## RAGING SWAN PRESS DUNGEON DRESSING: DUNGEON ENTRANCES





### DUNGEON DRESSING: DUNGEON ENTRANCES

Tired of your dungeons lacking in verisimilitude? Want to add cool little features of interest to your creations but don't have the time to come up with non-essential details? Want to make your dungeons feel more realistic? Then Dungeon Dressing is for you! Each instalment focuses on a common dungeon fixture such as stairs, pillars or pools and gives the harried GM the tools to bring such features to life with interesting and cool noteworthy features.

This instalment of Dungeon Dressing presents loads of great features and details to add to the dungeon entrances in your dungeon. Designed to be used both during preparation or actual play, Dungeon Dressing: Dungeon Entrances is an invaluable addition to any GM's armoury!

#### CREDITS

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**Art**: William McAusland and Matt Morrow. Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission.

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#### DUNGEON ENTRANCES

Whether it be a cobweb covered gate, a portcullis adorned with a green iron devil's face or a fissure in the stony ground belching a sulphurous smoke, the entrance to your dungeon sets the tone for the adventure. If done well, it is likely to be the encounter talked about most by everyone who plays your adventure. Not every character lives to the end, but everyone plays the first encounter. Make it memorable.

#### FORESHADOWING

In the haste to get your players into the thick of your masterpiece dungeon, do not skimp on the entrance. The way you dress the dungeon's entrance, not only sets the tone, but gives your players some inkling of what to expect. Is it a natural entrance littered with the bones of animals and the occasional traveller? That suggests rough tunnels, lack of light and likely some feral monsters or animals. Is it a monstrous gate with a complicated lock between two statues of dwarven warriors? Savvy players are already noting the likelihood of solid passageways, the necessity of dealing with locks and the high probability of mechanical traps. Of course, you won't want to give away all the dungeon's secrets in the first encounter, but it never hurts to scatter hints of what might lie beyond with a strong and evocative flavoursome description.

#### A DEATH-TRAP FOYER?

Beyond the mood you hope to evoke, you should also consider the original purpose of the entrance when the dungeon was constructed. Was it intended to be a welcoming entrance to entertain foreign dignitaries or rich merchants? Was it a heavily defended gauntlet meant to lure an enemy to their doom? While the former might offer interesting things for the characters to explore, the second is much more likely to be investigated. If your entrance is inviting or intriguing enough, the characters will likely enter it of their own accord, placing them just where you want them.

> Entrances might have a door, a portcullis, a stair and even a selection of traps. Putting these features together can create a memorable entrance, and opening encounter for your dungeon.

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#### MAJOR ENTRANCE FEATURES

Use this table, to generate interesting characteristics for your dungeon entrances. Some features listed below may be inappropriate based on your dungeon's setup–ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

#### D% MAJOR FEATURE

01-06	The entrance lies near the bottom of an abandoned moss-covered well. In the well's wall, fifteen feet down from its mouth, muddy bricks protrude slightly in a spiral downward <sup>1</sup> sixty feet to the bottom where a secret door <sup>2</sup> grants entry to the dungeon. A few inches of rainwater and thick mud fill the bottom of the well.
07-12	A circle of magical runes large enough for an average wagon with a team of horses encloses images of clouds and birds painted onto the floor. A faint breeze of cold, fresh air blows from the circle. Speaking the correct command word while in the circle causes the creature to disappear and reappear in the dungeon.
13-18	A tumbledown two-storey tower of grey stone is perched upon a low mound in a foggy moor. Broken arrow shafts, rusty swords and bleached bones poke through the soggy soil for hundreds of feet around the hill. The tower is empty but for a skeleton seated at a simple table, an empty bottle of wine before it and a fine longbow at its side. An iron key that opens a nearby trapdoor hangs from a leather thong around the skeleton's neck.
19-24	A worked tunnel protrudes the length of a spear into an earthen mound. Vines and moss cover the entrance while a putrid sludge flows sluggishly out onto the wet, muddy ground. The stonework is chipped and worn, suggesting it is ancient. A scream, or possibly some strange bird call, echoes from within.
25-30	The entrance is a broad hole located on the side of a steep cliff. A rickety wood and rope elevator, sized for six Medium creatures provides access. It may, or may not, be safe. Two sets of machinery–one at the top and one at the bottom–control the elevator.
31-36	The entrance is a set of stairs behind a locked <sup>3</sup> portcullis. A carving of a phoenix decorates the wall above the portcullis. The carving radiates faint evocation magic <sup>4</sup> .
37-42	To prevent intruders, the dungeon's entrance is inside a traditional fortified keep surrounded by a crenulated wall. A water-filled moat with a raised drawbridge surrounds the keep.
43-49	The dungeon's entrance lies at the end of a fog-filled box canyon. Thirty feet across with steep-sided walls more than sixty feet high, the approach is littered with large boulders. Two huge iron-bound wooden doors stand ajar with the left door hanging solely by one hinge. Enemies could lurk anywhere

