

GM's Cookbook

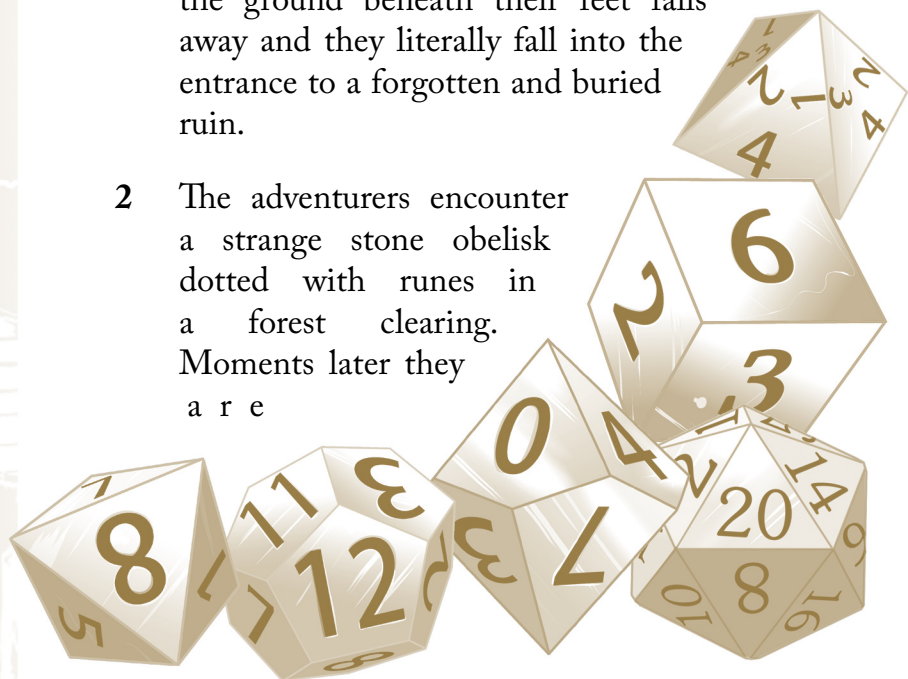
Dungeon Jumpstarters #1

Let's face it, a lot of fantasy games revolve around the dungeon crawl. There was a time when the dungeon became passé and more and more adventures centered around wilderness settings, or cities, or some other unusual location. But eventually that changed, and the "good old fashioned" dungeon came back into vogue, with a vengeance.

GM's Cookbook: Dungeon Jumpstarters #1 is designed to provide you with quick and easy ideas to get the party into the dungeon. Maybe the adventure you had planned went off the rails, or you're just having an off night, whatever the case sometimes you just need to get the adventurers back underground for one of those ubiquitous dungeon crawls.

This is especially useful if you have a dungeon you like from a published product but don't like the adventure details that lead into it. You can also craft your own dungeon or generate one at random to fill a night's play.

- 1 As the adventurers are traveling overland the ground beneath their feet falls away and they literally fall into the entrance to a forgotten and buried ruin.
- 2 The adventurers encounter a strange stone obelisk dotted with runes in a forest clearing. Moments later they are



