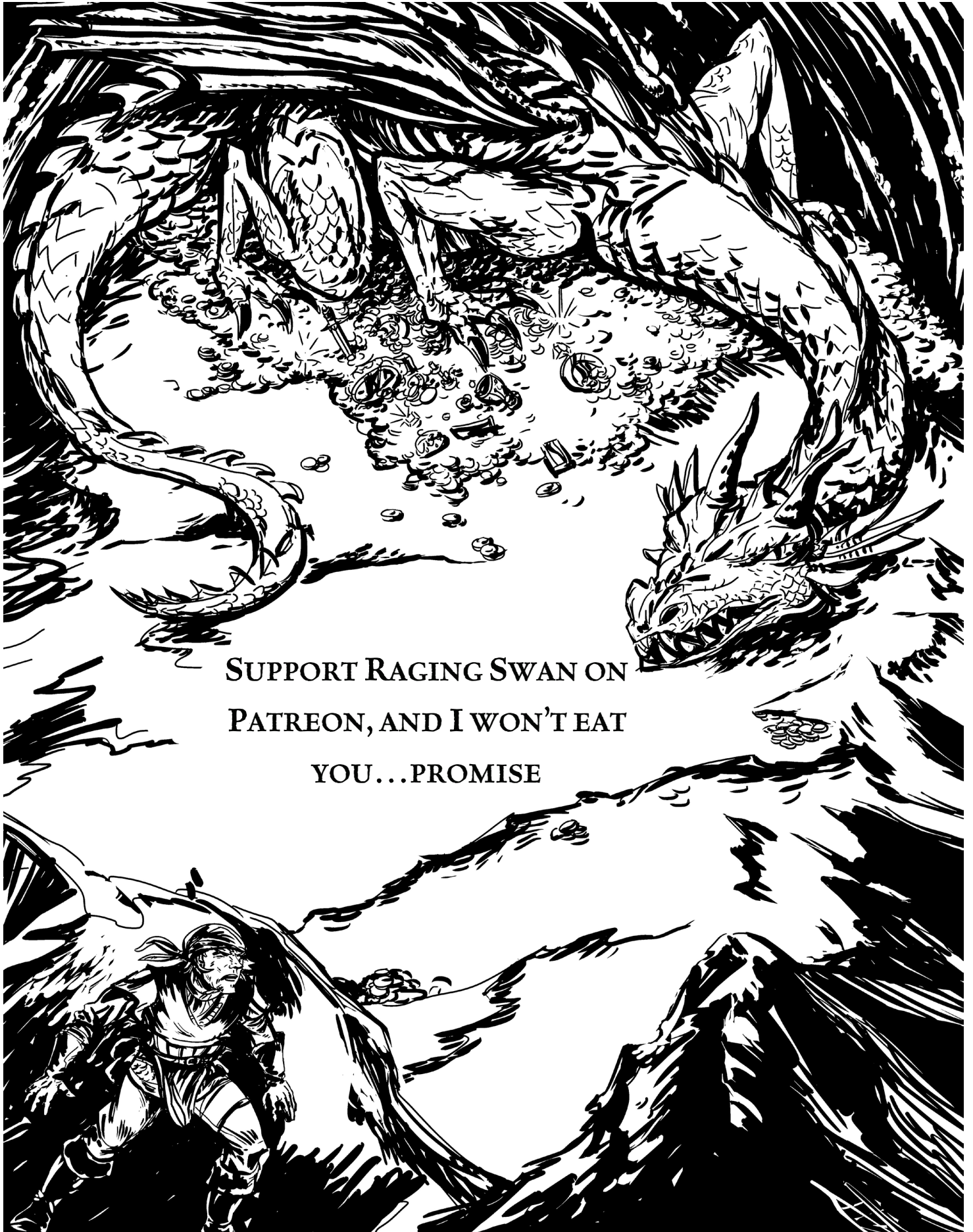


RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

AUGUST 2015





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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: AUGUST 2015

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, the *GM's Monthly Miscellany* series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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CONTENTS

Foreword	2
GM Advice: How to Name the Roads in Your Campaign	3
Coldwater At a Glance	4
I Loot the Body: Trinkets.....	6
Scions of Evil: Gahlgax Atarrith.....	8
20 Things to Find in a Smuggler's Storeroom	12
Legal Stuff	13

SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, this instalment of *GM's Monthly Miscellany* presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **I Loot the Body** Josh Vogt.
- **Scions of Evil** Christian Alipounarian, Creighton Broadhurst, Ben Kent, Andrew J. Martin, Julian Neale, David Posener and Martin Tideswell.
- **Village Backdrop: Coldwater** Creighton Broadhurst.

