

4 Hour One-Shot Campaign

Journey Through The Glowing Fields

Setting: Subterranean Cave System

Monsters: Troglodyte, Small Worms, Bats, Ankehg

Boss Monster: Umber Hulk, Carrion Crawler, Hook Horror (v tough), Nothic

Objective: Travel deep into the Underdark to find the cause of the tremors wreaking havoc on peaceful homes of the Myconids .

Fungi - page 137 in MM, Myconids - page 230

Premise

A horrible beast has overtaken the Glowing Fields, the primary source of Meld Spores and sustenance for the peace loving circle of Myconids that inhabit these subterranean lands.

The players, a group of adventurers from the surface world, have fallen through a large crevasse that opened up while exploring a small cave system. Their landing softened by a large mass of fungi, our heroes awake surrounded by the curious creatures.

Story Hook

Something stirs in the Glowing Fields. A creature...a *monster*. For an age or more we have farmed these lands in peace with no contact from the blinding light of the skyworld. Never once before have we sought the help of others, let alone those from the surface.

But life is not as it once was. Our people can no longer mind-meld and are starving, those who have ventured out into the fields have been slaughtered. When the first echoes of the common tongued visitors rang in our ears we thought it a curse, a second death thrust upon an already opened sore. But perhaps we were wrong. Perhaps they are our only hope.

Rough Plotline and Dialog

Introduction

Many hours have passed since you first entered the cave. Many hours since the ground opened up beneath you and swallowed your party whole.

Each one of you is an experienced adventurer, you can't help but wonder how the sink-hole that snared you could have formed so suddenly and caught you all by surprise. Or even stranger,

how it managed to seal up behind you as if it never existed.

As you stretch your limbs and rub the fog from your eyes you see a winding trail of rock and broken mushrooms that softened your lengthy descent. Although the ordeal knocked you all unconscious, you are surprised to find you have suffered no lasting injuries.

The cave system you find yourselves in is darker than the one you had fallen from with air that is humid but cool. You hear a faint whispering in the distance, but it quickly draws to a halt as you rise and regain your composure.

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[Should the players call out, no one will answer.]

Mycondria

As you venture forward you see a great cavernous space filled to the brim with mushrooms of all shapes and sizes. The larger mushrooms are emitting a soft glow that bathes the cavern in a warm light.

Addressing The Mycondrians

Calling out (in a non threatening way) or knocking on a door (peacefully), the Myconids will come out, cautiously, and tell them of their plight.

[[Should the players come into the space overly aggressively, the Myconids will remain holed up, allowing the players to venture out into the glowing fields (the only accessible path) and go-a-murderin' as they please. When they return to the town the townsfolk will be amazed by their actions and allow the end of the campaign as it would have happened with the alternative approach.]]

As the players call out, they are greeted by the wary faces of many small mushroom-like creatures. One, larger than the others, makes his way toward the players.

“Oh my, such fleshy bodies, such small eyes...Are...are you from the surface world?”

the sovereign explains their plight, explains why the passage to the portal (the only way out) is sealed. Explains they must venture to the glowing fields.

Plight of The Myconids

“Well, to make a much longer story short, a wicked creature has recently made a home for himself to the east of here. He came seeking use of our portal, claiming to seek only a return to the surface world, but we knew better.

Because we would not help him, he has sent foul creatures to the Glowing Fields, a vast cavern between our town and his makeshift lair. He thinks he can starve us into compliance, but these old spores know better than to trust a Vampire. Those lawless brutes will say anything to get their way!

Please, we are not warriors or adventurers or even explorers. You carry weapons and have the look of heroes we only know from stories. Will you venture out into the fields and help rid us of this evil?”

Background for the DM on the situation at large:

1. Several years ago a Beholder infiltrated the Myconid community and captured a small group of Myconids, including the recently appointed Myconid Sovereign. Although the young sovereign eventually returned, all of those that were taken with him had perished. The event had a terrible impact on the sovereign and he recused himself from the community to live in seclusion.
2. As a result of the “beholder incident,” the previous sovereign, an ancient Mycanoid (even by Myconid standards) returned as the leader of his people. The tragedy of the event led him to ban all travel between the Underdark and Surface world. To protect themselves, a barrier was erected sealing off any access to the Overworld Portal.
 - a. The Mushroom Gate - an impenetrable wall of iron-hard fungus, erected to seal off the Overworld Portal. It generates a cloud of toxic spores to make any attempts at breaching the gate impossible. Maintained exclusively by the Sovereign, the wall will grow out of control if not properly maintained. Only the Sovereign, of his own free will, can keep its growth in check or remove it.
3. Some years later a vampire is banished to the Underdark as a punishment by his master. Taking residence in a large cavern east of the Glowing Fields, he quickly grows weary of his new home. Despite the joys of eternal night, he hungers for the warm blood of the surface races.

