

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S SCREEN #7:
HAUNTED HOUSE



SYSTEM
NEUTRAL



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GM's SCREEN #7: HAUNTED HOUSE

Space behind your GM's screen is precious (and limited). You've got dice, figures, the adventure, reference books—obviously a drink and snacks—as well as pencils, pens, a notebook and more! Often times a GM needs to be a juggler to make it all fit. That's why we created the GM's Screen line. Most GM screens focus on presenting the rules. This GM's Screen line is different. Instead of rules, each instalment presents hyper-focused pages of dressing, minor events and more all designed to add depth and flavour to an adventure. (And better yet, you can use the tables without your players realising what you are doing!)

This instalment of GM's Screen comprises three tables designed to bring to life the haunted houses in your campaign and is compatible with virtually any roleplaying game.

DESIGN CREDITS

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HOW TO USE THIS SUPPLEMENT

Using this supplement is easy. Simply print out page 2 and pin it to the inside of your GM's screen. (You can also print it out and cut it up before clipping it to your screen so you do not obscure vital tables printed on the screen itself).

When play calls for it, roll on the relevant table and use the result to build verisimilitude, detail and flavour into your game. Always re-roll inappropriate results, but consider any given result as a starting point. Describe the situation and see how the players react!

Because words have power, we've also added some flavoursome examples to help you bring the setting alive in your players' minds.

SYSTEM NEUTRAL EDITION

Welcome to this Raging Swan Press System Neutral Edition supplement. Herein you'll find evocative, inspiring text designed to help you—the busy GM—run better, quicker and easier games.

This book is compatible with most fantasy roleplaying games. It's impossible to create a truly system neutral book, though, and some generic game terms—wizard, fighter, human, elf and so on—lurk within. These generic terms are easily modified to the GM's system of choice.

One special note about the NPCs in this supplement. While some are wizards, fighters, clerics and so on, others are simply normal folk. Because different game systems handle normal folk differently we've made no attempt to note their "class" leaving them simply as "female human" and so on.

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HAUNTED HOUSE

DRESSING

1. Cobwebs—heavy with cocooned insects—fill the corners of this dank, gloomy chamber; a veil of cobwebs fills a doorway leading further into the building.
2. Rotting, mould shrouded furniture stands against the walls of this chamber. A heavy, formal chair is particularly far-gone and one leg collapses if the chair is disturbed.
3. The shattered remains of several pewter mugs lie scattered across the floor. A dented and bent pewter plate lies against one wall. Dust covers everything.
4. A mouldering brown blanket lies where it fell.
5. A strange dark stain mars the floor of this chamber. Investigation reveals the stain is likely old, dried blood.
6. Someone has pried up the floorboards to reveal a small space below. Nothing but cobwebs fills the niche. A faint outline in the dust hints a small box or coffer was once stored here.
7. Black mould has grown over one wall of this room and the air is redolent with the stench of decay.
8. Part of the wooden wall has been pried loose and the boards tossed casually aside.
9. The roof of this chamber is partially missing and the rain has got inside. The floor is damp and several small puddles have gathered.
10. The hinges of this door have failed and only the door jam holds it in place. If the door is opened, it collapses into the room with a loud thud.

MINOR HAUNTINGS

1. From the area the PCs just left comes the distinct creak of floorboards—as if someone heavy is walking across the floor.
2. The temperature suddenly plummets to freezing point in the area surrounding the party. Their breath mists the air and frost forms on the ground. Within a few minutes, the chill passes.
3. Somewhere up ahead a door rattles in its jamb. The rattling is loud and sustained.
4. The indistinct sound of whispering or muttering comes from a random direction. The PC can make out only one word...death.
5. A faint glow of light—as provided by a candle—comes from behind a door or around a corner. When the party investigates, the light suddenly goes out.
6. As #5 above, but the light dances wildly as if caught in a strong wind. As the party moves to investigate, the light is extinguished and a strong wind momentarily batters the party.
7. With a crash, a small object such as a tankard on a nearby table smashes to the floor.
8. The sound of scrabbling comes from within a nearby wall. It sounds like dozens—if not scores—of some small animal such as a rat—are trapped within. The sound reaches a crescendo—loud enough to drown out normal conversation—before abruptly ceasing.
9. A deeper shadow seems to move in the dark just beyond the party's lights.
10. One of the party suddenly feels dizzy—as if he had been spun round and round—and sick. If the PC engages in strenuous activity within the next five minutes, he is violently sick.

MINOR TREASURES

1. A grand harp carved with images of cavorting satyrs stands near the wall. Its strings emit an ear-piercing scream when first plucked.
2. Two heavy silver candlesticks lie on the floor. One of them is stained with old blood. Nearby, an ornate set of cutlery rests near a tray of spoiled meat.
3. A seven-headed serpent is carved into the walls of the room. Its scales are covered with gold leaf, which can be scraped off with 30 minutes careful work.
4. A crystal chandelier fell to the floor and shattered here. Many of the crystal pieces are salvageable.
5. Hanging on the wall is an oil painting depicting a demonic doe devouring her young. The frame of the painting is studded with small flecks of ruby.
6. Hidden amidst a tangle of rotten flowers is a single (fragile) crystal rose.
7. This beautiful wooden box is engraved with the image of a rampant unicorn. Inside, the box is filled with expensive cigars.
8. A painting of an old woman is hidden beneath a white sheet. Careful inspection reveals the lines and wrinkles on her face spell out fiendish runes.
9. An intricately engraved locket hangs from a peg on the wall. One half of the locket holds a painting of a child. The other half holds a painting of a hairy spider.
10. Every piece of this golden chess set shows the piece dying in a different, painful way. The game's board is crafted from a piece of chipped and scorched oak.

WORDS & DETAILS HAVE POWER—USE THEM TO ADD FLAVOUR AND ATMOSPHERE TO YOUR GAME

Abandoned: empty, deserted, vacant, derelict; **Dark:** dim, dingy, gloom, murky, shadowy, tenebrous; **Dilapidated:** ruined, broken-down, battered, neglected, crumbled, run-down, decayed, shabby, ramshackle, rickety, decrepit; **Ghost:** spirit, soul, phantom, spectre, spook, revenant, apparition, wraith, shade, phantasm; **Haunted:** possessed, ghostly, cursed, eerie, spooky; **Shadowy:** vague, indistinct, faint, ghostly, dim, phantom, imaginary, unreal, intangible. illusory, spectral, nebulous, unsubstantial, wraithlike, dreamlike.

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