

The Humongous Fungus Trip

By Jean McGuire, with help from Henry J. Cobb

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Introduction

In the real world, the largest living creature is not a blue whale, nor is the oldest a bristlecone pine. Rather, they are both a fungus growing in Oregon: *Armillaria ostoyae* to be exact. That specimen is only the largest found (so far) of a widespread growth form used by several species of *Armillaria*, commonly called honey mushrooms. It is parasitic on trees, and can kill trees in a wide area.

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Armillaria maleficis



That's in the real world. What happens when a multi-ton, millennia-old fungus grows in Cidri?

Most such fungi are similar to the real-world ones. But some are very different ... and dangerous. The species *Armillaria maleficus* resembles the real-world *Armillaria*, but can be dangerously different.

At all sizes the fungus has ST zero (it can't lift anything on the scale of seconds and the destruction of its mycelium network would require a mass disruption of the soil it grows in), DX zero (it perceives time on a much longer span than humanoids. Anything that happens in a single day is like an eyeblink to it and its responses are purely reflexive), and IQ zero (again its thoughts flow far too slowly to even notice an illusion). But it does have a Mana score, which scales with the size of the fungus, and under good growing conditions it will recover its full Mana reserve over 24 hours by leaching vitality from the trees and other plants within its span that it feeds on. So a fungus that fills most of a Province map hex would recover one of its 256 total Mana in less than six minutes, while a Melee megahex sized fungus would recover one of its two points of Mana every 12 hours.

Sizes

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Fungus Size	Youngest possible age	Suggested age	Mana	Zombie Animal ST
Melee combat hex	1 year	3 years	1	-
Labyrinth map hex	2 years	10 years	2	-
Village map hex	10 years	30 years	4	-
Town map hex	30 years	100 years	8	10
City map hex	100 years	300 years	16	25
County map hex	300 years	1,000 years	32	75
Barony map hex	900 years	3,000 years	64	250
Duchy map hex	2,500 years	8,000 years	128	750
Province map hex	9,000 years	25,000 years	256	2000

Spellcasting

A young *A. maleficus* will use its mana apparently randomly. There is some evidence that the fungus learns by repeating spells that have been used near it, but given its slow reactions this can occur years or decades later. The fungus activates spells without needing a DX roll (as with enchantments), but due to its slow reaction time any intentional spell target would need to stand in one spot for at least a week. It does react quickly to fire. Roll one die at the start of each turn when there is a fire within its reach and on a six it will summon a Magic Rainstorm that turn.

Under suitable growing conditions it can reach Village map hex size in a decade and by this time it will show more control of its spellcasting, but still in an instinctive reflexive way. For example it might summon a Magic Rainstorm when it feels dry. At this size and above it will have developed an affinity for the trees it feeds on and may use its electrical attack when these trees or the soil under them is disturbed.

One notable aspect of *Armillaria* species is their growth of rootlike structures called rhizomorphs. The TFT *Armillaria* can use their rhizomorphs as conduits or antennae for an electrical attack. This is treated as a zero range lightning bolt (through direct contact, so Reverse Missiles or Spell Shield provide no protection, but immunity against Lightning helps) of one die (for one mana) at the Village map hex, gaining one die (for an additional mana at each

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step) for the next two larger sizes of fungus. This is treated as a trap that takes a three dice vs DX roll to dodge, but Naturalists are treated as having Detect Traps to help evade this trap. This is in addition to the standard three dice vs. IQ roll Naturalists get to notice a fungus infected area just before stepping inside it.

Fungal Zombies

Once it reaches the Town Map hex size on the night of the full moon when the soil is damp (perhaps from a Magic Rainstorm) *A. maleficus* will sprout mushrooms. Unless preserved in a dark container these will release their spores by the next morning, usually when disturbed. *A. maleficus* can use these spores to take over the bodies of animals that live in the area, turning them into zombies the way some other fungi do with insects. These animals are not under the active control of the fungus; it merely causes them to become extremely aggressive and attack intruders regardless of risk. The zombie animals usually die within a few weeks. The fungus can infect any number of animals up to a total base ST, depending on its size. The fungus is not selective about what it zombifies. A dozen zombie mice aren't much of a threat, but a pack of wolves or a single monster, driven by the fungus to attack and kill any intruder, could be a major threat. The zombie animals will not attack anything that smells "local". These "fungal zombies" start with their current ST (losing one point of ST each per day they fail a three die save against their current ST (as adjusted for size below) and standard Zombie Rings have no effect), two point reduction in DX, and an effective IQ of zero. They are not actually dead at this point and can be cured with a Cleansing Spell (though the 1d6 damage may also kill the weakened host animal).

An uninfected animal (and humanoids count as animals here) under the available zombie base ST rating who is exposed to the spores (either in the hex or a few hexes downwind) needs to make a three die health saving throw against its ST adjusted for its own size (one less die for small humanoids or smaller figures, plus one die for large 1-hex figures, plus one die per hex for multi-hex figures) or start experiencing fever and confusion (-2 to both DX and IQ) for another 24 hours before becoming a fungal zombie. A Woodsman, Expert Naturalist, or Master Physicker will be able to diagnose and devise a cure during this initial fever (adjust for temporary loss of talents from the reduced IQ if treating oneself). Vampirism and Lycanthropy provide cross protection against the zombie fungus and there are verified reports of at least one each Vampire and Werewolf Shroom Shamans.