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FOREWORD

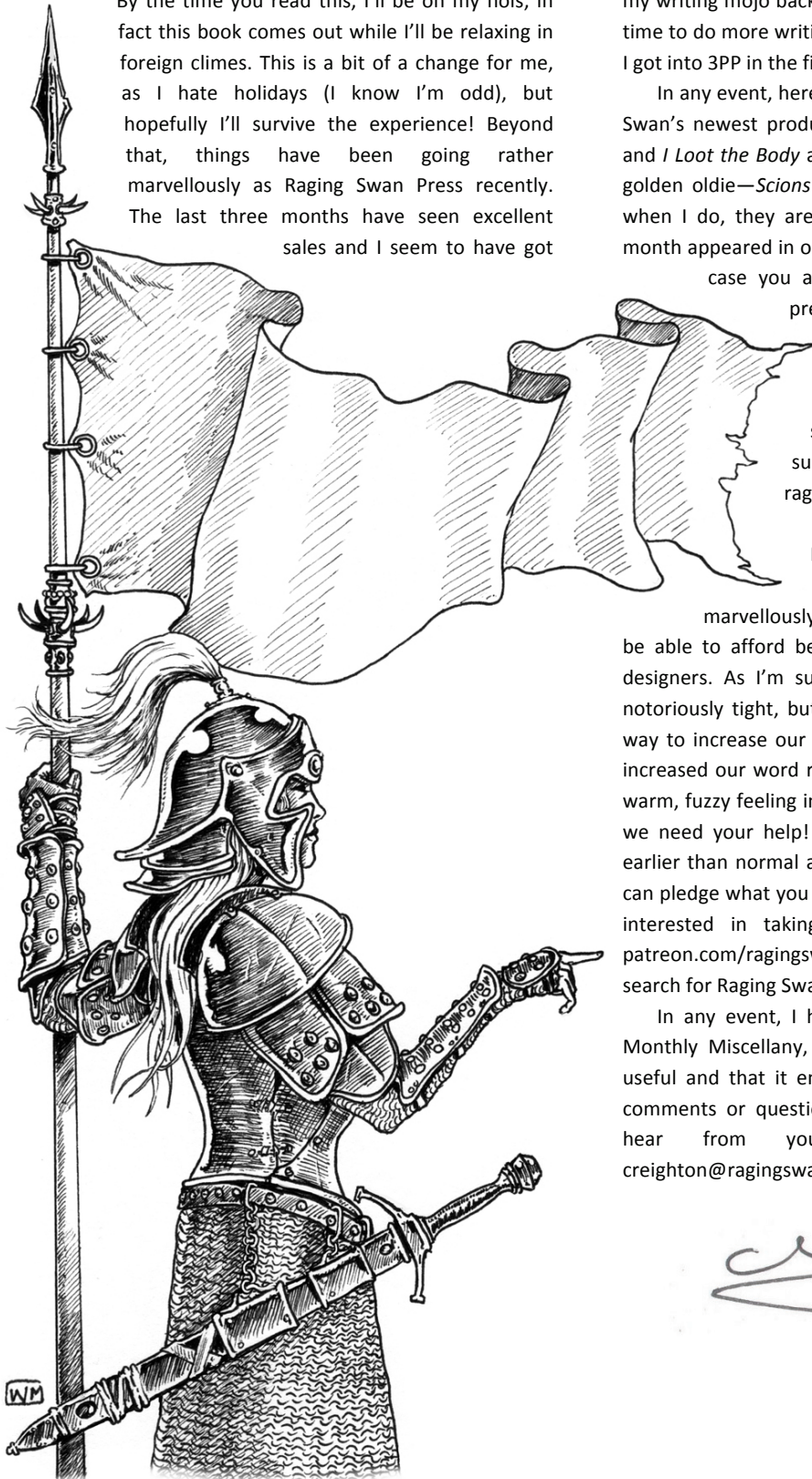
By the time you read this, I'll be on my hols; in fact this book comes out while I'll be relaxing in foreign climes. This is a bit of a change for me, as I hate holidays (I know I'm odd), but hopefully I'll survive the experience! Beyond that, things have been going rather marvellously as Raging Swan Press recently. The last three months have seen excellent sales and I seem to have got

my writing mojo back (or more accurately, I seem to have found time to do more writing—long may it continue as it is the reason I got into 3PP in the first place!)

In any event, herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products including *Village Backdrop: Coldwater* and *I Loot the Body* as well as one of my favourite sections of a golden oldie—*Scions of Evil*. I rarely run high-level games, but when I do, they are very high level! The villain featured this month appeared in one of my Christmas death match games. (In case you are interested, the party were wiped out pretty rapidly—take a look at the stat block to see why!) I've also included a couple of short articles for your gaming pleasure You can read the articles—and scores more as well as campaign summaries—at creightonbroadhurst.com and ragingswan.com.

You might also be aware that Raging Swan Press is now on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April, and it's going rather marvellously. The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've increased our word rate to five cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in taking a look at the campaign, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.



GM ADVICE: HOW TO NAME THE ROADS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Every GM I've ever met names the various villages, towns and cities in his campaign. It's as normal and natural as naming a world's rivers, forests and mountain ranges. What few GMs do, however, is name the streets, alleys and other thoroughfares of their settlements.

Don't get me wrong; no GM has the time to name every road, street and alley in a given town, but naming a few helps bring the settlement alive in the players' minds. For example:

- Why is that shady lane called Dagger Alley?
- Why is that road called Dead Troll Road?
- Is it worth avoiding Beggars' Way?
- Is Temple Avenue a good place to find magical healing?
- What could possibly go wrong on Cutthroat Alley?

Such questions not only breathe life into the setting, but can even lead to interesting minor encounters or even the genesis of the PCs' next adventure. Adventurers venturing down Cutthroat Alley, for example, deserve everything they get while those wandering Market Street might discover a bargain or hear a particularly juicy rumour.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

There are many different ways a road could be named. Here are a few of the most common styles:

- [Descriptor] street/alley/lane: Example, Dagger Lane, North Street and so on.
- Street of [Descriptor]: Example, Street of Swords, Road of the Dragon and so on.
- [Feature] street/alley/lane: Example, Water Street, Church Way and so on.
- [proper name's] street/alley/lane: Example, Krorz's Promenade, Sorn's Alley and so on.
- [Race, creature or monster] street/alley/lane: Example, Giant's Street, Orc Alley and so on.

THINGS TO NAME A ROAD AFTER

Once chosen, a name can enhance a town's flavour and verisimilitude. Roads can be named for or after a variety of features, events or personalities. For example,

- **Major Building or Urban Feature:** If a road runs to or passed an important urban feature, sometimes the road becomes known by that feature. For example, a road running passed the lord's castle may be known as Castle Street, while a road festooned with temples might be called Temple Way. Streets could also one named for churches, local markets, town gates and so on. Similarly, a street linking the town to a nearby village may become known by the name of the village.

