

Monsters of the Ethereal Plane

Introduction

In the comments for [Monsters of Spelljammer](#), @Dungeonosophy suggested that a *Monsters of the Ethereal Plane* article would complement the release of *Journeys to the Radiant Citadel*, which is located in the Ethereal Plane. That was an intriguing suggestion, so here we go.

A visitor to the Ethereal Plane is as likely to encounter other visitors as native inhabitants. Encounter tables across editions include:

- Creatures from the neighbouring Inner Planes.
- Summoned creatures returning to their home plane.
- Visiting creatures with business in the Ethereal Plane.
- Creatures using the Ethereal Plane to move between other planes.
- Creatures native to demiplanes, leaving or returning to their home demiplane.
- Phenomena such as colour curtains, ether gaps, ether cyclones and protomatter.
- Material Plane creatures that can target the Border Ethereal (e.g. basilisks, medusas).

The Plane of Shadow was a demiplane in 1st and 2nd Edition, so early encounter tables also included a lot of creatures of shadow. In 5th Edition, any creature with *truesight* can see into the Ethereal, which gives dozens of additional creatures that could plausibly be encountered. Across editions, many more monsters are capable of becoming *incorporeal* in some way, which usually but not always means the same thing as entering the Border Ethereal.

This article does not attempt to cover all of the possible creatures that could be encountered during an ethereal sojourn. It focuses on monsters native to the plane, those who have lairs there, and a few with abilities interacting with the Ethereal Plane in unusual ways. Each entry in the article has a picture (if the monster has one), a short description, and list of primary sources. For detailed stats for these monsters please refer back to the original source material or search for a 5th Edition conversion. The chances are high that some inhabitants of the Ethereal are missing from this list. If you notice any obvious omissions, please mention them in the comments.

Aerial Servant (also known as a Haoou)

An aerial servant is a type of air elemental that—on its home plane—looks like a humanoid made of sparkling blue smoke with a legless torso that trails away into vapour. If summoned to the Material Plane, an aerial servant is invisible. It has empty eyes, a slash for a mouth and hands with four long fingers. Aerial servants have limited intelligence but high strength, attacking foes by attempting to strangle them. They originated on the Plane of Air, but many now call the Deep Ethereal home. Aerial servants spend their time floating on the ethereal currents, on which they also feed. They do not like being summoned and will attack any summoner not protected by magic. Sources: *Rules Cyclopedia* (BECMI), *Monster Manual* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e).



An-Ur, the Wandering Death

This unique dragon wanders the Deep Ethereal feeding on the concentrated ethereal mist. An-Ur is one of Tiamat's oldest children but remains aloof from the conflicts between good and evil dragons, preferring to live a solitary existence on the Ethereal Plane. It has a 140' body, a 100' tail, and ripples with many colours, much like an ethereal curtain. An-Ur prefers to negotiate peaceful resolutions to conflict, but can defend itself when necessary. Outside of the Deep Ethereal, An-Ur breathes ethereal mist that transports its targets to a random part of the Deep. In the Deep Ethereal, the dragon summons an ether cyclone which blows anyone within 300 feet to a random part of the Border and possibly into the adjoining plane. Every three hundred years, An-Ur's hunger flares and it consumes a whole demiplane. Sources: *Dragon #260* (2e).



Aoa

These strange entities are created by friction when the Positive and Negative Planes graze each other. Resembling huge blobs of quicksilver, aoa bob around the Astral and Ethereal Planes seeking out sources of significant magic. When such a target is detected, an aoa will become excited, and will attack by slamming into it and discharging a *dispelling touch*, feeding off the energy from the dissipating magic. The reflective surfaces of aoa reflect both spells and gaze attacks. Three times per day an aoa can release a *reflective pulse* that destroys magical auras and items, creating a smaller aoa droplet in the process. It is possible to *summon* these smaller droplets. Communicating with an aoa is challenging, as it neither speaks nor understands any languages. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (3e)



Apparition

An undead creature that looks like a skeleton shrouded in filthy bandages, an apparition dwells primarily in the Ethereal Plane but can move between there and the Material Plane twice each day. An apparition attacks by using a powerful *suggestion* to make victims believe they are being strangled by its bony claws. If a target fails to disbelieve, it either flees in *fear* or dies of fright. A slain victim not restored to life within a day rises as a new apparition. On the Material Plane, an apparition is insubstantial except when it attacks, which is the only opportunity for a foe to strike back. Even if slain, it reforms on the Ethereal Plane several days later, intent on revenge. Ethereal opponents can see and attack an apparition normally, as well as permanently destroying it. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (1e), *MC14: Fiend Folio Appendix* (2e).



Cerebral Parasite

Invisible to the human eye, these tiny parasites inhabit both the Material Plane and the Border Ethereal. They attach themselves to the auras of psionically gifted beings, and leech power whenever the host uses psionics. After absorbing enough to reproduce, the parasite splits into two, and both continue to feed. They can be easily removed by *cure disease* or by simply starving them by refraining from using psionics. If captured—which is challenging given their size—cerebral parasites are a good weapon against psionists. Some sages claim that they were originally created by wizards to rid the multiverse of “false mages”. Every fifteen years, a plague of these parasites infests the Material Plane. Sources: *Eldritch Wizardry* (OD&D), *Monster Manual* (1e), *PHBR5: The Complete Psionics Handbook* (2e), *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (3e).



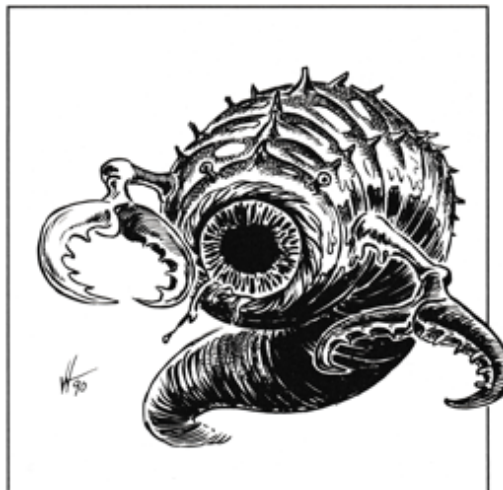
Chronolily

The chronolily is an enormous (50 foot diameter) sentient flower that grows in the Deep Ethereal, particularly in the vicinity of the Demiplane of Time. Its petals form a bowl filled with a golden nectar that shows an endless procession of images of the past, present and future. Which part of the timestream is revealed depends on the colour of the flower (yellow, violet or orange). It is possible, although difficult, to persuade a chronolily to show a particular image, either by touching the nectar or by plucking the petals in a precise sequence. If approached by an evil being, a chronolily's nectar turns black, revealing nothing at all. If slain, a chronolily instantly decomposes into a poisonous cloud. Sources: *MC Annual Volume Two* (2e).



