

STORM OVER PURPLE ROCKS



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This is a one-shot 5th Edition Dungeons & Dragons adventure designed for a party of 3-5 level 5 players. It requires access to the 5th Edition Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, and Volo's Guide to Monsters. It features locations from the Forgotten Realms, but can be transplanted into any campaign.

In the seas to the north, there sits an island off the shore of the mainland. It is a small isolated island, with a small population of humans. There is little more than a fishing village, a couple of farms, and some old ruins from when it used to be a military outpost a long time ago. What sets this island apart is that during storms the rocks within the earth of the island glow an ethereal purple, giving the island its name, Purple Rocks. None know exactly why this happens, but some with arcane understanding suggest some kind of planar resonance.

Island History:

The people of Purple Rocks are simple folk, hardy and stoic without luxuries and occupations centered around their fishing industry. For a long time, the islanders would go to the local hag, **Meryl**, for advice and aid, giving small trinkets and offerings in exchange for her services. However, around thirty years ago a priest came to the island, and began to build a following among its inhabitants. As his congregation grew, strange things began to occur. Storms would happen more regularly, perfectly timed to his sermons on the clifftop, but more disturbingly people began to disappear. Young people, children, and infants. Concerned parents would send off word to the continent asking for help, but so remote was the island that by the time help came the whole township was a member of the cult and everyone denied anything was wrong.

The priest, **Oliver Taske** has the statistics of a Kraken Priest (Volo's p215), and serves the magical kraken **Slarkrethel** and the secret Kraken Society. He is charming and polite, but is really quite mad, his mind enslaved. He and his congregation have sacrificed children to the waves during a storm, and while some of them never return, others do. These are Sea Spawn (Volo's p189), servants to Slarkrethel's will, and are indistinguishable from the other Rocklanders until they transform. The sea spawn have aged into adulthood, but Oliver has not aged a day since he arrived on the island 30 years ago. His goal is to create a small army of cultists and sea spawn that obey him, and to eventually take his cult to the mainland to spread Slarkrethel's control.

They ran out of children some time ago, and have begun to use adults and foreign visitors of the island as sacrifices, despite adults not taking to the transformation as well as children, making it a sparsely populated place that is rarely visited.

Adventure Hook:

One party member receives word from **Abigail Reed** (Swashbuckler), a young budding do-good adventurer who has been investigating rumours of children going missing on the island of Purple Rock, and requests help in handling the situation. They are to find her at the Bread and Barnacle inn, and if she is not around to ask for Scarlet.



Abigail Reed



Patrick Grimshaw



Keth Grimshaw



Toby



Oliver Taske



Scarlet

Arriving at Purple Rock:

The party will have hired a boat, owned by a gregarious halfling sailor named **Patrick Grimshaw** (Swashbuckler, Volo's p217) and his brooding adopted half-orc son **Keth Grimshaw** (Gladiator, MM p346), who assist in taking them to Purple Rock. They arrive as a large storm is looming from over the ocean and is sure to hit overnight, so the Grimshaws arrange to stay on the island until the next day but more importantly that means there is no way off the island until tomorrow. When they land at the docks a huge simple dockhand, **Toby** (Gladiator, MM p346), helps them moor up. The islanders do not want to talk to adventurers, but as they step onto land they are approached by the priest, Oliver Taske. He is young, with wind tossed blonde hair and sea blue eyes. He greets the visitors and welcomes them to their island, denying that anything is wrong and touting it up to the locals and their superstitions. He also informs them he is holding a sermon tonight and encourages them to join. If asked about his religion, he will explain he worships the god of the seas, avoiding going into too much detail, and unfortunately a very busy man with much to do. The islanders show him respect and attention that they would not give the party.

The Bread and Barnacle:

The taverna and inn is a soggy rustic local drinking hole with barely three rooms to offer. If pressed for information, no one knows anything about the missing people, and they claim never to have seen Abigail Reed. Playing on the small ramshackle stage are a trio of bards, the lead being a handsome and sarcastic young woman with flaming red hair and a red dress, **Scarlet** (a Deep Scion, Volo's p135, with

the Bard's Taunt ability from p211). She willingly tells them that a deceitful hag has been stealing the local children, and folk are too afraid to go against her. She says Abigail went after the hag a couple of days ago and hasn't been seen since, and Scarlet gives them the location of the hag's lair in a cave. If the party investigate Abigail's old room, they find it having been cleaned and cleared recently, and none of Abigail's belongings left behind.

