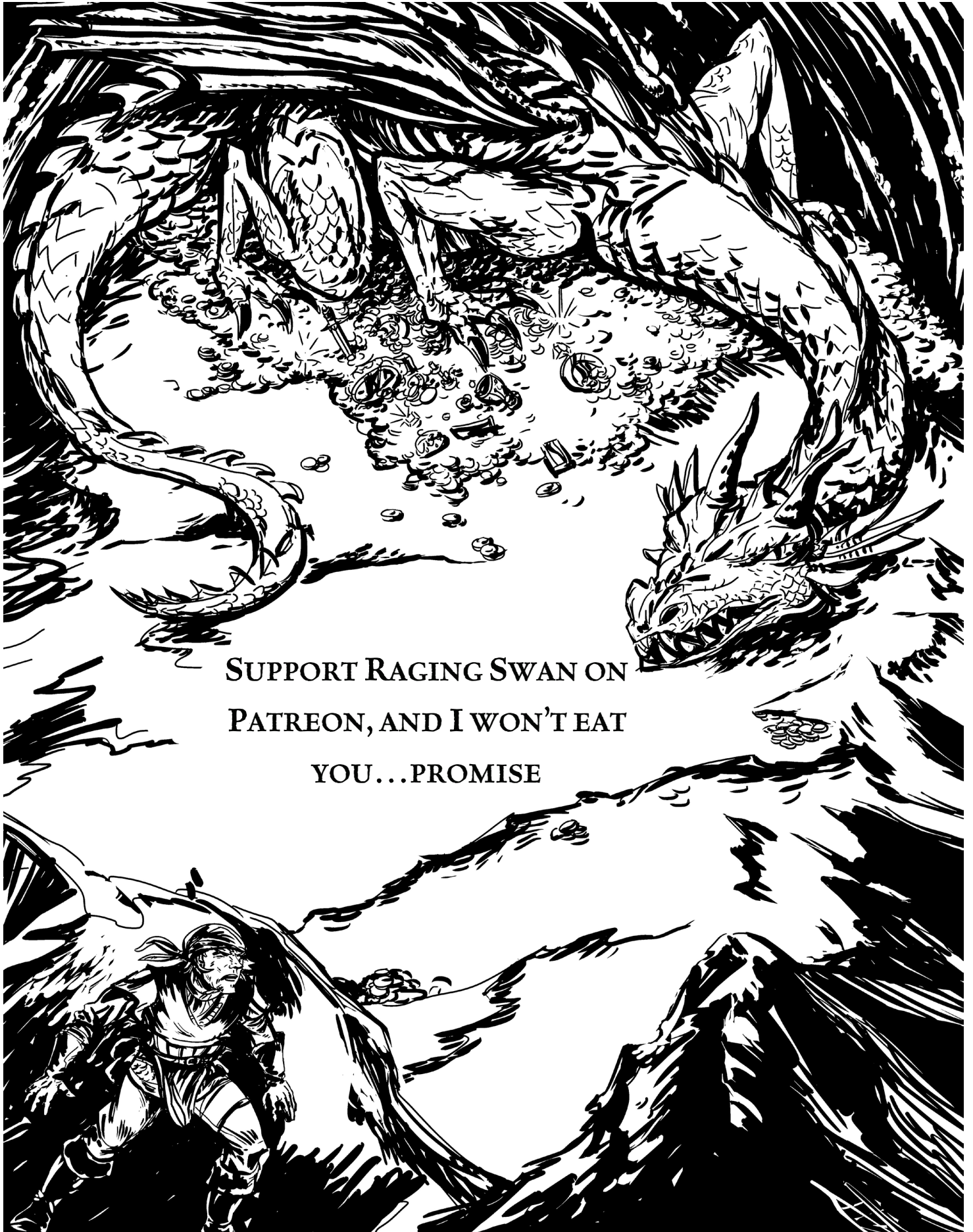


RAGING SWAN PRESS

VILLAGE BACKDROP: COLDWATER





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VILLAGE BACKDROP: COLDWATER

Widely thought of as a haven for smugglers and other miscreants, rumours swirl as thickly about Coldwater as the persistent sea fogs that sometimes blanket the place for days at a time. Set at the head of a muddy cliff top path, Coldwater is an isolated, dismal place. Its folk are sullen, ugly people and even the village's ruler hates the place. For all that, Coldwater can be a place of opportunity and adventure. Sometimes, pirates drop anchor off the coast to deal with the local smugglers while rumours of a sunken stair and a nearby cove of ill aspect bring a steady stream of adventurers to the village.