Chulcrix

The adventure *Dragon's Rest* involves a plot to invade Taladas with an army of extraplanar creatures, and consequently introduces some unusual monsters. A chulcrix is a 100' to 300' foot long, black, chitinous worm. It is carnivorous and eats anything it finds in the Deep Ethereal. It uses a special ability to suck prey into its tendril-lined mouth, and can also attack with two large sets of pincers. If harmed by a swallowed prey, a chulcrix can turn itself inside out and *plane shift*. If somehow forced into the Border Ethereal, a chulcrix becomes beached in the adjacent plane. If that plane has gravity, it will soon perish. Although it can communicate using telepathy, a chulcrix seldom does so. Sources: *DLA3: Dragon's Rest* (2e), *Price of Courage* (3e).



Devourer

A devourer is a 8-foot-tall undead creature that wanders the Abyss, Astral and Ethereal Planes, consuming souls. Orcus creates devourers from lesser demons that prove themselves to him. Devourers are desiccated bipeds with hollowed-out rib cages in which they can trap and devour dying creatures. Once an imprisoned creature dies, the devourer absorbs its essence and regurgitates the corpse as a zombie, ghoul or wight. In earlier editions, devourers were not connected to Orcus and were found only on the transitive planes. They also had a number of additional spell-like abilities powered by the imprisoned being. The *Ecology* article in *Dragon* #355 provides an alternative origin story for the devourers, making them the creation of a renegade githyanki warlock. Sources: *Planescape MC Appendix III* (2e), *Monster Manual v.3.5* (3e), *Dragon* #355 (Ecology), *Monster Manual* (4e), *Monsters of the Multiverse* (5e).



Dharculus

Introduced in *The Gates of Firestorm Peak*, the dharculus is a creature native to the Far Realm now found swimming through the Border Ethereal looking for prey. A dharculus is a 30-foot long worm-like creature, with a large primary maw on one end, and a mixture of biting tentacles and eyeball tentacles at the other end. A dharculus keeps its primary maw and eyestalks in the ethereal, looking for potential meals, and inserts its biting tentacles into the corporeal world to grab whatever it views as food. If three or more of the mawed tentacles gain a hold on a target, the dharculus attempts to pull its prey into the Border Ethereal, where the primary maw can devour it. Dharculi do not generally cross over entirely into the Material Plane; the specimens found within Firestorm Peak being rare exceptions. Sources: *MC Annual Volume Four* (2e), *Planar Handbook* (3e).



Dhour

These large, amoeba-like creatures are translucent and have a number of strange organs and pulses of light located inside their bodies. Dhours form a 6-foot high cone-shape when moving or fighting but can flatten themselves to a 10-foot wide pancake about a foot thick. They roam the Ethereal Plane and watch over colour curtains for travellers to waylay. Once a dhour chooses a victim, it pursues that target doggedly, and will even leave the Ethereal in pursuit. Although dhours have a number of psionic abilities, they attack using powerful pseudopods and by engulfing their victims. Some sages claim that they don't just consume the bodies of their prey, since someone eaten by a dhour cannot be *raised*. Dhours are intelligent, but have alien minds. Efforts to communicate with them reveal curiosity, but only if they are not hungry. Sources: *Planescape MC Appendix II* (2e).



Diabolus

Diaobli are originally from the Demiplane of Nightmares, but the boundary between the Far Realm and that demiplane is thin. Over time, the corrupting taint of the Far Realm has grown, and many diaboli have emigrated to the Material, Astral and Ethereal Planes. They are the most numerous in the world of Mystara. Similar in size to humans, diaboli have lavender skin, vestigial horns, tails, hooves for feet and hands with only four digits. Their eyes have vertical slits, and they have forked tongues which give them an enhanced sense of smell. They are almost as variable and diverse in skills and abilities as humans, but share a common belief in chaos as the natural order of things. They have an anarchist society but customs and a sense of fair play keep it functioning. Diaboli do not try to impose their views on others. Sources: *Wrath of the Immortals* (BECMI), *Mystara MC Appendix* (2e), *Dragon #327* (3e).



Dreamweaver

You could be forgiven for assuming that the ferocious horned creature in the illustration is the dreamweaver, but that is actually a dream tarrasque, and the glimmering, levitating girl (usually seen playing a golden harp) is the dreamweaver. A dreamweaver inhabits the Ethereal Plane and visits people who have recurring nightmares, singing to them to remove the horrors from their dreams. Unfortunately, this process causes the nightmares to manifest in the Material Plane as *shades*, often resulting in havoc for those near to the sleeper. A dreamweaver exists only to aid those suffering from night terrors, and does not care about the effect this process has on others. A dreamweaver enjoys a number of magical protections, but will not defend itself if attacked, other than to use a powerful form of *sleep* on any would-be attackers. Sources: *Polyhedron #138* (2e)



Dreamwraith

Originally appearing in the Dragonlance adventure *Dragons of Dreams*, dreamwraiths are malicious spirits, humanoid in shape but twisted and otherworldly. They are formed when the violent subconscious urges of mortals manifest in the Ethereal Plane as a result of spells or chaotic magical effects. Dreamwraiths look for a dreaming mind and enter that dreamscape, taking the form of someone known to the dreamer. Dreamwraiths have a chilling touch, and some also have a special *despair* attack. All the damage they inflict is illusionary and vanishes when the dream ends, or if the dreamer disbelieves, but the dreamer may suffer some mental damage as an aftereffect. Sources: *Dragonlance Adventures* (1e), *MC4: Dragonlance Appendix* (2e), *Towers of High Sorcery* (3e).



Ebon Tiger

Ebon tigers are magical creatures composed of black fire in the shape of a tiger. Possibly originating from a demiplane in the Deep Ethereal, these creatures keep most of their bodies in the Border Ethereal, even when hunting prey in the Material Plane. This makes them masters of stealth and immune to normal weapons. Ebon tigers are carnivorous and attack with claws and a bite that causes rapid blindness. Although they have a reputation for being fearless and bad tempered, they are actually quite shy and reclusive, attacking only when hunting or when threatened. Rakasta from the Mystaran setting use them as guards. Captive tigers need be fed only every six weeks, and do not require water or sleep. Sources: *Rage of the Rakasta* (BECMI), *Mystara MC Appendix* (2e).



Einsaung Nat

Nats are lesser spirits resembling squat humanoids that first appeared in the original *Oriental Adventures*. Although an einsaung lairs in the Ethereal Plane, most of its activity centres on the house of its adoptive family. If a family offers an einsaung food (fruits and nuts) and small treasures, it will move into the house and act as the family's protector, remaining *invisible* and ethereal while it does so. An einsaung knows a variety of spells, but most of its assistance is in the form of advice and information delivered on scraps of paper that mysteriously appear. In an emergency, an einsaung can *possess* one of the members of the household in order to act. Einsaung nats will only ever reveal their true forms to children, whom they adore. Sources: *Oriental Adventures* (1e), *MC6: Kara-Tur Appendix* (2e), *Oriental Adventures* (3e).