The Caves:

Crossing the island, before they come to the shore where the caves are, they find a series of small nameless graves, each marked with driftwood, and decorated with shells and sea fauna. There are about a dozen of them, and each one contains a child who has died from drowning, from the sacrifices.

When the party goes to the cave they find it a winding narrow tunnel formed out of the rock. The walls are decorated with carved scratches in Abyssal, written by the sea hag warning intruders to stay out. The light from the shore diminishes and sounds echo, including the rolling thunder getting closer to the island. The rock around them begins to glow purple ever so slightly. There is a simple string curtain tied with shells and small animal bones, that if moved rattle loudly but can be carefully taken down with a DC14 Sleight of Hand check. They come across a chamber (20ft wide) of dim turquoise light, illuminated by glowing fungi. It is a dry chamber where all kinds of fungus, herbs, and vegetables are grown in rows along the walls. **Globdop**, a mild mannered kua toa (MM p199), tends to them. He will defend the area but call out for help if overwhelmed.

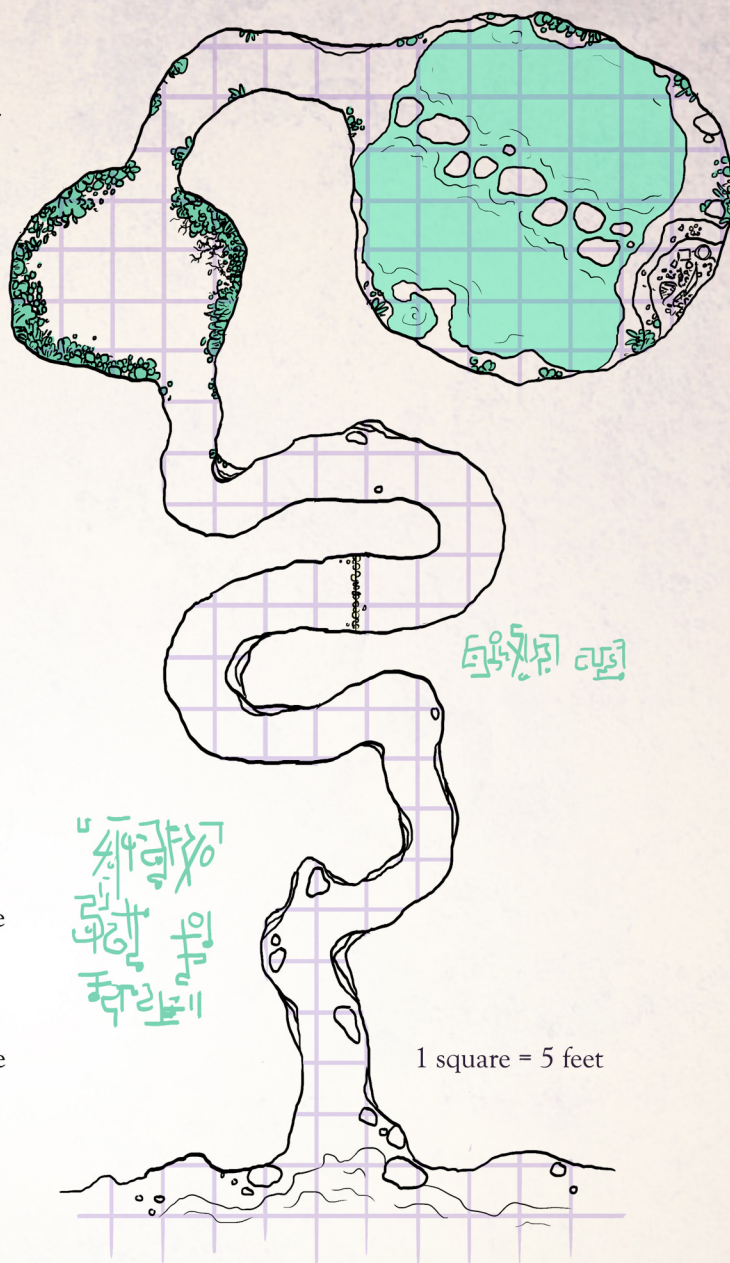
On the other side of the chamber is a curved tunnel that leads to another open chamber (35ft wide), which houses an underground pool. Stepping stone rocks lead across it to a stone platform on the other side which is covered in old rusty trinkets and items. Use the trinket table in Player's Handbook (p160), as well as these suggested items.