Design: Creighton Broadhurst

Development: Creighton Broadhurst

Editing: Creighton Broadhurst

Cover Design: Creighton Broadhurst

Layout: Creighton Broadhurst

Interior Art: William McAusland, Matt Morrow and Tommi Salama. Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission.

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ragingswan.com
gatekeeper@ragingswan.com

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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 Stooped Man:** Coldwater's only inn and tavern, the Stooped 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.

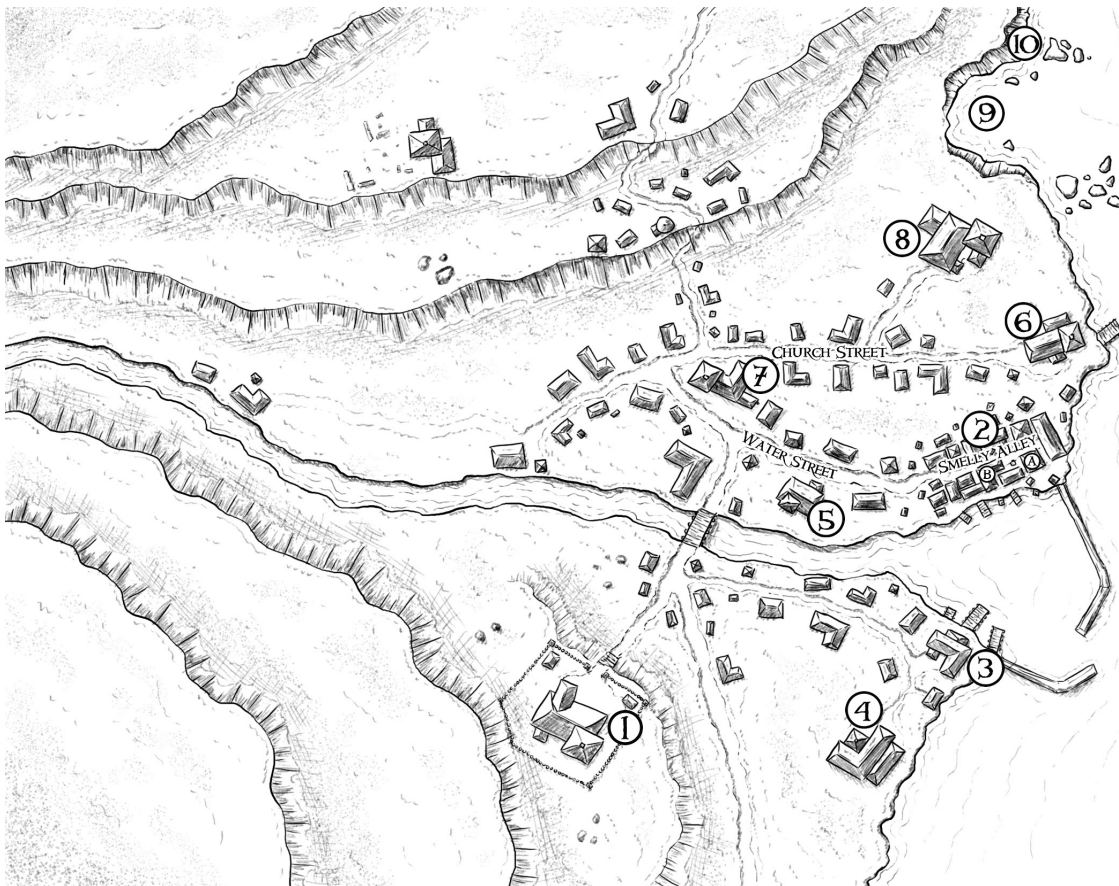
Nomenclature *male* Arvo, Ilari, Kaarlo, Valto, Viljo; *female* Aila, Eeva, Helmi, Pia, Ulla; *family* Eerola, Itkonen, Purho, Varala.

