

Wormfirehaven

A fantasy campaign framework for Mausritter and other games with cute and horrific mice.

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What is this about?

The players will be part of a fantasy seaport town inhabited by anthropomorphic mice and other small animals, a mousy Lankhmar, if you will.

The major line of action concerns a band of rodent pirates trying to steal the cities biggest treasure, worm eggs. The worm farms have made the town rich and are hence heavily guarded. The pirates turn to a group of fey and their desperate queen for help. The fey were the original inhabitants of the place where the city now stands and have been driven away by the mice. They have lost almost all of their power since the portal to Faerie broke down and their turtle goddess fell asleep in the volcano above the city.

The pirates offer help with the portal in exchange for a magically supported fey raid on the worm farms. Since the fey queen is not at the height of her powers, things go wrong, and this is where the players come in.

Thrown into the mix are racist and class tensions in the city, a corrupt government and elite, two competing thieves' guilds, a mad hare scientist, robots, crabs, the Ruined Comousus, and a white (comparatively) giant ape looking for his mum.

I have used this framework with Mausritter, but any rpg should do fine. I would recommend something osr-ish, rules light-y, though, since the framework is big on (social) relations, cool set pieces and conflicts, with little emphasis on detailed strategic fighting or housekeeping. No stats are

presented here, and the rules set you chose should allow you to improvise on the fly and play along with the spin your group gives to the framework.

Things I can see working besides Mausritter are World of Dungeons, DCC, Shadowdark or even Trophy Gold, if you really want to dial up on the horror implied in the framework and lean less into the cute mousiness of it all. Older, leaner versions of the world's most famous RPG or the Basic Role Play should be good, too, if that is where you feel at home.

Where is this happening and who is everybody?

Wormfirehaven

A seaport town.

A rich town, growing and selling worms and worm-related products to the far ends of the world.

Shielded by a strong wall with many towers against the wilderness of the Pale Mushroom Forest.

Two roads coming into town. The Old Road through the King's Gate (the name sticks, though there are no kings anymore in Wormfirehaven), and Wormwind Way through the smaller East Gate running directly to the worm farms.

An inactive volcano called Feys' Furnace towers over the city. The fertile ground around is home to blossoming flowers, which attract bees. There is no shortage of honey in Wormfirehaven.

Unbeknownst to most mice today, this is also the site of the old fey graveyard. Workers and strollers sometimes find shards of bones known as "cheese wedges."

Not everyone is wealthy. The town has a seedy underbelly. Honey abuse runs high in some quarters.

Racism. "Rats and frogs work the docks. Frogs and rats smell like ass."

Everyone likes moles, though. Why can't frogs and rats be more like them?

The City Council

Seven members elected from and by citizens, who can afford the 50 g election fee.

Led by Gunilla Thorsbear, a ruthless populist.

The worm trade rules all; wealth is supposed to 'worm its way down' from the rich.

An iron claw in velvety fur.

"The worms must wriggle."

The Moles

Oversee the worm farms.

The strong, silent type.

Model minority.

Hank "The Shovel" Snoutser is a little more talkative.

The Magpies

A band of bird thieves stealing from the rich and sometimes giving to the poor -- for a price.

Headquarters high on the rooftops.

"Leaders? We don't have no fuckin' leaders. Go ask Meg, though."

Stories run wild on Meg. To the poor, she is a hero. Some say, she is not a magpie, but some other animal: a hedgehog, a crab, a rat, a toad or something else entirely, like a fey or a robot.

The Spiders

A band of arthropodian criminals active in illegal honey trade and trafficking fake worm goods made of mushrooms.

Headquarters in the sewers.

"The Magpies attract too much attention and are bad for business."

Led by Bloat Seveneyes. Two of his legs are perpetually holding and stroking his pet white roly-poly Gears. Bloat never leaves his net.

The Fey

Once the owners of the land around the fire mountain Ashafar (known as Feys' Furnace to the mice), long driven to a measly existence in the Howling Caves at the east coast of Wormfire Bay by the first settlers.