Embryonite

You won't find a statistics block for the Embryonite in any D&D source, and its very existence is dismissed by some as a myth. However, according to the reports of some planar travellers, the Embryonite is a planet-sized insect that gestates demiplanes in its thorax. The flesh of the Embryonite is translucent, so that the growing protoworld is visible inside it. If this creature does exist, it is surely one of the most unusual residents of the Ethereal, and there are many unanswered questions about it. Where did the Embryonite come from? Is there only one Embryonite or are there more of them floating in the Deep Ethereal? And, importantly, what does it eat? Sources: *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* (2e).



Ephemeral Swarm

An ephemeral swarm is the ghost of a swarm of little creatures that all suffered a common death. It looks like an incorporeal version of the living swarm and, like other ghosts, inhabits the Ethereal Plane. Ephemeral swarms return from the dead seeking to inflict the same sort of suffering that they experienced in death. If a particular being caused a swarm's demise, the swarm will try to hunt and slay that individual. Otherwise they will attack any living creatures. The presence of a swarm creates a nauseating distraction, and the collective attack of the swarm does strength damage to a target. The victim of an ethereal swarm attack does not linger, but dies immediately upon reaching zero hit points.



These swarms are common in cities where recent vermin incursions have been exterminated and in ruined strongholds and dungeons. Sources: *Monster Manual III* (3e).

Ether Horse

Early planar explorers from the Material Plane brought giant sea horses with them to serve as mounts, assuming that the waveless sea of the Ethereal Plane was similar to the oceans where the sea horses had originated. Enough of these creatures escaped to start herds of wild sea horses in the Ethereal. Without their traditional sources of nutrition, many of them died off, but others learned to extract nutrition directly from the medium of the ether. These sea horses eventually evolved into herds of purely ethereal creatures that are now known as ether horses. Wild ether horses roam primarily in the Deep Ethereal, but can be caught, tamed, and trained to carry a saddle. They can even be fitted with armour to serve as barded war mounts. The Etherfarer Society, an organisation dedicated to exploring the mysteries of the Deep Ethereal, maintains a base known as Freehold City on a chunk of stable ether. The Society keeps domesticated ether horses in stables. Access to these mounts is generally limited to senior members of the Society, but the Etherfarers defend their territory with lance- and sword-wielding cavalry mounted on ether horses. Sources: *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* (2e).

Ether Scarab

These tiny, harmless beetles are native to the Ethereal Plane. Ether scarabs have a hard, chitinous shell marked with swirling, colourful patterns, and two pairs of sharp mandibles. Scarabs are food for many ethereal predators; as a means of escape, they have developed a way of tearing through planar boundaries with their mandibles to create a temporary two-way portal big enough for even large-sized creatures to pass through. Although an ether scarab generally flees at the first sign of trouble, it can inflict a bite using its mandibles. All wounds caused by this bite will continue to bleed until healed. The collective effect of multiple bleeding wounds can be deadly. If slain, an ether scarab explodes, causing a temporary planar rip like the one it creates using its bite. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (3e).



Ether Shadow (also known as a Greater Shadow)

These shadows are created by a dark ritual that divides a creature's essence into three parts, causing it to exist simultaneously on the Ethereal Plane, the Negative Plane and the Material Plane. Although the resulting creature can travel freely through the Ethereal, it cannot enter the Material Plane, so it is only able to manifest as a black or grey shadow. It can give the appearance of a three-dimensional shadow by changing its colouration. Ether shadows have a chilling touch that drains strength and they can also enter and control the dreams of any sleeper they discover. They usually use this power to plague the dreamer with terrible nightmares. A creature drained of strength by an ether shadow becomes an ordinary shadow. In the adventure, ether shadows are said to be the progenitors of normal shadows. Sources: *Dungeon #35* (2e).



Ether Weird

These rare creatures were once the inhabitants of an outer plane. When that plane was destroyed by warring immortals, the ether weirds were stranded on the Ethereal Plane. They now serve Orisis, the hawk-headed Nithian Immortal of death and resurrection. Orisis has promised to rebuild their home plane. Ether weirds are spirits of destruction and a danger to any who might disturb them. They have a unique ability to drain energy from both the living and the undead through their touch. Contact with an ether weird may also cause a living creature to experience a vivid dream of immortality that is so awe-inspiring that it might well drive the recipient insane. A victim of this effect can be restored to sanity if a *cure disease* spell is cast swiftly enough. In the Material Plane, ether weirds are found only in the world of Mystara, specifically in the depths of the Springs of Life on White Island in the Kingdom of Ierendi. They have been conjured there by Orisis to serve the Whitenight druids against a reawakened Nithian evil. White Island visitors often experience terrible dream visions; ether weirds are the cause of this phenomenon. Sources: *GAZ4: The Kingdom of Ierendi* (BECMI).

Ethereal Defiler

Somewhat reminiscent of a lizard in shape, an ethereal defiler has green and black scales, and stands twelve feet tall. It has muscular limbs ending in vicious claws, a long tail and a horned head from which two long tendrils hang. Defilers live primarily on the Ethereal Plane, visiting the Material Plane only to hunt and feed. They enjoy killing for fun and prefer sentient prey that puts up a good fight. They are imbued with a corrupt energy that allows them to tunnel between the Material and Ethereal Planes. Ethereal defilers can also use this energy offensively, either firing blasts of it as a ranged attack, or enhancing their claw attacks with it. As well as doing a considerable amount of damage, the eldritch energy sickens its targets. A quarry attempting to evade a defiler by teleporting away will find itself trapped by the creature's *anchoring aura*, which blocks anyone within 20 feet from escaping. Sources: *Monster Manual V* (3e).



Ethereal Doppelganger

These unusual beings maintain homes in the Ethereal Plane, and have some unique abilities: *brain lock* which leaves a subject paralysed and unable to use any form of special movement and an unfailing *mind wipe* that can remove any trace of the doppelganger from a subject's mind. These doppelgangers are polite about their subterfuge. They collect magical items, and if they need to borrow the identity of another in order to obtain a new item, they kidnap the target and secure them in their Ethereal abode. The subject is given the option of remaining in comfort while the doppelganger becomes them. If the subject doesn't agree to this, they are *mind wiped*, and the doppelganger looks for another willing target. Woe betide someone who agrees to the arrangement and then tries to escape. The doppelganger will unhesitatingly sell them into extraplanar slavery. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (3e).



