Raging Swan Press

GM's Screen #1: Kobold Warren

System Neutral

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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 kobold warrens 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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Kobold Warren

Dressing

1. Scraps of mottled blue and brown scales lie on the floor below a rocky protrusion in the wall.
2. Kobold runes scrawled on the wall speak of the kobolds' destiny to rule the world and their inevitable triumph over the "big folk".
3. Crude drawings of a gigantic dragon surrounded by bowing and scrapping kobolds decorate the whole wall. The dragon is depicted as munching on something. Careful observation reveals a tiny pair of legs protruding from its mouth.
4. A coil of thin string lies neatly against one wall. One end is tied to a small iron peg hammered into the ground. A discarded hammer and another peg lie against the opposite wall.
5. A small pile of rubble—more the start of a breastwork—about three-foot high partially blocks access to the area beyond.
6. A small carven niche in the wall holds a large horned skull that glowers down at all who pass. Investigation reveal the skull to be that of a minotaur.
7. A pile of rotting wood lies against one wall. It is riddled with centipedes and seems to almost writhe like some kind of sentient worm creature.
8. A ragged, filthy half-curtain hangs from the ceiling to about four-foot above the floor. the kobolds can easily move and see under the curtain but it obscures taller creatures' vision.
9. The heavy stench of wet dog and the faint smell of smoke hang in the air.
10. Water oozes down one wall into a small pool of scummy water surrounded by a ring of mould.

Events

1. From somewhere out of sight comes the quiet, furtive scrabbling sound of claws on stone.
2. A crossbow bolt whizzes out of the darkness. The bolt misses everyone and skids down the corridor before splintering against the far wall.
3. The faint murmur of conversation suddenly cut short reaches the most perceptive—or perhaps most paranoid—PC's ears.
4. A sudden gust of wind fills the area, threatening to extinguish any nonmagical unprotected flames.
5. The distinctive rattling of a chain breaks the relative quiet. Moments later, the party hear a distinctive thud of something heavy hitting the ground.
6. The faint smell of wet fur reaches the party's scout's nostrils. It grows stronger as the party proceed toward the next lurking defenders—perhaps providing a hint of an imminent, impending ambush.
7. A faint piping sound reaches the party's ears. It might be just the wind or it could be the kobolds communicating with each other. This latter theory seems much more likely as after a few moments, the piping begins from another, unexplored direction.
8. A clatter—like someone dropping a shield or weapon—echoes through the air.
9. A nearby, but hidden, kobold taunts the PCs. He starts in the kobold language, but if no-one understands him he switches to broken, high-pitched Common.
10. A sudden breeze carries the scent of smoke and fire over the party. Perceptive PCs hear the crackle of flames from somewhere up ahead.

Things to Loot

1. A half-eaten rat wrapped in a scrap of dirty, gore-stained cloth.
2. A tangle of strings—of varying colours and lengths—fill this small pouch. Hidden deep within the ball lurks a shiny black pebble.
3. A pouch contains four silver coins—tarnished and bent—a dozen coppers and a single gold piece bent almost in half.
4. A rudimentary tripwire—a length of thin string wrapped around two small wooden pegs—along with a half-dozen tiny copper bells that can be tied to the tripwire.
5. Four half-burnt candles along with a much-used flint and steel wrapped carefully in a strip of sacking.
6. A broken dagger—sized for a human—whose blade ends in a jagged stump. The shard of the blade—covered in dried blood—is also in the pouch.
7. The kobold wore a crude necklace crafted from finger bones; some still have fingernails attached.
8. The kobold wore a bandolier from which hang many small securely stoppered flasks. Each is filled with a noxious substance—excrement, rank water, vomit and so on. The flasks are flimsy and designed to break apart when they hit something solid.
9. An almost empty wine flask along with the bodies of several large spiders fills the kobold's pouch. Each of the spiders has had their legs removed and one of the bodies is half eaten.
10. A ragged belt pouch holds the ornate silvered hilt of a dagger. The blade is missing, but the hilt is worth 15 gp.

Words & Details Have Power—Use them to Add Flavour and Atmosphere to Your Game

Cackle: giggle, snigger, titter; **Cramped**: claustrophobic, confined, narrow, tight; **Creep**: sneak, steal, slink, skulk; **Dark**: dim, dingy, gloom, murky; **Female Kobold Names**: Dhilk, Dol, Gep, Jellmug, Krisk, Vupak; **Male Kobold Names**: Azn, Furni, Luh, Nok, Rad, Vulma, Zel; **Kobold Epithets**: Darkbite, Nosecutter, Sneakhide; **Trap Ideas**: cave-in, dart trap, falling objects (doors, rocks, furniture), net, panji sticks, pit (open, covered, flooded, spiked), snare, spikes, spear thrower, tripwire (damage-dealing or noisemaker).

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