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



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

1: VUOLLE MANOR

Overlooking the village proper, this looming edifice is part home and part redoubt. Built long ago by Einar Vuolle—a black-hearted, vicious man—the so-called manor house is heavily fortified. Extensive cellars provide access to certain hidden sea caves and it was here Einar carried out his sinister trade—for as well as a sideline in piracy and smuggling, Einar dabbled in slavery and human trafficking.

Over the years, Einar's line has dwindled. Now, along with her servants and a handful of guards only the aged Elina Vuolle (LN female old human aristocrat 2/sorcerer [abyssal] 6) dwells here. The wife of Jaska Vuolle, who disappeared nine years ago and is now presumed dead, Elina married into the family at an early age. She hates life in Coldwater and has tried to sell her home and title several times. However, few people with the necessary funds actually want to live in Coldwater, and one trip around the village has put off all potential buyers thus far.

The Vuolle's fortunes have waned since Jaska disappeared. Elina yet possesses her husband's *+1 flaming longsword*—a family relic—and a *staff of fire* of unknown provenance recovered from the manor's deep cellars. She has no attachment to the sword, but would prefer to keep the staff unless selling it means she can escape Coldwater for good.

2: WATERSIDE

The mercantile heart of the village, the harbour is always busy. Here, fishing boats jostle for position on the docks alongside merchantmen hailing from distant ports and other small craft of less obvious purpose and intent.

A small line of shops stands hard upon the docks along the aptly named Smelly Alley. Here one can find fresh or salted fish, nautical supplies and so on. Several businesses also have rowboats and suchlike for hire (1 gp/day)—and can even provide a brawny rower for the right price (1 sp/day).

- **Holg's Locker (2A):** This small shop abuts a large warehouse. Holg (NE male old human expert 1/rogue 3) is an old, foul-tempered man but he has a keen mind for business and has done well for himself—at least as well as anyone who has not yet left Coldwater—and his warehouse is bursting with goods (many of dubious origin). Holg keeps meticulous records of what he has in stock. No one is allowed to browse the teetering stacks of his warehouse, but he can often find what a customer seeks—given a day or two.
- **Addabar's (2B):** This small shop is home to the apothecary Addabar Erklen (NG male gnome sorcerer [destined] 3/bard 2) a gregarious, but slightly eccentric apothecary who settled in Coldwater after a serious misunderstanding involving an

accidental poisoning in nearby Languard. Addabar thinks there is something seriously wrong in the village, but is not brave enough to investigate; he suspects an evil cult is at work, and that they lair in Devil's Cove.

3: ITKONEN'S

The largest legitimate business in the village, this shipwright remains steadily busy. Repairing and maintaining the many watercraft the village relies on for both its legitimate and illegitimate trades forms a large part of Itkonen's trade. However, the shipyard is also often engaged in some larger project—perhaps for a merchant or privateer desirous of certain modifications to his vessel.

Owned by Uzlen Itkonen (N female middle-aged half-orc expert 2/barbarian 1), a hardworking, hard drinking half-orc, the shipyard comprises its own private dockyard along with associated warehouses, offices and so on. The half-orc herself is somewhat of a local talking point. She has lived in the village for almost 20 years, and is widely assumed to have been a pirate before settling down. At any given time, she employs a small staff of between 4-8 skilled shipwrights (N human expert 1) depending on the amount of work she has on. Uzlen normally has several small rowboats for sale (35 gp) or hire (1 gp/day).

4: SAULI'S HOME

This two-storey home is of much finer quality than its nearby brethren for the Eerola are a wealthy family, at least in relation to their neighbours. This large family has thrived over recent generations as the strange deformities afflicting their rival smugglers—the Purho—have become more pronounced. Led by Sauli Eerola (NE male middle-aged human expert 2/fighter 2), the family now also run operations in several nearby ports.

Sauli dreams of one day buying Coldwater and elevating himself to the nobility. His feud with the Purho, however, acts as a constant drain on his resources and this goal yet remains elusively beyond his reach.

