

Ripples on the Darkened Water

Prologue

After vanquishing the Kraken that plagued the fishing village, you have decided to rest for a few weeks enjoying life on the coast. Word spreads quickly of the returning fish harvest, and many villagers that had left return to their homes. Soon life is bustling again, and you are encouraged to see the mayor make a trading compact with the merpeople of the bay. More half-merpeople come forward, showing that these two cultures had been interdependent all along.

One morning as you are lounging on the beach and enjoying some coconut rice soup, a merman named Nautili pokes his head out of the water and calls your name. He looks worried.

As you approach, he tosses you a conch shell and then begins speaking into his. "I'm sorry to bother you," he begins, "but the merpeople have a problem and you all are the only ones I know who can help us!"

- Noticed dark waters spreading from an island out at sea; Merpeople that went to investigate got sick
- Pollution is spreading towards their homes; Soon it will be at the shores of the fishing village!

You decide to rent a boat for the adventure. Nautili agrees to help you as far as he can, but the waters will prevent him from getting too close to the island.

In the vast ocean, a small, eerie island rises, its jagged rocks like sharp teeth against the sky. The waters around it are dark and murky, tainted by some unknown foulness. Not a single bird flies overhead, and there is no life in the shallow waters, as if all creatures have learned to avoid it.

A shadowy cave mouth yawns wide on the rocky face of the island, like a dark secret waiting to be discovered. It whispers of hidden dangers and ancient mysteries.

Act 1: Encounter

Living boulder

15 HP, 2 Armor, 12S/5D/5W, rock punch d8

As the heroes near the cave, a massive boulder stirs to life, groaning and creaking. It moves incredibly slowly, its rocky surface shifting and grinding as it clumsily attempts to block the path with raised fists of stone.

Act 2: Puzzle/Challenge

You peer into the cave to find a small opening before a solid rock wall with a distinct carving. It appears to be an illustration of the island. On the floor is a box filled with strange sticks of every color of the rainbow.

After the heroes color the carved image correctly, a secret door creaks open in the stone wall. Behind it, a hidden passage beckons them to explore its shadowy depths.

Act 3: Trick/Setback

Inside a hidden chamber, the heroes discover an evil wizard, his hands swirling with dark, crackling magic. He chants ominously, focused on a sinister spell that dances in the air before him. The wizard whirls around in shock, his eyes wide with surprise. With a swift motion of his hand, he unleashes a tidal wave of water that comes rushing towards you!

Evil wizard novice

6 HP, 0 Armor, 10S/10D/12W, tidal wave d4 (prone), water sphere (restrained)

As the wizard is defeated, he speaks one last magic word. With a flash, he opens a glowing portal next to him, showing a scary, strange world full of monsters. Out of the portal slithers an ugly creature, its long, worm-like body covered in slimy, dark gray scales. It has a beak-like mouth surrounded by four writhing tentacles, each lined with sharp barbs ready to grab and bite.

The creature lunges forward, its tentacles snatching up the fallen evil wizard with ease. It devours him quickly, making unsettling crunching noises as it does. Then, with a hiss, it turns its hungry, beak-like mouth towards the heroes, ready to attack!

Act 4: Boss battle

Grick

20 HP, 1 Armor, 15S/12D/8W, bite d8, acidic hold d4 (restrained)

As the heroes deliver the final blow to the grick, it bursts apart dramatically, splattering the room with its slimy guts and the remnants of everything it had devoured. Then the glowing portal behind it begins to flicker and shrink. With a soft whoosh, it snaps shut, cutting off the eerie world it revealed, and leaving behind only the echo of its strange energies.

Act 5: Resolution

Amid the messy remains of the grick, the heroes spot a brilliant blue gem encased in a pendant. It shines brightly, untouched by the goo around it, as if waiting to be discovered.

As the heroes gaze at the waves around the rocky island, they notice the murky waters beginning to clear. The pollution that once tainted the ocean slowly dissipates, and the island no longer looks sinister but part of the natural, peaceful sea.

Upon their triumphant return to the fishing village, the heroes are greeted with cheers and gratitude. The merpeople, thankful for the salvation of their home, reward the heroes with golden ceremonial conch shells, symbols of honor and respect, glistening in the sunlight.