Consumption of the fresh mushrooms or dried mushrooms (Shamans favor mushroom tea) will grant immunity to the zombie infection and protection against fungal zombie attacks for a month, but won't help once the infection has started.

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A Naturalist can diagnose the nature of a fungal zombie on a four dice against IQ roll (minus one die for each of Woodsman, Expert Naturalist, or Master Physicker), but would be suspicious if attacked by a “rabid” squirrel (same stats as a rat), because as a Naturalist they know that squirrels rarely catch rabies.

After 8000 years of life spent slowly absorbing magic from its environment, the oldest Humongous Fungi develop limited sentience. Such a fungus is capable of communicating, albeit slowly. While it is not very intelligent, it is aware of everything which has occurred in the area where it grows, and everything underground within reach of its hyphae. Normally it has to be contacted via magic means, but on the rare occasions when it feels the need to reach out, it can communicate via an image drawn from the adventurer's mind. Getting answers from a fungus is a slow process and the Trance spell or other divination magics can be very helpful.

Shroom Shamans

Some humanoid communities have developed ways to harness the wild and apparently random magic of *A. maleficis* for their own ends. They do this by training individuals from a young age to be Wizards (to utilize the mana), Naturalists (to understand the fungus), and Priests (to explain this understanding to their own kind). The Wizards' Guild is interested in studying this non-literate, more instinctive, form of sorcerous instruction, but generally find that it lacks the scalability for their own needs of mass enchantment. It takes at least six months for a trained shaman to attune her own mind with the life force of a new fungus. (But only a day to reinfect herself should she be robbed of her powers by a Cleansing spell.) Each humanoid can only be attuned to one fungus at a time and no more than two humanoids can be attuned to the same fungus through careful coordination with each other. Therefore each community can be expected to have one master shaman and one apprentice shaman. Those attuned can draw on the mana of the fungus to restore their own fatigue at a one to one ratio. This requires their bare skin to be in contact with the soil of the fungus, so they tend to go barefoot. They can also restore the mana of their own staff at a one to one ratio; again this requires direct contact, so they use wizard staves cut from fungus-infected trees, with no metal or other inorganic parts, which they touch directly to the fungal soil. A shaman can use up to her full ST and Mana to cast a spell then instantly recover from the Mana of her fungus without falling unconscious. They do not traditionally learn other enchantments. Nor do they use books or scrolls but instead learn their spells from the slow wisdom of the fungus.

While in contact with their fungus (through skin or staff), a shaman applies missile spell range penalties against thrown spell targets standing on their fungus and their Ward and Creation spell maximum ranges extend to the boundary of their fungus. Some Shaman also know the Control Plant spell (Thrown, IQ 11, Costs 2 ST, plus 1 per minute maintained, other stats as per Control

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Animal) or the Mass Control Plants spell (Special, IQ 15, Costs the radius in hexes from the caster plus 1 per turn maintained at any radius), but most plants can't do or sense much in the span of a few minutes. As most plants are mindless they get no resistance rolls to these spells. Note that a fungus is neither a plant nor an animal and so is subject to neither spell.

Shroom Shamans are also able to exert some control over the zombies of their own fungus. Roll as per trained animals obeying orders (ITL 94) on four dice against the Shaman's IQ. (The IQ zero zombie adds nothing to the total.) Add an additional die in stressful situations such as when the zombie is already attacking or has been attacked. The shamans will not be actively attacked by zombies or plants under the control of their fungus, but some plants have passive attacks which are not under this control.

Encounters

Bad patch in the labyrinth

The adventurers think they've just encountered some mushrooms. It's really an outgrowth of a little *Armillaria* ... just a few acres in size, around the cave where some fungal zombies are waiting. As the fungus grows older it will then to (over centuries) open up labyrinthian drainage tunnels under itself. Long term denizens of these cave networks will dig lairs positioned above the ten year flood level, and if sentient most likely behind a hidden door.

Village of the spores

Human sacrifice in that old stone circle with all the mushrooms.

The gigantic gardener

As with similar fungi on Earth, *A. maleficis* trades nutrients such as potassium and other minerals in exchange for the sugars it extracts from the plants within its span. While it cannot control where seeds land, it can provide or deny these resources to seedlings. The older a given fungus is the more selective it will be in the plants it allows within its domain and the spacing between them. The garden of a wild *A. maleficis* will appear random or fractal while gardens under the supervision of Shroom Shamans will be structured for humanoid needs with the Bloodtrees, Am bushes, and other trap species planted strategically.

Bind Vines

Naturalists consider this vine to be a relative of the Bloodtree. Stepping into ground or under trees the vine is growing on gives the effect of a Rope spell (or Giant Rope for larger species). Only when the victim is helpless at DX zero will the vine pierce the skin with its tendrils and inflict one hit per minute of blood loss.

Scythe Grass

This nasty species combines the sharp blades of Sword Grass with the fast motion of a Venus Flytrap. Walking or running over Scythe Grass inflicts one hit per hex entered and an additional hit if the figure ends their movement in such a hex. Armor (and magical protections) count against the final sum of hits inflicted during movement. Normal clothing (or hooves) is assumed to include shoes that protect as well as cloth armor. Shamans attuned to the local fungus automatically avoid this damage and have been known to run across the grass to escape pursuit.