Seeking to return to the Overworld, the vampire learns of the Overworld Portal, but is unable to breach the barrier and reach it.

4. The vampire approaches the Myconids to use the gate, but is refused. Known for their ability to charm others, the myconids fear the vampire will enslave more myconids and

take them back to the surface world against their will as the Beholder once did.

5. The myconids manage to repel the vampire with the use of concentrated fungal spores, strengthened by the ancient, well cultivated mushrooms of their home-cavern.
6. In an attempt to “starve” the myconids into submission, the vampire enslaves a number of fell creatures - some native to the Underdark, and others conjured by the vampire himself - laying claim to the vast space between their town and his lair, the Glowing Fields. These fields are the myconid’s sole source of Meldshrooms, a unique fungi whose spores are used to induce the Mind Meld, a communal activity pivotal to myconid society.
7. With the Glowing Fields blocked from the Myconids and the Sovereign blocked from the Vampire, the two parties are locked in a stalemate.

Mycondria

Town Hall

Home of the Myconid Elders, as well as the Sovereign. The players can go here to get additional information on the glowing fields as well as the history behind the Mushroom Gate and vampire incursion.

The Collectors

On the northern edge of the town lies a tightly huddled set of mushroom homes belonging to The Collectors. Explorers in their youth, they have become reclusive, shunned from the larger social circles of the other Myconids for their wanderlust.

The Elder of the collectors has an item they can give to the players if they rescue a collector that ventured out into the glowing fields. Others have written him off as dead, but they know he is still out there. Save him to get the item.

Cap of water breathing and Weighted Boots - a set of items that allows one of the players to sink into the great lake without drowning or being swept away by the fast moving current as the water that flows into and out of it falls off the cliffside and into the abyssal crevasse. While this makes for the easiest way to access the treasure, the magical item (cap of water) will draw out the Chuul waiting for the players in the pool’s small underwater cave.

The Market

The fungal market has been drained of foodstuffs of great importance to the Myconids, however several of their less-used harvests can be repurposed into healing items for the players.

Should the players have accepted the Sovereign’s quest, they can provide 6 potions of healing or 3 potions of greater healing to the players for free. This can be re-done once more after some

time has passed. The Market can also provide a supply of mushrooms that, when consumed, will provide several hours of Darkvision should the party need a boost in low-light effectiveness.

The Wormfields

A field of pink, tubular fungi grows in the northern half of the central cavern. Not actually worms, this thick web of fungus wriggles and waves to the slow pulse of the blue light that shines from the fungus' tops.

Many years ago, one of the myconids hid a small chest of his own "personal reserve" of specially cultured mind meld spores. As much as he would like to reclaim them, the field has grown thick and unruly, pushing out any who attempt to enter.

Should the players be able to venture in and secure the chest, they will be rewarded by the myconid.

"The glowing fields are a dangerous place, if you're really going to go out there then you should take some knellbane with you. An awful crop of Knellblossom had been cropping up in the lower regions of the fields. You can hack away at their roots all you like, but the easiest way to kill one is to hit it with a dusting of this knellbane I've been growing. The powdered crystal will shrivel even the biggest of the awful plants in no-time flat."

The Glowing Fields

Bodies of The Deceased

At the entrance to the Glowing Fields are the slain bodies of several Myconids.

Encounter Before The Crystal Fields

"A large insect can be seen ahead, skittering about to and fro on the small passage between you and the brightly glowing space beyond."

2x Ankheg. MM p.21

Crystal Fields

"As you move onward, a warmth can be felt coming from the ground where a large field of crystals has begun to grow. The soft light they emit bathes the space in a purple-blue glow."

Harvestable Crystals:

A DC 8 Nature, Medicine, or Survival check will recall some of the crystals as having herbicidal properties. Some may be harvested for later use against the Knellblossom should the players not have already acquired it from the town.

Encounter Across The Bridge

“As you cross the bridge you see three large, unusual looking violet colored fungi. They seem to swish and sway in the breeze, despite the complete stillness of the air around you.”

3x Violet Fungi. MM p.138

The Glowing Field Maze

The maze is filled with various illusionary traps. These traps test different skill check / saving throws and respawn after players have successfully passed through them. Only one player needs to pass the trap to allow all players through.