the desert sands and is only visible here and there. It leads to a natural cave in an outcropping of rock that 50-56 stands out prominently in the desert. A primitive painting in white outside the cave depicts a stickman holding a spear and several four-legged creatures, each with a single horn and long tails. The entrance is behind a shelf of old, dusty books in a 57-62 large library. The door is opened when a character pulls on the correct series of books. A line of square, marble columns march toward a grand archway. Above the entrance, a frieze depicts a 63-68 bearded man lounging upon a stone while golden birds bring him bunches of grapes. A broad staircase of black stone rises to a door of iron. painted bright red and covered in dripping blue runes. 69-74 The door pierces a wall of plain stone and radiates significant heat. The entrance to the dungeon, a round door with a ship's wheel in the centre, is in a grand hall with walls carved to depict stone ships sailing out of the walls 75-81 towards the middle of the hall. The floor is of dark blue tiles and the room is strangely filled with the scent of sea air. It is colder than normal in the hall. A soaring narrow bridge crosses a grand chasm to a gate of golden bars. The bridge rises at a steep grade to the higher side making it difficult to see what lies 82-87 beyond the gate. On either side of the bridge stands a winged lion statue; one stands rampant while the other has its mouth wide in a feral roar. Built into the side of a hill, a low moss-roofed cottage protrudes as far as a horse. A candle flickers beyond a clouded glass window, barely visible past the gnarled trees and thorny bushes. Sickly herbs grow in boxes 88-94 under the windows. Rustling in the underbrush and the reflection of small eyes suggest the land is alive with fauna that are not at all disturbed by the party's approach. Some may even be eager to feast on the characters' warm flesh. Glowing blue lichen and large mushrooms line the cavern, growing out of the soft loamy soil. A pale white vine grows along the ground, through bones of small 95-100 animals. Water drips from the ceiling like a slow steady rain, making conversation difficult. The dungeon's entrance lies beyond the mushrooms at the end of a winding path.

A crude, cracked brick roadway disappears beneath

- 1. +15% chance to climb walls
- 2. Successful find secret door roll reveals.
- 3. Successful open locks roll picks.
- 4. Detect magic or similar spell reveals.

#### MINOR ENTRANCE FEATURES & DRESSING

Use this table, to generate interesting features for your entrances. Some features listed below may be inappropriate based on your dungeon's setup–ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