- **Business Type:** In an urban area, businesses often cluster together, and within this mercantile district sometimes businesses of the same type establish themselves nearby to one another. So, for example, a street might become known as the Street of the Smiths for all the metalworkers found there.
- **Proper Name:** Perhaps someone famous lived or once lived on the street. Alternatively, a street could be named after a legendary personage thought to have once visited the area or even someone who died there. Some streets could even be named after deities and other semi-mythical beings. Additionally, streets could be named after important local families, famed bands of adventurers and so on.
- **Feature:** A street running by a river might become known by the river's name—for example, Fleet Walk—while a road running in a cardinal direction may be called North Street. For example, in my hometown, Abbey Road leads toward a ruined abbey, Market Street still hosts a market and Fleet Walk runs over the River Fleet (which now flows under the road). Other examples could include Water Street, Marsh Lane and so on.
- **History:** Sometimes streets are named for events. Perhaps a troll was slain on Dead Troll Street and it was named (or renamed) to commemorate the event. Alternatively, a street could be named after a prominent local—perhaps Culven's Way—or for some feature that no longer exists (or which is now buried beneath the modern town).
- **Flavour:** If the party head down Dagger Alley before turning into Cutthroat Lane it's a clear indication they are entering an unsavoury part of town. Similarly, the Street of Silks likely stands in a nicer part of town. Street names are a quick and simple way to impart a location's flavour.

NOT ALL ROADS ARE CREATED EQUAL

When naming a street, road or alley the GM should be aware that some kinds of streets occur only in certain parts of town. For example, alleys and lanes probably don't have much of a place in the posher areas while boulevards and avenues—normally wide, tree-lined roads—have no place in the slum.

A FINAL NOTE

The information in this article can easily be adapted to naming the streets and lanes of any village or city—even those inhabited by nonhumans. Remember, even a small village with only two streets probably has names for both—otherwise how do locals get around, give directions to travellers and so on?

COLDWATER AT A GLANCE

An isolated place, perched upon an inhospitable coast at the head of a muddy coastal path, Coldwater is not an easy, or pleasant, place to visit. The village huddles at the mouth of a steep-sided valley leading down to the sea. Here, the seabed quickly drops away and the waters are deep, dark and cold.

Widely thought of as a haven for smugglers and other miscreants, rumours swirl as thickly about the village as the persistent sea fogs that sometimes blanket the place for days at a time. Other rumours—whispered in taprooms up and down the coast—speak of darker things: of unwholesome practises carried out in worship of some ancient, depraved power, of travellers going missing near the village and of an ancient set of steps buried at the base of nearby cliffs and revealed only at particularly low tides.

Whatever the truth, Coldwater's folk are sullen, distrustful of outsiders and some are said to suffer from horrible deformities. Even the village's ruler—the aged Elina Vuolle—hates the place and leaves its folk to fend for themselves. Two families dominate day-to-day life: the Eerolas and the Purhos. Trapped in a low-grade, but vicious, family feud the two families subtly work against one another and use the other villagers as their pawns.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Elina Vuolle

Government Overlord

Population 188 (109 humans, 59 deformed humans, 18 half-orcs, 1 gnome, 1 half-elf)

Alignments CN, N, NE

Languages Common, Orc

Corruption +2; **Crime** -1; **Economy** +0; **Law** -2; **Lore** +1; **Society** -2

Qualities Insular, notorious

Danger +10; **Disadvantages** Cursed

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Armas Hujanen (location 5; LE male half-elf wizard [universalist] 5) Armas has come to Coldwater to study the high incidence of deformity in the populace.

Atro Purho (location 8; N male deformed human rogue 4) Young and dynamic, Atro has an implacable hatred for the Eerolas blaming them for his own ill fortunes.

Elina Vuolle (location 1; LN female old human aristocrat 2/sorcerer [abyssal] 6) Elina hates Coldwater (and her lot).

Sauli Eerola (location 4; NE male middle-aged human expert 2/fighter 2) Patriarch of the Eerola family, Sauli once served as a soldier but now runs the family “shipping” business.

Uzlen Itkonen (location 3; N female half-orc expert 2/barbarian 1) Uzlen runs the local shipbuilding business and tries to stay out of the Eerola's and Purho's feuding as much as possible.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Coldwater comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Vuolle Manor:** Perched on the side of the valley, Vuolle Manor overlooks the village. It's battlemented walls give spectacular views of the surrounds.
2. **Waterside:** The harbour is the busiest—and smelliest—place in the village. Here, a gallimaufry of fishing vessels and small merchant craft jostle for berths.
3. **Itkonen's:** Here, Uzlen Itkonen builds and repairs fishing vessels and small merchant craft. The dockyard is always busy.
4. **Sauli's Home:** Here dwells the patriarch of the Eerola family.
5. **Crooked House:** This partially sunken building is the home of Armas Hujanen. Part of the cellar's foundations has collapsed, giving the house its name.
6. **Chapel of the Mistress:** Dedicated to Serat (the uncaring Mistress of Storms) this small chapel is one of the most substantial buildings in the village. On misty nights its bells toll endlessly to guide home those still out on the water.
7. **The Stoooped Man:** Coldwater's only inn and tavern, the Stoooped Man is a bastion of cheap alcohol, surly service and draughty, flea-infested accommodation.
8. **Atro's Home:** Atro Purho dwells in this large, ramshackle building. Extensive cellars intersect with a sea cave; here much of the Purho's clandestine business is conducted.
9. **Devil's Cove:** Strange goings on and several disappearances conspire to keep the populace away from this nearby cove.
10. **The Sunken Stair:** Only exposed at particularly low tides, these stairs lead to a chamber containing a seemingly unopenable pair of stone doors.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Smuggling, fishing

Base Value 650 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd;

Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

When the PCs arrive in Coldwater, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *cure light wounds* (50 gp), *hide from animals* (50 gp), *protection from energy (fire)* (750 gp)
- **Rings** *feather falling* (2,200 gp), *sustenance* (2,500 gp)
- **Rod** *lesser metamagic rod of extend spell* (3,000 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *charm person*, *disguise self* and *erase* (75 gp) *disrupt undead* (12.5 gp), *scorching ray* (150 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** *inflict light wounds* (25 gp)
- **Staff** *fire* (18,950 gp; location 1)
- **Weapon** +1 *flaming longsword* (8,315 gp; location 1)

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about Coldwater. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser result.

DC 10: Coldwater is a dump—the place is a dismal cesspit of the worst sort. The people are sullen and tremendously ugly; there is no reason to go there.

DC 15: The folk of Coldwater are of the worst moral fibre. Many are smugglers and rumours of an evil cult based in the village refuse to die.

