



MONKEYDM

FUNGAL HYSTERIA

VENTURES THROUGH A FUNGAL INFESTED CITY TO UNCOVER LOST KNOWLEDGE



An investigative adventure for three to five characters of the 5th level.

BACKSTORY

There are places in this world that were made for humanity to settle. Wide, relaxing plains, calming shores, bright forests. Then, there are the places that humanity stole from the world and the world tries helplessly to this day to reclaim. One such place is the city of Shapland. Once a forest overrun with fungus and tall trees surrounding a silent lake, it was slowly cut down and turned into Shapland. The lake was drained bit by bit, and turned into a collection of canals helping you traverse the city.

Below it all, however, the roots of the fungus that once ruled this land spread more and more, hoping to one day return to the shore. Now, a long while later, it finally has.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The party find themselves in the dark, winding alleyways of the Shapland's slums. They are searching for a mysterious artifact that has been lost for centuries, which has led them here. As they navigate the treacherous streets and confront the dangers lurking in the shadows, they uncover the entire city's mind has been twisted by the rainbow-colored waters. They must decipher cryptic clues, and dodge deadly traps to finally reach crates full of diving supplies. Equipped with their gear, the adventurers don diving suits and plunge into the cool waters of the city. They are immediately struck by the dazzling array of colors that surround them, as the sunlight filters through the water and threatens to drive them mad, before finally making it below.

Navigating the twisting canals and tunnels beneath the city, the adventurers encounter a variety of obstacles and challenges, hidden dangers, and unexpected encounters with the city's aquatic fungus. Finally, they reach the entrance to an underground cave. They find themselves standing in a vast, dimly lit cavern. The walls and ceiling of the cave are covered in glittering fungus that refract the light in a kaleidoscope of colors, and the air is thick with the musty scent of ancient rock.

At last, they come to a massive underground chamber, the heart of the cave, where they discover the core of the fungus that has been hidden away for centuries.

PLOT HOOK

The party has been contracted by a benefactor to find a staff that allows the wielder to control the nature. It's believed the staff is underneath the city of Shapland, where the party will arrive, starting from the slums.

CHAPTER 1: AS ABOVE...

In which the party notices something strange.

A Change of Scenery

This adventure begins with the party arriving in Shapland. The city is formed of two districts, the slums, built further downstream, and upper Shapland, which is upstream and unaffected by the growing fungal threat.

Before starting the adventure, If you are playing this adventure as a one-shot or as the start of a campaign, this is the perfect point for the party members to introduce themselves. Once each party member has had a little bit of time to introduce themselves and their abilities, you may proceed.

Read this:

'Your adventure begins in shadowy alleyways, where the desperate and the dangerous rub shoulders in a deadly dance. The slums are a place of contrast, where the glittering towers of the city's elite loom in the distance, casting a long shadow over the decaying buildings and twisted streets of this forgotten corner of Shapland. You've been warned before arriving that segregation and neglect has led to this part of town being particularly full with unlucky folk, but the first thing you encounter, oddly, is silence. The streets seem barren. An entire district, devoid of laughter or voices. Perhaps something has happened, who knows? Your job is to find out how to best get below the city and find the staff your boss has sent you after.'

Bring the party to map 1. They start at area 1 and can navigate the map either together or alone. Their main goal should be finding out more information about both the city and how to get below it.



GM NOTE: Before the party explores the map, you should understand the behavior of the corrupted. They're fungus zombies, but they're also semi-cathartic. Unless the party is filled with outright aggression, they'll ignore them to start. Only once the party has killed a few of them will they begin going out of their way to attack.

Keyed Locations

1 - POINT OF ARRIVAL

This is where the party starts their journey. From this point, they can make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** to look around. On a success, they notice the well (area 2), as well as the bridge beggar (area 3)

2 - WELL

Read this:

'After going down a short flight of stairs, you arrive next to an old stone well, which is clearly funneling water from the main course of the river. Upon looking at it, you immediately notice the rainbow tint of the water.'

A creature who sees the water can make a **DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check** to analyze if this is natural. On a success, they'll draw the conclusion that this is unnatural. The party can also make a **DC 18 Intelligence (History) check** to think back on the city's history and if it has ever had rainbow-colored water before. On a success, they recognize that it hasn't.