Ethereal Dragon

A [D&D Beyond preview](#) of the moonstone dragon from *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons* claims that it is an update of the 3rd Edition ethereal dragon. While it is true that the latter are sometimes referred to as "moonstone" dragons, they don't have much in common, and are probably different species. The pearlescent brown-grey ethereal dragon spends most of its life on the Ethereal Plane, visiting the Material Plane only to snatch magic items it covets, or to flee from combat, which it dislikes. It can both see and strike ethereal creatures as if they were material, but cannot strike material creatures while ethereal. An ethereal dragon has a cone of force for a breath weapon and a great wyrm can summon an ethereal cyclone. It also has several spell-like abilities: *dimensional anchor*, *ethereal jaunt*, *blink* and *etherealness*. Ethereal dragons are curious and inquisitive by nature. Sources: *Draconomicon* (3e).



Ethereal Filcher

Perhaps the most bizarre-looking creature introduced in the 3rd Edition *Monster Manual*, the ethereal filcher is the consummate pickpocket. It is able to move quickly between the Ethereal Plane and the Material Plane, and has four multi-jointed arms each with a quartet of long, slender fingers ideal for lifting trinkets from unsuspecting targets. Although they spend much of their time in the Ethereal, searching for likely marks, filchers make their lairs in the Material Plane, usually in secluded, inaccessible locations that cannot be easily reached without the benefit of an *ethereal jaunt*.

Filchers seem to be able to sense magical auras, and are more likely to snatch magical or gaudy items than valuable yet nondescript possessions. Sources: *Monster Manual v.3.5* (3e).



Ethereal Marauder

Blue or purple bipeds with trifold jaws filled with jet-black teeth and long, sinuous tails, ethereal marauders stand about four feet tall, and seven feet in length. A marauder has three small eyes located in a ring around its maw. The ethereal marauder is an aggressive predator, living and hunting on the Ethereal Plane. Once it locates a potential target in the Material Plane, it uses an special *ethereal jaunt* to materialise, bites its prey, and then shifts back to the Ethereal Plane. Not much is known about the ecology and sociology of the marauder since it is rarely seen in its natural habitats. They do not speak any languages but sometimes emit an eerie whine of varying pitch. Sources: *Monster Manual v.3.5* (3e), *Revenge of the Giants* (4e).



Ethereal Ooze

A powerful and dangerous ooze that inhabits the Ethereal Plane, this huge creature has a similar general form to a gelatinous cube but is fleshy in colour. The remains of previous meals can often be seen inside it. The ooze senses prey by scent, vibration and sound and it can detect material creatures and objects while ethereal. It hunts by materialising partially in the Material Plane, visible but incorporeal. In this form it can engulf but not harm quarries. Once the ooze has enveloped a potential meal, it shifts fully back to the Ethereal Plane, taking any prey inside with it. The ooze then constricts and digests its victim at its leisure. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (3e).



Ethereal Slayer

Visitors to the Ethereal Plane should be wary of using the same location to make the crossing too frequently. Carnivorous predators called ethereal slayers can detect magical auras, and they seek out locations where there has been significant cross-planar traffic. A slayer will wait in ambush for the next unfortunate traveller, use *dimensional anchor* to prevent the target from fleeing, and attack. If the chosen target somehow manages to escape the Ethereal, the slayer will *plane shift* to pursue. An ethereal slayer has a chitinous shell studded with spines and four mandibles surrounding a drooling mouth. It stands on a pair of thick, bird-like legs and can attack either with a mandible bite, or using two four-foot long claws that look like those of a praying mantis. Fortunately, ethereal slayers are solitary creatures. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (3e).



Ethergaunt (also known as a Khen-zai)

Millennia ago the ethergaunts abandoned their vast, interdimensional war of destruction and retreated from the Material Plane into the Ethereal, where they dwelt in fantastic stone pyramids and other enclaves. More than ten thousand years later, the ethergaunts are returning with a single-minded goal: Eradicate all the vermin now living on the Material Plane. Tall, gaunt humanoids with a strict caste system, ethergaunts wear masks to hide tentacled faces that are located in the middle of their torsos. Looking at an unmasked ethergaunt damages the mind of the observer. All ethergaunts are skilled arcane spellcasters, and have some level of absolute immunity to arcane spells directed at them. Khen-zai society strives for self-preservation and the elimination of emotion in favour of rationality. They view all Material Plane life as a threat to these goals. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (3e).



Foo Creature

Powerful creatures that sometimes serve those of good alignment, foo creatures are known to lair in many places, including the Ethereal Plane. They are said to house the souls of petitioners who were rewarded for their service to chaotic good gods, but who remember little of their former lives. All foo creatures resemble a cross between lions and dogs and are referred to as foo lions or foo dogs, depending on whether they appear more leonine or canine. They usually have gold or black fur. Foo creatures can become invisible, ethereal or astral at will and can *gate* in others of their kind by barking or roaring. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (1e), *Planescape MC Appendix* (2e), *Oriental Adventures* (3e).



Geist

A geist is a type of spirit stuck in the Border Ethereal, but lacking a ghost's ability to manifest itself. It is an image of the deceased at the moment of death, which might be gruesome, depending on the nature of the death. They are physically harmless, and cannot be attacked physically, but the sight of one can cause the weak-hearted to flee in *fear*. Geists are created when someone dies with a deed left undone, and their spirit refuses to leave the location of their death. They can communicate with those they wish to in any language, and have the same alignment they had in life, so may even be helpful. A greater geist variant can cast illusions that include sounds, but—like the geist—these are transparent. Sources: *Ravenloft MC Appendix III* (2e), *Denizens of Dread* (3e).



Gendruwo

Memedi are lesser spirits native to Kara-Tur in the Forgotten Realms. One type of memedi, the gendruwo, is known for its habit of kidnapping people into the Border Ethereal. The natural appearance of a gendruwo—a featureless humanoid made of shimmering mist—causes *fear*. However, it can change its appearance and will often take the form of someone known to the victim of its mischief. In order to successfully kidnap someone, a gendruwo must get them to accept a morsel of offered food. If the food is accepted, the gendruwo whisks the quarry into the Border Ethereal, where they are abandoned. Despite this strange habit, gendruwo are generally more annoying than harmful. They enjoy eating paper, especially important documents. Sources: *Kara-Tur: The Eastern Realms* (1e), *MC6: Kara-Tur Appendix* (2e).



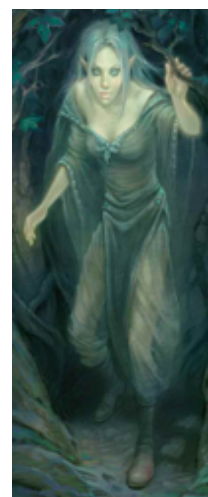
Ghost

Ghosts are the classic incorporeal creature and have always had a connection to the Ethereal Plane, able to move between there and the Material Plane at will. The abilities of ghosts have varied somewhat over the years; in their original D&D appearance in *Strategic Review #3*, the touch of a ghost caused a target to age 10-40 years. In 3rd and 4th Edition this was watered down to ability point or necrotic damage, but in 5th Edition a ghost is once again able to cause ageing using its *horrifying visage*. An ability common to ghosts of all editions is some form of possession, where the ghost temporarily takes control of a host body. For hardcore fans of all things ectoplasmic, *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* offers a menu of different ghostly characteristics and abilities, and *Ghostwalk* makes it possible to run an entire campaign for ghostly characters. Sources: *Strategic Review #3* (OD&D), *Rules Cyclopedia* (BECMI), *Monster Manual* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Monster Manual* (3e), *Monster Manual* (4e), *Monster Manual* (5e).



