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# DUNGEON DRESSING: PITS



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# DUNGEON DRESSING: PITS

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*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 pits in your dungeon. Designed to be used both during preparation or actual play, Dungeon Dressing: Pits is an invaluable addition to any GM's armoury!*

## CREDITS

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## PITS

Pits are a lurking danger that have spelled the doom of countless adventurers. Pits can be used to kill, injure or trap intruders, to block progress or to prevent escape. An explorer trapped in a pit with no way of getting out is at the mercy of the first creature or character to discover their predicament.

Other mundane uses for pits include general storage, rubbish dump or prison. Other pits may accidentally (or by design) link a dungeon level to other deeper locations.

### MAJOR PIT FEATURES

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

D%	MAJOR FEATURE
01-05	Small holes pierce the bottom few feet of the pit's walls. They are too small for any character bigger than a halfling child to squeeze through.
06-10	The pit intersects with a natural cave which can be accessed through a narrow crawlway.
11-12	The pit's rough, uneven floor is difficult terrain.
13-14	Several large boulders lie in the pit; a partially squashed skeleton protrudes from under the largest.
15-16	A pool of pure, cold water covers half the pit's floor.
17-18	A narrow chasm pierces the pit's floor; a cold wind issues forth from its depth.
19-20	Seams of different rock cut through the floor.
21-22	The pit's walls are rough and easy to climb.
23-24	The pit has an overhang making it hard to escape.
25-26	The pit is a cesspit. Many small holes, chutes and cracks in its walls ooze excrement. Characters in the pit may contract a gastro-intestinal disease <sup>1</sup> .
27-28	The floor of the pit slopes steeply downwards.
29-30	A shard of obsidian (or other sharp rock) rears from the pit floor. The shard is sharp and smooth; characters falling while climbing it suffer 2d6 damage as they slide down the rock.
31-32	The pit narrows; at its base it is only 5 ft. wide; character falling into the pit slide down to the bottom and suffer less damage as a result.
33-34	The pit once served as a oubliette. Four sets of rusting manacles are affixed to its walls.
35-36	A ring of crudely carved gargoyles leers down at the pit floor. Set 15 ft. above the pit floor their open mouths connect to chutes elsewhere that can be used to pour burning oil, effluent and other liquids down upon those trapped below.
37-38	Several small holes pierce the floor; a noxious foul-smelling breeze issues forth from within.
39-40	A lurid painting of demons and devils slaughtering humans covers one wall. Several pieces of the painting have been chipped away.
41-42	Niches carved into the walls about 6 ft. from the bottom of this pit each hold a leering humanoid skull.
43-44	A single empty torch sconce juts from one wall. Pulling the sconce causes the pit lid to collapse into the pit. Perceptive characters examining the sconce realise it has a mechanism linked to the pit lid.
45-46	The floor is made of different coloured cobblestones laid out in a simple geometric pattern.
47-48	A stone shelf is cut into one wall. It holds several sets of trail rations. They are all poisoned.
49-50	An archway pierces one wall. The unfinished corridor beyond progresses 5 ft. before abruptly ending.
51-52	A ring of crudely carved gargoyles leers down at the pit floor. Set 15 ft. above the floor water trickles from their mouths. The walls and floor are slick.
53-54	The floor has been treated with a <i>continual light</i> spell. Lurid shadows dance within the pit.
55-56	The pit is above a natural cavern and the floor is very weak. A falling character creates more cracks in the floor and the rock creaks and groans alarmingly. Six rounds after a character falls into the pit, the floor collapses dumping the unfortunate character into the cavern below. The distance fallen (and what—if anything—lurks in the cavern) are at the GM's discretion.
57-58	Thick, cloying mud covers the floor. The pit is dank and smells of earth.
59-60	The floor is of cobblestones. The symbol of an evil god is picked out in black stone.
61-62	Carvings of skeletons—all with broken and shattered legs—decorate the pit's walls.
63-64	A narrow, crumbling ledge circles the pit about 10 ft. below its lid.
65-66	A natural seam of black rock (coal) studs the pit's walls.
67-68	Broken pottery is mortared into the nooks and crannies of the pit's walls. Treat the pottery as caltrops (that injure both hands and feet).
69-70	A mosaic of a shadowy, substantial creature decorates the floor.
71-72	A mosaic of a gigantic mouth (a purple worm's maw) covers the pit floor.
73-74	The walls of the pit are warded with a <i>magic aura</i> spell and appear trapped to any mundane or magical investigations.
75-76	The pit is suspiciously clean (as if recently tidied). Paranoid characters may suspect the presence of a gelatinous cube.