These traps are being cast by a magical entity/monster. To disable all traps, that entity/monster must be slain. The monster/entity is located in the north western corner of the maze, the maze's largest open space.

A. Ability Check / Saving Throw Traps

- a. “Living Bog” trap - Ghostly arms reach out of an ectoplasmic bog-like soup, grasping at the player's legs. Players must succeed on a DC 17 wisdom saving throw in order to see through the illusion and temporarily dispel it
- b. Poison Gas Cloud trap - a cloud of poisonous gas occupies a small section of the maze, requiring a constitution saving throw to cross without being damaged by the poison

"As you walk forward, a sudden cloud of acrid green fog envelops you."

- c. Falling boulder trap - an illusionary boulder appears, blocking off the path. The boulder must be moved or destroyed by a strength check

B. False Walls trap

- a. False walls appear behind the players, and again behind them when they turn to face the (first) false wall, sealing them into a confined area of the maze. These walls though are fake, and disappear when the players attempt to walk through them. For added stress, the ‘real’ walls on either side of the players can appear to cave in on them, pushing them forward.

C. Rat Trap

- a. A small wooden box rests on a pedestal. Written on the box in an obtuse, but player-readable, language is the phrase “Don't open, dead rats inside.” When the box is opened an endless stream of dead rats pours out until the box is closed.

D. Fire Wall Trap

- a. A wall of flame erupts in front of the players, blocking off their path. The fire is described as neither feeling warm nor smelling of smoke. If detect magic is used, the presence of illusionary magic is detected, giving the players the false sense that the flame wall is just an illusion. The real illusion though is that the wall of flame is real and the illusion is hiding the heat and smell to *appear* to be an illusion, dealing damage when walked through.

Trapped Myconid

A Myconid has been trapped in the center of the Glowing Fields maze. Should the players have talked to the Collectors on the edge of Mycondria, they would recognize this Myconid as their lost friend.

“A Myconid huddles, shaking with fear, in this small alcove within the glowing fields maze.”

Myconid:

“Oh my, more surface dwellers??”

You’re not with that...fiend, the vampire, are you??”

“Oh thank the spores, can you lead me out of this horrible place? I came here in a desperate attempt to collect more meld spores for the others, but some horrible creature has trapped me here. Normally I know these spore fields like the back of my hand, but the brute has filled the fields with his magical traps!

I’m fairly certain the creton is holed up in the opening to the northwest of here. Please, stop him! As long as he remains here his terrible traps will persist!”

Battle in The Maze

On the Western edge of the maze is a large opening. The spellcasting minion of the vampire waits here, where he continually casts his illusionary traps that plague the maze. He must be defeated to allow free movement within the maze.

Encounter Details Here.

“At the western edge of the maze a large opening appears. At the rear of the opening a dark, humanoid creature hunches over a tattered spellbook. He seems lost in thought, pouring over the book, making various signs of conjuration.”

Should the players approach the vampire spawn with anything but great stealth, it will turn around to face them.

“As you approach, the creature twitches, spinning around quickly to face you. Before you sits the gnarled spawn of a Vampire.”

Roll for Initiative.

1x Vampire Spawn. MM p.298

A Watery Divide

“Exiting the maze at the North-Eastern edge of the cavern is a ramped pathway leading to the lower level of the large cave structure. At the end of this path the ground is split by a large body of water. Fed by a waterway cascading down from above, the western side has become a massive waterfall with water torrenting over the edge into the bottomless crevasse below.”

This flow pattern creates a strong current at the surface level of the water. The main body of the pool is very deep however, so the water becomes still quickly as you plunge below the surface.

Two boats are docked on either side of the divide, each connected to the dock by a series of pulleys, with a long rope connecting one side to the other. Moving one boat along the ropes path will automatically cycle the other boat behind it, ensuring that one boat remains at either dock and that neither will be swept over the waterfall.

Deep below the surface of the water lurks a Chuul. Unable to swim upwards, it is locked to the bottom of the pool, but will engage any that approach it in combat. It stands guard over the chest that rests at the pool’s bottom. Although it is usually resting in a small cave within the pool, it is alerted by and greatly attracted to magical items.

Pool Chest

Deep at the bottom of the eastern waterfall pool rests a medium sized chest containing a Vorpal Sword.

Hermit NPC 1 - Soerensven

A small Deep Gnome (Svirfneblin - MM p.164), Soerensven has erected a small tent in the center of the eastern edge of the cave system. Travelling with his brother Doerensven, they had climbed up from the depths below in search of gems when the vampire’s minions moved into the Glowing Fields, trapping them.