DC 20: A nearby cove has a strange feature buried in its cliffs—a sunken staircase that only becomes visible at particularly low tides.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Dark of hair and pale of skin, many of the villagers appear to be unwell in a general, non-descript way. Some are horribly disfigured.

Dress Villagers wear loose, ill-fitting woollen or leather clothes suited to their trade.

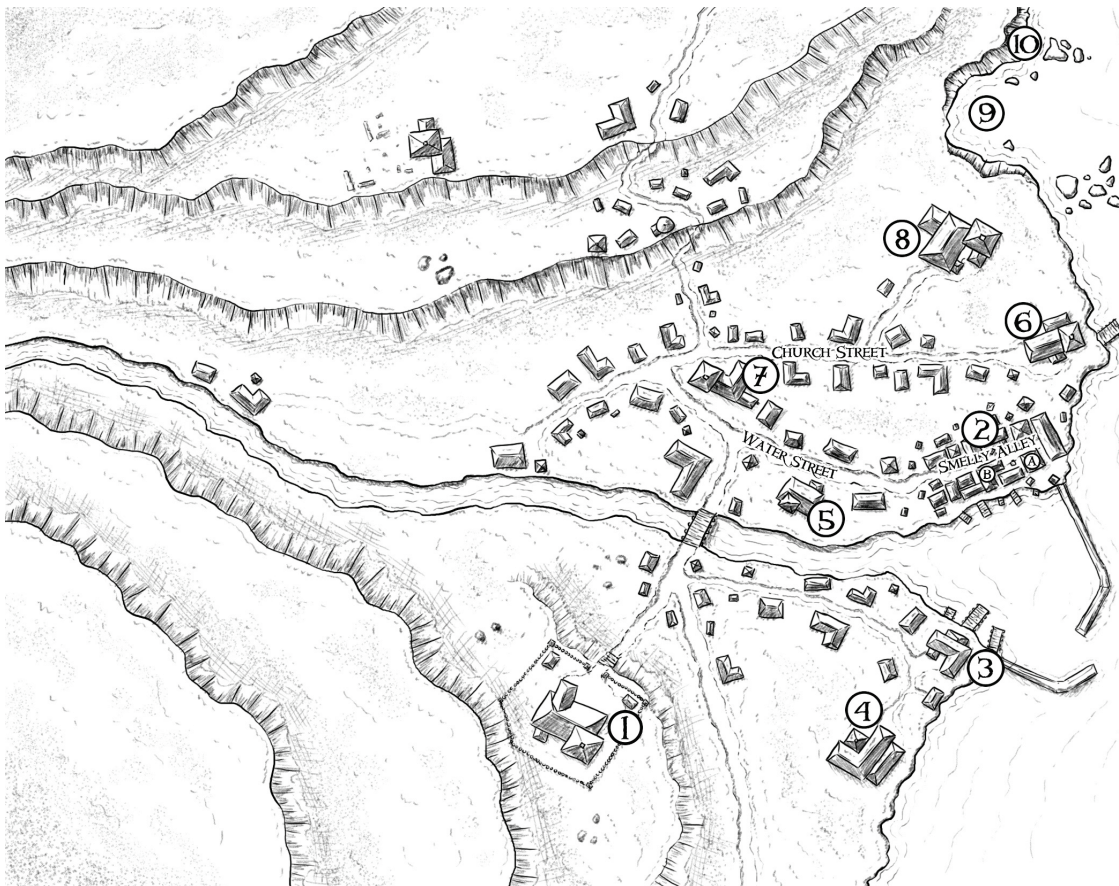
Nomenclature *male* Arvo, Ilari, Kaarlo, Valto, Viljo; *female* Aila, Eeva, Helmi, Pia, Ulla; *family* Eerola, Itkonen, Purho, Varala.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Coldwater and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	Unguessable things lurk in the waters of Devil Cove. Strange figures have been seen moving in the mists and people have gone missing there.
2*	Armas Hujanen is digging in his cellar for something best left buried. He dug so deep, his house almost collapsed!
3	The Eerola and the Purho hate each other; the two families have been implacable foes for generations.
4	Elina Vuolle has nothing but disdain for Coldwater and its folk. She's tried to sell it—and her title—several times.
5	A mysterious set of stairs pierces the cliffs of Devil Cove; they are only accessible at particularly low tides.
6*	Many of the Purho are horribly disfigured; they take a perverse pleasure in their appearance and often drown healthy babies born into the family.

*False rumour



I LOOT THE BODY: TRINKETS

Folk often have small, seemingly odd, items in their possession. Use this table, to generate the details of such trinkets.