77-78	Many deep notches pierce the pit's walls. All manner of spiders and insects dwell within.
79-80	The pit is actually an aborted mineshaft pressed into service as a trap. Minerals stud the pit's walls.
81-82	The pit's walls have been sharpened so they are dangerous for climbers. Treat as #67-68.
83-84	The pit is a natural sinkhole.
85-86	Tiny holes pierce the pit's lid allowing light and air into the interior.
87-88	The first two steps of a rudimentary stair rise from the pit floor. "Not this Way" is carved into the first step.
89-90	The pit floods through wide and deep cracks in the walls after heavy rain; a tide mark on the walls indicates how high the water rises.
91-92	The pit floor is slightly warm.
93-94	The air in the pit is foul, fetid and close; characters within may be nauseated <sup>1</sup> until they escape.
95-99	Roll twice on this table, ignoring results of 95-100.
100	Roll thrice on this table, ignoring results of 95-100.

1: Save against poison resists.

## THE THING IN THE PIT

On occasion, when a character falls into a pit they discover it is already occupied. Sometimes the pit builder intentionally stocks it with undead or magically creatures creatures while other times vermin or other creatures claim the pit as their own. A partial list of suitable monsters includes:

- **Magically Created Creatures:** animated object, clay golem, flesh golem and stone golem
- **Miscellaneous:** mimic
- **Ooze:** gelatinous cube, grey ooze and ochre jelly
- **Undead:** ghast, ghost, ghoul, skeleton, wight and zombie
- **Vermin:** giant ant, giant beetle, giant centipede, giant rat, rot grub, spider

Additionally, some monsters are attracted to pits, and the tasty treats trapped therein. As well as the normal dungeon denizens, predators such as giant spiders could be drawn to such locales.

Fighting in a pit can be challenging. Characters therein often lack the ability to manoeuvre—this is particularly devastating for archers and spellcasters. It is also likely the entire party will be unable to participate in the battle. Thus, when placing monsters in a pit, be mindful of the encounter's likely difficulty level and take care to provide interesting tactical options for all participants.

## CLIMBING

Characters stuck in a pit normally extricate themselves as quickly as possible. Those without magical means of doing so must scale the pit's walls.

WALL CONDITION	CLIMB MODIFIER
Very rough wall with ledges	+20%
Very rough natural rock wall	+10%
Uneven wall; narrow foot and handholds	0
Natural rock wall or brick wall	-10%

## FALLING INTO A PIT

Characters falling into a pit normally take falling damage and land prone; the damage suffered is dependant on the distance fallen. Typically, this is equal to 1d6 damage per 10 ft. fallen. Some pits, however, contain acid, water or even magma, making them much more dangerous.

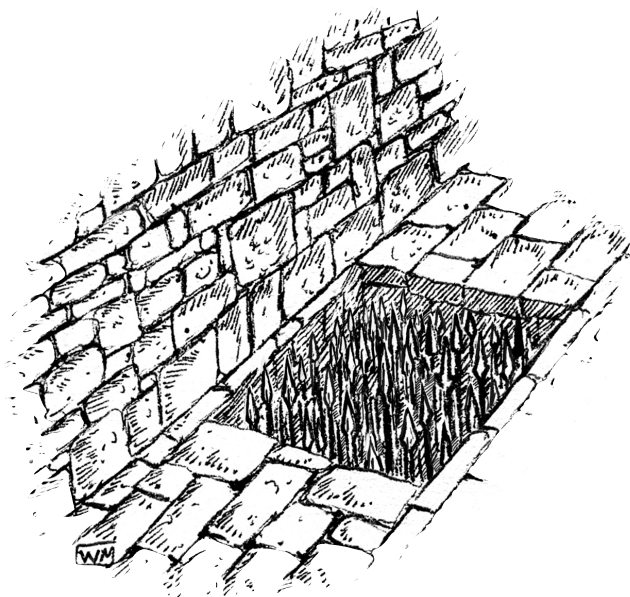
**Acid:** Total immersion in acid deals 10d4 acid damage per round, while exposure to acid deals 2d4 acid damage each round. Additionally, the fumes of acid are inhaled poisons. Characters adjacent to a large pool of acid must make a saving throw against poison or suffer blurred vision and a hacking cough for one turn.