Ghost Elf

These unusual elves now dwell entirely in the Ethereal Plane, living in cities built from material imported from the Material Plane. Always an isolated branch of the elven race, the ghost elves were almost wiped out by the drow during an ancient elven civil war. Desperate to save themselves, they were tricked into making a bargain with one of the Archdukes of the Nine Hells and spent many centuries serving as pawns in the Blood War. Eventually escaping servitude by tricking other fiends into helping them, the ghost elves slew their master and flew into the Ethereal Plane. Ghost elves have blank, mirror-like eyes, and skin that glow with a pale white light. This gives them a ghostly appearance and is why others refer to them as ghost elves. As a result of having their connection to the Material Plane severed for so long during their time in the Nine Hells, ghost elves have a special affinity for their adopted home plane, and gain some Ethereal powers over time. Sources: *Dragon* #313 (3e).



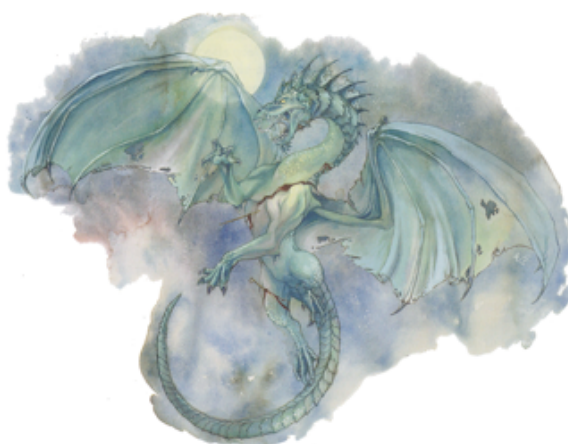
Ghosteater

Although they are naturally incorporeal, and able to become ethereal several times each day, ghosteaters have evolved to spend most of their time manifested in the Material Plane. There they hunt ghosts and other ectoplasmic beings. They resemble phantom fungi made of blue or grey ectoplasm. Ghosteaters are intelligent creatures and communicate with each other, but choose not to engage with other species. They attack ghosts with enthusiasm, draining their wisdom by means of a tentacle touch attack. Once a ghost has all of its wisdom drained, the ghosteater absorbs its body into one of its fleshy sacs where it is digested over the course of a few days. Ghosteaters are able to absorb the spellcasting abilities of the ghost they consume making them occasionally surprisingly competent casters. Source: *Ghostwalk* (3e).



Ghost Dragon

Many different creatures can become ghosts, but ghost dragons have tended to get separate monster entries so that more of their special abilities are retained in ghost form. The 2nd Edition version has a breath weapon which causes up to 1000(!) years of ageing, the 3rd Edition version drains levels and abilities with its breath, and the 5th Edition ghost dragon's breath does cold damage and frightens its targets. A common theme across editions is the ghost dragon's attachment to its hoard. In some cases, a ghost dragon is created when the dragon dies protecting its hoard, and the only way to permanently dispatch the dragon is to give it sufficient treasure to replace what was stolen. Sources: *MC Annual Volume Three* (2e), *Draconomicon* (3e), *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons* (5e).



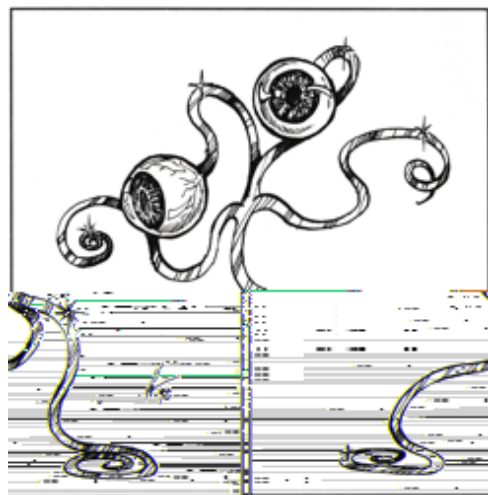
Gingwatzim

In their natural form, gingwatzims are semisolid, glowing blobs of swirling gas. There are at least six species of gingwatzims, each of which has a different coloured glow. On the Ethereal Plane, gingwatzims are solitary predators. They can be summoned to the Material Plane by powerful spells first developed by the wizard Castanamir of Oerth, and bound into two other forms determined by the summoner. One form is a tiny object and the other is a tiny animal. In earlier editions, the object form was typically a magical weapon, but 5th Edition restricts this form to non-magical objects. In its true form, a gingwatzim's attack drains energy or strength from a target, depending on edition. Sources: *C3: The Lost Island of Castanamir* (1e), *WGR1: Greyhawk Ruins* (2e), *Dragon #295* (3e), *Candlekeep Mysteries* (5e).



Gk'lok-lok

The word gk'lok-lok refers to an immense, branching green crystal that drifts through the Deep Ethereal plus the thousands of individual gk'lok attached to the tree. An individual gk'lok is humanoid in size and basic form, but instead of limbs and a torso, it has tubes of what look like polished metal, and instead of a neck and head, it has two more metallic tubes attached to two eyeballs, with glowing red halos of flame. The gk'lok-lok captures the spirits of dead warriors and allows the gk'lok to experience their lives, then releases them to continue on to their final place of rest. Gk'lok can defend themselves or their tree by firing metal slivers from their arms or by slashing. Gk'lok understand most languages but communicate only through mime. Sources: *DLA3: Dragon's Rest* (2e).



Grim

A grim is a neutral good guardian creature bound to protect a particular location from evil creatures. At the beginning of each night, it takes one of three forms: a great black dog, a huge black cat, or a black owl. At day break, a grim fades away, becoming ethereal. It must wait until night before it can return to the Material Plane to continue guarding, but it does so fully healed from any injuries suffered the night before. A grim can make the physical attacks you would expect from its chosen forms: claws, talons, bite or beak. It can *detect evil* and gives a deep howl if an evil creature approaches, sometimes causing it to flee. Grimms are also able to turn undead. A grim has no need to eat or sleep and never abandons the location it guards, even if that location becomes dilapidated and desolate. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (1e), *The Shadow Rift* (2e), *Denizens of Dread* (3e).



