

Mouse Guard Summer 1 154: Beneath the Roots



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The Guards' reputation has been damaged by recent events in the Territories, namely the handling of the Winter War of 1149 and Midnight's Rebellion of 1152. Gwendolyn, Matriarch of the Guard, has been desperately trying to maintain order in the Territories but political leaders have risen to oppose her. Most notably is the newly appointed Governor Aeren of Copperwood who has taken a vocal stance of being anti-Guard.

Form Patrol

Beneath the Roots can be used as a first adventure for a new patrol or can be inserted into the ongoing adventures of a patrol already outside of Lockhaven.

Assign Mission

Gwendolyn summons the patrol to her office and informs them about the appointment of Governor Aeren and her vehement anti-Guard position. As one of the only metal producers in the Territories, Copperwood is too valuable for Lockhaven and the Guard to lose trade with. The residents of Copperwood are about to start their annual festival, Musfire, which celebrates the coming harvest. Gwendolyn wants the patrol to head to Copperwood and to try and improve the Guard's reputation with both Aeren and the citizens of Copperwood.

Alternatively, if the patrol is already in the field, they could just as easily hear about Governor Aeren's anti-Guard political position or Musfire's celebration from anywhere else. Either of which could be enough motivation to set the Guard on the path to Copperwood and begin the adventure.

Start the adventure upon the patrols' arrival at Copperwood, describing the journey there as necessary.

GM's Turn

Welcome to Musfire

The patrol arrives in Copperwood to find the festival in full swing. The residents of Copperwood are a competitive breed of mice so a big part of their celebration includes competitive games, everything from swordplay, archery, climbing, brewing, eating, and more competitions surround the roots outside of the great oak tree that Copperwood resides inside. Give the patrol the opportunity to participate in competitions and interact with the mice of Copperwood. Some mice are happy to see the Guard, others are not. Overall a wide variety of perspectives and opinions are represented in the town.

There are some ominous clouds on the horizon but the citizens don't seem too concerned since Copperwood is in need of some more rainfall leading up to the harvest and they can always take the party back inside.

Unwelcome Arrival (Mouse Obstacle)

As the patrol starts to make themselves at home, Governor Aeren and an entourage of Copperwood guards arrive to confront the patrol. Aeren immediately goes on the offensive by stating that the Guard's next supply of copper won't be ready for several more months and that the Guard is being too greedy in coming to Copperwood early.

Aeren is loud and is trying to gather the crowd's attention in an opposed **Orator** test. She will go on a small triad about the

Guard never being around when Copperwood requires and simply taking supplies. She will also badmouth their participation in the festival when they are not Copperwood citizens and have not helped with the care of the town's crops of which they are celebrating. After she speaks, the Guard have the opportunity to respond. Good roleplaying will earn the patrol a **+1D** on their Orator check.

Alternatively, the encounter with Aeren can be run as a speech conflict or an argument conflict if the GM prefers.

Governor Aeren of Copperwood

Raw Abilities	Rating	Special Abilities	Rating
Mouse Nature	3	Resources	5
Will	6	Circles	6
Health	3		

Skills: Administrator 3, Deceiver 4, Hagglers 4, Half Truth-wise 4, Orator 5, Persuader 3

Traits: Cunning (1), Extrovert (1), Quick-Witted (1)

If the patrol fails to sway the opinion of the crowd, then Aeren orders her guards to escort them out of the city, violently if necessary.

Exploring the Tunnels (Travel Obstacle)

At this time, the mouse Marian arrives, either breaking up the argument or meeting the patrol outside the borders of Copperwood. Marian's husband, Hector, and his friend, Fenton, ventured into a tunnel near Copperwood, investigating a possible new vein of ore. Hector promised to return in time for the festival, but no one has seen or heard from him and Aeren refuses to send anyone after them until

it's been longer than a day. If still inside the city, Aeren will attempt to defend her position but will not make a move to stop the patrol if they wish to assist. Even the anti-Guard voices in the crowd die down when the patrols agree to try and help one of Copperwood's citizens.

Twist: Sneaking Back In (Mouse Obstacle)

If the patrol agrees to help her and were thrown out of Copperwood, then they need to find a way back in or around the city to get to the tunnel Marian spoke of. This is best treated as a **Scout Obstacle 4**. If any of the patrol thinks to remove their cloaks, the obstacle drops to 3. If the patrol fails the check and is spotted, they make a run for the tunnel but a number of mice in the patrol take on the **Tired** condition based on the number of successes the patrol missed the target number by.

Upon arriving at the tunnel, Marian provides them with a lantern as a light source. The ominous clouds have now collected and it's starting to drizzle. It looks like it's going to be a bad storm and if the patrol doesn't hurry the tunnel could be flooded along the way.