**Lava:** Lava deals 1d6 fire damage per round of exposure. Characters totally immersed suffer 10d6 fire damage; characters escaping the magma suffer 5d6 fire damage for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases.

**Soft Surfaces:** Falls onto soft surfaces (such as mud, dense undergrowth and so on) reduces falling damage by 1d6.

**Spikes:** Treat small spikes as daggers while larger ones could be equal to longswords or perhaps even spears.

**Water:** If the water is at least 10 ft. deep, the first 20 ft. of a fall inflicts no damage.



## MINOR PIT FEATURES & DRESSING

Use this table, to generate interesting features for your pits. 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
01	Brackish water about six inches deep fills the pit.
02	Mushrooms and fungi grow in the pit.
03	The air in the pit is musty. Mould and fungus grow on the floor and walls.
04	Bent and broken spikes jut up from the floor. Dried blood coats many of the spikes; but there are no other signs of previous victims.
05	Rubble litters the ground; treat the pit's bottom as difficult terrain.
06	The pit's walls are slightly moist, but are not wet enough to hinder climbers.
07	Small holes pierce the bottom few feet of the pit's walls. They are too small for any creature larger than a cat or other tiny creature to enter.
08	Several rotting rat corpses lie about the pit.
09	A skeleton of a human male is huddled in one corner; both his legs are broken and his equipment is rusted or rotten (and worthless—although this is a good spot to place an item the characters might need later).
10	Brackish water about one-inch deep fills the pit.
11	An upturned rotting table lies at the bottom of pit.
12	Brackish water about five-foot deep fills the pit.
13	Greenish, moist slime covers the pit's floor and walls.
14	Iron spikes—serving as a rudimentary ladder—are rammed into one wall.
15	Burnt torches lie scattered about the pit's floor.
16	The dead, frozen remains of a large patch of brown mould covers one wall; the mould is harmless, but the temperature is slightly chilly in the pit.
17	Iron spikes—serving as a rudimentary ladder—pierce one wall. Several are loose, however; a character climbing them may fall back into the pit.
18	A single bent and rusty iron spike protrudes from one of the pit's walls.
19	Water oozes from the pit's walls, making climbing out harder <sup>1</sup> . Mud coats the pit's floor.
20	Thick mud covers the pit's floor. The mud is four-foot deep; characters excavating may find treasure within.
21	A pile of rubble fills one corner of the pit.
22	A high pile of rubbish and detritus fills the pit; the pile reduces falling damage by 1d6.
23	Rubbish and detritus fills the pit and reduces the falling damage by 1d6. Disease lurks in the festering mass, however. Those falling into the pit may contract a virulent gastro-intestinal disease.
24	Spider webs cluster thickly in the corner of the pit; not enough spiders dwell therein to form a swarm.
25	A large (dried) bloodstain mars the pit's floor.
26	The air in the pit smells musty.
27	The scorched (dead) remnants of green slime cling to the pit's walls.
28	Fresh water oozes up through cracks in the floor to create a small pool.
29	Bat guano covers the floor.
30	Fungus grows on the walls. The walls are slippery <sup>1</sup> .
31	Cold air issues out of small cracks in the floor and walls of the pit. The breeze is strong enough to make a torch's flame flicker.
32	Glowing fungi fills the pit with a soft, green light.
33	Mud covers the pit floor and white mushrooms grow within. Insects infest the pit.
34	The words, "Tell Adosan, I love her", are scratched into the pit's floor in Common.
35	The pit's walls are unstable <sup>1</sup> and may collapse when a character tries to climb out.
36	Crudely carved hand and foot holes pierce one wall <sup>3</sup> .
37	The faint smell of rotten flesh pervades the pit.
38	The stench of urine and fear fills the pit.
39	A cloud of flies buzz about the rotting corpses of several large rats.
40	Wet sand, about 3 ft. deep, covers the floor of the pit; it reduces falling damage by 10 ft.
41	Dry soil, about 2 ft. deep, covers the pit floor.
42	A large dried bloodstain mars part of the pit floor.
43	Cobwebs cover the walls; many spiders dwell within, but not enough to form a swarm. Some, nevertheless, scuttle forth to see what has fallen into their lair.
44	A field of half-foot high mushrooms covers the floor.
45	A pile of blackened stones and charred wood bear mute testimony to a fire set long ago. Characters searching the fire find scorched rat bones.
46	The cloying stench of rotting flesh and excrement hangs in the air.
47	A half-decayed body of a goblin lies slumped against one wall. Dressed in rags, he has nothing of value.
48	A large colony of white ants live in the cracks running through the walls and floor of the pit. They are numerous, but harmless.
49	Old and dried excrement is daubed over one wall. It is crumbly and flakes off easily.
50	Dried bloodstains smear one wall; they mark the easiest climb out of the pit <sup>3</sup> .
51	"Have mercy on my soul" is scratched into one wall in tiny Elven letters <sup>6</sup> .
52	A small pile of rubble lies stacked in one corner. Searching the rubble reveals a crushed skeletal hand.