Spider Pumpkin

This plant or insect (Naturalists are still debating which it is exactly) is often seen near wild *A. maleficus*. This is first seen as a plump orange pumpkin body that crawls around at MA 3 on giant spider legs. When it finds suitable prey within a half-dozen hexes the body bursts open revealing a dozen small spiders (as per ITL 100) which then jump six hexes (at that point in the action sequence, 3/DX roll to dodge each one) to swarm over the victims. If the pumpkin is hit before bursting it will lose one spider for every two hits inflicted on it and the surviving spiders will be set loose on its next action. Once the victim is subdued by the poison bites the tiny spiders then bury themselves in the corpse to sprout as vines which each produce one to three gourds three months later.

Tree Shaman

There have been reports of trees that act as Shroom Shamans. Given the wide variety of tree species reported the Scholars' Guild suspects that the trees are haunted by the ghosts of previous shamans while the Wizards' Guild blames this on ventriloquism or other trickery. There was at least one shaman who returned as a Wight, but he retained none of his shaman powers.

Adventure Setting: Elves of the Mushroom Kingdom

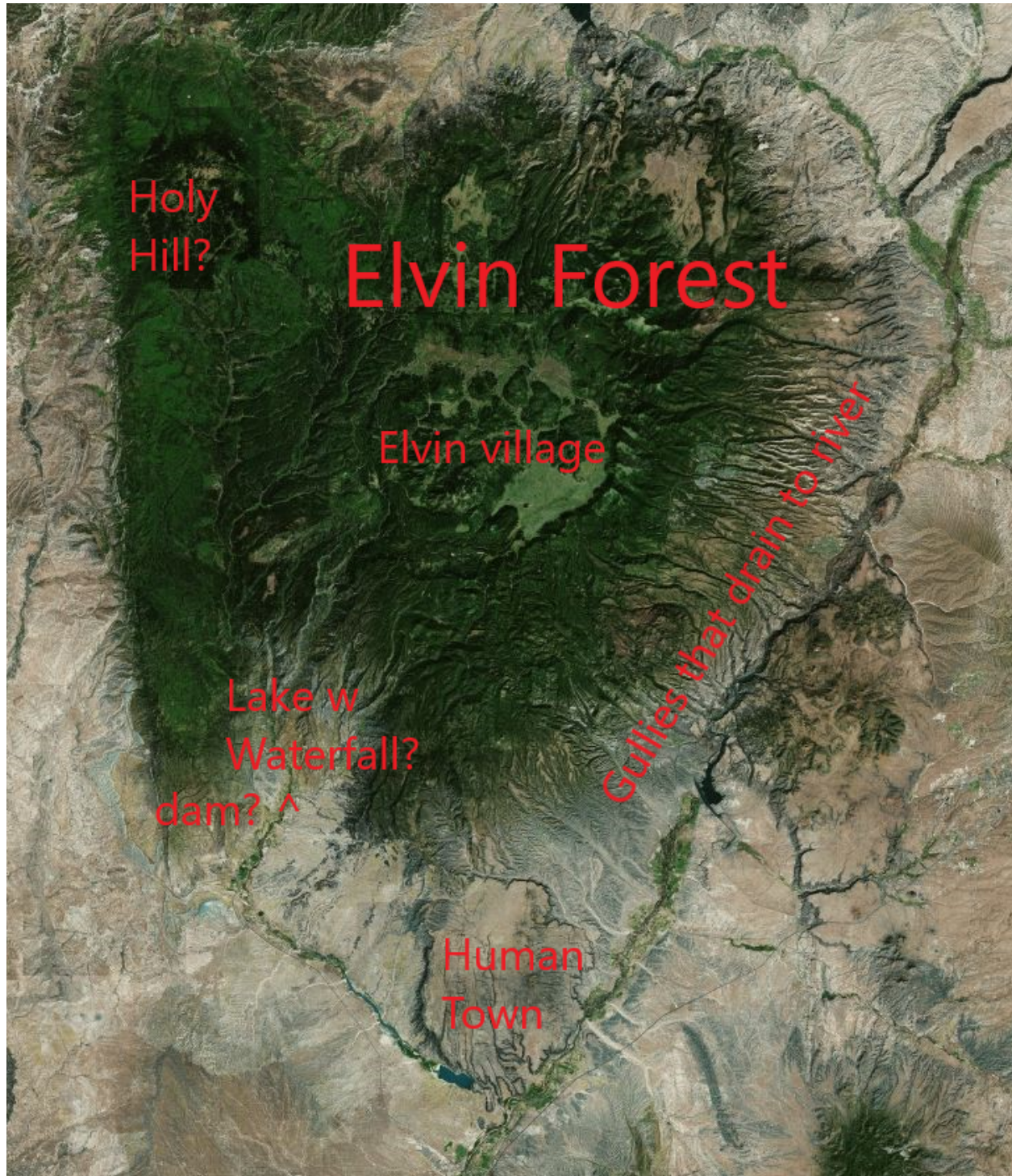
Despite their general affinity with plants, elves are the most common Shroom Shamans and several elvin communities dwell within the boundaries of large fungi. Screams about the hypocrisy of serving a creature that feeds on trees from intruders being dragged off for fertilizer will fall on long deaf ears.

The Mesa Dalath

In the middle of a high desert a river springs from a rainforest that covers a two mile wide mesa. Eight thousand years ago when the local climate was more humid a fungal infected hawk was blown here during a freak storm and died, but the fungus survived. When the regional climate dried up a few centuries later the fungus started casting Magic Rainstorms to maintain its forest. A thousand years ago a small group of elves arrived and tamed the fungus, selecting for beneficial plants and animals.

