



# THE ETERNITY STAIR

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*Each step down causes time to run faster. Be careful you don't descend too far.*

**THEMES:** Profoundly Weird, Impending Doom. **TERRAIN:** Strange Physics, Steep Halls. **RESOURCES:** Abundant Magic, Scarce Safety. **REMOTENESS:** Hidden.

**IT IS BROAD ENOUGH FOR FIFTY** to walk abreast. It is made from a stone of dark and pearlescent green that has never been identified. From a wide flat ledge it descends inexorably downward into a black chasm whose floor is lost in shadow: lost, perhaps, in more. For the end of the Stair, some say, touches the end of time, and can never be reached till all the rock of this world has worn away to dust.

Time quickens the further one descends. Linger on the two-hundredth step down for an hour and return to the top, and you might find you've lost the better part of a day. Spend a night on the six-hundredth stair and a year will pass away while you slumber. But time hastens both above and beneath the skin: as the world ages faster, so too does your flesh. Keep descending into that fathomed abyss and your skin would wrinkle as you watched, bones crumbling with each step. You'd collapse a lifeless

husk, like fruit wintering on the branch, before you reached the thousandth step.

Stand at a point on the stair and look down: perhaps you see other pilgrims below you, each caught in their own current of time. The further down, the slower they seem to move, until at the edge of your torchlight are frozen statues whose every step takes a season. Crane your head back behind you: folk on higher steps move quicker and quicker, until far above they become nothing but gnat-scratches of faint gray mist, scribbles the eye can't quite believe are real.

This is a lonely place, but you will rarely be alone. Like moths to flame, the lure of the Stair draws many to its glimpse of a terrifying sublime. Buildings and tents cluster along the edges of the first few hundred steps (nothing blocks the stair itself, by ancient taboo): houses of healing offer fast cures, brewers and tanners lower goods on

measured ropes and pull them up well-aged, and pilgrims and mystics have their own strange rituals, endlessly squabbling with silver-haired horologists and mad chronomancers who each claim to have their own answers. But the truth is there are none who understand the Stair, and any you meet who claim not to fear it are liars. Watch your step.

### LOCAL DETAILS

☞ **The Clobbered Clock**, a cramped multi-level tavern, winds along the diagonal edge between steps 52 and 118. The buzz never lasts for long (great for business) and the seats near the bottom are a great place to recover from a hang-over. Grandma Ness, proprietress, hauls up barrels of well-aged beer from further down on a rickety pulley system.

☞ **Tirish**, a toothless old rock gnome, sells trinkets and charms from a spread-out blanket; she claims they'll protect your body

from the ravages of deep time, at least for a while. But then why aren't more people buying them?

### ☞ **Will you join the dance?**

The choreography is witheringly complex, with dancers moving up and down the steps in different timestreams of synchronization, but the dancers are laughing.

☞ Is that **statue of a fang-toothed dire panther** down there starting to move?

☞ **A squat mushroom-man, Gom-gom**, casts a fishing line down the Stair, but has only pulled up rusty hooks so far.

☞ Last week folk saw a flash of deep red light far down the stair, illuminating **titanic figures** thousands of steps down, frozen in the act of climbing up. Several new religions have since been founded and they aren't all getting along.

☞ **The Cheesemakers Test Kitchen** is sadly accepting no new members at this time.

### TIME DILATION EFFECTS

Step	Time Multiplier	Note
<b>50</b>	x <b>2</b>	For each day you experience here, two days pass in the world.
<b>200</b>	x <b>7</b>	Each day, a week passes. Good for healing.
<b>600</b>	x <b>350</b>	Each day, a year passes. Good for witness protection programs.
<b>700</b>	x <b>1000</b>	Nothing below this point appears to be moving from above.
<b>The Rope:</b> A mouldering safety line at waist height blocks the 777th stair, marking the point below which sane folk do not venture. Looks ancient, but actually replaced once a day—quickly—by a brave order of knights.		
<b>800</b>	x <b>10,000</b>	Each second, three hours pass above; one day is 27 years
<b>1000</b>	x <b>3,000,000</b>	Each second, a year passes; mortals die in moments. The stairs do not stop here. They keep going down.