53	The remains of torn and burnt cobwebs cling to the pit's walls. Hundreds of decaying crushed and burnt spider corpses litter the floor.
54	One wall is whitewashed. The colour is faded and discoloured.
55	"Hunger for Death" is carved into one wall.
56	One wall has partially collapsed. The resultant rubble pile is easy to scale and reduces the pit's depth by half on that side.
57	A bleached, cracked skull leers up from the floor.
58	Green slime coats one wall. The slime is harmless.
59	A bent miner's pick lies abandoned in the pit.
60	One wall is partially melted. The wall is very smooth <sup>1</sup> .
61	Dust covers the pit's floor. No tracks are evident.
62	Spikes once festooned the floor, but they now lie battered and scattered about the pit; several bear ominous bloodstains.
63	A smashed mirror, burst waterskin and a ripped sack are piled in one corner.
64	A crude painting of humans slaughtering orcs decorates one wall. It is done in blood and ink. Water oozing down the wall has effaced much of the image.
65	An <i>audible glamer</i> spell wards the bottom of the pit.
66	A character falling into the pit activates a <i>magic mouth</i> . The mouth cackles loudly.
67	A silver piece fills eight small holes in the pit floor. The coins are old and tarnished.
68	A pile of bodily wastes has attracted a small number of pale white ants into the pit. The ants live in crevices in the walls and are harmless.
69	A discarded, slashed and torn map shows a route from the dungeon entrance to the pit.
70	A dried blood trail leads up one wall. It seems someone who fell into the pit was badly hurt but managed to climb out.
71	Phosphorescent fungi grows on the underside of the pit's lid.
72	"Geralt's Folly" is carved into one wall.
73	Scratch marks mar the underside of the pit's lid.
74	Soot stains cover the underside of the pit's lid.
75	A cluster of small bloody handprints—perhaps those of halflings, goblins or the like—decorate one wall.
76	A single two-foot high mushroom grows in the centre of the pit. It reduces the falling damage of a character landing on it by 1d6.
77	A macabre display of bones covers the pit's walls and the underside of its lid. The bones are attached to wires and loudly rattle when the lid opens (and for a few minutes afterwards).
78	A pair of faded, red eyes is painted onto the underside of the pit's lid.