Huldrefolk (also known as a Lost Folk)

Small, grey-skinned humanoids, the huldrefolk are Krynn's primal fey. Originally, the Huldre may have settled Krynn from the Ethereal. Some say they are the ancestors of *all* that world's fey. Most of them retreated from Ansalon into the Ethereal Plane thousands of years ago, leaving only a few of their kind behind. Huldrefolk are sensitive to light. They are accomplished sorcerers; each one specialise in an elemental sphere which grants related magical powers. In personality, huldrefolk are given to extreme passions and manic behaviour, leaping from melancholy to incoherent joy. They are fascinated by toys and machines. Sources: *Tales of the Lance* (2e), *Bestiary of Krynn, Revised* (3e).



Joystealer (also known as an Insoril)

A fey with an elven appearance, a joystealer has a strange dual existence. It is bound to the Ethereal Plane, but present on the Material Plane as visible but incorporeal. A joystealer feeds on the emotions of creatures from the Material Plane. Once it has drained a target's charisma with its touch attack, a joystealer consumes the prey's ability to experience emotion. This can only be restored by killing the thieving joystealer, or using a combination of the *remove curse* and *hallow* spells. Joystealers call themselves insoril. Before being enslaved by the ethergaunts, their ancestors were more refined in how they approached their consumption of others' emotions. Modern insoril resent the ethergaunts for binding them to the Ethereal Plane and turning them into the desperate hunters they are now. Source: *Monster Manual IV* (3e).



Magran

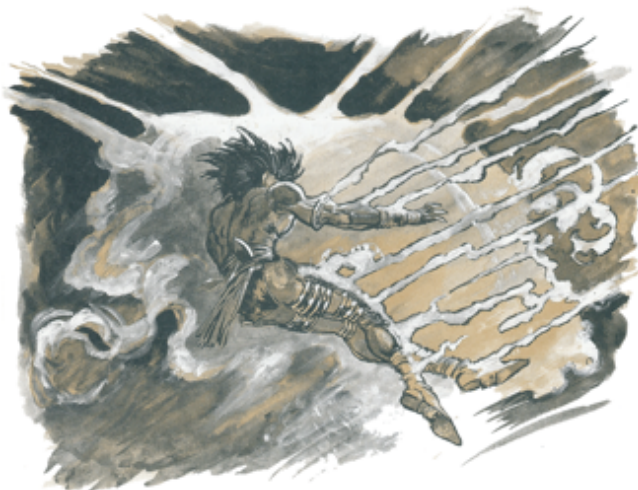
Huge reptilian serpents called magran are found only in the Deep Ethereal. A magran dangles a glowing light in front of a maw filled with sharp teeth. The hypnotising pulse of the light transfixes those nearby. The body of a magran (except for the light) is usually invisible, becoming visible only for an instant when an entranced target is bitten or swallowed whole. Swallowed prey remain visible (and struggling) inside an invisible magran until they die. Magran are usually solitary but gather schools to spawn. The light organ remains functional for a few weeks after the magran dies, but enchants its possessor. Sources: *Planescape MC Appendix III* (2e).



Meme

Found in the Deep Ethereal, a meme is a self-perpetuating pattern. It looks like a vaguely humanoid shape moving under a sheet, if the sheet was the fabric of the Ethereal Plane. A close observer sees that the meme's image is formed from tiny vortices of particulate ethereal matter. This matter, which the meme consumes in order to maintain itself, is drawn from nearby creatures by the meme's *usurpation field*, which dissolves all matter within ten feet.

Because the meme's form is in constant motion, certain spells like *hold monster* and *stasis* are especially harmful or fatal to it, as is planar travel. Sources: *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* (2e).



Monadic Deva

Devas are the winged agents of the powers of good. They look like strong, heroic humans. The interests of the gods on the Ethereal and Inner Planes are represented



by the patient and stoic monadic devas. In the original *Dragon* #63 article and in the *Monster Manual II*, monadic devas had milky white skin, silvery hair and colourless eyes. In 2nd Edition and 3rd Edition, they have dark brown skin, jet black hair and green eyes. All devas enjoy a variety of immunities and have a wide range of spell-like powers. The monadic deva is also immune to *death* magic and level draining, can cast *hold monster* and *mirror image* at will, and can *charm* elemental creatures. In combat, a monadic deva wields a deadly *mace of smiting*. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (1e), *Planescape MC Appendix* (2e), *Fiend Folio* (3e).

Moonstone Dragon

The moonstone dragon (easily confused with the ethereal "moonstone" dragon) is a graceful and elegant creature, with ruffs of emerald green fur growing between opalescent scales. Originally created when the magic of the Feywild suffused eggs left there by a visiting dragon, the moonstone dragon spends much of its time on the Ethereal Plane. The dragon's breath causes *sleep* and sleepers experience dreams that the dragon can influence. Moonstone



dragons cherish treasures with hard-to-quantify value, such as a story of happy times fondly remembered. Sources: *MC Annual Volume Four* (2e), *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons* (5e).

Mordenkainen's Faithful Hound

The spell *Mordenkainen's Faithful Hound* has appeared in most editions' *Player's Handbook*. The faithful hound summoned by the spell is a creature of the Ethereal Plane. It is temporarily called into cohesion by the spell to function as a guardian. Invisible to all but its summoner, the faithful hound starts to bark if an intruder gets close. It can see both invisible and ethereal intruders and will attack a target within the range of its bite. A faithful hound cannot be attacked from the Material Plane. It can be attacked normally by someone in the Border Ethereal, but the attacker requires a magic weapon to hit. A *dispel magic* spell dissipates a faithful hound whether the caster is on the Material Plane or in the Border Ethereal. Sources: *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* (2e).



Nathri

Small humanoids with dark green skin and an unruly mop of black hair, nathri are fierce and wild, dwelling in the Deep Ethereal in clans of more than a hundred. They are completely at home in the Ethereal, and can see into the Border Ethereal when on a neighbouring plane. Nathri raid demiplanes for resources and are comparative experts on such places. They have venom producing barbs on the backs of their hands. Nathri are as likely to coat a weapon with this, as to try to inject it using the barbs. The toxin makes a target disoriented and dizzy. Although they are not too powerful individually, nathri attack in swarms. They are hard to negotiate with since they are used to taking whatever they covet by force from those who would try to negotiate with them. Sources: *Planescape MC Appendix III* (2e).



Neh-thalggu (also known as a Brain Collector)

The neh-thalggu is a large, bloated, oily creature with six crablike legs, dozens of short, writhing tentacles, a tooth-filled mouth, and four large, yellow, bulging eyes. It originates from some other dimension, probably the Demiplane of Nightmares or the Far Realm. It wanders the known planes, including the Ethereal Plane and the world of Mystara in particular. A neh-thalggu attacks with spells or a bite, but is careful not to damage a target's cranium as it collects the brains of those it slays. It can store up to a dozen brains at once; each new brain adds a spell to the creature's casting capabilities. Once it has collected a full complement of twelve brains, the neh-thalggu immediately returns to its home plane. Sources: *Creature Catalog* (BECMI), *MC Annual Volume Four* (2e), *Epic Level Handbook* (3e).