5: CROOKED HOUSE

This house has a strange, slanted look to it, and the wing nearest the docks appears to have partially sunk into the ground. Two years ago, Armas Hujanen (LE male half-elf wizard [universalist] 5) moved to Coldwater and purchased the house. Roughly six months later, the northern part of the building sunk several feet overnight causing great cracks in the masonry and hasty repairs to the shingled roof. The villagers now dub the place the "Crooked House" and rumours continue to swirl about the cause of the house's sudden partial collapse and the purpose of its mysterious resident.

6: CHAPEL OF THE MISTRESS

The only church in Coldwater, the Chapel of the Mistress is dedicated to Serat, Mistress of Storms (CN goddess of seas, storms and voyages). Staffed by but two clerics, Aune Laitnen (CN female human cleric [Serat] 4) and Irja Outila (CN female human cleric [Serat] 2), services here are well attended. The folk of Coldwater are superstitious and devout; unsurprisingly given that most of their livelihoods revolve around the sea. Burials take place at sea and so there is no graveyard at the chapel. However, it does have its own dock, where the clergy's sacred sloop is moored. A high bell tower—the tallest structure in the village—serves as an excellent lookout and storm watching post. When fog shrouds the village, the bells ring continuously until all the faithful out on the water have returned safely to port.

7: THE STOOPED MAN

Marked by a faded sign depicting a stooped cloaked figure carrying a heavy sack, the Stoopd Man is Coldwater's only tavern. The taproom is shadowy and smoky. All manner of nautical decorations—lobster pots, old harpoons, stuffed fish and so on—cover the walls. Old fishing nets hang from the ceiling's wooden beams. The whole place smells of smoke, cheap beer and sweat.

- **Food & Drink** meal (typically fish soup with bread, rolled seaweed stuffed with beans or spiced fish with parsnip and onion) 1 sp, ale 4 cp, wine (pitcher) 1 sp.
- **Accommodation** A standard room costs 2 sp a night. The room is draughty, probably has no lock on the door and is sparsely furnished.

Run by Arvo Eerola (N male middle-aged half-orc expert 1/warrior 2) the Stoopd Man is always busy when the village's fishing vessels return to port. Many of his patrons pay their bills with the fruits of their labours, and thus he greatly values

SERAT

CN goddess of the sea, storms and voyages

Epithets: Mistress of Storms, the Uncaring

Symbol: A cresting wave

Domains: Chaos, Travel, Water, Weather

Favoured Weapon: Trident

Holy Text: Book of Tides

Additional Notes: As wild and unpredictable as the sea, sailors, merchants and pirates alike placate Serat with glittering gifts to guarantee a safe voyage. Some believe Serat to be the physical embodiment of the sea while others believe she dwells in a glittering, crystal city far beneath the waves. During services, offerings are cast into the sea. Her priests are often shipwrights, navigators or sea captains.

customers with actual coin.

At night, the Stoopd Man is busy for the simple reason there is nothing else to do in Coldwater (excepts smuggling) once darkness falls except staying at home to stare at one's hearth.

8: ATRO'S HOME

Perched dangerously closely to Devils' Cove this large, ramshackle house is the centre of the Purho's power. Atro Purho (N male deformed human rogue 4) lives here with his wife Elena Purho (NE female deformed human fighter 2) and their three daughters (CN female deformed human commoner 1).

Atro keeps a pack of five vicious dogs (N advanced deformed dog) to ensure his privacy and the dogs run wild throughout the home's fenced grounds. The house's cellars link Atro's home to a nearby sea cave in which the family store the goods they are either smuggling or storing for other unscrupulous individuals. At any one time, there are four or five of Atro's minions in the cellar guarding, cataloguing or packing his goods.

9: DEVIL'S COVE

Although relatively close to the village, Devil's Cove is shunned by the populace. Rumours of strange goings on and sinister figures in the mist serve to keep away all but the bravest (or maddest) explorers. Some who explore the cove do not return.

Devil's Cove is a barren place; a rocky, flotsam-strewn beach runs right up to lofty, precipitous and wind-blasted cliffs. No path runs down from the cliff tops to the beach far below. Most people who arrive in the cove do so by boat.

A pair of deformed giant spiders (N advanced deformed giant spiders) dwell in a cave buried deep in the cliffs; a narrow fissure in the rock links the cave to the surface.

