Crime-wise

Wises D

Darkheather-wise, Deer-wise, Drought-wise

Wises E

Elmoss-wise, Epidemic-wise, Escort-wise

Wises F

Famine-wise, Flash flood-wise, Forest fire-wise, Forest-wise, Fox-wise, Freezing-wise, Frog-wise

Wises G

Governor-wise, Grain-wise, Guard captain-wise, Guardmouse-wise

Wises H

Harvest-wise, Hawk-wise, Heat wave-wise, Herb-wise, Hidey hole-wise

Wises I-K

Ice storm-wise, Ice-wise

Wises L

Lake-wise, Leaf cover-wise, Lockhaven-wise

Wises M

Mail-wise, Medicine-wise, Moose-wise, Moss-wise, Mouse Guard-wise, Mud-wise

Wises N

Night-wise, Nut-wise

Wises O

Open ground-wise, Owl-wise

Wises P

Path-wise, Patrol guard-wise, Patrol leader-wise, Planting-wise, Poison-wise, Pond-wise, Predator-wise

Wises R

Raccoon-wise, Rain-wise, Raven-wise, Rebellion-wise, Recipe-wise, Road-wise, Rocky terrain-wise

Wises S

Scent Border-wise, Shaleburrow-wise, Shield-wise, Shore-wise, Shortages-wise, Snake-wise, Snow-wise, Sprucetuck-wise, Squirrel-wise, Star-wise, Stream-wise, Swamps-wise

Wises T

Tall grass-wise, Tenderpaw-wise, Thorn-wise, Thunderstorm-wise, Tide-wise, Tradesmouse-wise, Trail-wise, Transport-wise, Trap-wise, Tunnel-wise, Turtle-wise

Wises U-V

Unseasonably cold-wise, Unseasonably warm-wise

Wises W-Z

War-wise, Weasel-wise, Widget-wise, Wild country-wise, Wild mouse-wise, Wolf-wise

Specific Town Wises

The wisers list provides examples of wisers for towns—Lockhaven-wise, Elmooss-wise, etc. If you wish to take a wise for an unlisted settlement, you may. Note the settlement and add “-wise” to it. You’re done.

Specific Animal Wises

The wisers list provides example wisers for animals—Raccoon-wise, Owl-wise, etc. If you wish to take a wise for an unlisted animal, Turkey Vulture for example, you may. Note the wise on your character sheet as Turkey Vulture-wise or whatever animal you wish.

Specific Mouse Wise

You may take specific wisers for types or groups of mice—Mouse Guard-wise, Governor-wise, Wild Mouse-wise, etc. If you do not see the group of mice listed in the wisers, you may develop your own wise to represent the group. For example, Armorer-wise, Apiarist-wise, Bandit-wise and so on.

For his character, Chris chooses Lockhaven-wise 2 and Governor-wise 2.



GUARD RESOURCES

Resources represent the Guard's pay, but also how resourceful and clever the mouse is with his possessions and material goods.



Your character's base Resources rating is determined by his rank: tenderpaw 1, guardmouse 2, patrol guard 3, patrol leader 4, guard captain 5.

The following six questions can modify that score:

❏ In winter, do you still practice a trade like weaving, smithing or pottery for the Guard?

If so, increase Resources by 1. You must have the skill for the trade in question. You may not take the Leader trait to start. You're too busy.

❏ Are your parents smiths, politicians, merchants or apiarists?

If so, increase your Resources by 1. Your parents must be of the noted trade and may not be in the Guard.

❏ Do you like to buy gifts for yourself and your friends?

If so, decrease your Resources by 1.

❏ Are you thrifty?

If so, increase your Resources by 1. You may not take the Generous trait to start.

❏ Have you ever been in debt? Or are you generally bad with money?

If so, decrease your Resources by 1.

❏ Do you always pack carefully for a journey, ensuring you have everything you need?

If so, increase your Resources by 1. You may not take the Bold or Fiery traits to start.

Chris decides that his character practices Carpentry in the winter at Lockhaven (+1). His parents aren't any of the indicated types (± 0). His guardmouse is not particularly generous (± 0). He's not thrifty (± 0). But he's been in debt (-1). Being a survivalist, he does pack carefully for long journeys (+1). This is a net of +1 added to his base of 2. His character starts with a Resources rating of 3.

GUARD CIRCLES

The Circles ability represents how well-connected your character is.



Tenderpaws start with a Circles rating of 1. Guardmice start with a Circles rating of 2. Patrol guard and patrol leaders start with a Circles rating of 3. Guard captains start with a Circles rating of 4.

Answer the following questions and modify your starting rating accordingly. The minimum starting rating is 1.

- ❖ Is your mouse gregarious? Does he have lots of friends? Does he make friends easily?