3 - BRIDGE BEGGAR

Read this:

'Resting on the side of the bridge, surrounded by empty bottles, is a shroud-covered humanoid. You're unsure if they are awake or not, but you do hear the sound of mumbling.'

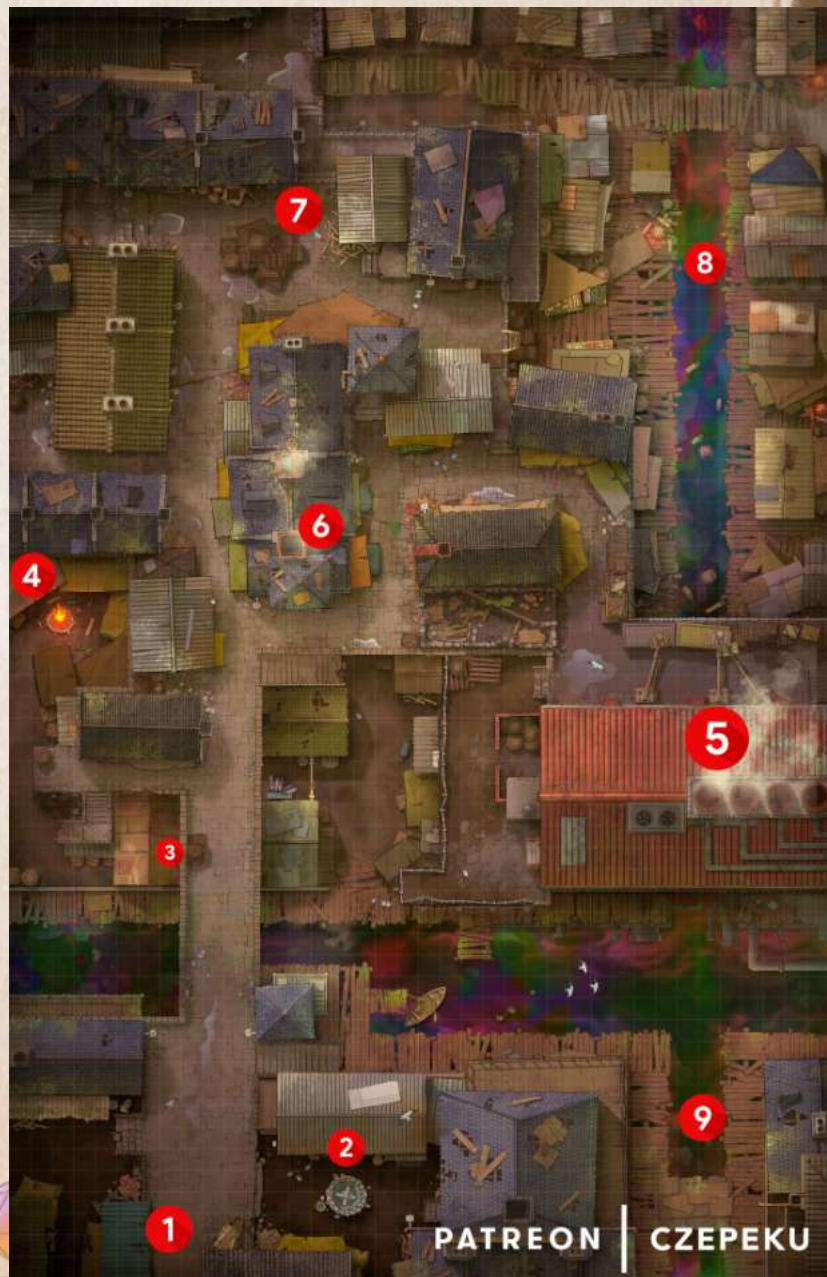
The beggar on the bridge is a **ghast**, corrupted by the fungal water he had been drinking. If the party approaches the bridge, they can make a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to move by without waking him up. Each party member with a **passive Perception of 14 or higher** can also hear the campfire at area 4. The party can also make a **DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check** when looking at him. On a success, they notice he'd been spreading to the bridge's railing, almost like a fungus.

Encounter: Corrupted Beggar. If the beggar is woken up either by the party failing their check or calling out to him, he'll attack them.

GM NOTE: Most of the fungal-infested civilians are **ghasts**, **ghouls** or **zombies**, but feel free to describe them as vividly as you see fit. Tap into your *The Last Of Us* knowledge and bring out that fungal horror to life.