79	A pair of rusting short swords and the remains of several skeletons fill the pit. Sharpened leg bones are jammed into crevices in the rock; they serve as impromptu pitons.
80	An iron spike pierces the wall just below the pit's lid. A frayed three-foot piece of rope hangs from it.
81	Water oozes out from the bottom of one wall.
82	The pit lid does not shut perfectly, leaving a thin slit through which light and fresh air enters the pit.
83	The air inside the pit is unnaturally cold.
84	Minerals in the pit's walls glimmer invitingly in the light. They look attractive, but are worthless.
85	An iron ladder leads up from the floor to the pit's lid. Several cracks in the lid are big enough to thrust a spear through, with little effort.
86	When the pit's lid shuts, only one side operates properly. The other remains stuck open.
87	Sounds from the area above the pit filter through a score of small holes in its lid.
88	The acoustics of the pit create weird, muffled echoes that linger for longer than normal.
89	Thick, wiry mottled black fungus covers one wall and part of the floor.
90	The smell of sweat and smoke hang in the air.
91	A gigantic representation of an evil god's holy symbol made of carefully placed rubble decorates the floor.
92	A large carven sigil of the holy symbol of an evil god decorates the floor. It has been comprehensively scratched and defaced.
93	Fleas infest the carcass of several huge rats. Characters in the pit may catch fleas and begin to itch and scratch until they bathe. This may, at the GM's discretion, make concentrating on complex tasks difficult.
94	A ripped and torn sack contains two day's worth of crushed trail rations and a shattered spyglass.
95	Thick stripes of black and white paint cover the walls.
96	Smoke or steam issues from small cracks in the pit's floor. The floor is noticeably warm.
97	A pouch containing 12 gp, a <i>potion of healing</i> and a map fragment lie on a natural shelf halfway up one wall.
98	A single bloody handprint mars the underside of the pit's lid.
99	Roll twice on this table, ignoring results of 99-100.
100	Roll thrice on this table, ignoring results of 99-100.

- 1: -10% on climb wall checks.  
2: Save against poison resists.  
3: +10% on climb wall checks.

## PIT TRICKS & TRAPS

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Not all pits are created equal. Some are merely holes in the ground; others have more cunning or deadly features.

### CRUSHING PIT

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Characters caught in this pit must move quickly to avoid being crushed to death.

**Activation:** The pit opens, if a character stands on it. Once activated, it resets after ten minutes.

**Find the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll discovers the pit.

**Defeating the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll disarms the pit's mechanism. Alternatively, a character making a successful find secret door roll notices a tiny switch near the pit that turns the trap's mechanism on and off. Destroying the switch locks the trap in the position it is in.

**Effect:** When triggered, this pit has the following effects:

*The floor drops away suddenly, dumping you into a deep pit.*

- **Fall (Round 1):** The pit opens; characters in the party's front rank have a 3 in 6 chance of falling in; individuals in the party's second rank have a 1 in 6 chance of also falling in. Such characters fall 40 ft., suffer 4d6 falling damage and land prone. A character making a find secret doors roll spots dozens of small holes piercing the pit's walls.
- **Spikes Emerge (Round 2):** Grinding sounds issue from the walls and long spikes emerge from the small holes. Characters utilising the spikes can scale the walls with a +10% chance of success, but suffer 1d6 slashing damage for every climb walls roll they make. Characters scaling the walls without using the spikes must make normal climb wall rolls.
- **Walls Begin to Move (Round 3):** The walls start to grind shut, moving 5 ft. a round. Characters climbing a wall must roll equal or under their Dexterity on 3d6 or fall off as the walls slowly move together.
- **Effect (Round 5):** The walls slam shut. Characters in the pit are attacked by 1d4 spikes (THAC0 15, 1d8+5 damage) and are pinned in place; pinned characters suffer 1d4+2 damage per spike per round until they extricate themselves by rolling under their Strength score on 3d6 (+1 per spike). The walls remain closed for two rounds before slowly grinding open.

**Note:** Decide the pit's width and length before placing it. The pit's dimensions affect how many rounds trapped characters have to escape. A kind GM will give them at least four rounds to effect their escape.

### DANGEROUSLY UNSTABLE PIT

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Characters falling into this trap, might fall into a deeper cavern.

**Activation:** The pit opens, if a character stands on it. Once activated, the lid resets after one minute; however, the collapsing floor does not reset.

**Find the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll discovers the pit.

**Defeating the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll disarms the pit's mechanism. Alternatively, a character making a successful find secret door roll notices a tiny switch near the pit that turns the trap's mechanism on and off. Destroying the switch locks the trap in the position it is in.