D%	
1	A wood carving of an owl, so lifelike the eyes might blink at any moment.
2	A dried-up snakeskin wrapped into a tight coil.
3	A rose stem with the thorns still on, but all the petals plucked.
4	A wadded up scrap of leather that looked like it once had writing on it.
5	A shard of glass that changes colour depending on how it is held up to the light.
6	An odd stone that seems attracted to most metal it nears.
7	A strap of silk with the words "Put it Back" inked on it.
8	A rabbit's foot, dyed purple.
9	A shard of porcelain decorated with tiny painted flowers.
10	A bunch of needles stuck through a doll made of stuffed sackcloth.
11	A whole eggshell with the egg inside somehow drained.
12	A white stone with several black lines scored across it.
13	A miniature house formed of fired clay painted outlandish colours.
14	Six small feathers tied together with twine.
15	A vial of ash.
16	A battered tin cup.
17	A horseshoe so rusty it could be snapped in half with a good tug.
18	A sheet of paper, blank except for a dot in the middle and the words "You are here."
19	A dirty mirror so small it fits into a pocket.
20	An empty glass orb so fragile, the slightest pressure should crush it.
21	A length of string that looks to have been snapped in half and re-tied multiple times.
22	One half of a wooden puzzle block.
23	A steel doorknob, with the end snapped off jaggedly.
24	A tarnished silver bell lacking a clapper. The worn initial H.P.L are barely visible on its lip.
25	A pair of bird wings, sewn together so they flap if held while the wearer runs.
26	This appears to be someone's disembodied moustache.
27	A chunk of obsidian shaped into a cow's head.
28	A piece of pink ribbon tied into a little bow.
29	A thimble that's been hammered flat.
30	A coin that appears to have been bitten by impossibly sharp teeth.
31	A weighted coin that, when flipped, always lands on its edge.
32	A tankard that turns anything poured inside into raw sewage.
33	A massive shark's tooth.
34	A clay panel with someone's handprint pressed into it.
35	A flier to a house of ill-repute.
36	A preserved pair of ears that look to be torn off a goblin.
37	A vial with a live spider scabbling within.
38	A brass listening horn that makes the person using it go deaf while it's in their ear.
39	A lady's painted fan, but the painting changes every time it's opened and closed.
40	A bag of mints.
41	A pouch that feels and sounds heavy with coin but, when opened, is wholly empty. Investigation reveals five platinum coins woven into its lining.
42	A few pages of horribly written poetry.
43	The figurine of a soldier, complete with metal armour.
44	A hammer that bends every nail it strikes.
45	A scrawled bill from a shady fortune teller.
46	A pair of wedding bands.
47	A shrunken head.
48	A child's crude sketch of their family.
49	A plumb bob that points toward the sky.
50	A spyglass that only shows the viewer's own eye peering back.
51	A block of wood that has been rubbed so many times it has a thumb groove worn into it.
52	Spectacles that turn the wearer's eyes bright red.
53	A fist-sized stone with a miniature sword stabbed deep into it.
54	A length of black cloth with eyeholes cut in it.
55	A sack of glass marbles, with what looks like a starburst frozen inside each.
56	An octopus tentacle.
57	A brass doorknocker shaped like a grumpy old man's face.
58	An hourglass without any sand inside.
59	A vampire fang capped with gold.
60	A map of a city labelled "The Middle of Nowhere."
61	A seashell that when held to the ear emits sounds like the howling wind.
62	A heavy metal ball that only rolls uphill.
63	A handful of fine gold dust wrapped up in a parchment sealed with red wax.
64	A metal figurine moulded in the shape of a horned demon.
65	A scrap of paper that words literally slide off of, no matter what they are written with.

66	Two shining silver balls that chime when clicked together.
67	A random scattering of gears and rivets.
68	An unused coal.
69	A small jar of odd-smelling wax.
70	A silver rod that makes no noise when it strikes anything.
71	A clump of blonde hair tied with fine string.
72	A clay ball with something rattling inside when shaken.
73	A slab of honeycomb.
74	A tongue that, when held, waggles and tries to lick the person holding it.
75	A handkerchief with the initials "O.P." stitched on one corner.
76	A puff of steam that refuses to dissipate.
77	A small metal bar etched with the word: "Help."
78	A paintbrush so clumped with paint, it's useless.
79	A bone stylus tipped with a long claw.
80	A clay whistle that makes no noise, no matter how hard it is blown.
81	A pair of shoes so small, they must be for a baby. They look like they've never been worn.
82	A twig around which is wrapped a length of thick twine.
83	A single acorn. Except one that's formed of pyrite.
84	A pair of leather reins, like those used for driving horses.

85	A stone that glows during the day and turns dark at night.
86	An invitation to a party going on that evening.
87	An envelope with a print of rosy lips painted on the flap.
88	A book smaller than a thumbnail. When a character flips through the book, the words on each page echo in his mind.
89	A box that, when opened, reveals a yellow lizard, which skitters for freedom.
90	A stinking woollen sock covered in patches.
91	A thumb carved out of stone.
92	A thin length of metal bent into the shape of a question mark.
93	A fish skeleton, tied together with thin wires.
94	A metal comb missing all its tines.
95	A half-burnt candle, with wicks sticking out at both ends.
96	This soggy mass appears to be a collection of mossy clumps.
97	The brim of a top hat, missing the actual hat portion.
98	A little skull carved out of jade.
99	A small jar full of fireflies, most of which appear to be dead.
100	A fist-sized lump of stone with flecks of gold embedded in the rock.



SCIONS OF EVIL: GAHLGAX ATARRITH

A being almost as powerful as its master, Gahlgax is a nightmarish foe for even legendary heroes.

An elder being of almost unimaginable power and depravity, Gahlgax had lived for millennia uncounted. One of the most powerful Abyssal balor lords, Orcus himself blessed him with undeath a score of centuries ago.

Only the greatest hero has any chance of even reaching Gahlgax's lair, Calaunsur, a benighted place of shadow, fire and death set deep within the Abyss. Even if he should reach Calaunsur, the hero must then fight his way through legions of lesser undead, vampire guards and powerful skeletal spellcasters as well as countless guardian demons before finally reaching Gahlgax's inner sanctum. Here he sits upon The Moaning Throne, a huge edifice of fused skulls crafted from the remains of his greatest enemies and rivals. Using powerful and unique magics unknown to mortals, he has bound the souls of the slain to their skulls, dooming them to an eternity of suffering and madness. The moans of the imprisoned souls emanate from the

throne, acting as a constant reminder to all those nearby of the folly of challenging Gahlgax.

A faithful servant of his lord and master (well as faithful as any demon can be) Gahlgax is served in turn by a triumvirate of graveknight mariliths that lead his armies and protect his person from the rare threat that manages to breach his terrible fortress of fused bone and flaming shadow.

Deeply steeped in the bloody lore of the Abyss, Gahlgax's knowledge on a number of blasphemous and otherworldly subjects rivals that of any mortal sage. Having acted in the mortal world for years almost without number, he is also surprisingly knowledgeable in the ways of men and their allies.

Feared even by other balor and the most powerful of liches, Gahlgax's word is law in his realm; no other dares rise to challenge the vampiric balor.

Background: Gahlgax's climb to become Orcus' most trusted servant has been slow, but inexorable. He has slain countless other demons in his quest for power and slain legions of mortals who have dared to penetrate the benighted realms of the Abyss.



It was Gahlgax who was responsible for the disappearance of Enkidu Shuruppak, the so-called Purple Archmage, after the foolish and colossally arrogant wizard sought to summon and control a balor and it was also Gahlgax who single-handedly destroyed the Temple-Fortress of Barir-Kar after the priests and paladins of that place came dangerously close to discovering certain secrets relating to the *Wand of Orcus*. Countless other heroes have fallen before his blade or been destroyed by his deceptions or sorcerous magics. Such is his depraved infamy that he appears in the holy scripts of many good-aligned faiths with epithets such as the Light Banisher, Destroyer of Hope or simply The Corruptor.