If you answered yes to 1 or more of these, increase Circles by 1. You may not take the Bitter or Jaded traits.

- ❖ Do you have strong ties to the Guard? Perhaps a family tradition or allies within the Guard?

If so, increase Circles by 1. Either your parents must be in the Guard or your mentor must be family.

- ❖ Has your character accomplished some great task in the Guard? Does he already have a reputation?

If so, increase Circles by 1.

- ❖ Does your character have powerful enemies in the Territories?

If so, reduce Circles by 1.

- ❖ Has your character been convicted of a crime?

If so, reduce Circles by 1.

- ❖ Is your character a loner, tough and cool?

If so, reduce Circles by 1. You may not take the Extrovert trait.

As guardmouse, Chris's character starts with a Circles rating of 2. He's not gregarious, but he does have an easy disposition (+1). He has no family tradition with the Guard (± 0). He

doesn't want his character to have accomplished anything great yet (± 0). He decides that he has a powerful enemy—a patrol leader of another patrol (-1). He's not been convicted of a crime (± 0), nor is he a loner (± 0).

That's a net of ± 0 . He starts with a Circles rating of 2.

MOUSE TRAITS

Traits describe the personality quirks and special qualities that all of the guardmice possess.



Trait selection is similar to skill selection. You can choose a variety of traits or choose one or two traits multiple times. Each time you choose a trait you increase its value. There are three ranks of traits.



The first rank of a trait gives you +1D once per session in a situation where the trait would be useful to the task at hand. The second rank gives you +1D for every roll of that ability when appropriate to the trait. The third rank of a trait allows you to reroll all of the failed dice (cowards!) from one roll appropriate to the trait once per session.

Choose a quality you were born with



All players get one check from this list. They can reinforce their hometown trait if it's available, or pick something new.

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Bigpaw | Fearful | Quiet |
| Bitter | Fearless | Scarred |
| Bodyguard | Fiery | Sharp-Eyed |
| Bold | Generous | Sharptooth |
| Brave | Graceful | Short |
| Calm | Guard's Honor | Skeptical |
| Clever | Innocent | Skinny |
| Compassionate | Jaded | Stoic |
| Cunning | Leader | Stubborn |
| Curious | Longtail | Suspicious |
| Deep Ear | Lost | Tall |
| Defender | Natural | Thoughtful |
| Determined | Bearings | Tough |
| Driven | Nimble | Weather Sense |
| Early Riser | Nocturnal | Wise |
| Extrovert | Oldfur | Wolf's Snout |
| Fat | Quick-Witted | Young |

At this point, Chris has a good feel for his character. He built his skills to be tough and capable. He's not rich, but neither is he poor. He doesn't know a lot of mice, and has made some enemies. Now he wants to pick a trait to give him an unexpected softer edge. He chooses Compassionate. He writes that on his character sheet and marks the first level of the trait.

Choose something you learned or inherited from your parents



This is for tenderpaws only. Take one check on this list.

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bigpaw | Fearful | Quiet |
| Brave | Fearless | Scarred |
| Calm | Fiery | Sharptooth |
| Clever | Generous | Short |
| Compassionate | Graceful | Skeptical |
| Curious | Longtail | Skinny |
| Deep Ear | Lost | Stubborn |
| Defender | Natural | Suspicious |
| Determined | Bearings | Tall |
| Early Riser | Nimble | Tough |
| Extrovert | Quick-Witted | Wolf's Snout |

Life on the Road



Patrol leaders and guard captains may also choose a trait that represents a lesson learned during their tenure in the Guard. Guardmice and tenderpaws may not make this selection.

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Bitter | Early Riser | Scarred |
| Bodyguard | Fearful | Sharp-Eyed |
| Brave | Fearless | Skeptical |
| Calm | Jaded | Skinny |
| Clever | Leader | Stoic |
| Compassionate | Natural | Thoughtful |
| Cunning | Bearings | Tough |
| Curious | Nocturnal | Weather Sense |
| Defender | Oldfur | Wise |
| Driven | Quiet | |

NAME

Choose a name for your character.

Common Mouse Names

| Male | Female |
|---------|-----------|
| Abram | Autumn |
| Aengus | Aynsllle |
| Algomin | Baeylie |
| Beagan | Brynn |
| Brand | Caley |
| Cale | Clove |
| Caley | Daewn |
| Connor | Dalia |
| Curt | Daye |
| Faolan | Gale |
| Finn | Ingrid |
| Folker | Ivy |
| Gamlion | Josephine |
| Garnier | Julyia |
| Garrow | Kearra |
| Grahame | Laurel |
| Gurney | Lilly |
| Hannidy | Loonis |
| Henson | Loralai |
| Jasper | Maren |
| Joseff | Millicent |
| Kole | Moirra |
| Laird | Nola |
| Noelan | Quinn |

Common Mouse Names

| Male | Female |
|----------|---------|
| Seyth | Rona |
| Siemon | Rosalee |
| Sloan | Sayble |
| Tander | Serra |
| Thom | Sloan |
| Thurstan | Sylvia |
| Trevor | Taryn |
| Vidar | Tinble |
| Walmond | Veira |



Chris decides to name his character Baron. It's not on the list, but he likes the sound of it. And the name is similar in spirit to Saxon.