**Effect:** When triggered, this trap has the following effects:

*The floor beneath your feet suddenly drops away.*

- **Effect (Round 1):** The pit opens; characters in the party's front rank have a 3 in 6 chance of falling in; individuals in the party's second rank have a 1 in 6 chance of also falling in. Such characters fall 20 ft., suffer 2d6 falling damage and land prone.
- **Effect (Round 2 - 3):** The floor of the pit begins to fail. Characters in the pit hear the sound of cracking rock; a dwarf or gnome character hearing this sound automatically realises the floor is unsound.
- **Effect (Round 4):** The floor collapses into a natural cavern 20 ft. below the pit. Characters on the pit's floor fall into the cave, suffer 2d6 falling damage and land on 1d4 stalagmites (THAC0 18, 1d4+5 piercing damage). A character can scale the cavern walls with a normal chance of success. Unfortunately, an overhang between the cavern and the pit is much harder to negotiate (-30% chance to climb).

### SUFFOCATING PIT

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Characters caught in this pit may drown in a deluge of mud and quicksand, if they do not escape quickly.

**Activation:** The pit opens, if a character stands on it. Once activated, the pit does not reset.

**Find the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll discovers the pit.

**Defeating the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll disarms the pit's mechanism. Alternatively, a character making a successful find secret door roll notices a tiny switch near the pit that turns the trap's mechanism on and off. Destroying the switch locks the trap in the position it is in.

**Effect:** When triggered, this trap has the following effects:

*The floor drops away and you fall into a deep pit. Moments later, mud starts to pour into the pit through large openings high up on each wall.*

- **Fall (Round 1):** The pit opens; characters in the party's front rank have a 3 in 6 chance of falling in; individuals in the party's second rank have a 1 in 6 chance of also falling in. Such characters fall 60 ft. and suffer 6d6 falling damage.
- **Deluge of Mud (Round 2):** A deluge of mud starts pouring into the pit through the large openings in the walls. The depth of the soil increases by 2 ft. per round. Roll for initiative. Characters in the pit suffer 1d6 damage (a successful saving throw against breath weapon halves) from the deluge of falling mud. Characters can scale the pit walls with their normal chance of success but every round on its go, the falling mud makes an attack (THAC0 16) against climbing character. A hit knocks the character back to the floor and inflicts damage as if the character had fallen onto a soft



surface, unless they roll equal to or under their Strength score on 3d6.

- **Quicksand (Round 6):** The mud begins to act like quicksand. Unencumbered characters in the mud can tread water or swim 5 ft. by rolling equal or less than their Strength score on 3d6; characters wearing heavy gear use 4d6 for this roll. A character rolling 2 or more higher than their Strength score sinks below the surface and might begin to drown. Characters below the surface can swim back to the surface by making another roll against their Strength score, but apply a +2 modifier to the result rolled. Another failed roll indicates the character sinks further into the mud. The mud stops pouring into the pit when it is 40 ft. deep.

## SLIDE PIT

Characters falling into this pit discover the floor is sloped and that the resultant slide leads to a deeper flooded cave.

**Activation:** The trap opens, if a character stands on it. Once activated, the pit resets after five minutes.

**Find the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll discovers the pit.

**Defeating the Trap:** A character making a successful find/remove traps roll disarms the pit's mechanism. Alternatively, a character making a successful find secret door roll notices a tiny switch near the pit that turns the trap's mechanism on and off. Destroying the switch locks the trap in the position it is in.