Orcus personally gifted him with vampirism after Gahlgax slew a rival balor that sought (foolishly) to supplant the Prince of the Undead. In truth, the now long-forgotten balor did nothing of the sort, Gahlgax manipulated and miss-reported his rival's actions so that it appeared he sought to steal Orcus' famed wand. Slaying the balor, he then (humbly) presented his evidence to Orcus. Orcus, in rare good mood after torturing and dismembering a particularly obnoxious and strident paladin-hero, drank deeply of Gahlgax's blood to create the unholy abomination that now serves him.

Since that day, Gahlgax has seemingly worked tirelessly for his master.

Personality: Utterly without remorse, empathy, mercy or any other redeeming trait, Gahlgax is as close to an utterly evil being as a mortal can ever "hope" to meet. Although as devoted as any demon could be to its master, Gahlgax is slowly beginning to realise that his power may one day rival his master's. Steeped in the lore of the Abyss and rich in a demon's innate cunning, Gahlgax knows that this day is a long way off, but what matters the passage of millennia to an immortal being?

He has no compunction handing out the most brutal, depraved tortures imaginable to any that displease him.

In truth, Gahlgax greatly enjoys his new status as a vampire; he finds the variety of abilities useful and particularly enjoys dominating his foes (or torture playthings). He particularly enjoys humiliating those in clutches – particularly powerful good-aligned prisoners – making them carry out a vast range of depraved, humiliating tasks before driving them mad.

Distinguishing Features: Huge and wreathed in flame and shadow, Gahlgax is instantly recognisable as a being of immense power. However, those that look closely at him may recognise his undead nature – his fangs are unnaturally long for a demon's and although a creature of darkness himself, he casts no shadow.

TACTICS

Gahlgax is a cunning tactician and warrior. He prefers to fight from a distance, using his multitude of spell-like abilities to confound and terrorise his enemies. He particularly enjoys using his dominate ability to force his enemies to fight among themselves. When only one opponent remains, he strikes mercilessly cutting him down with his terrible longsword.

If given warning of a serious assault upon his person, he briefly wields each Sword of Orcus' *brilliant energy adamantine longsword* giving it the *vorpal* ability for the upcoming battle.

HOOKS

Only the most powerful heroes can hope to survive meddling in Gahlgax's schemes. Many of the plots Gahlgax spins are at the behest of his undying master, but others are fashioned to increase his own powers.

The PCs may come to Gahlgax's attention if they destroy a balor or other powerful demon or undead servant of Orcus. Gahlgax is not one to let a potential threat grow unchecked and so he despatches increasingly large and powerful bands of demons and undead to deal with the upstart mortals.

Alternatively, he may require the souls of one or more powerful good-aligned clerics for some horrific ritual designed to increase his personal power. The PCs could get involved when they are asked to investigate the sudden and mysterious disappearance of several such individuals, or one of their own number could be targeted by Gahlgax's minions.

Finally, it is entirely possible that Gahlgax may use the PCs in some fiendishly complicated scheme; good-aligned mortal are notorious meddlers and he may use them to stymie the plots of one of his rivals (or even his master). He may even subtly guide them to eliminate one of the Swords of Orcus if he believes the marilith is planning to strike against him.

LORE

Characters can learn more about Gahlgax with a successful Knowledge (planes) check. A successful check reveals all information gained by a lesser result.

DC 38: This is Gahlgax Atarrith, balor lord and personal servant of the demon prince Orcus. Gahlgax is a power almost without equal in the multiverse; even demi-gods fear his wrath and brutal attention. He is often served and guarded by powerful mariliths.

DC 43: Gahlgax has been blessed by his patron with the powers of undeath and has all the standard undead immunities in addition to those enjoyed by normal demons.

DC 48: Gahlgax is a vampire and has their standard immunities, powers and vulnerabilities.

GAHLGAX ATARRITH, BALOR LORD

CR 23 (XP 819,200)

This large fiendish creature has thick, strong wings and wields a flaming longsword and whip.

Vampire balor fighter 1

CE Large undead (augmented)

Init +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +42, Sense Motive +42

Speed 40 ft., base speed 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good), *gaseous form* (fly 20 ft. [perfect]), spider climb; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +30 (+34 jumping), Fly +35, Stealth +37

Gaseous Form (Su) Gahlgax can assume *gaseous form* (AC 24, CL 5th) at will and can remain gaseous indefinitely.

Spider Climb (Ex) Gahlgax climbs sheer surfaces as though affected by *spider climb*.

AC 48, touch 24, flat-footed 37; **CMD** 64; unholy aura (+4 deflection, +10 Dex, +1 dodge, +22 natural [*amulet of natural armour* +2], -1 size)

Unholy Aura (Su) If a good creature hits Gahlgax with a melee attack it takes 1d6 Strength damage (DC 33 Fortitude negates).

Immune electricity, fire, poison, mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless); **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **Weakness** vampire weaknesses (garlic, mirrors, cannot enter private homes unless invited, direct sunlight, running water, wooden stakes)

Fort +33, **Ref** +22 (evasion), **Will** +27 (+31 vs. channelling); **SR** 31

hp 436 (21 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** cold iron and good/15 or magic and silver 10; death throes, *gaseous form*

Death Throes (Su) When killed, Gahlgax explodes in a blinding flash of fire that deals 50 fire and 50 unholy damage to anything within 100 ft. (DC 38 Reflex halves).

Gaseous Form (Su) If reduced to 0 hit points, Gahlgax assumes *gaseous form* and flees. Gahlgax must reach his coffin within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once at rest, he is helpless for one hour until he regains 1 hit point. Gahlgax is then no longer helpless and fast healing heals his wounds normally.

