

# EPIC DEATHS

You think lying around on the ground, slowly dying through death saves, is boring? Well, we're presenting **two** ways to shake it up and make character deaths epic!

Which to choose? That's up to you. It is possible to use both at once, but that would probably do more harm than good. Choose one, or allow players to choose one, and make them die like real heroes!

Also note the clear difference between the two systems: Death's Stair makes is a downward slope, and Heroic Ending is upwards.

## DEATH'S STAIR

If damage reduces you to 0 hit points and fails to kill you, you are now on a descent towards death.

There are four steps on your descent, each with various effects (see table below). These effects stack.

### THE STEPS OF DEATH'S STAIR

#### Step Effects

1st Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws

2nd Speed halved, -5 spell casting ability

3rd No bonus actions or reactions, Speed reduced to zero

4th Death

### ON THE STAIR

Once you have dropped to 0 hit points you immediately gain one level of exhaustion (disadvantage on all ability checks), but you don't fall unconscious: you just start dying while fiercely fighting it.

Once the fourth step is reached, you die. If you ascend above the first step, you are no longer on the stair but you retain as many level(s) of exhaustion equal to the lowest step that you descended to while on the stair. You also regain 10% of your HP maximum.

### ASCENDING THE STAIR

You can use an action on your turn to attempt to ascend the stair and come closer to escaping death. Make a death saving throw: on a success, you ascend a step.

Additionally, if you are healed, you regain Hit Points as normal, but do not leave the stair. Instead, you ascend one level.

### DESCENDING THE STAIR

Whenever you take damage reducing you below 0 HP, you descend a step of the stair (see "Damage and Crits"). Additionally, if you didn't ascend a step during your turn, you descend one.

### STABILIZING A CREATURE

The best way to save a creature on Death's Stair is to heal it, thereby allowing them to ascend, as seen above.

Another creature can also use its action to administer first aid to a creature. Make a check with a Medicine Kit against a DC of 10+2\*the creature's stair level: on a success, the creature can no longer ascend or descend by itself. However, if external effects (such as dealing damage or healing) cause it to ascend or descend, it is no longer stabilized.

### DAMAGE AND CRITS

A creature on Death's Stair can still take damage and healing, as seen above.

A creature can have positive hit points while on the stair, as seen under "Ascending the Stair". If a creature is dealt damage that reduces it to 0 or below, it descends one step, and its HP remains at 0. If the creature takes a critical hit or takes damage reducing it to an amount equal to or less than its negative HP maximum, it dies immediately.

## HEROIC ENDING

If a monster dies, no big deal. However, if a character dies, then a heroic ending might be expected. And that's the case!

### FINAL WORD

When you die, you may rise again on your next turn. A sudden surge of power and heroism has taken hold of you, and you may take a final turn before dying. During that turn, you are more powerful than you ever were - a fitting death for a hero.

### FINAL ABILITIES

When performing your final word, you gain the following boosts:

- All your abilities and spell slots are available to you, as if you finished a long rest before resurrecting. You have full HP, for that matter.
- Your movement speed is doubled.
- You deal additional damage of a fitting type (such as radiant or fire) equal to your character level on any damaging ability.
- You have advantage on all rolls.

After performing this epic final turn, the character dies, at peace with themselves. They may well finish off the evil big bad guy, or save the party from certain doom in this great self-sacrifice. You've lived a good life, hero.

### RESURRECTION?

As with many cool things, your players might decide to meta the Heroic Ending and purposefully die for the epic boosts, before resurrecting them shortly afterwards. You should rule that it is impossible to resurrect someone after a Heroic Ending, but maybe allow an epic ceremony and comeback of the hero in a non-meta scenario.

## THE MANY ISLES THANK YOU!

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*Thanks to u/bacchus\_underpants  
Made with the Homebrewery*