

A PROMISE MADE

Your long-time friend is recovering from a serious misadventure. He is asking you to take a small bag to an important man before the next local full moon. If the bag is not returned he says it will not matter if he recovers and dying will not help him escape his promise for what is in the bag. He hands you the bag and a map with a location marked in the middle of nowhere. The bag contains an oversized silver coin and a partial promissory note, apparently torn in half.

DM NOTES

This ancient structure is known in places as the Stairway of Leng even though no one remembers who or what Leng was. There are 10,000 steps to the cavern floor a mile below the entrance. Safe travel keeps a party to moving along at 30 steps a minute. It will take 5-6 hours to reach the bottom if there are no incidents along the way. Belaying or other rope work would be a good idea. Teleporting of any form doesn't work throughout the cavern. Anyone flying will quickly be covered in a sticky mist and will fall unless they take immediate action. The cavern has a glow equivalent to a near full moon.

The River Styx passes through this cavern and because of the caverns special properties it is often a meeting place of various parties. A Caretaker Daemon wanders the steps looking to keep those who are here without purpose off the stairway.

The misfortunate friend got caught in a situation where he needed a ride home. Not having the required coin he promised the Oarsmen a special silver coin by the next full moon or the Oarsman could take the man's soul.

STAIRWAY OF LENG

1 X Marks the Spot The well in front of you has a heavy oak and iron covering. Atop the covering is a weather-worn sign scrawled in common, "POISON!". The covering of the well appears to be tied shut but upon closer inspection the rope is just there for show. There is nothing holding the cover down except the fear of entry.

The shaft is at least five feet wide lined with bricks. The shaft is 60' deep but somewhere near the bottom the shaft passes through an invisible gate that leads many miles below the surface. The shaft widens as you reach the bottom.

2 Garbage The bottom of the shaft is cluttered with debris, and various bones. If any significant amount of time is spent searching the rubble you may find an odd coin or mundane item like a blood stained dagger.

An oversized door heavily banded with iron is the only other thing in the room. It doesn't appear to be locked.

3 Through the Door Through the door you see a faint glow, and carved steps lead into the mist.

4 Step After Step You no longer feel like you are near the well where you entered above. You appear to be on a massive stone spiral staircase in a vast cavern. The steps slope downward and disappear to your left. The path is only a couple of feet wide and the steps seem to be a little slick.

ABOUT

The Promise gives the party an opportunity to talk themselves out of a bad situation or have a direct fight that might end in a long fall to the cavern floor. The encounters may be sized to match the level of the party and the type adventure you are seeking. Later on, The Stairway of Leng could also be used as a known path to The Underworld, just be sure to keep some change on hand.



5 View Below The mists have cleared enough for you to see the cavern floor below. The spiraling staircase ends on a small island in the middle of a dark river. You can't see much past the banks of the river but you are not too sure you would want to do so.

6 Cavern Floor The steps end, you somehow reach the cavern floor, and you now see a rickety dock with a small light on a pole. If you wait near the dock, after a while, you see a lone figure approaching in a small boat.

The skiff eventually makes it to the dock. A single oarsman dressed in ominous black stands silently. If you hand the bag to the oarsman he pulls out the note and compares it to the other half in his robe. He pockets the coin, and drops the papers that fall into smoldering ashes. After a moment he asks if anyone needs a ride.

ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE WAY

Ever hour roll a d6 for a chance of encounter (1-2). These are common encounters but you could also run into a crusading band of Paladins or a Lich party out on a jaunt.

D20	EVENT
1-5	Slide
6	Monk
7	Thieves
8	Bandits
9	Hag
10-13	Slime/Ichor
14-20	Caretaker

Slide: Loose debris, a wet patch of pebbles, or a badly carved step causes you to slip. Test your preparedness. You waste 30 minutes or more holding your place.

Monk: An ornamentally dressed individual sits in a alcove, meditating. Does he offer wisdom, trinkets, or a mental battle?

Thieves: These pilferers try sneaking, spying, and taking advantage of bad situations. They could be carrying valuable stolen goods from the underworld.

Bandits: Being direct, they approach the party demanding goods. They are armed smartly with short swords and hand crossbows.

Hag: She is carrying a sack of soul jars to the underworld for some foul business. She may have items to trade, otherwise she fights as a powerful witch.

Slime: A large patch of slime "stands" in your way. Does it react or move on?

Caretaker: A man-sized frog daemon capable of taking on an entire party. Poisonous claws, swallowing whole, and wall climbing are his advantages.