10: THE SUNKEN STAIR

Although the stair's general location is well known among Coldwater's populace, few have ever seen them. Set in the

wind-blasted headland of

Devil's Cove they are only

accessible during

particularly low

tides—and even

then, the tide

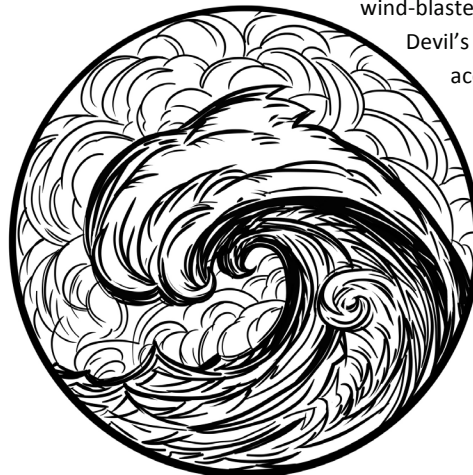
returns to flood

the stairs within

an hour; thus,

explorers must be

quick.



LIFE IN COLDWATER

Life in Coldwater is dismal. The village's remote location and the physical deformities of many of its residents do not make it a happy place. Laughter or song is rarely heard within its bounds. Surprisingly, despite persistent rumours to the contrary, no cult of sinister intent operates in the village.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Both Coldwater's legitimate and illegitimate businesses are focused on the water. Fishing accounts for much of its mercantile business; merchantmen call weekly to exchange barrels of salted fish for meat, flour and other staples. Coldwater's remote location also makes it a perfect smuggler's haven. Here, unscrupulous merchants (and the occasional pirate) unload their goods on moonless or fog-shrouded nights for sale on Ashlar's black market.

LAW & ORDER

Technically, Elina Vuolle rules Coldwater, but in practise as long as her interests are not interfered with she leaves the villagers much to themselves. Thus, the burden of law and order nominally falls upon the shoulders of Sauli Eerola and Atro Purho. Their competing interests make for some lively arguments between the two when agreeing suitable punishments for wrongdoers.

NORMAL VILLAGER CR 1/3 (XP 135)

Human commoner 1
 CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +1, Sense Motive +1
Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Climb +5, Swim +5

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; **CMD** 11
Fort +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1
hp 6 (1 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9
Feats Alertness^B, Skill Focus (Profession [fisherman])
Skills as above plus Profession (fisherman) +6
Languages Common

Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp, peasant's outfit

Prepared for battle, a villager has the following altered statistics:

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; **CMD** 11
 (+1 armour [padded])
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or
Melee spear -3 (1d8/x3)
Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1)
Combat Gear bullets (10)

EVENTS

While the PCs are in Coldwater, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A fistfight between members of the Eerola and Purho families breaks out in the street; bystanders stay well out of it; nothing more than a few broken bones results.
2	A thick mist rolls in from the sea. It could burn off by midday (50% chance), last all day (30% chance) or linger for 1d3 days (20% chance).
3	Armas Hujanen tries to hire a deformed villager to come to his home so he can examine him more closely. The villager refuses—violently and loudly.
4	A drunken villager loudly proclaims his plans to explore Devil's Cove. Several of his friends try to talk him out of it, but he is adamant. He subsequently goes missing.
5	A merchantman drops anchor. She carries several sealed crates marked for delivery to Armas Hujanen.
6	An adventuring group comes to explore the Sunken Stairs. The tides are not right and they soon leave.

DEFORMED VILLAGER

CR 1/3 (XP 135)

Deformed human commoner 1
 CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +1, Sense Motive +1
Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Climb +5, Swim +5

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; **CMD** 11
 (+1 natural)
Fort +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1
hp 6 (1 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 7
Feats Alertness^B, Skill Focus (Profession [fisherman])
Skills as above plus Intimidate +2, Profession (fisherman) +6
Languages Common

Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp, peasant's outfit

Prepared for battle, a deformed villager has the following altered statistics:

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; **CMD** 11
 (+1 armour [padded], +1 natural)
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or
Melee spear -3 (1d8/x3)
Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1)
Combat Gear bullets (10)

Special Note: To personalise this deformed villager roll on the Deformity and Cosmetic Deformities tables (page 7).