Today the roughly six hundred elves prosper on their natural fortress under the protection of a powerful shaman.

The river Raduin originates around the border of the well watered mesa and joins with the lesser Raduin (from below the waterfall) at the human town of Algodones then flows south to the (mostly) human kingdom of Bernalillo.



(Yes, it's Los Alamos, NM)

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Elf Village of Jarosa

Thanks to Elven longevity and a stable, isolated, and well defended location, 60 of the 600 elves living in Jarosa are 60 to 98 years old (not counting the 205 year-old Naccendeth). This same stability limits prospects for advancement. There are around 150 elves who were born in Jarosa who now live elsewhere on Cidri, while only 25 elves have moved to the village from elsewhere (mostly to become spouses of natives). This has not reduced the net population because Jarosa has a higher than usual birth rate for elves.

Jarosa exports fine woodworks, fresh fruit, nuts, vegetables and rare spices mostly to Dryadales. The village is well known for their ability to grow difficult crops even out of season. In addition to the village garden they harvest tree products and have strictly limited deer hunts in the surrounding forest. There are two small fishing rowboats that operate on the lake.

The outhouses are built on a wooden platform over a sinkhole. The material deposited here by the elves is absorbed by the fungus which then trades nutrients with the plants. Given the odor released in this process the pit is located both downwind and downhill to the southeast of the village.

Pixie Hummingbird

Because of Elven antipathy towards insects the trees and other plants are pollinated by a highly intelligent (for bird brains) species of hummingbirds.

ST 1, DX 12, IQ 7, MA 20

Peck is instantly fatal to small insects but does at most 1d-5 damage to any larger target.

The birds are -4 DX to be hit due to flying plus another -4 DX to be hit or seen for being a small evasive target. These birds will happily devour insects but will alert an elf to deal with larger threats.

Holy Hill

The gate is marked by a free standing arch of stones and goes to the elven city of Dryadales. Naccendeth has set a rule on both sides of the gate to limit its use to times when she is within ten hexes of one side so that it doesn't wear out when she is unavailable. Both Naccendeth and Aenvarlah maintain constant Ward spells on the gate. If a hostile force casts Control Gate and then passes through both witches will know this instantly.

The great tree is several centuries older than Naccendeth and she was not the first shaman to start molding it into a living wizard's tower. The ground floor is for entertaining guests, while the two witches have living quarters on the level above. The top level has a library of spellbooks and other reference materials, along with their wizard chests.

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The basement has spring fed bathing and sanitary facilities and is rumored to have a gate to the distant ruins of Revoreesh.

Naccendeth, Elf Shaman

Elf wizard, age 205

ST 6, DX 14, IQ 20, MA 12

Talents include: Alchemist, Expert Naturalist, Literacy, Theologian

Spells include: Aid, Break Weapon, Cleansing, Control Animal, Control Gate, Create/Destroy Elemental, Create Gate, Curse, Diamond Flesh, Dispel Illusions, Dissolve Enchantment, Freeze, Great Voice, 7-Hex Fire, 7-Hex Illusion, 7-Hex Image, Light, Mage Sight, Magic Rainstorm, Megahex Sleep, Open Tunnel, Regeneration, Reverse Missiles, Scrying, Speed Movement, Spellsniffer, Staff V, Summon Scout, Telekinesis, Teleport, Trance, Ward, Wizard's Wrath, Word of Command - Surrender

Languages: Common, Elvish, High Elvish, Sorcerers' Tongue

Attacks and Damage: Punch (1d-4)

Armor: Robes stop zero hits

Equipment: Silver hand mirror for scrying, value \$200

Magic Items:

- Staff V (Mana: 25): 6' cedar staff, value \$15 (1d, 1d+2)

Special note: Naccendeth is ancient even for an elf. It is rumored that her age will catch up to her if she spends even one day away from her fungus. She only leaves the holy hill once a month on the night of the full moon to ensure that all of the mushrooms are harvested and that no spores are released.

In order to cast a 50 ST spell, such as Create Gate, Naccendeth will first cast a 25 point Aid ST spell on herself from her staff (rising up to physical ST 11 with 20 extra fatigue for the next ten seconds), then on her next turn fully recharge her staff from the 128 Mana of the fungus and cast the 50 point spell. On the turn after she will recharge her staff again. She can do this two and half times a day because the fungus recovers one mana every 135 turns.

Naccendeth has had a dozen apprentices over the century and a half. They have studied under her for a decade or so then thanked her, picked up a potted plant, stepped through the gate and never returned. Three of these including Aenvarlah, her only direct descendant currently in the village, have been the daughters of previous apprentices sent to Naccendeth at the age of six to learn wizardry and shamanship.

Aenvarlah, Elf Apprentice Shaman

Elf wizard, age 22

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 14, MA 10

Talents: Literacy (mundane), Naturalist, Priest

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Spells include: Aid, 4-Hex Image, Light, Staff II, Trailtwister, Ward
Languages: Common, Elvish
Weapons: 2-h 6' cedar Staff II (1d+1, 1d)
Attacks and Damage: Punch (1d-3)

Naccendeth's great-great-granddaughter maintains a set of wards along the boundary of the mesa. When these are triggered she will summon an image of herself (from a great distance away) to confront hostile intruders. If the intruders disregard the warning then Trailtwister is cast from nearby hiding spots to confuse them while the villagers are gathered.