- Assortment of gems and jewellery worth 180gp
- Silver cutlery worth 15gp
- Ring of Water Walking
- Scimitar of Sahaguin design
- Large conch shell carved with runes in Giant
- Discordant music box with a rotating mermaid figurine inside with its head broken off
- Assortment of shark teeth and strangely shaped shells
- A Will-o-wisp trapped in a glass jar

The walls are covered in the glowing fungi, and the pool reflect the light, making it difficult to see beneath the water's surface, and by now the stone around the room is glowing purple quite vividly. Meryl (Sea Hag, MM p179) lives here, and if she hears the party from afar she will hide underneath the water and ambush them. She is actively hostile, having long believed someone would come for her eventually. If persuaded to talk, the hag tells that the locals used to come to her for help and guidance, especially when the merfolk were a problem, but forty years ago the priest turned up and started converting people to his religion. Ever since people have avoided the hag, and the seas have been harsh and unkind to her.



Meryl



Sometimes she finds the drowned bodies of very young children washed up on her shores. She is bitter over her loss of power, and wants control over the island once again, so she will assist the party with information against Oliver Taske. She is unwilling to give them any of her hoard, but can be persuaded by a successful Charisma check. There are tunnels and caves under the island that they could travel through, but many of the routes are submerged in water, so she recommends they proceed over land.

If Meryl is killed, then the party should proceed to the ritual anyway, as that is where the islanders have all gone to.

The Ritual:

It is getting close to midnight as the party make their way to the shrine. The storm is fierce, with driving rain and wind as they race across the open fields and hills. From a distance they can see the lamplights of the town, but they can also see torchlight some ways away up on the cliffs (out of view from when they had arrived by boat).

The ritual is set up on a cliff edge (60ft drop) where some old weathered battlements cling to the edge, with half a dozen wooden posts leaning out hanging things by rope out of sight (sacrificed bodies that were too old to be thrown to the ocean). An 8ft tall shrine has been built out of wood and stone and, on closer inspection, bone, resembling an abstract eldritch shape with many arms. Most of the town has turned out (approximately 20 individuals. Adjust to taste and player group strength), wearing heavy leather coats with hoods, bracing themselves against the heavy wind and rain. Lightning cracks in the distance over the oceans, and standing before the shrine, illuminated by the flashes in the sky, stands Oliver Taske, arms outstretched to the storm shouting a sermon.

At the shrine are three gagged and bound figures, kneeling. They are Patrick and Keth Grimshaw, and Abigail Reed. The party won't have seen her before, but it should be an easy guess. Guarding them is Toby, armed with a spear. Keth is knocked out unconscious, but Patrick is struggling angrily, shouting through a gag in his mouth, and Abigail is carefully watching the whole situation but looks noticeably scared.