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MAP 1



4 - CORRUPTED CAMPFIRE COOKS

Read this:

'Pushing on through the empty streets, you hear the crackling of a campfire in the distance. Looking in that direction, you see three people huddled around it, on top of a pot filled with food.'

The three figures huddling around the fire are **2 ghouls** and **1 ghoul**. They've recently been corrupted by drinking the soup. Now, they are trying to fight the corruption.

Encounter: Corrupted. If the party walk within 15 feet of the cooks, they can make a **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to not be noticed. If noticed, they'll attack the party. Their bodies can be searched (or pickpocketed) to find a **dagger of venom** and a prescription for medicine from "Masal Zedd".

5 - FACTORY

Read this:

'Upon a quick inspection, you notice smoke coming out of the factory chimneys. Someone is certainly inside, hard at work.'

Any party member can make a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** to look at the outer walls of the Factory for any hints as to why the water is rainbow-colored. On a success, they find bits of piping that lead to the outside, spewing out rainbow water.

The party can also knock on the factory's door, which is trapped. before touching it, party members can investigate the door with a **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, noticing the trap on a success. Once noticed, they can disarm it with a successful **DC 14 Thieves' Tools check**. The door is also locked and requires a **DC 18 Thieves' Tools check** to open.

Hazard: Trapped Door. When a party member touches the door, if they haven't disarmed the trap, they must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, they take 3d12 lightning damage and are paralyzed for 1 minute. They may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success.

Once a party member knocks on the door or unlocks it, Ysuf (see "Yusuf" sidebar), one of the workers inside, will notice the door opening and come speak with the party.

Ysuf (TN half-orc commoner)

Information: Ysuf has been locked inside the factory for a week. The factory owners, seeing the fungal virus slowly spread over the city, stocked up the factory and locked the workers inside, telling them to sleep and eat there until the virus problem "dies down". This was all done in hopes of keeping productivity up, thus angering Yusuf and the rest.

Roleplaying as Ysuf: Ysuf and the workers are completely detached from the outside world. They've been locked inside for a week, ever since the crisis started. They are also very angry. When the party opens the door, they'll thank them and tell them what happened, then move away.

Thankful they've been freed, Ysuf and the other workers will tell the party their story, then run away to their family. Lastly, they'll tell the party they might be able to find out more from the crazy alchemist in the slums: Zedd, who lives inside his shop (area 6).

The party can then move inside the factory and investigate it further for clues. They can make a **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. On a success, they track the piping and find that it is already rainbow-colored by the time it reaches the factory. In addition, the party finds a payment notice for diving equipment.

GM NOTE: The diving equipment was requested by the factory owners to get into the caves below and find out what has awoken the fungus. Unfortunately, the shipment never arrived, instead stopping at area 7.

6 - ALCHEMIST'S HIDEOUT

Read this:

'Not too far down the street, a second building also lets out smoke, signaling life inside. The exterior is made of aged, gray stones that have been worn by time and weather, covered in ivy and other creeping vines. The windows of the building are boarded up, giving the impression that there's no intent of letting anyone inside. The door to the building is massive and heavy, made of thick wood and reinforced with metal bands. Above the door, a sign hangs crookedly, bearing the name "Zedd's" in faded, peeling letters. Despite its neglected exterior, there is an air of mystery and power emanating from the building. The thick walls and heavy door, coupled with the smell of concoctions lingering from the inside, might urge someone to look inside.'



The door to Zedd's is locked via 3 metal bars and two locks, hinting at his extensive preparations. Each metal bar can be broken with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** or by dealing 15 damage to it (each bar has an AC of 18, 15 HP and immunity to poison and psychic damage).

Each lock can be broken with a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** or a **DC 18 Thieves' Tools check**.

Encounter: Alerted Infected. If the party fails to break off a bar or breaks it via damage, it will alert **4 ghouls** from nearby who'll come and attack the party.

Alternatively, the party can knock on the door and await Zedd's answer. They'll need to wait for 10 minutes, during which Zedd will be investigating them from the many windows, then put on his plague doctor suit. After the ten minutes, he'll open the door and the party can walk inside.