#### D% MINOR FEATURE OR DRESSING

A cave-in, rock fall or collapsed wall has covered the entrance and requires several hours of excavation to01-02clear a path. Once half the rubble is cleared, the characters must proceed cautiously or the remaining rocks may shift and collapse.03-04The entrance is barricaded with boxes, chests and barriels. There are signs of a struggle–sprays of blood, a few old bones and a discarded boot. Given the barricade has been pushed aside, it appears whomever attacked was able to successfully breach the entrance.05-06As above, but the barricade appears to have been arranged to keep something in.07-08Large-sized, clawed footprints of some four-legged creature tracks in and out of the entrance.09-10giant mushrooms, shrubs or other flora appropriate to the climate) partially occlude entry.11-12The entrance has been covered by an illusion1 making it appear as the surrounding landscape.13-14The tidy dungeon entrance shows signs of recent cleaning and maintenance.15-16Dense spider webs shroud the entrance.17-18in a semicircle before the entrance. All have been roughly severed and are too decayed to recognise. The stench of rotting flesh is overpowering.A crudely painted blue door on the side of a monstrous conifer provides a magical entrance to the dungeon. Turning the shiny brass door knob reveals a blinding aquamarine light. Travellers find themselves in a new location, when it clears.21-22Splashes of different colours paint the area near the entrance. The donkey happily chews on grass, ignoring anyone a shawl fills the cart. The goods can be sold for 60 gp.23-24Splashes of different colours paint the area near the		
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29-30	A dented helmet with a blood-encrusted feather plume lies on the ground, near the entrance.
31-32	A pair of torches flank the entrance. One burns with a magical cold flame, while the other is unlit. The flame for the active torch is permanently extinguished if the torch is removed from its sconce.
33-34	A big red "X" is drawn on the floor, near the entrance.
35-36	Placed facing the entrance are hundreds of eyeballs of all sizes and colours, floating in jars filled with a clear, thick liquid. They do not radiate magic.
37-38	The corpse of a female halfling explorer lies just outside the entrance, a dried stain leaving a trail into the entrance from where she crawled. She appears to have died within the last three days from multiple bite wounds. Most of her equipment has been looted, but she still carries a pouch holding 12 sp and an unlabelled potion vial.
39-40	A trail of 27 silver coins, spaced evenly, leads into the entrance. Ominous blood splatters are clearly visible along the path the coins take.
41-42	A copper coin with the number one crudely etched upon it has been wedged into a crack, crevice or under a stone near the entrance.
43-44	A crow picks at a tangle of colourful string caught in a thorny bush. Careful inspection reveals it has tassels and appears to have been torn from a thin material, such as a shawl. The scrap is no bigger that a man's finger, but looks of good craftsmanship.
45-46	Faint acrid smoke periodically wafts from the entrance. It is not enough to provide concealment. Whatever creates the smoke lurks close to the entrance.
47-48	A long abandoned campsite is hidden in the underbrush a bow shot from the entrance. There is a ring of stones for a small fire and three depressions suggest someone slept there. Those that excavate the fire pit find the remains of old animal bones and a partially melted brass cap for a scroll tube.
49-50	Scorch marks mar the entrance and a wand made of yew, snapped into three pieces, lies discarded on the ground. If the entrance was barred or otherwise blocked, the obstruction has been damaged by the flames and is now at 50% of its original hit points.
51-52	A large wooden pole with a crossbeam atop it has been set into the ground before the entrance. An orc in a rent chain shirt is crucified upon it. Several arrows pierce his body.
53-54	Half of a set of mangled battered manacles, now covered in rust, lie atop a rock. The top of the rock shows damage from where something heavy was pounded against it.
55-56	A burnt out torch stub is wedged into a crack in the wall. Soot stains the wall behind it. If lit, it burns weakly for one minute before guttering out.

