

Poison Pie
A Multi-Planar History
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Just as scientists are prone to boast of the first success at some ethically ambiguous technological endeavor such as the splitting of atoms or the cloning of mammals, so too do wielders of magic seek to elevate themselves above their peers by claiming credit for various eldritch conundrums, errors and flat-out monstrosities. Take, for example, the case of Myconids. There are those among the fey elves, Eladrin as they are known, witches and druids who long ago lost favor with the Lords of the Court of Stars and descended into subterranean laboratories in the Feydark, who claim to have, through a mingling of arcane and primal energies, gifted sentience to the fungal kingdoms, giving rise to the Myconids, or mushroom people. These witches cite as evidence of their claim the vast Living Grotto that occupies an immense underground fissure stretching several miles in width and descending to unknown depths of the Feydark. Through interrogations of a nature to ghastly to be recounted, unfortunate captive Myconids revealed that at the heart of the Living Grotto is the Great Cathedral of Psilofyr, an ancient toadstool towering 600 feet high with a cap 400 feet in diameter, sprouting from the lingering remains of the slumbering essence of Psilofyr, their creator. These witches and druids scoff at the romantic notion that the decay of a divine being gave rise to the Myconids, but spread those details of the story which suit their cause and support the idea of the origin of the Myconids in the Feywild. Verily, the Myconids are a horror of which to be proud, at least by those who value notoriety over virtue. However, the Eladrin dark mages of the Feywild are not the only group who seek to identify themselves as the source of the Myconids.

In the Shadowfell, the world of the dead, where a pervasive melancholy infuses the very mists that cloud the rocky terrain, there has arisen a sect of Warlocks who provide a no less convincing argument for a Myconid origin in that grim, nether domain. Their principle argument is of course rooted in the biological fact that mushrooms thrive on detritus and decay. A Warlock skilled in Nethermancy, in a dungeon prison deep within the bowels of the Shadowdark, engaged in experiments so unspeakable that the very stones that formed the chambers collapsed in protest in every land in which the tests were attempted save that of the Shadowfell. In those chambers, with a mighty spell of arcane binding, this warlock stripped the sentience from a hapless creature, a troll or a troglodyte perhaps, the bestial appetite of an otyugh, the elemental patience of a xorn and placed them in the distorted, humanoid form of a mushroom, sealing the amalgamated entity with a gloom pact so powerful it could be passed like a genetic deformity from one generation of mushroom to the next. The Myconids of the Shadowfell therefore require an unholy sustenance of both physical and psychic decay. They dwell only in the most distant and forlorn pits of the Shadowdark, the Mycomantle, a region too dangerous for any but the most foolhardy outsiders to enter. A few of these creatures, it is postulated by the Warlock Binders, escaped through planar portals to populate the Feydark and the Underdark of the mortal realm, as well as who knows whatever more remote planes cast adrift in the Astral Sea.

In the mortal realm, there are those that argue that the tens of thousands of species of mushroom littered through-out all ecosystems of the world are proof enough of their terrestrial origin. If so many mundane branches of the fungal kingdom can be traced to this world, it is not so preposterous to suppose that one not-so-mundane branch also managed to find a habitat in which the fruiting bodies of these organisms gradually, through the accepted evolutionary process, girded themselves with the neural wiring of sentience. Moreover, just as the Feydark has the Living Grotto, and the Shadowdark the Mycomantle, the Underdark of this world possesses Hraak Azul, a living testament to mushrooms that brooks no argument, for Hraak Azul is a unique colony of millions upon millions of fungi, a living fortress larger than many towns, slowly crawling through the subterranean shallows. Riddled with labyrinthine passages, the Hraak Azul serves as home not only to Myconids but also to a species of symbiotic troglodytes, who take refuge in the fungal city and in exchange tend to it, pruning damaged edges and excising parasitic infections. In this world, it the highest honor of the members of the Cult of the

Mushroom to be sacrificed upon the Altar of White Scales at the heart of Hraak Azul, for it believed that the transformation that occurs upon that altar is not death but rather subsumption into the consciousness of Hraak Azul through digestion.

Poison Pie, Man of the Mushroom People, could provide no additional evidence to support or invalidate the claims of the fey witches and druids, the shadow warlock binders or the terrestrial mushroom cultists. He had never asked even a single fungal brain cell to exert any effort in the contemplation of his origin. No indeed, for Poison Pie believed that “Not knowing was the triumph of evolution.” He applied this adage not only to his origins but to virtually every aspect of his fungal life. He had wandered the planes—the Feywild, the Shadowfell, the terrestrial realm and many others—for time out of mind. He could no longer recall much of what had transpired during his travels, much less his starting point. He viewed the gaps in his memory fondly, as an unasked for but appreciated all the same karmic gift, because Poison Pie was not infallible. On the contrary, Poison Pie had a peculiar propensity for poor judgment, a character flaw that almost certainly stemmed from the sentient rather than fungal portion of his ancestry. As such, the missing pieces of his memory were better left forgotten. He had no desire to be followed by a trail of shame. That his history happily disappeared behind him seemed altogether appropriate.

Poison Pie, Man of the Mushroom People, Adventurer Extraordinaire, believed as many others have that “To err is to be human” and appended “To err egregiously, stupendously is to be a mushroom person”. He was, in general, a very likable fellow, except by those whose poor luck it was to fall victim to his chronically poor judgment. Those ill-favored few viewed him in a substantially less favorable light.