Encounter: Masal Zedd. Once inside, the party will see Zedd (see "Masal Zedd" sidebar) 10 feet away, armed with a repurposed crossbow that shoots vials of disinfectant. He'll disinfect each, close the door, then begin talking to them about what has happened.

Masal Zedd (LN half-elf commoner)

Information: Zedd is a thorough, intelligent, and obsessive individual, which has served him well during the crisis. Dressed in a full plague doctor suit and hidden behind a raven-beaked mask, Zedd wants nothing more than to survive. He's also got his suspicions about the source, because of how thoroughly he's investigated the nearby flora and the surroundings.

Roleplaying as Zedd: Zedd is cold, distant, and measured. He doesn't deal with feelings, but calculus. He won't be overly excited about the party, but cooperate with them since they give him a good chance at survival. Worth mentioning is that he will never walk closer than 10 feet to the party. He keeps his distance. Who knows how the sickness spreads?

Read this:

'Walking in, you are greeted by the smell of rubbing alcohol and the sight of a black-robed specter in front of you, wielding a large crossbow. It remains a good 10 feet away, backed up against a wall adorned with notes and vials of varying liquids.'

Zedd will ask for the party's names, then introduce himself. He'll refuse to give any additional information until the party convinces him via a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check** or a **DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check**. Once persuaded (or intimidated), he'll explain to the party how the water slowly started turning rainbow-colored. Him, being

the only person in the slums with a water filter, didn't get infected, but the rest got turned quickly. He's been closed off and living off of his alchemical creations ever since.

He'll also tell the party about a shipping of diving equipment which made it very close, but got overran by infected a little bit northwards (area 7).

After he's given the party information, he'll ask them to go away, since he can't offer them anything else. If they ask him about the staff they're looking for, he'll say he has no knowledge of it. A successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check** will reveal this to be untrue. Truthfully, Zedd is looking for the staff himself and has tracked it down to below the city, hence why he's been slowly brewing potions that will help him achieve his goal.

Finally, the party can ask Zedd for potions to aid in their quest to stop the contamination. They must make a **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to convince them. On a success, he'll grant them one **greater healing potion** and one **antitoxin**. Alternatively, they can try to steal from him with a **DC 18 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check**, taking the same potions.

7 - CRATE SALVAGERS

Read this:

'Not too far off from Zedd's, exactly where one of the Alchemist's higher windows gazes, is a bunch of knocked over crates and boxes, laid out in the middle of the street. On top of them, about six or seven fungus-infested creatures, looking about and rummaging through. In one of the knocked-over boxes, you can clearly see diving equipment that might help you find out what lurks below and makes the water corrupted.'

The crates hold inside them four **cloaks of the manta ray** (re-skinned as diving suits), but are guarded by **3 ghouls** and **4 zombies**. The party can lead them away with a destruction or fight them head-on. When every enemy is defeated, the party can get the suits and put them on.

With the suits on, the party can move to the canals (area 8) and begin their underwater investigation.



8 - CANALS

Read this:

'Considering how beautiful the water looks, you can't help but wonder whether you should take a sip of it, but your experience guides you against it. You calm yourself, then prepare for a deep swim. Perhaps it'll help you reach the core of the problem.'

The party can make any final preparations they want, then they dive into the water. Proceed to the next subchapter.

9 - SEWAGE BREAK

When the party reaches this point in diving suits, you may proceed to chapter 2.

Swimming in Rainbows

GM NOTE: In this subchapter, the party investigates the sprawling canals of the slums briefly, before finally making it below the city. If you want to add some length to this one-shot, you can do so by adding more challenges to this leg of their journeys. Feel free to do so.

Right as the party enters the water, they'll come face to face with rainbow fungus. Each party member with darkvision must make a **DC 10 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failure, they become charmed and start taking off their diving suit. Taking off a diving suit requires two turns. A charmed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns and whenever it takes damage, breaking the charm on a success.

GM NOTE: This first encounter with the fungus should serve as a good indicator for what's to come. Additionally, the party might figure out that seeing the rainbow fungus charms them. If they solve it and start swimming with their eyes closed, you can trick them in other ways.

Read this:

'Once you fully immerse yourself in the water, you notice this algae-looking fungus all around you, colorful and bright. Regardless, it's time for you to press on. Moving past the factory, you quickly notice a strengthening in the current next to it. It becomes apparent that the factory is siphoning a bunch of water and might siphon you if you're not careful.'