Neogi

This Spelljammer monster might be an unexpected feature on a list of Ethereal Plane inhabitants, but their 5th Edition description has them dwelling in far-flung locations on the Material, Astral and Ethereal Planes. Neogi are arachnids with eel-like heads. They are mind-controlling slavers who use dominated umber hulks as servants. Neogi mark themselves and those they capture in various ways to keep track of their status within neogi society, and neogi are punished harshly for failing to defer to those of higher societal status. Some neogi make pacts with aberrant entities in order to gain spellcasting abilities. Sources: *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Monster Manual II* (3e), *Monster Manual 2* (4e), *Monsters of the Multiverse* (5e).



Nethersight Mastiff

These black, shaggy predators look like massive wolves with wide muzzles. Aggressive carnivores, nethersight mastiffs hunt in packs of up to twenty, but are occasionally encountered solo. They are about eight feet long with huge paws. Mastiffs are found in arctic and subarctic regions of the Material Plane, but prefer to hunt creatures in the Border Ethereal. Their pack tactics, excellent senses, and continuous *true seeing* make them perfect ethereal hunters. A nethersight mastiff's jaw is filled with sharp teeth that emit a blue glow. This glowing bite reaches into the Ethereal Plane, and mastiffs have a talent for grappling a foe and then wrenching the grappled prey right out of the Border Ethereal into the Material Plane, potentially stranding it. Nethersight mastiffs are sufficiently intelligent to be able to speak Common. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (3e).



Nethling (aka Neth's Child)

Formed from the substance of Neth, the Demiplane That Lives, nethlings are pink, ten-foot-diameter pancakes by default. Each of Neth's Children views itself not as a separate entity, but as an extension of Neth, searching for meaning on the Ethereal Plane. The shape of a nethling rapidly changes to reflect its purpose, usually matching the shape of those it meets. When encountered, a nethling's first words are usually "Neth has questions." If not satisfied with the answers to its many, many questions, a nethling may try to gain knowledge more directly, by consuming someone. It does this by rapidly dissolving and then absorbing the target and the target's memories. Each nethling eventually returns to merge into Neth, passing on the knowledge it collected during its travels. Source: *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* (2e).



Nilshai (also known as an Ethereal Theurge)

These alien sorcerers are from the same plane as ethereal filchers and ethereal marauders. From a ropy body spring three clawed legs, three long whiplike tentacles with fingers, a bulbous head with a trio of eyestalks and membranous wings. Nilshais spend most of their time in bizarre stone strongholds hidden in the Ethereal Plane. They can *ethereal jaunt* at will and engage in raids to the Material Plane to plunder magic and lore. A group of them infiltrated the Yuirwood in the Forgotten Realms. Nilshais are accomplished sorcerers and contemptuous of Material Plane life. They use their impressive array of spells to deal with anyone trying to interfere with their purpose. Source: *Unapproachable East* (3e).



Phase Spider

This spider first appeared in *Supplement I: Greyhawk* and has been a *Monster Manual* staple in every edition. Defining the phase spider across editions is the ability to rapidly phase between the Ethereal and Material Planes, except in 4th Edition, where they just teleport a lot. Phase spiders have a poisonous bite. For quite a while in 2nd Edition, they were described as having human-like heads attached to their thoraxes. They spin large web habitats in the Ethereal, but only a few of their kind can spin stable ether webs. Sources: *Greyhawk* (OD&D), *Monster Manual* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Monster Manual* (3e), *Monster Manual 2* (4e), *Monster Manual* (5e).



Phantasm

A phantasm lives in the Ethereal Plane. Once every 111 years, it can *plane shift* to the Material Plane, where it can stay for up to, but no longer than, a year. It looks like a large white deer with rainbow-coloured wings. A phantasm will flee from combat, fighting only if it cannot escape. While a phantasm is visiting the Material, it collects magical items to take back with it; it can draw nourishment from them. Phantasms can speak and continuously *detect magic* and *read magic*. If someone tries to harm a phantasm, and the phantasm escapes, it will cast a special *antipathy* curse on its attacker to repel humanoids of all sorts. Other phantasms will not go near anyone so marked. Sources: *Dungeon* #5 (1e).



Phantom

A number of ghost-like entities have been called phantoms in D&D lore, but not all of them are linked to the Ethereal Plane. In the world of Mystara, a phantom is an ethereal undead creature with a fear attack, but a *lesser* phantom is a misty, magical creature that leads people into danger to feed on their fear. In 1st and 2nd Edition, phantoms are residual images left behind by traumatic deaths, harmless except that they instil *fear*. In 3rd Edition, the phantom template is used to give corporeal creatures the ability to become incorporeal. 4th Edition has several different things called phantoms, including an eldritch phantom with a possession ability. Sources: *Rules Cyclopedia* (BECMI), *Monster Manual II* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Monster Manual V* (3e), *Tomb of Horrors* (4e).



Phantom Warrior

Introduced in *Curse of Strahd*, a phantom warrior is the spirit of a soldier who perishes while performing a sworn duty. Unlike a ghost, a phantom warrior isn't forced to remain behind, but does so voluntarily. A phantom warrior's memories are faded. It remembers its death, and has some memories from shortly before it died; everything before that is an impenetrable fog. A phantom warrior is surrounded by an invisible sheath of energy that it can use to deflect incoming blows. It can see into the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane and vice versa and is able to move freely between the two planes. An earlier phantom warrior appeared in the 4th Edition *Monster Manual*. This version is a type of ghost that patrols the location where it died. It is usually encountered in groups. Sources: *Monster Manual* (4e), *Curse of Strahd* (5e).



Phirblas

Phirblas are tall, thin humanoids who levitate a few inches above the ground. Instead of speaking, they manifest text in the language of the "listener" in the air above themselves. The style of the script may convey additional information: elegant writing is used for a formal announcement, a messy scrawl indicates the phirblas is in a hurry. Although phirblas are most often encountered in the Ethereal Plane, they originate from the ancient demiplane of Inphirblau. Millions of phirblas live in this endless city-realm filled with tall towers. Phirblas are telepathic and possess a few spell-like powers, including the ability to make their "speech" into a *hypnotic pattern* or a *suggestion* from time to time. To an outsider, the organisation of phirblas society appears fluid, with responsibilities and areas of influence constantly in flux. Phirblas are long-lived vegetarians whose cooks labour for days to prepare intricate meals. Sages have long ruminated on the similarities between the phirblas and Sigil's dabus. Sources: *Planescape MC Appendix III* (2e).



