

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S SCREEN #5:
NOISOME SEWER



SYSTEM
NEUTRAL



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GM'S SCREEN #5: NOISOME SEWER

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 noisome sewers 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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NOISOME SEWER

DRESSING

1. The bricks lining the tunnel wall have fallen, creating a tumbled pile of slippery, unstable rubble which blocks the walkway.
2. Here, the sewer channel narrows. A thick, but rotten, wooden plank, secured by rusting iron spikes at either end, bridges the gap.
3. The stench of excrement, urine and rot is shockingly potent in this area.
4. A wooden lantern lies on its side amid the filth. Its oil has leaked out, creating a slippery area. The lantern is still vaguely warm to the touch.
5. A small roughly-hewn niche carved into the sewer wall holds a broken, rusting lantern. Congealed slime and grime holds the lantern in place.
6. A strange, wide track in the muck suggests something large, like a snake, slithered through here recently.
7. Faded and smeared chalk sigils decorate the wall; they are now illegible but may have once been a crude map.
8. A slimy island of excrement and mud partially blocks the sewer channel. Anyone standing on the island discovers—rapidly—its consistency is that of quicksand. “Luckily” the island is only five-foot deep, although small explorers could still drown—or perhaps suffocate—in its slimy depths.
9. A section of walkway has crumbled away into the channel. Unstable, slick rubble redolent with slime fills the five-foot wide gap.
10. A single, mouldy knee-high leather boot stands amid the muck. The white glint of bone and the smell of moulding flesh emerges from within.

EVENTS

1. A loud rumbling from the ceiling breaks the quiet. It seems to head along the sewer before fading away. (A heavily laden cart has just passed along the street above).
2. The muted splash of something falling into the water comes from a random direction.
3. A loud splash breaks the quiet. A minute later, ripples reach the party.
4. The air grows rank with the stench of decay and excrement. Weak-stomached explorers may become violently sick as a result.
5. A distant scream echoes through the sewer. It is suddenly cut off and is not repeated.
6. A sudden wind issues through the sewer, blowing the stench of excrement and urine over the PCs. The smell is so vile, it brings tears and dry heaves to the eyes of the least robust PCs.
7. A congealed “island” of muck and debris floats passed the PCs. A large rat, its glimmering eyes glaring at the party, perches atop the island. If attacked, the rat dives into the water.
8. Bats nest on the ceiling. Bright lights disturb them and they flap about screeching until the intruders leave. In the confusion, the bats might extinguish some of the party’s lights or knock an explorer into the filth of the sewer’s channel.
9. Splinters of wood—perhaps the remains of a makeshift raft—float passed the party, spinning gently in the current.
10. The mouldering remains of a decomposing dog float passed the party, before gently coming to rest against the walkway.

THINGS TO FIND

1. A small tree branch floats amid the effluent. Perceptive PCs notice a small silver necklace (worth 50 gp) entwined around the branch.
2. A small sodden pouch lies on the floor in the shadows. The pouch contains 5 gp and a crude map of the surrounding tunnels showing two exits to the streets above.
3. A slimy short sword—its tip stained with dried blood—lies on the floor. The weapons shredded scabbard languishes nearby.
4. A bloody, sodden bandage hangs off the edge of the walkway.
5. A partially sunken sack floats amongst the effluent. The sack still holds 3 sp and 1 gp wrapped in its sodden, noisome folds.
6. A small niche in the wall holds a small parcel wrapped in sailcloth. The parcel contains three torches, flint and steel and a dagger.
7. A rope dangles from a spike hammered into the ceiling over the sewer channel. The spike pierces the ceiling near a steel trapdoor.
8. A 10-foot-long pole with a curved hook on one end lies discarded on the floor.
9. The tip of a rusting, bent dagger is wedged between two bricks in the sewer wall. Unwary explorers could cut themselves on the rusting metal and contract some kind of horrible disease as a result.
10. A shuttered lantern, with about one hour’s fuel remaining, stands wedged against the wall on the opposite walkway. Its shutter is closed; only a faint glow radiates from within.

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

Dank: damp, dripping, moist, soggy, wet; **Dark:** dim, gloomy, murky, tenebrous; **Decay:** decompose, fester, moulder, putrefy, rot, rusty, spoiled; **Disgusting:** foul, gross, grotty, nauseating, sickening, revolting, vile; **Excrement:** faeces, shit, ordure, night soil, turd; **Fetid (Foetid):** corrupt, foul, malodorous, noisome, noxious, rank, stench, stinking; **Rubbish:** dregs, flotsam, garbage, jetsam, junk, litter, refuse, trash; **Sewage:** effluent, slops, waste; **Wet:** damp, drenched, soaked, sodden, soggy, sopping.

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