

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S SCREEN #8: FORGOTTEN CRYPT



SYSTEM
NEUTRAL



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GM'S SCREEN #8: FORGOTTEN CRYPT

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 forgotten crypts 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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FORGOTTEN CRYPT

CRYPT DRESSING

1. Water oozes down the walls leaving tracks on the ancient brickwork. On the ground, the water has turned the dust into thick paste-like grey ooze.
2. Dusty cobwebs fill the corners of the ceiling.
3. A small portion of brickwork from one wall has fallen away revealing the bare rock behind. A low pile of rubble lies on the floor nearby.
4. The stones above this door have shifted. Consequently, the door is hard to force open. If the door is opened, the stones above groan ominously and dust sifts down onto the PCs...
5. Incongruously, a single bone—a thighbone—lies on the floor in front of a shadowy archway.
6. The walls were once decorated with brightly painted images painted directly onto the smooth stone. The colours have long since faded, and now only a suggestion of what once was remains.
7. A section of floor is bumpy and uneven, making rapid movement difficult. The paving slabs can be easily pried up, but nothing of interest lies beneath.
8. Several niches that once contained offerings to those buried here pierce the walls. All have succumbed to time's remorseless advance.
9. Huge religious symbols appropriate to the faith who built the crypt have been carved into the walls. Dust and cobwebs shroud portions of the carvings. Tracing the grandest of the carvings with one's hand deactivates a nearby trap.
10. A faded mosaic covers the floor depicts the afterlife, but exact details are hard to pick out as some tiles are cracked and others are missing.

THINGS TO FIND IN A SARCOPHAGUS

1. Although it only contains the remains of one body, this sarcophagus holds two skulls. One clearly suffered a violent death.
2. A fine white sheet edged in silver trim covers the occupant's remains. The trim is worth 15 gp.
3. The sarcophagus' occupant clutches a mouldering scroll in his hands. It crumbles if touched, but an investigation of the remains reveals several indistinct religious symbols.
4. The inside of the sarcophagus' lid has scratch marks—as if the interred had tried to escape.
5. The sarcophagus contains not only the skeleton of his intended occupant, but also the remains for four huge rats. A close inspection of the occupant's skeletons reveals hundreds of teeth marks.
6. The skeleton (strangely) is lying on its front. Among its rotting clothes, perceptive adventurers spot a thin leather cord around its neck. A silver heart-shaped pendant (worth 30 gp) hangs from the cord.
7. Curled at the feet of the sarcophagus' inhabitant lie the remains of a small dog, cat or other small pet.
8. Only a skull, resting on a faded black cushion, lies in the sarcophagus. Even casual observers note all the skull's teeth—and its jaw—have been smashed.
9. This sarcophagus has never held a body—instead someone has used it as a secret storage place. It contains 236 gp, 478 sp and a pair of gleaming masterwork silver daggers. The daggers have a raven engraved on their pommels.
10. The lid of this sarcophagus sits slightly askew. Amid the scattered bones and mouldering clothes within lair half a dozen feral rats.

STRANGE SOUNDS, EFFECTS & EVENTS

1. The skittering of tiny clawed feet on stone from somewhere beyond the party's lights fills the air.
2. The gentle sigh of the wind (perhaps accompanied by tiny, swirling dust devils) washes over the party.
3. Thick shadows cloak the small nooks and crannies in this area. Only magical light—or closely applied mundane light—banishes them.
4. Faint groaning emanates from the walls; perhaps it is the spirits of those buried within lamenting their fate, or perhaps the old stones are simply moving and shifting.
5. Small motes of insubstantial darkness float like dust upon the air. They disappear when they collide with a warm blooded creature.
6. Bones in some of the burial niches seem to shudder and move slightly when the PCs get close.
7. A faint susurrus of whispering—its tone oddly menacing—occasionally reaches the party's ears.
8. Spectral people blink in and out of existence along a row of bone-filled niches piercing the wall. Expressionless, they silently observe the party
9. A translucent, roguish figure flashes a smile at the nearest creature before disappearing into a wall (which could reveal the location of a hidden secret door to observant PCs).
10. Pale figures fly from a set of urns, burial niches or sarcophagi, streaking towards any living creature, their mouths rent with fury, before disappearing with a cackle.

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

Coffin: sarcophagus, casket; **Crypt:** vault, tomb, catacomb, ossuary, undercroft, sepulchre; **Dark:** dim, gloomy, murky, shadowy, tenebrous; **Dead:** deceased, gone, departed, late, perished, passed away; **Dusty:** dirty, grubby, unclean; **Haunted:** possessed, ghostly, cursed, eerie, spooky; **Shadowy:** vague, indistinct, faint, ghostly, dim, phantom, imaginary, unreal, intangible. illusory, spectral, nebulous, unsubstantial, wraithlike, dreamlike; **Skeletal:** wasted, gaunt, skin-and-bone, cadaverous, hollow-cheeked, fleshless.

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