

Roots Underground:

Vibe Edition

by

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¹ <https://www.oldbookillustrations.com/illustrations/woods-decked-leaves/>

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Vibe Edition²

Introduction & Essentials

Under the forest floor, it's busy.

Roots carry chatter. Fungi hustle. Trees brood about the meaning of sunlight.

Roots Underground is a short, whispering larp where players become parts of a forest ecology. It's about connection, decay, and the occasional misunderstanding between an oak and a mushroom.

Players: 4–10

Duration: 60–90 minutes

Space: A space comfortable for players to sit or be for extended periods of time. Provide chairs or cushions as necessary.

Roles: Trees • Fungi • Forest Forces (facilitator)

Material: many different colors of string or yarn.

Accessibility: Trees may sit or lie down; fungi move gently; facilitator ensures comfort and safety.

Safety & Touch

Before beginning, hold a Touch & Boundaries conversation.

Ask what kinds of movement and proximity feel safe.

Fungi move themselves through the forest, and are tying strings to other players. Discuss the most acceptable way for everyone. Running the string along the floor is recommended over suspended between players. But it's ok if everyone agrees. Also, the facilitator may occasionally guide or reposition a fungus to represent wind, flood, or fate.

Everyone has permission to step out at any time (Open Door).

Roles & Setup

Players must divide themselves between trees and fungi. It does not have to be equal. Tree players will be stationary throughout the game. Fungi will move around. Players may only speak to a person within arm's reach. Explain the following:

Trees — The Rooted

Choose a comfortable position and stay there. Be within arm's reach of at least one other tree.

You are an old consciousness spread through bark and soil. You may die and be reborn.

You may whisper to nearby trees—slowly, softly—like windborne scent or chemical drift.

Choose or draw one question from The Forest's Questions (page 4).

Fungi — The Wanderers

You are the threads between worlds.

Move slowly through the space, connecting trees. Information flows through you.

Use your yarn or string to show connections between trees, where you are extending yourself.

² Inspired by Still Life by Wendy Gorman, David Hertz, and Heather Silsbee

The facilitator may reposition you to show climate, growth, or decay.
Choose or draw one question from The Forest's Questions (page 4).

Forest Forces — The Facilitator

You are time, weather, and chance.

Guide the rhythm of play and care for the players.

You whisper sensations, describe environmental shifts, or move fungi physically.

Examples:

"Rain gathers in the moss."

"Logging has begun.."

"A forest fire sparks and burns, reshaping everything."

Playing the Game

Build the Forrest (5 min)

The facilitator directs players around the room to their initial starting positions. Every tree starts within arm's reach of another tree. Fungi start with their string attached to one tree player.

Life Beneath (30–60 min)

Play begins in silence.

The facilitator introduces changes:

"Morning dew returns." "Heat ripples through the ground." "Shadows lengthen."

Answers

Explain that after a while of play, a player may stand and declare, "I have an answer!" Everyone pauses and listens. That player then speaks about their question and their conclusion. At that point they may choose a new question, change roles, or exit the game.

End and Debrief (10 min)

After the hour mark, end the game, gather in a circle. Go around and give everyone an opportunity to say what their question was and a few words about their experience.

Thank the forest and each other.

List of questions

Growth and Interdependence

What am I willing to lose so another may grow?

What do I give that I never see returned?

What thread binds me to what I cannot reach?

When do I share my strength, and when do I keep it?

How far can a root travel before it forgets its trunk?

What happens when the sunlight never reaches me?

Who do I shelter without knowing?

How much of me belongs to others?

What does generosity cost in dry soil?

Can balance survive hunger?

Decay and Transformation

What falls apart inside me when I begin to grow?

What remains after everything softens?

Is decay the end, or the beginning of listening?

Who remembers the shape I used to have?

When I dissolve, what stories do I feed?

Do I choose what I become, or am I chosen by rot?

What in me refuses to break down?

What sings in the dark when all else sleeps?

What grows from what I failed to protect?

If I stop changing, do I still live?

Communication and Distance

What message travels without words?

Who speaks through me when I am silent?

What language does the water understand?

How many ways can we misunderstand each other and still connect?

Which roots lie, and which only whisper truth?

What is the cost of carrying another's grief?

Who hears me when the wind drowns everything?

How far can love travel underground?

What truth can survive translation?

What do I mean when I mean nothing?

Time and Memory

Who remembers the fire?

What have I forgotten in order to survive?

How long does a promise last underground?

What memories are trapped in sap?

How do I know when to let the season turn?

What stories have fossilized inside me?

What wakes when I am still?

How do I mourn what the forest forgets?

What remains after the last leaf falls?

Who will remember my name when I am soil?