Space 10 ft. (flaming body); **Base Atk** +21; **CMB** +39

Flaming Body (Su) Dancing flames cover Gahlgax's body. Anyone striking him with a natural weapon or unarmed strike takes 1d6 fire damage. A creature that grapples Gahlgax or is grappled takes 6d6 fire damage each round it is grappled.

Melee +1 *vorpal unholy longsword* (reach 10 ft.) +37/+32/+27/+22 (2d6+18/17-20)

Melee +1 *vorpal flaming whip* (reach 20 ft.) +36/+31/+26 (1d4+9 plus 1d6 fire and entangle) or

Melee 2 slams (reach 10 ft.) +32 (1d10+17 plus energy drain [2 levels])

Atk Options Blinding Critical (DC 31), Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Power Attack (-6/+12), blood drain, create spawn, energy drain, entangle

Blood Drain (Su) Gahlgax can suck blood from a grappled

opponent. If he establishes or maintains a pin, he drains blood (1d4 Constitution damage). Gahlgax heals 5 hit points or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to his full normal hit points) each round he drains blood.

Create Spawn (Su) Gahlgax can create a spawn when he slays a creature with blood drain or energy drain.

Energy Drain (Su) A creature hit by Gahlgax's slam attack gains 2 negative levels (DC 35 Fortitude restores). Gahlgax can use this ability once per round.

Entangle (Ex) If Gahlgax strikes a Medium or smaller foe with his whip, he can immediately attempt a grapple check without provoking attacks of opportunity. If he succeeds, he draws the foe into an adjacent square. The foe gains the grappled condition, but Gahlgax does not.

Special Actions change shape, children of the night, dominate

Change Shape (Su) Gahlgax can assume the form of a dire bat or wolf as if affected by *beast shape II*.

Children of the Night (Su) Once per day, Gahlgax can summon 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms or 2d6 wolves. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve for up to 1 hour.

Dominate (Su) Gahlgax can crush a humanoid's will (DC 35 Will resists) if within 30 ft. as *dominate person* (CL 12th).

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 21th; concentration +33)

Constant—*true seeing*, *unholy aura* (DC 33)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *dominate monster* (DC 34), *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 26), *mage armour*, *mirror image*, *power word stun*, *protection from energy*, *resist energy*, *shield*, *telekinesis* (DC 30)

3/day—*forcecage*, *interposing hand*, *mind blank*, quickened *telekinesis* (DC 30)

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 32), *fire storm* (DC 33), *implosion* (DC 34), *summon* (level 9, any 1 CR 19 or lower demon 100%)

Abilities Str 45, Dex 31, Con —, Int 26, Wis 28, Cha 35

SQ master of magic, shadowless, vorpal strike, whip mastery

Vorpal Strike (Su) Any slashing weapon Gahlgax wields gains the vorpal quality. Weapons retain this quality for one hour after he releases the weapon.

Whip Mastery (Ex) Gahlgax treats a whip as a light weapon for the purposes of two-weapon fighting and inflicts lethal damage on a foe regardless of its armour.

Feats Alertness^B, Blinding Critical, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge^B, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (longsword)^B, Improved Initiative^B, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes^B, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*telekinesis*), Toughness^B, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills as above plus Bluff +39, Diplomacy +31, Disguise +32, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (engineering) +16, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (nobility) +28, Knowledge (planes) +31, Knowledge (religion) +28, Use Magic Device +31

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, telepathy 100 ft.

Gear as above *headband of alluring charisma* +6, *luckblade* (0 wishes), *ring of evasion*

WORDS OF ORCUS

Three Swords of Orcus serve as Gahlgax's personal bodyguard, messengers and executioners. Each secretly dreams of

SWORD OF ORCUS CR 21 (XP 409,600)
This snake-bodied fiend has a six-armed woman's torso, pointed ears and glittering, otherworldly eyes.

Graveknight marilith antipaladin 2
CE Large undead (augmented)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +34, Sense Motive +26

Speed 50 ft., base speed 40 ft.; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +30 (+34 jumping), Fly +20, Ride +30, Stealth +21

AC 52, touch 18, flat-footed 47; **CMD** 52 (54 vs. disarm, can't be tripped); unholy aura; **Miss Chance** 20%

(+11 armour [+5 *mithral breastplate*], +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +19 natural [*amulet of natural armour +2*], +2 shield [*ring of force shield*], -1 size)

Unholy Aura (Sp) If a good creature succeeds on a melee attack against the marilith, the attacker suffers 1d6 Strength damage (DC 25 Fortitude negates)

Immune cold, electricity, fire, poison, mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless); **Resist** acid 10

Fort +41, **Ref** +33, **Will** +32 (+36 vs. channelling); **SR** 32
hp 437 (20 HD); **DR** cold iron and good/10 or magic/10

Space 10 ft. (sacrilegious aura [30 ft.], unholy aura); **Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +32 (+34 disarm, +36 grapple)

Sacrilegious Aura (Su) This aura functions as a *desecrate* spell and the Sword of Orcus' armour acts as an altar. Any creature that attempts to summon positive energy must make a concentration check DC 31. If the check fails the effect is expended but does not function.

Melee +1 *brilliant energy adamantine longsword* (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-5/+10]; cold iron, chaotic, evil) +32/+27/+22/+17 (2d6+14/17-20 plus 4d6 fire), 5 +1 *longswords* (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-5/+10]; cold iron, chaotic, evil) +32 (2d6+14/17-20 plus 4d6 fire) and tail slap (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-5/+5]) +27 (2d6+7 plus grab) or

Melee 6 slams +30 (1d6+11) and tail slap (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-5/+5]) +25 (2d6+7 plus grab)

Atk Options Bleeding Critical, Blinding Critical (DC 28), Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Disarm, channel destruction, constrict (crushing coils), grab, infuse weapon, multiweapon mastery, smite good (+11 attack, +2 damage, +11 AC)

Constrict with Crushing Coils (Ex [standard]) The Sword of Orcus deals 2d6+18 bludgeoning damage with a successful

grappling check. A creature suffering damage must make a DC 31 Fortitude save or lose consciousness for 1d8 rounds.