Hazard: Factory Whirlwind. Each party member must succeed on a **DC 14 Strength saving throw** or they take 2d10 slashing damage and become restrained. A restrained creature takes an additional 1d10 slashing damage at the start of each of its turns and can spend its action to repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. Unrestrained creatures within 5 feet can spend their actions to grant a restrained creature advantage on the saving throw.

Once each party member has successfully made it past the factory, ask for each party member to make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** or a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check**. If at least one party member succeeds on any of the two checks, they find the other whirlwind, which reaches into the caves below.

Read this:

'You quickly swim in the direction of the other small whirlwind, feeling the current fight against you and yet, you arrive and notice the small crack inside the stone on the bottom of the aqueduct. You jump in and feel the force of the water push you forth. Perhaps, you've made it.'

You may proceed to the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: ... SO BELOW

In which the party goes below the city.

Finding Your Footing

To begin this chapter, bring this party to map 2, area 2. They've now made it below and are surrounded by fungus, as well as some other dangers.

Read this:

'As you enter the cave, the air becomes thick with moisture, and a pungent, earthy smell fills your nostrils. The ground beneath your feet feels soft and springy, as if you're walking on a thick layer of moss. As your eyes adjust to the dim light, you notice that the walls, ceiling, and floor of the cave are covered in a thick layer of fungus, creating an eerie, otherworldly landscape. The fungus is a riot of colors, ranging from pale, ghostly white to deep, velvety black, with every shade of green and yellow in between. Some of the fungus is delicate and lacy, resembling intricate lacework, while other specimens are thick and fleshy, resembling enormous mushrooms.'



To start, ask each party member to make a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failure, they take 3d8 psychic damage and are stunned until the start of their next turn. On a success, they take half damage and are not stunned. This saving throw is meant to show them that the fungus is much stronger here below.

Now, the party can investigate the underground tunnels.

Keyed Locations

1 - POINT OF ARRIVAL

This is where the party starts off their investigation.