- teleported away to a dungeon in a strange locale or on another plane and must find a similar obelisk to return home.
- 3 The adventurers are traveling by ship or boat when they spot either an unmapped waterfall ahead or a violent maelstrom forms in the waters near them. They fall or are sucked down under the water and emerge in an air-filled cavern beneath the water. They must find an apparatus or magical device that will raise their conveyance back up above the water or abandon their craft and discover a way out on foot.
 - 4 The adventurers are stunned as a trio of assassins murders a man in the city streets right before their eyes. The assassins rip open the back of the man's tunic before spotting the adventurers and fleeing. Closer inspection reveals the man has an intricate tattoo on his back that shows the way to a nearby dungeon entrance.
 - 5 As the adventurers are traveling along a road they spot several zombies milling about in a field. Closer inspection reveals an overgrown cemetery that must have belonged to a settlement that once stood near the site. The adventurers spy the shadowy entrance to an underground crypt near where the zombies shuffle aimlessly.
 - 6 An adventurer has a lucid dream of a cave entrance that leads to a series of catacombs and has glimpses of great riches that lie within. She sees various recognizable landmarks that lead her to believe she could find the supposed entrance to such a place if it indeed does exist.
 - 7 Villages are digging a new well when the bottom gives way and one of them falls into a cavern below. The adventurers are asked to help rescue the injured man and discover a large networks of caves and passages when they do.
 - 8 The adventurers are approached by a ghostly apparition and lured to the entrance of an overgrown barrow mound.
 - 9 Passing through the woods the adventurers hear a curious almost melodic whistling sound. Tracking it to its source reveals a dungeon entrance. Some draft or wind from down below is causing the strange sound.
 - 10 The adventurers are invited to a noble's manor home to entertain a job offer. They find themselves trapped in a devious trap and monster infested dungeon beneath the manor while the mad noble watches in amusement through a scrying pool.
 - 11 The adventurers hear an odd rumbling in the skies over their heads. A large structure seems to be falling slowly from the clouds. It picks up some speed as it goes and lands with a terrific crash. As the dust and debris settle, the adventurers see that this strange structure is largely intact. It resembles a small walled keep and was in fact the magical redoubt of some long dead wizard. The magical energies that kept it aloft and hidden in perpetual cloud cover have finally dissipated.
 - 12 The adventurers are in a small walled town when an eccentric circus troupe with a menagerie of exotic animals and monsters passes through. Some mishap occurs and the menagerie is let loose. With the creatures trapped within the town's walls, the area becomes an impromptu dungeon. The adventurers are tasked with clearing it out and freeing any trapped townsfolk from the homes. Perhaps "salvage" rights are granted and the adventurers can loot as they go, or each freed family will reward the adventurers.
 - 13 While in a city the adventurers are surrounded by a large group of well-armed imperial soldiers. They produce a royal decree stating the soldiers have the authority to press gang anyone into the King's service to help clear out

- the monster-infested sewers beneath the city.
- 14 An incredibly powerful and insane wizard kidnaps the adventurers. He shrinks them down and sends them beneath his home to clear out the tunnels and warrens made by vermin. The vermin have made off with magical trinkets and pages from spell books to make their nests with.
 - 15 The adventurers have wandered into the domain of an evil druid who uses his powers over plant and animal to trap the adventurers in a maze of prickly vines and trees that they must navigate to escape.
 - 16 A recent storm has carried with it a massive sailing ship from some unknown island empire. It appears crewless and runs aground near the adventurers (this could be on the beach or in a river).
 - 17 The adventurers spy a plume of reddish smoke billowing into the sky nearby. They discover the smoke is coming from a hole in the earth that leads to a cave network. The source of the smoke could be an alchemical experiment gone wrong, the result of a cult's summoning ritual, or a natural geothermic event.
 - 18 The adventurers encounter an ornate magical artifact that when handled transports them to a dungeon made of gold and silver. The artifact is in fact a magical prison and was the prison for a vile necromancer. The adventurers unwittingly triggered the item's magical properties and have switched places with the necromancer who is now free to wander the world. The adventurers must contend with the creations the necromancer left behind and complete a series of Sisyphean tasks to escape. The adventurers stand a good chance of escaping since they can use their combined might, skills, and magical abilities while the

DUNGEON RAISON D'ÊTRE

The following are ideas for explaining the reason behind a dungeon's existence.

The dungeon was a multi-planar prison established by some form of divine authority. It housed the worst criminals and villains from across multiple planes of existence before a prison break resulted in collapse of any authority.

A mad alchemist maintained a heavily fortified underground redoubt where he would experiment on creating magical hybrids of disparate creatures. These monsters, some of which had achieved rudimentary levels of intelligence, turned on their captor.

This dungeon was just that. A series of rooms and tunnels beneath a castle which has long since crumbled away. The land's rulers employed the dungeon as a place of interrogation and torture for so-called heretics and enemies of the crown.

These catacombs were dug out as a barren for a group of underground-dwelling humanoids. After they abandoned the warren it was overrun by various monsters that now make their lairs there.

This dungeon is a wizard's lair that is under powerful enchantments that repairs and maintains the structure and resets the traps.

Some titanic creature from a time before recorded history died and collapsed here and is now buried beneath earth and stone. The tunnels and rooms are places where creatures have burrowed into the calcified corpse.

necromancer never succeeded because he was alone.

19 A man dressed only in rags, his feet and hands shackled staggers towards the adventurers, collapses and dies. His back is bristling with orange-fletched arrows. He is an escaped slave who was being forced to dig out a new dungeon complex for his masters. The adventures can easily follow the man's shuffling tracks and blood trail back to its point of origin.

20 While traveling at night the adventurers see a ghostly portal appear in the sky and a translucent set of stairs materialize that lead up to it. This phantom dungeon appears only in the light of a full moon and will disappear leaving the adventurers to fall a great distance if they don't leave by daybreak.

GM'S COOKBOOK: DUNGEON JUMPSTARTERS #1

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