Terse in sentence structure but talkative, Soeren will complain about the giant Knellblossom that has sprouted up between him and his brother (“not much of a loss, but annoying all the same!”) along with what “a dump!” the cave has become since the monsters have moved in.

If pressed, he can suggest the orange crystals as an explanation on the Knellblossom’s abnormal growth, as they seem to be turbocharging the plant’s hyper-sensitive photosynthesis (evolved to an extreme sensitivity to grow from the light local crystals and fungus emit).

3 Paths Obstacle

The walkway splits into three paths as the lower ground-space travels back westward. The middle path is empty and easily traversed. Each side path is blocked by thick roots. At the far end the paths merge back into one pathway, which is blocked by a large plant, a Knellblossom. The players can now see large roots extending from the plant to the blocked pathways behind them.

“A massive spiny plant blocks your way forward. What appear to be two monstrous root-like tendrils reach out from the base of the plant back in the direction you came from.”

Destroy the roots on each alternate path to cause the plant to wither and die, opening up the way forward.

Note: “knellbane” can be acquired from a Myconid NPC in Mycondria in exchange for successfully retrieving it’s hidden meld spore stash in the Wormfield. It can also be made by collecting crystals from the Crystal Field and grinding them into a powder.

Hermit NPC 2: Doerensven

A small Deep Gnome (Svirfneblin - MM p.164), Doeren is virtually indistinguishable from his brother Soeren. Like his brother, he tends to parse his sentences into short, terse bursts, but is otherwise quite talkative.

Additionally like Soeren, he will continually complain that the cavern has become “a dump!” and that the horrible green crystals that seem to have “come up out of nowhere” are giving him headaches.

If pressed, he can add that they definitely do not seem natural, and are likely in some way magical in nature.

Barrier Crystals

“Beyond the Knellblossom plants you see 3 large glowing crystals emerging from the ground. Unlike the crystals from above, these seem to pulse and hum with an unnatural aura.”

-An Investigation / Nature / Survival check will reveal they have been placed here, not grown.

-An Arcana check will reveal they seem to be powering some kind of magical barrier elsewhere in the cavern.

The crystals must be destroyed in order to disable the barrier at the maze’s exit.

The Barrier / Exit

“At the end of the maze the monstrous cavern begins to close up. A tunnel lies at the end of the pathway.”

<<Green Crystals Not Destroyed>>

“Before the mouth of the tunnel is a great magical wall. A brilliantly glowing barrier that glows an eerie green.”

The barrier stops all progression to the areas beyond it, stopping both physical and magical attempts to bypass it. The green crystals in the south western end of the cavern must be destroyed in order to dispel the barrier.

<<Green Crystals Have Been Destroyed>>

“At the mouth of the tunnel you see a green fog that has dissipated greatly and only clings to the far sides of the entryway.”

Arcana Check:

“It feels as though a great magical barrier has been dispelled and removed from this place.”

Portal

Mushroom Gate

An impenetrable gate of poisonous mushrooms blocks the path forward. Any attempts to hack and slash at it, or scorch it with magic, only sees the mushrooms regrow at an alarming rate. Attacks upon the mushroom, or close proximity to them, will also trigger a cloud of poisonous spores to be emitted.

Any players exposed must roll a DC18 Constitution save or be poisoned. Only the Myconid Sovereign can lift the poison and cure those affected.

<<Spore Poisoned>>

Should a player get spore poisoned:

-½ movement speed in combat

-Disadvantage on all Dex, Athletics, And Charisma checks

-Disadvantage on all Constitution saving throws

-1d6 of poison damage every 15 minutes (play time), or every 1 minute in combat.

Lair Of The Undead

Entrance

“The tunnel bends, revealing the warm glow of torchlight. Before you is a well made wooden door set into a well sculpted section of cave wall. The space is quiet, though you do notice an abnormal amount of bats, rats, and insects crawling around the area, which you have not seen at any other point in these caves.”

The door is not locked, and simply needs to be opened to enter.

Vassnek

“Ha, so you are the interlopers who have been disturbing my works here!

And surface dwellers at that! How on earth did you get down here while I have been unable to leave?!

No matter. Although you have proven quite the pests, I will grant you one last chance to save yourselves. Leave this place and return to those insipid Myconids. Slay them, and return to me. Do this task and I will reward you with a life and power beyond your wildest dreams.

Refuse, and die.”

1x Vampire (in lair). MM p.297

2x Vampire Spawn. MM p.298

For an even greater challenge, you can substitute the Vampire for a Vampire Spellcaster or Vampire Warrior. (MM p.298)