57-58	Shattered red glass-the remains of a crystal decanter- litter the floor inside the entrance. In the middle of the shards lies a carved bone stopper shaped as a fist with one finger pointing out. It is worth 2 gp.
59-60	A grave has been dug in the earth (or piled under rubble if the floor is not easily excavated) and a shield lies atop it. The top half of the heavy steel shield is painted blue and the bottom is yellow. Emblazoned on the front is a longsword, point down, with a pair of feathered wings sprouting from the middle of the blade. A set of humanoid bones lies in the grave.
61-62	A large brown bear sleeps in front of the entrance. It has randomly wandered by, and if the party returns later, it has moved on.
63-64	The smell of sweet, flowery perfume hangs in the air. There is no obvious source, but the odour dissipates over thirty minutes.
65-66	A crumpled piece of parchment is tacked to the wall or a nearby tree. In Common, it reads "Wanted Dalat Thunderock, For Banditry and Murder." It gives a description of a burly dwarf missing one arm.
67-68	Several small niches have been carved around the entrance. Each contains some small keepsake in remembrance of the fallen: a dagger, a silver necklace (3 gp), a brass ring (1 gp), three feathers tied together with a green string and a blue enamelled steel gauntlet; among others.
69-70	A reinforced wall of stone blocks stands across the entrance. It looks new and out of place.
71-72	A maggot-infested corpse of a large dog lies inside the entrance. The corpse is only a day or two old. One of the dog's legs lies ten feet away from the body.
73-74	Lightning has struck in front of the dungeon entrance and turned a swath of ground to smooth black glass.
75-76	A dozen caltrops are spread before the entrance. They are old and dirt encrusted and easily missed <sup>2</sup> . Characters oblivious to the danger, may stand on one.
77-78	A brown cloth sack with a loaf of hard, stale bread lies in the entryway. A coin-sized hole has been gnawed through the cloth; rodent droppings lie nearby.
79-80	Three empty, dark glass bottles lie on the floor. They smell of strong alcohol, but are (sadly) empty.
81-82	Written in Common sloppily over the entrance in dried blood are the words "Welcome to Hell." Fingerprints in the blood make it clear the writing was done by a small clawed hand.
83-84	A piece of paper is trapped against the side of the entrance, fluttering in a slight breeze. The sketch depicts the entrance with three armoured men seen from behind and a young woman in leathers with a sketch pad in the foreground. The picture is very good and provides enough detail to identify the woman, if she is ever encountered.

85-86	The entrance's door, portal or portcullis is chipped and shows signs of having been pried open. A bent, rusting crowbar lies in a nearby corner.
87-88	Two dozen caltrops are scattered outside the entrance and a large puddle of flammable oil covers the floor inside the entrance. Bloody rags lie further inside.
89-90	A wagon of weathered timber, missing all its wheels, rests on two logs in front of the entrance. Tall grass grows up around it and the hardware is heavily corroded with rust, suggesting the wagon has been here for some considerable time.
91-92	Wisps of colourful light dance before the entrance, shedding bright light for twenty feet. They can be suppressed with <i>dispel magic</i> but return an hour later.
93-94	The stub of a purple candle rests in a puddle of wax. If lit, the candle burns for fifteen minutes.
95-96	A tripwire is strung across the entrance <sup>2</sup> . It is connected to a metal shield balanced atop a shield. If a characters doesn't see the tripwire stepping into it causes the shield to loudly clatter to the floor.
97-98	A wooden stool, sized for a Medium creature, stands next to the entrance. Placed next to the stool is a crude wooden box. The word "fee" is written in Common, on the side of the box.
99-100	A statue has been dragged in front of the entrance, gouges in the ground making it clear it came from inside the dungeon. The statue portrays a snarling, fanged woman with a serpent's tail and six arms. Each arm holds an actual metal weapon that can, with some care, be removed from the statue's grip. The weapons carried comprise a spear, longsword, dagger, trident, khopesh and kama.

- Successful saving throw against spells disbelieves.
   Successful find/remove traps roll detects.