**Effect:** When triggered, this trap has the following effects

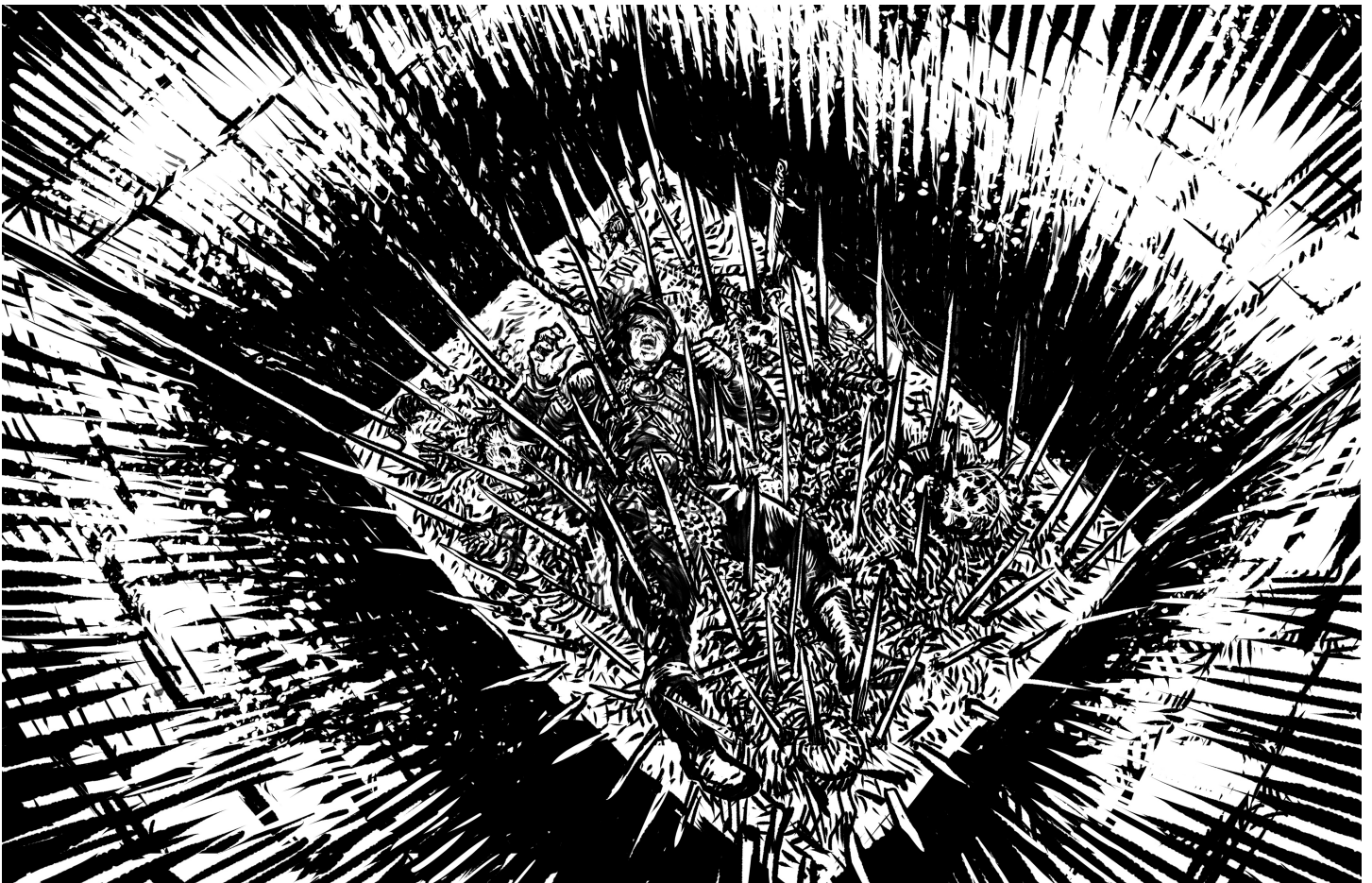
*The floor falls away dropping you into a pit with a smooth, sloped floor. You land prone and start sliding down the floor toward a steeply sloped tunnel.*

**Fall (Round 1):** The pit opens; characters in the party's front rank have a 3 in 6 chance of falling in; individuals in the party's second rank have a 1 in 6 chance of also falling in. Such characters fall 20 ft. and suffer 2d6 falling damage. They land prone on the sloping pit floor and slide 10 ft. along the floor.

**Slide (Round 2 Onwards):** Characters in the pit, slide 20 ft. down the sloping tunnel. A character rolling equal to or under their Dexterity score with 4d6 arrests their progress while those failing their roll by 4 or less reduce the distance travelled to 10 ft. Characters on the slide can climb its walls with their normal chances of success. The slide is 60 ft. long.

**Fall (Round var.):** At the slide's terminus, characters fall 40 ft. into a deep pool of water (and suffer 2d6 damage) unless they roll equal to or under their Dexterity score with 4d6. The walls of this pit are rough (+10% chance of climbing). The water is 20 ft. deep and calm. The only obvious exit from the pool chamber is up the slide.

**Variants:** Such pit traps often have things living in the deep pool. Constrictor snakes or most creatures listed under "The Thing in the Pit" are excellent candidates for such locations. Treat this as a separate encounter and award XP accordingly.



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