Aenvarlah has spent more time studying shamanism than wizardry. When she needs to cast spells she hasn't learned yet she retrieves her wizard's chest and a spellbook from the library in the great tree.

Agis Yllavyre, Journeyman Wizard

Elf wizard, age 30
ST 7, DX 11, IQ 18, MA 10
Talents include: Scholar, Writing
Spells include: Aid, Duplicate Writing, Light, Long-Distance Telepathy, Spellsniffer, Staff III
Languages: Common, Elvish, Sorcerers' Tongue
Attacks and Damage: Punch (1d-4)
Equipment: Robes, backpack, wizard's chest, quill & ink, notebook.
Magic Items:

- Staff III: 12" aspen wand, value \$5 (-, 1d)

Special note: Agis is a scholar sent by the Wizards' Guild in Dryadales to study the practice of Shamanism. He rents a room in the village then walks up the hill each day. Naccendeth tolerates him because she thinks he'd be a good match for Aenvarlah and therefore makes as many excuses as possible for the oblivious pair to be alone together.

Gillenia, Apprentice Wizard

Reptile Person wizard, age 12
ST 8, DX 10, IQ 10, MA 10
Talents: Literacy, Naturalist
Spells: Aid, Detect Magic, Staff, Ward
Languages: Elvish, Troglodyte
Weapons: 2-h 6' cedar Staff I (1d, 1d)
Attacks and Damage: Claws (1d-2; doubled in HTH), Tail (1d-2)
Special Ability/Weakness: She has been immunized against the zombie fungus.

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Special note: Gillenia is the daughter of a chief of a nomadic clan of Reptile People who live in the desert to the northwest. Her great grandmother was the first reptile person student under Naccendeth, but as she is a non-hominid she is unable to commune with the fungus in the shaman way. She has the smallest room on the living quarters floor of the great tree.

Human Town of Algodones

The human town acts as a trading hub between the elf village of Jarosa and the human kingdom of Bernalillo to the south. The elves trade timber to the town and spices through the town via the river to the south in exchange for steel products like spear and arrowheads and for textiles. Most of the townsfolk are farmers and ranch workers. As most of the elven trade is internal (through the gate) the townsfolk are keenly aware and resentful of being cut off from the perceived riches of the mesa. It is rumored that the bodies of humans who sneak onto the mesa to hunt for deer are fed to a mysterious monster that the elves worship.

Half-humans are welcomed in neither community and their families generally migrate to the urban cities of Bernalillo.