NEW TEMPLATE: DEFORMED CREATURE

Deformed creatures have been horribly altered by their proximity to a place of power dedicated to the demon lord of deformity, Dagon. These blasphemous aberrations often worship the Shadow in the Sea, but creatures can also unknowingly acquire this template.

CREATING A DEFORMED CREATURE

“Deformed” is an inherited or acquired template that can be added to any living corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A deformed creature retains all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted below.

CR: Same as the base creature.

Type: The base creature gains the augmented subtype.

AC: The base creature’s natural armour increase by +1.

Special Qualities and Abilities: A deformed creature rolls twice on the table below. Ignore duplicate rolls or results that makes no sense given the base creature’s characteristics.

D12 DEFORMITY

1	The creature’s skin is thick and leathery. Increase its natural armour bonus by an additional +1 and modify its abilities as follows: -2 Dex.
2	The creature has powerful limbs and is particularly fast; increase all its speeds by 10 ft. and modify its abilities as follows: +2 Dex, -2 Wis.
3	The creature’s senses are dulled, but it is of robust constitution. Modify its abilities as follows: +2 Con, -2 Wis.
4	The creature emits a powerful stench and gains the stench ability with a radius of 10 ft. Creatures with scent can detect it at twice the normal distance.
5	The creature’s legs are horribly misshapen and its land speed (and climb and swim speeds) are reduced by 10 ft. Modify its abilities as follows: +2 Str, -2 Dex.
6	The creature is stronger, but clumsier than normal. Modify its abilities as follows: +2 Str, -2 Dex.
7	The creature is blind, but gains blindsense 20 ft.
8	The creature gains light sensitivity and low-light vision. Creatures that already have light sensitivity gain light blindness and darkvision 60 ft.
9	One of the creature’s natural weapons is monstrosly oversized and is treated as if it were one size category larger. Modify its abilities as follows: +2 Str, -2 Dex.
10	The creature is slow-witted and gains Iron Will as a bonus feat. Its brain is relatively primitive. Modify its abilities as follows: -2 Int, -2 Wis.
11	The creature has a hunchback. Modify its abilities as follows: +2 Str, -2 Dex.
12	The creature’s eyes, ears and nose are freakishly oversized. It gains a +2 racial bonus to Perception checks and light sensitivity.

Cosmetic Deformities: A deformed creature’s body is often obviously warped and twisted by its condition. Roll once on the table below to flesh out such deformities.

D20 COSMETIC DEFORMITIES

1	The creature drools uncontrollably.
2	The creature’s limbs are twisted at unnatural angles.
3	The creature’s facial features are bloated.
4	The creature’s fur, skin or scales are a strange, otherworldly colour.
5	Vestigial horns grow from the creature’s forehead.
6	The creature’s body is riddled with sores and ulcers.
7	Patches of thick hair grow all over its body.
8	The creature smells terrible and is wildly flatulent.
9	The creature’s skin becomes pallid and drawn tight across its skeletal frame.
10	The creature is corpulent.
11	Vestigial wings grow from the creature’s shoulders, but it cannot fly.
12	The creature’s body is horribly scarred as if it had been burnt or wrinkled and puckered as if it had been immersed in water for a long time.

Abilities: Modify the base creature’s statistics as follows: -2 Cha.

Skills: A deformed creature gains a +4 racial bonus to Intimidate skill checks.



Protected by the roiling waters of the ocean, the Fane of the Undying Sleeper lies at the top of a set of stone steps only exposed at the lowest ebb of the lowest spring tides. Protected by impregnable stone doors, the fane has lain undisturbed for centuries. Once the lair of a heretical and degenerate demon-worshipping cult the benighted, profane place has never known the tread of human feet. None have yet penetrated the fane, but nevertheless wild and outlandish rumours speak of terrible dangers and glittering treasures to be found beyond the impregnable doors.

With a tide low enough to reveal the fane's entrance fast approaching, are the PCs brave enough to dare the terrors of the Fane of the Undying Sleeper?

A Deadly Delve adventure for 3rd-level characters by Creighton Broadhurst.

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