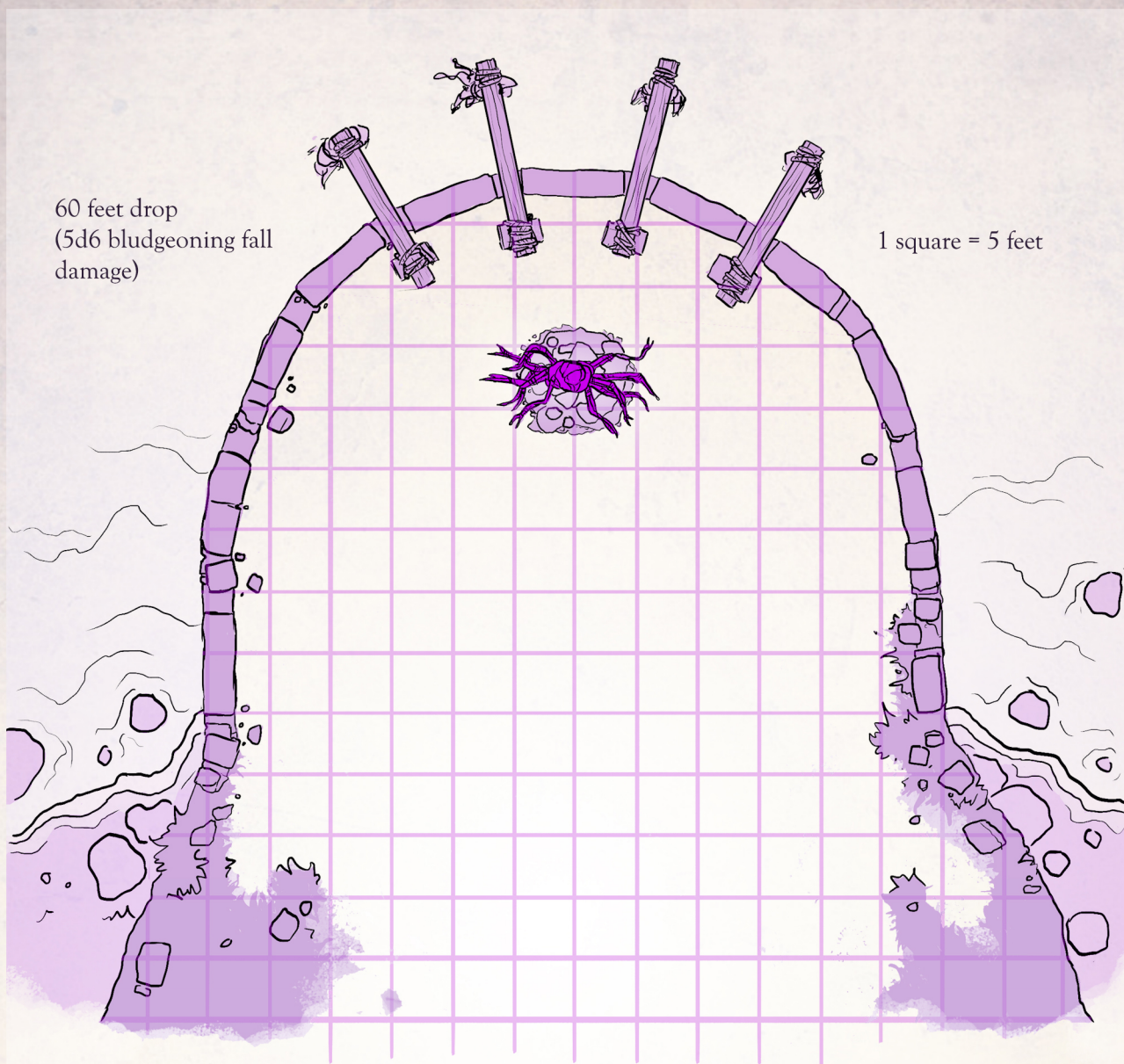
When the masses realise the group are there, the crowd treats them with caution and suspicion but Oliver Taske welcomes them, and gives them the option to join them in worshipping the Old One, the Tempest Lord, the Master of the Deep, the Voice of the Storm, the great Slarkrethel.

Suggested combat and NPC tactics:

Should fighting break out, Oliver will call the cultists to arms, beginning to transform into the eldritch abomination that is his true form. Half the crowd transform into **Sea Spawn** (Volo's p189) while the rest attack with simple weapons like clubs, knives, and sickles. To keep it simple with the crowd, you can use the mob rules in *Dungeon Master's Guide* p250, or assume that half of the number of individuals attacking a single player will hit with their attacks. They are not easily intimidated, as long as Oliver remains alive. The crowd will swarm the party, and Scarlet will stealthily try to pick off anyone who is separated.

Toby will race to defend Oliver, leaving the captives unguarded. If the party seem to be losing, have the captive NPCs break free and assist.

If Oliver is brought to 0 he can use his dying breath to cast *Call Lightning* with double damage, which breaks the very earth they stand on, causing the battlements to begin to collapse into the ocean. The islanders all scatter, and the party have two rounds to make it to safety, within which Scarlet will use *Psychic Screech* to attempt to stun the party.



If you think they're still looking a little too healthy and/or sane after all that, a gigantic tentacle can rise from the frothing depths to deliver a single attack blow (Kraken tentacle attack stats, MM p196), potentially dragging a poor victim away, demanding sacrifice. Any visibility on the tentacle's origin will reveal it coming from a shoreline far too shallow to accommodate a kraken, and a swirling purple portal underneath the waves from whence it has been summoned. Once it retracts from the attack, the portal closes.

If the party decided to join Oliver Taske and worship Slarkrethel, Olver will find that sacrificing the other NPCs was not enough to satisfy the kraken, and the party clearly must be sacrificed as well.

After the storm:

The sun shines the next morning, and the clifftop altar is destroyed. The Rocklanders busy

themselves moving and burying the dead, and any of the surviving Sea Spawn have transformed back to human form. They try their best to avoid the adventurers but are clearly ashamed.

After taking opportunities to try and berate the locals, Abigail Reed (assuming she survives) thanks everyone for their help but also apologises for getting them involved. She decides to quit adventuring, as this is not what she expected it to be.

The Grimshaw boat remains at the docks, and should one or both of them have survived, they will happily leave the island for good.

If the party return to Meryl before they leave, the hag greets them in old lady form and thanks them for their service, glad to have the island back under her control.