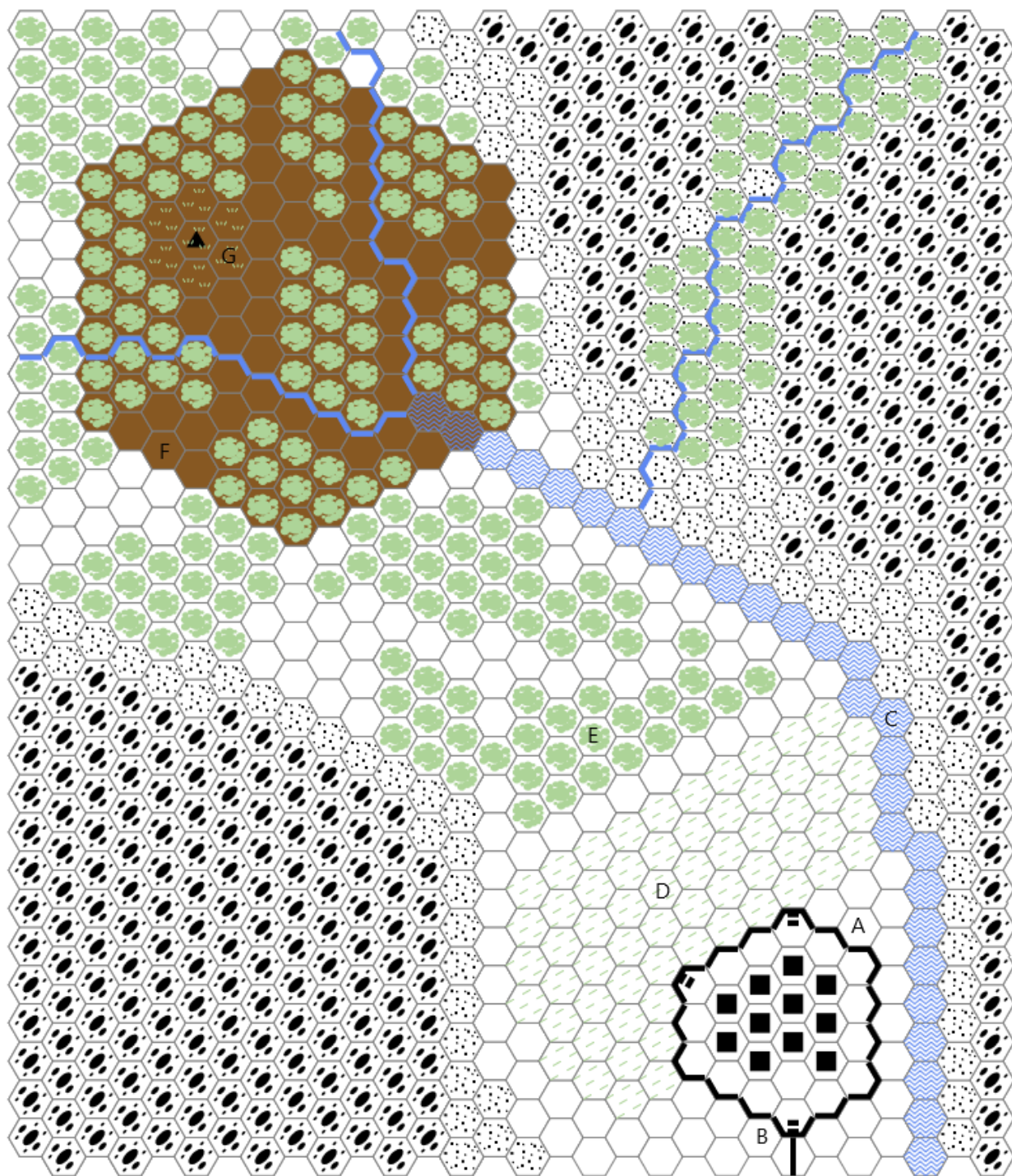
Adventure hook: Naccendeth's foragers

The players are starting elf hunters that Naccendeth sends out into the world to gather potion ingredients for herself and the two chemists that support her work. She either can't or won't leave the fungus herself. These adventures can be into the wilderness to the west or east, the human kingdom to the south, with Gillenia back to her tribe in the northwest, or against the orc tribes of the "great plains" to the northeast.

Adventure: Harvest of the Dark Forest

Map

(Mapping done on Howard A. Kistler's [Shamat](#) tool.)



A largely desert region south of a major mountain chain. The dark forest is in some hills south of the mountains and its unnatural storms feed a small river that the productive fields of the village

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Barakamsitu depend on. The river continues south to Friscatto, a city in a bay where the orcs landed. The major cities of the kingdom are upwind of the mountains to the west.

A: The palisaded village of Barakamsitu. There are gates in the palisade to the north and northwest (to the fields) and to the south to the main road.

B: This road leads south to Friscatto, past a junction leading to the main cities of the kingdom to the west. North of the south gate is the open town “square” of Barakamsitu.

C: The river Mwepesi starts in the dark forest north of Barakamsitu and combines with two other rivers to form Friscatto bay to the south. Only very small boats can make it up the rapids to Barakamsitu and most trade is carried by wagons.

D: The crop and grazing fields of Barakamsitu. The villagers also gather products from the southern parts of the dark forest, but only during daytime hours.

E: The main dark forest starts here and extends to the northwest.

F: The brown area is the (invisible) extent of the magical fungus. The forest thins out to the northwest from here into the mountains. The fungus has 32 Mana and up to 75 total ST in fungal zombies. There are various trap plants in this area, Khosrow knows of most of them while Amani knows all of them and has selectively planted some of them.

G: Fields of Scythe Grass surrounding the cave of the shamans.

Scale is 30 yards to the hex. Walking in clear is one hex per minute, divided by the terrain difficulty. Running is faster, but incurs risks. Vampires fly five hexes per minute high up and not searching.

Timeline

- -1000 years ago, Fungus starts in the forest (and is now county hex size)
- -300 years ago, Village established, cooperation with (and recruitment into) shamans.
- -10 years ago, Orcs invade, subjugate the population and impose Rhakkra. Worshiping plants seen as weakness. Current shaman killed and his 9-year old apprentice Amani hides in the forest. She is rarely seen by the villagers, but helps them as she can.
- One year ago, Vampire Shaman moves into the forest and seduces the apprentice. He turns her into a vampire also.
- Now: Orc Marchioness (sent by her father, the count of the city by the bay) arrives with her trusted team to deal with rumors of werewolves.

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Characters

Vampire Shaman

Khosrow Alinejad

Vampire human wizard shaman, age 48

ST 14, DX 14, IQ 19, MA 10 ground / 12 flying

Talents: Literacy, Naturalist, Priest, Sex Appeal

Spells include: Diamond Flesh, Freeze, 7-Hex Illusion, 7-Hex Shadow, Reverse Missiles,

Scrying, Sleep, Spell Shield, Spellsniffer, Staff V, Wizard's Wrath, Zombie

Languages: Common, Sorcerers' Tongue

Weapon: 2h Staff V (1d+3)

Magic Items:

- Blur gold ring, value \$3,200
- Staff V (Mana: 15): 2h staff, value \$5 (1d+2; +2 adjDX)

Driven from his native woods, Khosrow arrived at the forest a year ago and found Amani to be a very easy mark. She has proven to be very useful and easy to manipulate, but the one point she won't yield on is his plan for a vampire harem to extend his reign over the county and beyond.

He waits until the zombie fungus kills off wolves then raises them as magical skeletons at double their base ST, and recasts Zombie when they decay to ST 10. (Though a single hit of 8 points will shatter them.) These skeletons have his dark vision (and hence aversion to daylight) so he sends them out at dusk to herd in fresh blood. The villagers have responded with a palisade, a curfew, and a call for help from their despised orc overlords.

Seven Fungal Zombie Wolves: ST 1d+3, DX 12, IQ 0, MA 12. Bite (1d+1), Fur (1).

Seven Skeleton Wolves: ST 2d+8, DX 12, IQ 0, MA 12. Bite (1d+1), no Fur.

