

Death

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Unfortunately death is an occupational hazard for adventurers. Whether it's being eaten by an ettercap or having your head torn off by a hungry giant preying mantis something bad is always waiting round the next corner; normally sitting on the large pile of loot you're trying to acquire. Those living in Faeron are anchored to the world thanks to the godshield interfering with passage to the outer realms. This means that, whilst it is extremely uncommon, individuals sometimes return as ghosts rather than heading on to the afterlife. These are usually people of power, often with works left undone.

The common folk are largely unaware of this phenomena. For them, death is a final trip to be with the gods. Scholars have studied this rare phenomena extensively and are generally less likely to run screaming if a spirit manifests itself in front of their eyes.

In game terms, when a hero dies in battle he can become a ghost and continue adventuring with his party. The stress of dying causes the character to lose a level. Reappearing as a ghost takes approximately thirty minutes from time of death. The character has not become a ghost in the undead sense of the word, He does not gain the undead template or any special abilities of the ghost monster. He is not affected by turning attempts any further than they make him shiver. Exorcisms, and banishment magics aimed at breaking an extra dimensional creature's hold on the plane can break the ghost's grip on the world and force them to pass on.

The ghost has actually become a temporary resident of the ethereal plane, although he maintains an attachment to the material plane. When the character first becomes a ghost he must decide what to are haunt. Typical choices include his body, one of his friends, his killer or the place where he died. The GM's decision is final on choice of haunting locations. This location is the point at which the ghost is anchored to the material plane. The ghost cannot travel farther than (roughly) 30' from this location. If he does, he starts lose his way and is drawn deeper into the ethereal plane. He begins to fade away until his grip on the plane is broken and he passes on. The ghost is well aware of what is happening - this cannot take it by surprise. If the ghost's anchor point is broken (for example, if the building where he died is destroyed or the friend he is haunting is killed) he loses his way and passes on. At any point the ghost can journey to the deep ethereal and pass on.

The ghost is tied to his anchor-point, literally in fact. Under a *detect magic* spell, a thin line tethers the ghost to its anchor. The ghost shares some sensation with the anchor. If it takes damage, the ghost feels a dull ache (although suffers no actual ill effect). If it is hungry, the ghost feels hunger. If it is tired, so is the ghost. If it actually goes to sleep or is rendered unconscious, the ghost also falls asleep. If the anchor is moved whilst unconscious the ghost is drawn with him. The ghost gains a move speed equivalent to the anchor + 10' (or keeps his own, whichever is faster). This changes as the anchor point changes speed. For example, if he climbs on a horse, the ghost's speed is the speed of the horse + 10'. Hence the anchor cannot force the ghost to pass on by running away from it.

The ghost appears as he believes he appeared in life, but any manifested kit loses any magic properties. He is coloured in various shades of grey and is translucent. The wound which killed him is present, partially healed - if a character lost his head and it was reunited with his body afterwards there is a deep scar around the neck region. If for some reason part of a character has gone completely missing that part is missing on the ghost. Note that the ghost is very clearly not a living creature and is liable to scare most people.

The ethereal plane is a misty, fog bound realm which overlaps the prime material plane, although it is out of phase. Vision is restricted to 60' by these mists, magic functions normally and a resident can move vertically as easily as they can horizontally. Residents breathe normally and run the risk of dying of starvation or thirst. Residents can also see into the material plane. The material plane appears wrapped in fog, so ethereal observers are limited to a range of 60' and can't discern precise details such as normal writing, however it is easy to discern faces and landmarks. Seeing and hearing is otherwise normal so gaze and sonic attacks launched from the material plane affect ethereal creatures. In addition to these spells, certain abjuration spells affect ethereal beings as do spells with the Force descriptor (such as *Wall of Force* or *Magic Missile*). Of course the spellcaster still needs some way to target an ethereal creature. Residents of the ethereal plane are also susceptible to ghosttouch weaponry. No spells launched from the ethereal plane (including force spells) can affect the material plane. The exception to this are spells cast with the transdimensional spell metamagic feat. These can cross the planar boundaries as described in the feat.

Whilst a ghostly resident the character has a number of extra abilities. He is immune to fatigue and exhaustion. He does not require food or water, and is hence immune to starvation and thirst. He can also project himself into the material plane by manipulating the ethereal plane into a bubble and altering its phase to become visible. The ghost has the choice of aligning the bubble to appear either to the person he is haunting only, or visible to everyone on the material plane. The bubble is a projection only, so the ghost has no physical presence and retains the usual immunities to strikes and magics as if he remained on the ethereal plane proper. Any spells the ghost casts exist within the bubble and hence are as visible as the ghost himself. As with other residents of the ethereal plane, the ghost can be seen by magics that specifically target invisibility effects (such as *see invisibility*). A *detect magic* or *detect alignment* of appropriate type will also reveal a ghostly presence.

The bubble is the ghost's own mini-reality. He can manipulate this area while projected to the material plane. Thus the ghost can manifest minor items from the ether which he can then use, such as a hairbrush or clothing. This ability does not function back on the ethereal plane proper. Crafting a bubble and aligning it to the material plane is a move action whereas retreating back to the ethereal plane is a swift action. When the bubble is fully aligned to the material plane (and the ghost is visible to all) the mists clear and the ghost can see the material plane normally. At this point he cannot see back to the ethereal plane.

Within the bubble the ghost sheds the soft light of the ethereal plane, making it visible but not illuminating anything. It retains its ability to move in any direction freely (within the limitations set by its anchorpoint).

Whilst he is a ghost, a character retains all his abilities from life however any kit he has manifested loses any magic properties. Spellcasters gain the Eschew Materials feat whilst they are a ghost if they do not already have it. Whilst a ghost, the character gains no experience. At the GM's discretion he may get up to 50% experience and level up as if alive.

Since the ghost is a temporary resident of the ethereal plane if the party travels out there they can track down their comrade and actually bring him back. In that case the character gains a physical presence on the material plane and gains access to some of the special abilities available to a manifested ghost in the Ghostwalk setting. The ghost loses his ability to planebend and can be killed, resulting in him passing on. Whilst on the ethereal plane the ghost can sense the location of the person he's haunting, and the hauntee can sense the ghost in turn. If the ghost is haunting the place of his death or his killer, any characters trying to track him down will need to have another way of doing so.

To be brought back to life, any of the normal resurrection spells can be used. The ghost must be present and willing and any body parts required by the spell must also be present. When the ghost is raised, it goes through the same trauma as being killed. This time, however, it can brace itself properly. The ghost makes a fort or will save (player's choice) DC 10 + character level or it loses a level. This is a level lost, not drained and can only be replaced by re-earning the experience. This means the death penalty if a character becomes a ghost can be two levels.

A ghost cannot cast any kind of raise dead spell and cannot bring himself back to life.

A character can opt not to become a ghost. In that case he hangs about in the depths of the ethereal plane until he is ready to pass on. Resurrection spells work as normal until then. Normally a character will wait 1 week per level before the pull of the afterlife is too strong, however if he died leaving unfinished business he may resist for longer (GM's discretion).

Once a character has passed on they have begun the journey into the deep ethereal, then through the plane of shadow to the astral plane. From there they pass through the godshield and into the outer planes eventually coming to whatever afterlife awaits them. If their party wishes to return them to life, they'll have to go and fetch them by cutting across the dangerous areas of several planes to head them off on their journey. Not an option for the faint hearted. Once the spirit has been returned to the ethereal plane they can be resurrected as normal. Note this might mean *raise dead*'s of insufficient power (as it only works on a recently deceased body).