Their goddess Athungu, a giant turtle, is asleep submerged in the lava of the Ashafar.

"When the stars are right and Selumar is mended, Athungu will rise, and all the mice will squeak and die."

The magic mirror Selumar has broken into 49 pieces. Without it, the fey can no longer cross back and forth into the land of Faerie, from whence they were once led here by Athungu. Glimpses of Faerie can still be seen in the splinters. If the mirror were mended, it would serve again as a portal to Faerie.

Without access to Faerie, the fey have lost almost all of their power. Only queen Ilmuthi is awake now, endlessly trying to mend her people's mirror with bandaged hands, always coming up a piece short. Everyone else has fallen asleep in the caves. Only the robot Fivo keeps her company, who fled the laboratory of the mad inventor Honeychuckle Matosis.

The 50th piece has been stolen by the Crabs of the Comousus.

The Crabs of the Comousus

The comousus is a giant statue of a terrible mouse. It once guarded the harbor of Wormfirehaven.

After a sea quake, it is now in ruins. Only the head and sword are visible above the waves. The crabs are living inside the head. They collect treasure from the sea. A tunnel of theirs runs into the

Howling Caves. They possess the missing 50th piece of the mirror Selumar. The crabs don't have names. They go by numbers.

"Don't claws them the shiny sliver, 37! It's so...clack-clack...pretty!"

The most adventurous of the crabs are 14, 97 and 103.

97 half remembers a spell that can turn a mouse into a crab. He may, in fact, have once been a mouse himself.

The Pirates of Kokomo Island

A wild bunch of ragtag rodents. Kokomo Island is situated a couple days by ship to the south of Wormfirehaven. Their leader is a hedgehog with a golden ring around her neck by the name of Sonja. She is a deadly two-claw-fighter with spines she pulls from her own back, shrieking. The pirates have caught and tamed a white ape that now fights for them. They call it Fremiet, probably due to the sounds it produces. Its mother is still looking for it.

Their ship is called The Frothing Snout.

Sonja and the pirates are trying to rob Wormfirehaven of its greatest treasure: worm eggs. They have abducted the half-mad hare Honeychuckle Matosis from her tower in Wormfirehaven and forced her to build an incubator, which will allow them to raise bigger, stronger and tastier worms. The incubator, however, will produce monsters.

What would happen if the PC weren't there?

The Frothing Snout comes to the Howling Caves. Sonja offers Queen Ilmuthi help with the magic mirror in return for a magically supported air raid on the worm fields. The pirates have recently abducted the mad hare scientist Honeychuckle Matosis. Matosis built them an incubator for worm eggs, but also a new kind of mechanical brain that is able to solve puzzles much faster than any animal. The "hare brain 2000" would be able to figure out the correct placing of all the 49 pieces of

the magic mirror. The desperate queen agrees. A week later, a handful of pirates attacks the worm fields on the back of magically controlled crows, while the queen sneaks into the wormery in spirit form to steal some eggs. In the middle of the raid, her weakened magic fails. The crows go berserk, and she becomes visible. She flees without the eggs. One of the pirates is caught by the city guard, the others run off and hide in the city, where they ally with the Magpies and the Spiders. The city council puts together a revenge mission against the pirates on their island, with the additional goal of capturing the Hare Brain 2000. The Magpies send an emissary to the fey, trying to forge an alliance against the corrupt government, for a Wildfirehaven that is for all animals and fey alike. The spiders are looking for allies to catch the Hare Brain 2000 in time and sell it to highest bidder. Meanwhile, the stars are slowly sliding into a position that makes the turtle goddess toss and turn in her sleep...

In the end, the Magpies and the Fey will wake the goddess, while the Spiders and the Council battle it out with the pirates for the Hare Brain. No matter which of the parties returns victorious, they will find the city in ruins, a charred, magically irradiated wasteland, full of half mad fey and bird terrorists, muttering about their perfect utopia.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the PC are there to step into this rough timeline at any point.