Annoyed at the resistance of the villagers, Khosrow's plan is to attack openly on the night of the full moon, grab one victim and fly back into the woods. When the villagers charge into the woods he will lure as many as possible to be infected by the zombie fungus then circle back around and burn down the village with Wizard's Wrath fireballs. He is not aware that the PCs will have arrived the previous day and will adjust his plans if they strike first. Once he discovers that the Marchioness is in the party she will become his target in order to subvert the county from the top down.

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Vampire Apprentice Shaman

Amani Shamasdin

Vampire human wizard shaman, age 19

ST 14, DX 12, IQ 12, MA 10 ground / 12 flying

Talents: Naturalist, Physicker

Spells include: Aid, Control Animal, Control Plant, Illusion, Staff II, Staff to Snake, Ward

Language: Common

Weapon: 2h Staff II (1d+3)

Magic Item: Staff II: 2h staff, value \$10 (1d)

Amani fled into the depths of the forest at the age of nine when her previous master Cheboi was lured to the village by the mayor at the time of the conquest and killed by the orcs. She survived with the help of her attunement to the fungus, returning to the village rarely to heal children and accept offerings of clothing and other supplies. She never lingered because of her fear of the orcs. Because of her limited contact with humanoids she has yet to develop the people skills needed to learn the Priest talent of a successful shaman. She was delighted when Khosrow arrived because she finally had somebody to talk to who understood the shaman ways. She never suspected that he was a vampire until his fangs were at her neck and she did not resist his bite. Her jealousy of the women Khosrow brings to what used to be just her cavern is tempered by his insistence that these other women are just prey and by his polite flattery of her beauty.

Amani tends to attack by summoning up snake illusions and mixing her own staff in snake form into the group. When she thinks her staff-snake has been discovered she illusion duplicates it. She can do this anywhere in the area of the fungus so long as she remains in skin contact with the soil. Khosrow favors illusion duplicates of his seven wolf skeletons instead.

The Villagers

Mayor Mwinyee Kadzo

Human hero, age 30

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 10, MA 10

Talents include: Administrator, Area Knowledge, Bow, Fisherman, Knife

Languages: Common, Orcish

Weapons: Horse bow (1d), Dagger (1d-1)

Equipment: Middle Class clothing, fishing gear

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Special Note: When Kaisa, Kamara's mother (and his mistress), went missing Mwinyee adopted the orphan (and her dozen goats) and sent a call for help to Count Grolchamsh. Mwinyee will state that Kaisa never told anyone who Kamara's father was, but she, he, his wife Nbushe and their two daughters Tambika (16) and Chinira(14) all know that Mwinyee was the father and treat Kamara coldly as a result. Kamara still sleeps in Kaisa's hut next to the goat pen, but she goes across the path to Mwinyee's house for meals, which she eats sitting in the corner of the dining room rather than at the table.

Kamara the herds girl

Human wizard, age 13

ST 6, DX 10, IQ 11, MA 10

Talents include: Vet

Spell: Staff

Language: Common

Weapons: Herding stick club Staff (1d-1)

Equipment: lower class clothing and a dozen goats

Magic Items:

- Staff: Herding stick club, value \$5 (1d)

Special Note: At the age of six Kamara's fever was treated by Amani, who then taught her the ways of wizardry in secret until a year ago. One week ago Kamara was out after curfew looking for Amani when skeleton wolves appeared. Kamara's mother Kaisa had just caught up to her at this point then ran into the forest, drawing the wolves away, and has not been seen since.

The Player Characters

- Ten years ago young Onugh Grolchamsh landed with her father in Friscatto bay on the orcish campaign to conquer the human kingdom of Bantu. The orc who would be king left the future Count of Friscatto Grolchamsh (and future Marchioness Onugh) to secure his supply lines in Friscatto bay then won a quick victory in the capital to the west.
- Eight years ago Onugh's mother was killed by a human assassin. Onugh hasn't left the city of Friscatto since, and has seldom ventured outside her father's fortress.
- Four days ago a messenger arrived in Friscatto with a report of attacks and abductions by strange wolf like creatures in the remote village of Barakamsitu, leading to a werewolf panic in the city.
- Two days ago the Count sent his daughter and a small team to investigate these rumors and deal with the parties responsible.
- Now Onugh's party has arrived at the south gate of Barakamsitu at two hours before sunset on the day before the full Hunter's moon.

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Marchioness Onugh Grolchamsh

Orc hero, Age 24

ST 11, DX 13(12), IQ 11, MA 10

Talents include: Bow, Courtly Graces, Diplomacy, Horsemanship, Literacy, Sword, Unarmed Combat II

Languages: Common, Orcish

Weapons: Longbow (1d+2), Fine Shortsword (2d), Main Gauche (1d-1)

Armor: Cloth Armor stops 1 hit

Equipment: Fancy riding clothes, Healing Potions (4), silver arrows (20)

Special Note: Onugh is a true believer in Rhakkra and wishes to show that she has the sproash to inherit her father's county. She is keen to correct the weakness of plant worship.

Upepo, Onugh's riding horse

ST 23, DX 11, IQ 5, MA 20

Armor: Cloth barding stops 1 hit

Attacks and Damage: kicks for 1d damage

Doctor Wawuda Odhiambo

Human hero, Age 43

ST 8, DX 11, IQ 15, MA 10

Talents include: Expert Naturalist, Horsemanship, Knife, Master Physicker, Scholar, Two Weapons

Languages: Common, Orcish

Weapons: Two fine daggers (1d)

Equipment: Brands (2), Healing Potions (6), Physicker's kit

Special Note: Doctor Odhiambo was a scholar in Friscatto when the orcs landed and was hired to be Onugh's tutor. The two have remained good friends.