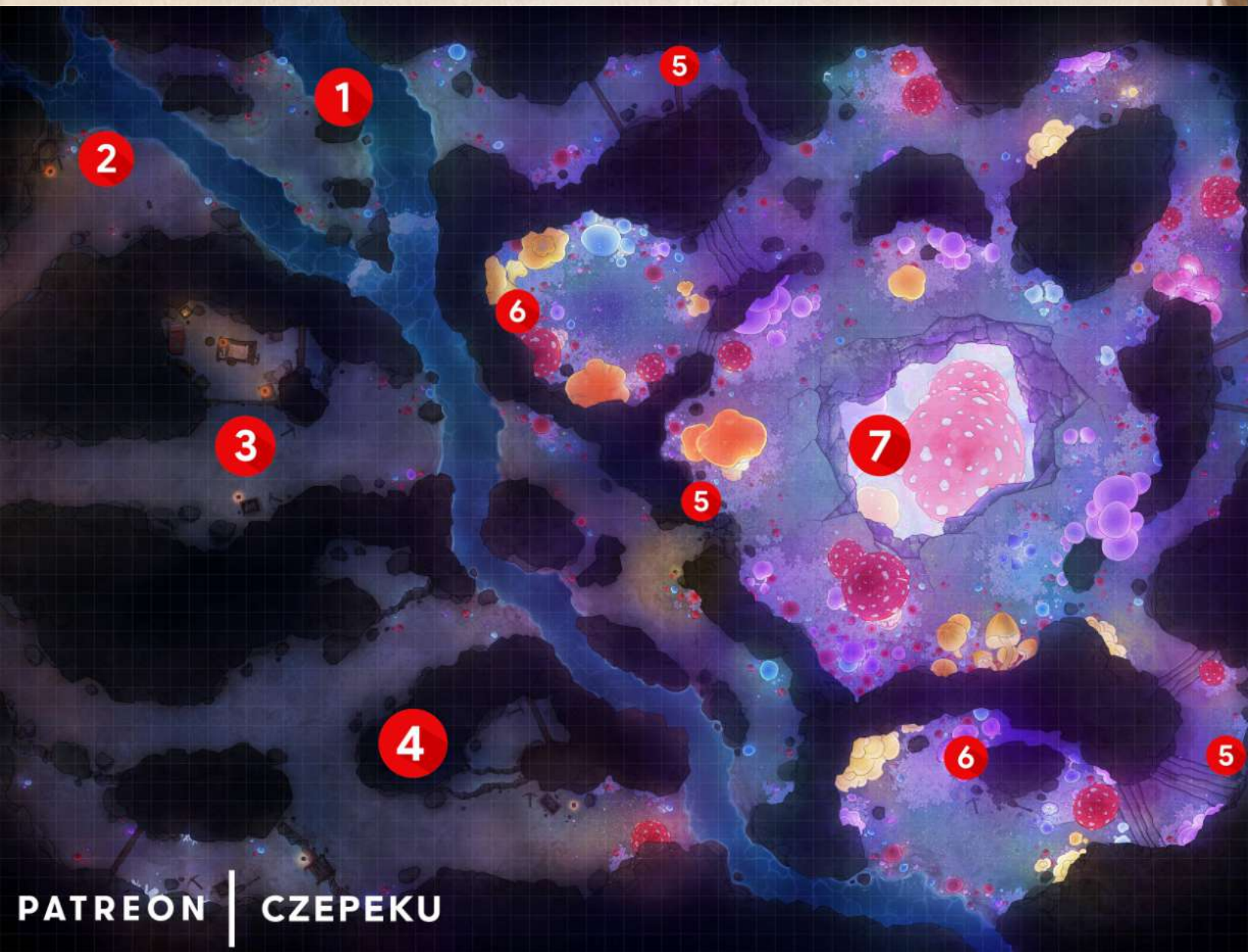
2 – DEAD EXPLORER

Read this:

'Looking immediately to the side, you see you aren't the first to reach thus far. A few feet from the water's course, you see a barely burning oil lamp next to a humanoid body in makeshift diving gear.'

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MAP 2



The party can make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to investigate the body's belongings and a **DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine) check** to deduce the cause of death.

A success on the Investigation check will reveal signs of fungus slowly corrupting the diver. It will also reveal scribbles made in the rock next to him which write „big shroom, RUN“.

A success on the Medicine check will reveal the diver (a dwarf) had killed himself before the corruption had taken over.

His gear can also be inspected with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, revealing it to be makeshift and quite lackluster. He had already been corrupted by the fungus by the time he made it inside the cave. The party can however scrap together a **+1 shield** from him.

3 – UNDERGROUND OUTPOST

Read this:

‘Making it further inside the cave, you come across a truly troubling site – that of a makeshift outpost, outfitted with beds, tables and lights. Civilians might have been here not too long ago, perhaps as late as the previous week, since dust has yet to fully settle. People might’ve known.’

The party can scour the outpost with a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, where they’ll find 200 gold in small batches, as well as contracts given out by the city to mine crystals from the underground. They pre-date the fungus outbreak by about two to three months.

This is also the perfect spot for a short rest.

4 – THE WORKERS

Area 4 is where the two workers, now infected **ghouls**, have retreated, going mad in each other's arms as friends. When the party moves within 30 feet of their area, they'll awake.

Encounter: Infected Workers. If the party moves within 30 of the worker's locations, each party member with a **passive Perception of 15 or higher** can hear the rumblings of them waking up. If a party member goes within 15 feet of the two, they'll start roaming the map and attacking the party.

5 – THE FUNGUS TUNNELS

Read this:

‘As you explore deeper into the cave, you begin to notice that the fungus is not simply growing on the surface of the rock, but is actually penetrating deep into the rock itself. Fungal tendrils snake their way through the cracks and crevices in the stone, creating a dense, interconnected network that seems to pulse with a life of its own. Despite the strangeness of the scene, there is a sense of beauty and wonder in the cave. The delicate filaments of the fungus glow softly in the dim light, casting strange and haunting shadows on the walls. The air is thick with the sweet, earthy smell of decay, and the gentle hum of the fungus seems to fill the cave with a sense of peace and tranquility.’

Hazard: Fungus. When making it into this part of the cave, each party member must succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw** or take 3d8 psychic damage and become charmed. While charmed in this way, a creature spends its action attacking creatures not charmed by the fungus. A charmed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns and when it takes damage, ending the effect on a success.