Grab (Ex [free]) If it hits a Medium or smaller target with its tail, the Sword of Orcus can try to grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Infuse Weapon (Ex [free]) Any weapon a Sword of Orcus wields gains a +1 enhancement bonus to attack and damage and strikes as if it were a chaotic and evil cold iron weapon (in addition to retaining the qualities of its actual composition).

Multiweapon Mastery (Ex [free]) A Sword of Orcus never takes penalties to her attack roll when fighting with multiple weapons.

Special Actions devastating blast, phantom steed, touch of corruption (12/day; 1d6) undead mastery

Devastating Blast (Su [standard; 3/day]) The Sword of Orcus unleashes a 30 ft. cone of fire; 10d6 fire; DC 31 Reflex halves.

Phantom Steed (Su [standard; 1/hour]) A Sword of Orcus can summon a skeletal horse similar to a phantom steed, but with these modified statistics (AC 18, hp 23, speed 100 ft., fly 100 ft, Fly +16).

Undead Mastery (Su [standard; at will]) The Sword of Orcus can bend any undead creatures within 50 ft. to its will. Each undead must make a DC 31 Will save or fall under the its control. This control is permanent for unintelligent undead, but an intelligent undead can make a new save each day to throw off the control. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same graveknight's undead mastery for 24 hours. A graveknight can control 90 HD of undead.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +29)

At will—*detect evil*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *project image* (DC 27), *telekinesis* (DC 26)

3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 27), *fly*

1/day—*summon* (level 5; 1 marilith 20%, 1 nalfeshnee 33% or 1d4 hezrous 60%)

Abilities Str 33, Dex 23, Con —, Int 20, Wis 24, Cha 33

SQ evil aura (overwhelming), rejuvenation, ruinous revivification (fire), unholy resilience

Feats Bleeding Critical, Blinding Critical, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative^B, Mounted Combat^B, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack^B, Toughness^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills as above plus Bluff +30, Diplomacy +30, Disguise +28 (+38 with *hat of disguise*), Intimidate +38, Knowledge (engineering) +21, Use Magic Device +30

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear *hat of disguise*, *boots of striding and springing*, *minor cloak of displacement*

20 THINGS TO FIND IN A SMUGGLER'S STOREROOM

Smugglers are naughty chaps; intent on dodging the lawful taxes of the realm they work at night to bring in valuable or illegal items destined for the black market.

Thus, smugglers' lairs can offer up a great store of treasure for adventurers intent on stamping out their nefarious doings.

Use the table below, to generate items of value and/or interest the party might find when plundering a smuggling gang's storeroom. Note, many of the items listed below are not ordinary or typical examples of a smuggler's normal inventory and should be used to round out the gang's inventory.

11. Two small kegs of brandy stamped with the seal of a famed distiller. Each keg weighs 10 lbs. and is worth 50 gp.
12. The lid of this small coffer is sealed with white wax. The coffer feels light if picked up as if it were empty. In reality, it contains ten sealed packets of exotic spices—themselves each sealed with wax and stamped with a seal depicting a stylised sailboat. The whole is worth 150 gp.
13. One bolt of blue silk and one bolt of red silk wrapped tightly in an oversized sack. Each bolt contains enough material for five cloaks and is worth 75 gp.
14. A lidless chest holds six large clay jars packed with straw. Each of the jars holds peaches steeped in whisky. A current favourite among the local nobility, each jar is worth 20 gp.
15. This large chest contains a mass of junk silver and gold including damaged coins, broken jewellery and blobs of already melted down precious metal. Destined for a jeweller of dubious moral character, the chest weighs 150 lbs. The contents are worth 250 gp.
16. An exquisitely made silk and lace ball gown is wrapped in a wide and soft roll of cotton.
17. This small finely crafted coffer contains an exquisite glass decanter along with four matching glasses. Nestled in a cushion of blue velvet the set is worth 80 gp.
18. This large barrel of middling to fair quality red wine contains a secret. Hidden within—in a waterproof sack—are three *scrolls of animate dead*. The wine itself is worth 10 gp to a tavern or similar establishment.
19. Wet sand fills this heavy barrel, which is covered in thick blankets. Buried within the sand are two large eggs the size of a human head. They are warm to the touch; what they contain is anyone's guess.
20. This rough wooden box is roughly four-foot long and holds the crumbling bones of a halfling or gnome. In life, the deceased was a prominent citizen of a nearby town who was rumoured to know certain secrets of the local nobility. A necromancer desires these secrets and so has secured the individual's bones so he can use them to *speak with dead*.
21. A wooden case contains six bottles of exquisite elven wine; each is worth 20 gp—even the bottles are delicate works of art.
22. This stiff and dry sheepskin glimmers in the light; silver flecks impregnate the heavy fleece. It is worth 20 gp.
23. A large cask of cracked salt worth 15 gp.
24. A single silk shirt wrapped voluminously in faded red cloth. The shirt is impregnated with bubonic plague and is destined to play centre stage in an upcoming assassination.
25. A pile of fur pelts stuffed into several sacks. Among the more common wolf, fox and rabbit pelts is a full owlbear pelt (complete with clawed hands and beaked head) and a thick, gorgeous winter wolf pelt. Each of these atypical pelts are worth 100 gp, while the others are worth a total of 25 gp.
26. A robust chest contains several trade bars of precious metals of the type used by mints or jewellers. There are five silver bars (each worth 5 gp), four gold bars (each worth 50 gp) and a platinum bar (worth 500 gp). Each of the bars bears the crest of a nearby kingdom.
27. Six small flasks hold a rare red dye much in demand due to recent fashion changes. Each flask is worth 5 gp.
28. A small dark wood coffer contains 12 small packets of exotic incense. The coffer is worth 20 gp and each packet is worth 15 gp.
29. Six tightly sealed earthen jars hold preserved exotic fruits. Two jars contain pineapples (worth 7 gp each) and three contain pomegranate segments (worth 7 gp each). The final jar is cracked and contains nothing but rotting coconut.
30. A large cage contains a beaten and starved baby griffon destined to be the plaything of a noble obsessed with owning the most exotic mounts. Although caged and maltreated the griffon is still a proud, violent predator. Characters getting too close to the cage could be in for a shock.

DUNGEON DRESSING

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