The tunnel is roughly cut into the ground, this wasn't the work of mice but maybe some burrowing animal. The entrance slopes downwards rather steeply at first but then starts to twist and turn and branch off as the tunnels get deeper and deeper. Within the first few minutes, the patrol hears a peel of thunder and soon after their paws are slick with rain water. It's a **Pathfinder Obstacle 3** to quickly navigate the tunnel.

Success leads the patrol to stumble into an open chamber where the water is pooling up. The patrol comes face-to-face with two mice with a lantern of their own facing a great stone door. Mice with sufficient encounters with or knowledge of weasels or Darkheather will recognize the design.

Failure will lead the patrol to spend more time backtracking. After half-an-hour they run into an exhausted and injured Fenton. He tells them that he and Hector came across a great stone door and then lost their light source. Next thing Fenton knew, Hector was screaming and Fenton was injured. He took off running. It takes a **Healer Obstacle 2** test to get Fenton moving again.

Flash-Flood (Weather Conflict)

The water that has been merely an inconvenience to date begins to rise rapidly. The sky has opened up outside and threatens to drown the patrol at the bottom of the tunnels. It's going to be a struggle back to the surface as the patrol fights past the heavy rain waters.

This is a special kind of conflict. The rain's Attack could be represented as a sudden surge in the stream of water, a Defense could be water stripping away roots and dirt, making it harder to climb, a Feint could be pawholds giving way, and a Maneuver could be water suddenly bursting forth from what appeared to be a solid wall.

On the patrols' side, Attack and Defense actions are tied to their **Mouse Nature**, representing their ability to make progress back up through the tunnels or to hold and resecure their grip. Feints and Maneuvers are a little more special and can be represented a variety of ways such as **Survivalist**, **Scientist**, or **Pathfinder** as the patrol finds creative

solutions to get back out of the tunnel, such as taking an adjacent tunnel or by making use of a set of ropes and pulleys they have on them. Encourage creativity for these actions. The Flash-Flood's **Nature is 6**. Its goal is to drown the patrol. If it wins, then the patrol is swept away and finds themselves in a set of tunnels away from Copperwood and half the patrol is Injured by their journey. Compromises for the Flood could include imposing Injured or Tired conditions on members of the patrol.

Players' Turn

There are a lot of potential hooks the players could follow up on. Here are a few ideas.

If the patrol lost the conflict with the Flash-Flood then they find themselves swept away to another location. This could be inside the weasel tunnels or a waterfront elsewhere in the Territories. Wherever they wind up, this should provide more questions to follow-up in a later adventure than answers.

Depending on whether the patrol saved Hector or not, they need to return Fenton to his family and either Hector to Marian or to inform Marian of the bad news. She is grateful in either case and will try to assist the patrol in recovering any conditions they've sustained, though if she lost Hector, it's obvious that she's heartbroken.

This is also the perfect time to gloat to Aeren or make it clear to the residents of Copperwood of the good deeds the Guard have accomplished. Alternatively, more devious players may want to try and dig up some dirt on Aeren. Doing so could happen in a shady pub with a **Circles** test or a break-in to Aeren's office with a **Scout** or **Crime-wise** test depending on

the mouse's inclinations. Juicy information such as Aeren selling a batch of copper to a group of unlicensed mice or something as dire as Aeren serving in Midnight's army could be dug up.

Then of course there's the stone door below and the threat of Darkheather's tunnels going directly below Copperwood. Investigating the tunnels could reveal weasel paw prints following the rain. If Hector was never found and the patrol returns to this spot, they find no trace of him, but do find the broken lantern and the weasel paw prints.

And there's still Musfire itself. The party goes on after the rain departs and there is much that can occur. For example, among the residents of the festival is Abercrombie, a beast of a mouse and Copperwood's swordsmaster. Abercrombie is a good opponent for any mice itching for a good fight.

Abercrombie (Swordsmouse)

Raw Abilities	Rating	Special Abilities	Rating
Mouse Nature	5	Resources	3
Will	2	Circles	2
Health	6		

Skills: Copperwood-wise 2, Fighter 6, Hagglers 2

Traits: Big (2)

Gear: Two-Handed Sword (uses it for +1D Attacks),
Heavy Armor (+1S Disposition, -1 Maneuver tests)

Ending the Mission & Continuing the Adventure

If the patrol wasn't swept away by the Flood, then the mission can easily end in Copperwood and the patrol can pick up next time trying to further put the nail in the coffin of Aeren's anti-Guard tendencies. Alternatively, Copperwood is just one town with this attitude. It could be the patrol continues on from there to Ironwood, Barkstone, or any other town that might harbor these beliefs.

Alternatively, the patrol could return to Lockhaven to report about the situation in Copperwood or the Darkheather tunnels they discovered, and recuperate there. If the patrol was swept away by the flood, then they could begin their adventure trying to get back if they spent their checks on recovering from conditions. And finally, for the truly adventurous, there is the possibility of finding a way past the stone door and exploring a piece of Darkheather deep into the Territories.