Mwezi, Doctor Odhiambo's pony

ST 20, DX 13, IQ 5, MA 30

Armor: None

Attacks and Damage: kicks for 1d damage

Sir Gugshug Chomsh

Orc hero, age 45

ST 13, DX 13 (10), IQ 11, MA 6

Talents include: Courtly Graces, Expert Horsemanship, Literacy, Pole Weapons, Recognize Value, Shield, Sword, Tactics

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Languages: Common, Orcish

Weapons: Lance (3d-1), 1-h Bastard Sword (2d+1)

Armor: Chainmail stops 3 hits, Small Shield stops 1 hit

Equipment:

Special Note: Gugshug has served Count Grolchamsh since before the conquest and has been sent to keep Marchioness Onugh safe as she learns how to manage these humans.

Zajarkal, Sir Chomsh's warhorse

ST 29, DX 13, IQ 6, MA 24

Armor: Cloth barding stops 1 hit

Attacks and Damage: kicks for 2d+1 damage

Mosi Kimachu, Esq.

Human hero, age 20

ST 11, DX 13 (11), IQ 8, MA 8

Talents include: Bow, Horsemanship, Pole Weapons, Shield, Sword

Languages: Common, Orcish

Weapons: 1-h Spear (1d), Shortsword (2d-1), Longbow (1d+2)

Armor: Leather stops 2 hits, small shield stops one hit

Equipment:

Special Note: A recent convert to Rhakkra and Sir Chomsh's squire. Mosi looks up to Sir Chomsh as a model for sroash.

Radi, Mosi's riding horse

ST 22, DX 11, IQ 5, MA 20

Armor: Cloth barding stops 1 hit

Attacks and Damage: kicks for 1d damage

Adept Agrosh Gulk-Rorg

Orc wizard, age 35

ST 8, DX 12, IQ 18, MA 10

Talents: Knife, Literacy (mundane)

Spells include: Aid, Cleansing, 7-Hex Fire, 7-Hex Illusion, Lightning, Pathfinder, Remove Thrown Spell, Reverse Missiles, Rope, Spellsniffer, Staff V, Telepathy

Languages: Orcish, Sorcerers' Tongue

Weapons: Silver dagger Staff V (1d-1)

Equipment: Silver pointer necklace (value \$200), wizard robe

Magic Items:

- 8 point powerstone ruby in a gold ring, value \$9,500

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- Staff V (Mana: 5): silver dagger, value \$100 (1d+2; +2 DX)

Special Note: Agrosh resents being taken from his research and sent along to cure werewolves that probably don't exist and so he insisted on being assigned an apprentice for the mission.

Apprentice Gogh Skorush

Orc wizard, age 20

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 12, MA 10

Talents: Literacy (mundane), Pole Weapons

Spells include: Aid, Blur, Dark Vision, Fire, Light, Sleep, Staff II

Language: Orcish

Weapons: 2-h Silver spear Staff II (1d+1)

Equipment: wizard robe

Magic Items:

- Staff II: silver spear, value \$400 (1d)

Special Note: Gogh had just arrived in Friscatto after his basic wizard training and was surprised to be selected for an expedition rather than just powering enchantments.

Chandu Nazari, Hunter

Human hero, age 23

ST 10, DX 13 (12), IQ 12, MA 10

Talents include: Acute Hearing, Bow, Running, Sword, Unarmed Combat III, Woodsman

Language: Common

Weapons: Horse bow (1d), machete (2d-2), dagger (1d-1)

Attacks and Damage: Barehanded Throw, Punch (1d+1 in HTH)

Armor: Cloth armor stops 1 hit, barehanded evade is -2 to hit and 2 hits stopped

Equipment: Heavy hunting clothing counts as cloth armor

Special Note: Chandu last visited Barakamsitu 15 years ago. He has heard of the shamans but considers it to be a dead religion of the past. Now he trusts only what he sees. On his latest visit to Friscatto he was surprised to be hired as a "native guide", but he'll take the money for what seems to be an easy job. He keeps his unarmed training a secret, just in case he's betrayed.

Mbwa, Nazari's hunting dog

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 6, MA 14

Armor: Fur stops 1 hit

Attacks and Damage: bites for 1d+1 damage

Snuno Unog, driver

Orc hero, age 20

ST 12, DX 11, IQ 9, MA 10

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Talents include: Crossbow, Driver, Missile Weapons III, Sword, Toughness I

Language: Orcish

Weapons: Light Crossbow (2d; adjDX 14 for one shot per turn), Broadsword (2d)

Armor: Main Gauche stops 1 hit, Toughness stops 1 hit

Equipment: 20 silver crossbow bolts, 4 of which are brands for +2 fire damage.

Special Note: Snuno's job is to drive the two horse wagon that carries supplies (and the other party members above who don't have horses of their own) but he is so terrified of rumors of werewolves in the mountains that he blew his life savings on silver crossbow bolts and even had some of these bolts enchanted.

The wagon has a week's worth of supplies which includes three 4-person tents, two Labyrinth kits, a spare Physicker's kit, a dozen torches, a dozen Molotails, four lanterns, 100-yard rope, Collapsible 6-foot pole, two crowbars, Miner's pick, 50 rations, a 10-gallon barrel of water, and 10 waterskins.