

# Nita

## Friends

BY STEPHANIE S.

Hi there - my name is Amanita muscaria formosa. "Nita" for short.

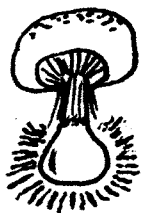
Hello Nita. I'm an annelid. Call me "Lidia".



Lidia, meet my fungal friends.



This is Cortinarius...



"Cortina" please.

Woah! Look at my spore print.

... And Coprinus comatus.

Nita, I told you not to call me by my scientific name!

Oops. My apologies.



This is Shaggy Mane.

What's got you down, Nita?

Why are humans so afraid of us?



Check out my new stem ring. I'm totally punk.



Not all humans fear mushrooms...

Really?!

Just those who stopped playing in the forest and rather listen to the T.V. instead of their hearts/instincts.

That must be confusing.

Exactly the point. These kinds of humans can only relate to mushrooms as far as viewing you all as a utility or resource to exploit.

Plus, these humans have been told to fear you for possibility of being poisonous.

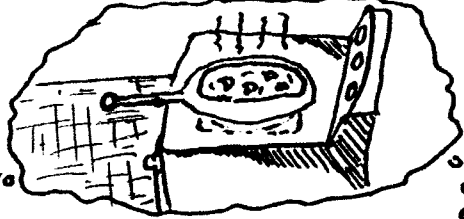


I'm misunderstood too. My poop nourishes the soil for the forest to grow but with human's impervious surfaces - buildings, roads, compacted pathways - suffocating the ground, rain run-off saturates the soil - my home - and I too suffocate. All too many of my kind have dessicated on their pavements just to catch a breath of air. But this isn't about me.

Lidia, what do you mean by utility?



Well, Shaggy Mane, humans would cook you up to eat and same for you Cortina.



Oh those humans - they only think of themselves. If they can't cook you up, hallucinate of you, sell you for monetary gain, or stick you in polluted soils to ingest all kinds of toxins they will not protect you for you are no use to them.

Or so they think.

Nita, you're the poisonous one.

To humans-possibly.

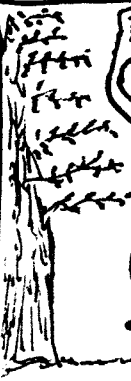


But I keep my conifer friends alive.

Our mycelial strands break down dead wood bits making nutrients available for new life in the forest.

In exchange for energy I bring tree roots those nutrients and water.

We are not poisonous. We are important.

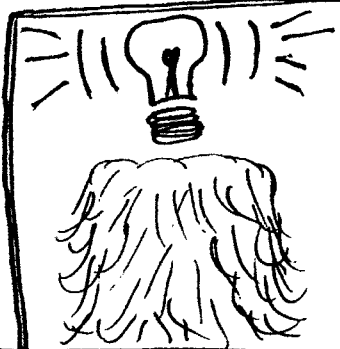
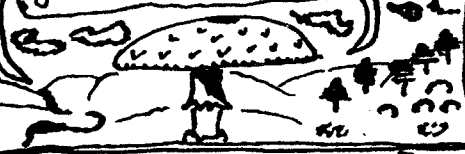


Without us the trees would die. Without trees to make oxygen humans would die.

That is why I want to protect you. We are all linked in the forest.

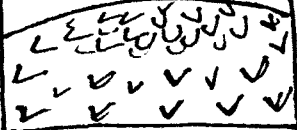
Speaking of self-ocating, Lidia, you would die too.

What do humans do?



If all they do is suffocate your kind, eat and fear mine, and do not protect any of us, then I wish more would eat poisonous mushrooms.

I would sacrifice a few sporocarps for the cause!



Yikes!  
Kill the humans.

If only it were that easy.



Deliquescing



THE END