FUR COLOR

Choose a fur color for your mouse. Brown is most common, followed by blonde and gray. Black and white are uncommon and red is rare.

Chris decides that Baron's fur is light brown.

PARENTS



You decided where you were born, what you learned and inherited from your parents. Now it's time to name them. Choose appropriate names and write them on your character sheet.

Chris names his folks Ma and Pa Twistwood.

SENIOR ARTISAN

What is the name of the senior artisan whom you apprenticed with? Name him now and note him on your character sheet.

His senior is named Feris the Carpenter.

MENTOR



Who was your Guard mentor? In the case of tenderpaw characters, this must be a current player character, preferably a patrol leader. If not, then the mentor must be an older mouse. For other, more experienced characters, the mentor must be either an NPC or a player character with the Oldfur trait.

Baron's mentor is a patrol leader named Gavin. He frequents the forests near Baron's home, Elmooss.

FRIEND



Invent a character who is a friend to your guardmouse, someone who would help your character without hesitation. Choose a name for him, pick his profession or specialty and place him in or near one of the towns or cities on the map.

In an effort to make his character even more interesting, Chris decides that Baron's friend is a mouse named Tuk. They grew up together in Elmooss. Baron went on to join the Guard, while Tuk fell on hard times and became a bandit. Even so, Baron never faulted his friend and still tries to remain close to him.



ENEMY



Invent a character who is an enemy to your guardmouse. It is preferable that the enemy be a mouse and not another animal. Choose a name for him, pick his profession or specialty and place him in or near one of the towns or cities on the map.

Your enemy can be from before your days in the Guard or from your time in service. It is permissible for the players to choose a common enemy.

When he was answering his Circles questions, Chris thought it would be cool for Baron to have an enemy in the Guard. He decides that Baron has run afoul of another patrol leader early on in his career. A mission went wrong and now these two mice do not like each other at all. Chris names him Paul.

CLOAK COLOR



Your mentor gave you your cloak on the day you were formally inducted into the Guard. What color is it and why? What part of your personality made your mentor decide on that particular color?

Tenderpaws do not start with a cloak and therefore do not make this choice.

For Baron, Chris chooses a gold cloak. He tells the group that his mentor chose it to reflect Baron's compassionate core.

FIRST MISSION



Stop and discuss what's going on in your game before going any further.

Check out **The Mission** if you need to and then come back to writing your Belief, Goal and Instinct.

BELIEF



Write a Belief for your character based on how he views his role in the Guard.

A Belief is an overarching ethical or moral stance.

Chris writes the following Belief for Baron: "I'll build a good name for the Mouse Guard." He bases this Belief on Baron's compassionate side. He knows that Baron is going to be called

on to fight and hunt, but perhaps he can use his talents to demonstrate that the Guard is a force for good.

Writing Beliefs is discussed in the **Mouse Guard** chapter.

GOAL



Write a Goal for your character based on the mission you've been assigned.

A Goal is an objective you could feasibly accomplish in the near future via the actions of your character.

For the Deliver the Mail mission, Chris chooses, "I will ensure that none of my patrolmates come to harm on this mission," for Baron's Goal.

Writing Goals is discussed in the **Mouse Guard** chapter.



INSTINCT



How does your character react? What has your guardmouse been trained to do? Write an Instinct for your character.

In order to play off of some of the history that he built for his character, Chris writes the following Instinct: "Anticipate what the patrol leader needs."

Chris tells the group, "This is for two reasons. First, Baron really likes Dain, our patrol leader. Second, Baron remembers the bad blood between himself and his last patrol leader. He wants to try to head that off this time around."

Writing Instincts is discussed in the **Mouse Guard** chapter.

GEAR



What weapon does your mouse carry? Common choices include: shield, knife, sword, staff, spear, hook and line, halberd, sling and bow.

Does he have any other tools or devices for his job? Note your choice down on your character sheet.

Trying to keep it simple, Chris chooses a halberd for Baron's weapon and a carving knife as an additional piece of equipment. If he needs

anything else, he'll make it on the fly using his Survivalist skill.

STARTING REWARDS

All characters begin the game with one fate point and one persona point. Write them in on your character sheet now.

Chris notes these on his character sheet in the appropriate spot.





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