#### SECRET ENTRANCES

Use this table, to generate a secret entrance for your dungeon. Some features listed below may be inappropriate based on your dungeon's setup–ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

#### D% SECRET ENTRANCES<sup>1</sup>

01-05	Thick curtains of ivy and thorny vines obscure the entrance. They undulate slightly in the breeze.
06-10	Mouldering brickwork blocks the entrance, but it is easily dismantled.
11-12	A mighty tree grows out of this cave-like entrance, obscuring the entrance shaft from sight.
13-14	A rock or mudslide covers the doorway.
15-16	A collapsed wagon lies across a trapdoor.
17-18	A bare expanse of sand conceals a stone slab that serves as a trapdoor.
19-20	The sunken entrance lies in a deep pool or lake. The entrance cavern is flooded, but the passages beyond rise quickly to drier caverns.
21-22	Guano or other filth covers the secret entrance.
23-24	Innumerable thick strands of spider-silk render this door nearly invisible.
25-26	Canvas or burlap, cunningly painted to resemble the surrounds, stretches across the entrance.
27-28	Access to the dungeon is on the side of an overgrown ditch or moat, obscured by weeds.
29-30	A collapsed hut or outhouse hides the secret entrance.
31-32	A narrow crack in a tumbled crag leads to a cave that intersects with the dungeon.
33-34	A large flagstone or flat rock serves as a trapdoor. It is cunningly weighted and can be opened easily.
35-36	An abandoned house's cellar opens into a long, dusty and part-collapsed tunnel.
37-38	The dungeon is accessed through a cell or oubliette in a gaol or castle.
39-40	Walking widdershins in a circle of toadstools reveals a magic opening on a nearby knoll.
41-42	A large freestanding tomb conceals steep stairs leading down into the dungeon.
43-44	A ruined shrine or folly conceals a narrow set of stairs.
45-46	Access to the dungeon is concealed within a huge clock or other mechanical device.
47-48	The secret entrance is hidden under a mural, itself containing clues to the nature of the complex.
49-50	A banner or tapestry covers the entrance, which is within a busy hall or reception room.
51-52	The corpse or bones of a huge creature partially obscures the entrance.
53-54	A waterfall or sheet of ice blocks the view of this cave- like tunnel.

55-56	This door is covered in rock and leaves fastened to make it blend in to the surrounding environment.
57-58	A great barrel or vat within a wine cellar conceals a secret set of stairs.
59-60	The entrance is hidden behind a cabinet in a busy, cluttered shop within a town or village.
61-62	An altar or megalith blocks an old entrance to underground tunnels.
63-64	A crevasse, nearly invisible because of overhanging trees, conceals the entrance.
65-66	Access to the dungeon is through a well's wall just above the surface of the water. Sometimes, after heavy rain, the entrance floods.
67-68	The entrance, while faintly visible, is halfway up a sheer cliff; no stairs reach the entrance.
69-70	A small door under a bridge leads to the dungeon.
71-72	The entrance stands beneath a long pier, reachable only at low tide.
73-74	This mountainside entrance is covered by the nest of a huge bird or other flying monster.
75-76	A boulder, cleverly counterbalanced, serves as a hidden door to the dungeon.
77-78	The dungeon is accessible through a cave or alley used as a rubbish tip; waste and filth blocks the door.
79-80	A paper-maché or plaster piece of stage scenery conceals a small door.
81-82	The entrance is through a dovecote or coop. Characters entering the coop, cause panic among the birds within; the birds loudly burst forth–perhaps alerting any nearby dungeon denizens to the intruders.
83-84	An icehouse or smokehouse conceals the door.
85-86	To reach the entrance, explorers must traverse a complicated and overgrown, monster-infested hedge-maze of cunning design.
87-88	The doorway appears in the mist or fog, seemingly insubstantial. It is only accessible when the weather conditions are just right.
89-90	A model or diorama contains a tiny magical door, that, if touched, teleports an individual into the dungeon.
91-92	A mirror or painting allows magical access to the interior of a dungeon.
93-94	The doorway is a simple closet or cabinet with a permanent link to the inside of the dungeon.
95-99	Access to this dungeon is possible by means of an old dumbwaiter or priest hole.
100	A simple illusion of a rock wall conceals the entrance. A deep, camouflaged pit lies just beyond the illusion.

 Secret doors generally require a find secret door roll to spot. Some doors may be easier or harder to locate.



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