6 – THE MOUND CHAMBERS

Read this:

‘Deeper still within the tunnels you feast your eyes with a circular chamber fully engulfed by fungus, in the middle of which is a mess of body parts and fungus. It is not only frightening, but somewhat living.’

Each chamber is inhabited by a **shambling mound** in a half-awake state, slowly growing and healing itself from the fungus.

Encounter: Shambling Mound. When the party walks by, each party member must make a **DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check** or they'll alert the mound. Upon being alerted, the mound will attack them and chase them through the caves.

GM NOTES: For a level 5 party that has already exerted itself, fighting a shambling mound is no small task. Fighting two of them might be impossible. If the party kills one and starts to investigate the chamber of the other, replace the second one with another Wisdom saving throw (detailed in area 5). Otherwise, your party might encounter a swift end.



7 – THE BREAK

Read this:

'Not too far off in front of you, you notice a jagged opening in the rocky ground, surrounded by rough and uneven edges. As you peer into the opening, you see a narrow passageway leading down into the depths of the cave. The walls are slick and covered in a thick layer of fungal growth, ranging from vibrant shades of green and yellow to deep purples and blues. The floor is uneven, with more rainbow-colored fungus protruding from the earth.'

The party can jump through the hole and reach the core. When they do, proceed to the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THE CORE

In which the party uncovers the fungus below everything.

A Living Organism

Bring the party to map 3. They start at area 1. Area 2 is the core of the fungus, the brainstem, if you will.

Read this:

'You make your way down the passageway and start to hear the faint sound of dripping water echoing off the walls. The fungal growth becomes more dense and vibrant, hanging in thick, otherworldly clusters from the ceiling and walls. Eventually, you emerge into a large chamber, filled with the intense glow of luminescent mushrooms and bioluminescent insects. The air is thick with the sweet smell of decay, and the ground has all but disappeared underneath a lair of moss-like fungus. In this strange and otherworldly place, you may feel as though you've stepped into another dimension, far removed from the world above.'

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MAP 3



2

1

Each party member can make a **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Nature) check**. Success on either check will reveal that this organism most likely has memory and consciousness. Its goal is to spread, doing so by gathering more and more knowledge, more and more consciousness. A success will also reveal that this fungus is most likely not entirely natural, but infused with magic.

Any party member can also make a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** to look for the magic staff they've been looking for. They'll find it in the middle of the fungus. The fungus spreads from it, akin to a defense mechanism.

GM NOTE: The party can, at this point, make the choice to let the staff slowly reclaim the land, leaving unharmed. It's a perfectly viable option. If they choose to do so, simply end the adventure there, specifying how the staff's fungus slowly spreads and gains in power, returning society to ruin.

When (or if) the party attacks the fungus, the staff will create a **fungal druid simulacra** to fight the party inside its lair. When the druid is defeated, you may proceed to the next chapter.

LAIR ACTIONS

When fighting inside its lair, a fungal druid simulacra can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the fungal druid simulacra takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- **Fungal Burst.** The fungal druid simulacra causes a burst of spores to erupt from the ground, dealing 2d6 poison damage to all creatures within 10 feet of the druid. The spores create a cloud of thick mist, causing the area to become lightly obscured for 1d4 turns.
- **Entangle Vines.** The fungal druid simulacra causes vines and fungal growths to grow rapidly from the ground, entangling all creatures within a 10-foot radius sphere within 60 feet of the druid. Each creature must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or be restrained by the vines and fungi for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, freeing itself on a success.
- **Fungal Charm.** The fungal druid simulacra causes fungal growths to erupt from the walls and ceiling towards a creature within 30 feet of the druid. The creature must make a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failure, the creature is charmed by the druid until the end of its next turn. It must spend its next turn following the druid's telepathic commands (no action required).

The End

Read this:

'With the last lair of defense shattering, the fungal heart begins beating rapidly. As you put an end to it, it squeals out in pain, before retracting and turning to dust, leaving only an old and withered staff behind. Soon, the infected will return to their human forms. The city is saved.'

For their efforts, each party member will be paid 1000 gold pieces by the city. Additionally, they can return the staff for a 3000 gold bonus. Then, if you are playing this adventure as a one-shot, give each party member a deserving epilogue.

The End.



THANK YOU!

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW AND SUPPORT ME, WITHOUT YOU I COULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT THIS PROJECT TO LIFE.

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