Planar Spider

Intelligent, plane-travelling arachnids from the Mystara setting, planar spiders likely originated from a demiplane located in the Deep Ethereal. Some sages speculate that planar spiders are related to phase spiders, but this remains conjecture. Planar spiders can move freely between the Material, Ethereal and Astral Planes, and they use this to their advantage when in combat, keeping their opponents constantly off balance. Planar spiders do not usually attack without provocation; most prefer to first communicate with strangers to determine their intentions. They generally speak Common and at least one other humanoid language. Planar spiders are not a homogeneous species, but have many different nations. Planar spider encounters are usually with seasoned explorers, but there are also groups of spiders who seek riches as wandering bandits. Planar spiders produce a deadly poison in their fangs, but are able to control its deployment, and can bite without injecting it, if they so choose. Planar spiders can use most magic items, and in rare cases practice spellcasting as a wizard or even a priest. Sources: *Rules Cyclopedia* (BECMI), *Mystara MC Appendix* (2e).

Plasm

Plasms are made of raw elemental matter clinging to stable ether, and are created when an ether cyclone spins too close to the curtain of an elemental plane. The malevolent nature of a plasm is mirrored in its appearance as a humanoid skeleton, typically six feet tall, but sometimes twice that size. Fire plasms have skeletons flickering with flames. Water plasms have bones made of solid water. Air plasms have bones visible only while moving. Earth plasms are covered in clumps of gooey dirt. A plasm attacks with its clawed hands or by summoning an *elemental cloud*. Plasms are encountered only on the Ethereal Plane or their corresponding elemental plane as they rapidly degenerate if they end up elsewhere. Normal elementals loathe plasms and will attack them on sight. Sources: *Rules Cyclopedia* (BECMI), *Mystara MC Appendix* (2e).



Poltergeist

D&D has had many poltergeists. The first appeared in *B3: Palace of the Silver Princess* (but only in the orange cover version). It is a mischievous spirit that animates objects to attack. In the *Rules Cyclopedia*, it is a cluster of ectoplasmic tentacles with tiny eyes, a paralysing gaze attack and a net that drags creatures into the Ethereal. In *Dragon #55*, a poltergeist is the spirit of a chaotic gnome from Limbo or Gladsheim, said to enjoy jokes and tricks. The 1st Edition *Fiend Folio* and 2nd Edition *Monstrous Manual* both describe the poltergeist as an invisible undead that animates objects. In 3rd Edition Ravenloft poltergeists are a geist variation. In etherless 4th Edition poltergeists are cowardly Shadowfell ghosts. In 5th Edition they are confused spectres who enjoy throwing people around. Sources: *Rules Cyclopedia* (BECMI), *Fiend Folio* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Denizens of Dread* (3e) *Open Grave* (4e), *Monster Manual* (5e).



Rabbiun

Rabbiun are first mentioned in passing in the back of the *Planescape Monstrous Compendium Appendix III*, where they are described as serpentine and spear-like, flying through the Deep Ethereal trying to avoid anything larger than themselves. Fortunately, *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* expands on this rather minimal initial description. There, rabbiun are described as resembling brightly-coloured snakes, no more than two feet long. They were originally wild animals that migrated to the Ethereal Plane. Rabbiun evolved from these migratory species to better survive the currents of the Deep Ethereal, but still have the intelligence of an animal. Rabbiun are most often spotted flying in a flock through the ethereal mists. They are able to absorb nutrients directly from the ethereal medium. Rabbiun are inoffensive and unaggressive towards others Ethereal Plane travellers. They always try to avoid combat, and have a flying speed that generally allows them to successfully flee. If forced to do so, rabbiun defend themselves by biting. Some eccentric planar travellers hunt rabbiun and serve them as delicacies on special occasions. Sources: *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* (2e).

Rusalka

This particular type of rusalka (D&D has a few) is the spirit of a drowning victim who was murdered. A rusalka looks like the deceased person but with a pale complexion, faded clothes, and a green tint. Its hair is long and sometimes contains tangled sea plants. A rusalka is driven by a desire for revenge. It can only leave the Prime Material plane once it has avenged its own death. A rusalka lures victims to



their deaths with enticing songs and then drowns them with a deadly embrace. Rusalki can control the water around them to their advantage. If a rusalka becomes seriously harmed, it withdraws to the Ethereal Plane where it remains for a full year, gaining enough energy to manifest again. Rusalki cannot come onto dry land and are bound to a body of water, but can stand in water as shallow as one inch. Sources: *Polyhedron Gencon Special Edition* (2e).

Sacred Watcher

These spirits aren't undead, but rather good-aligned deathless. They are created when a virtuous person dies while another person is in their care. Even in death, the sacred watcher continues to watch over their ward until someone else can take over that responsibility. A sacred watcher spends most of its time on the Ethereal Plane, out of sight, and unable to attack, but still able to keep watch. When manifesting on the Material Plane, a watcher takes on a silvery translucent radiance, and can use a *positive energy touch* attack. Even if destroyed, a sacred watcher restores itself in a matter of days. Only by fulfilling its purpose can its existence be ended. The example presented is a humanoid watcher, but the sacred watcher template can also be applied to many other creature types. Source: *Book of Exalted Deeds* (3e).



Shedu

Relatives of the lammasu, shedim have human heads with braided beards and long, curly black hair. From the neck down, they are winged bulls with five legs. Each shedu wears a crown, as if it was the ruler of some lost kingdom, but a shedu never discusses its crown with anyone. Shedim epitomise lawful good, roaming the Astral, Ethereal and Material Planes helping those in need. A shedu has psionic abilities that permit it to move easily between planes, and which offer protection against evil beings. If it needs to engage in physical combat, a shedu will trample opponents. Shedim communicate using telepathy. The more powerful of their kind are sometimes referred to as a greater shedu. Sources: *Eldritch Wizardry* (OD&D), *Monster Manual* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Fiend Folio* (3e).



Shyft

Planetouched humanoids descended from one of the native races of the Ethereal Plane, shyfts belong fully to neither the Material or Ethereal Planes but can move between them using *ethereal jaunt*. Shyfts are inconspicuous by nature, and have elevated not being noticed to an artform. They wear dark, simple clothing that doesn't draw attention, and specialise in stealthy tactics and ambushes. Their ability to listen in on conversations from the Ethereal Plane makes them efficient spies, but they also excel in assassination, thievery and other criminal activities. When encountered, shyfts are either travelling solo, or in small bands of up to eight. They live in settlements with clans of up to twenty. Shyfts speak Common. They have darkvision and minor resistances to cold, fire and sonic attacks. Like many other planetouched, shyfts cannot be *raised* or *resurrected*. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (3e).



Spirits of the Black Cabin

Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden details the Black Cabin as a place of interest. This cabin was constructed by a ranger of the Far North before the Ten-Towns were founded. Since then, the cabin has become a refuge for those seeking sanctuary from the howling glacial winds. In the adventure, a sage named Macreadus recently accidentally incinerated himself, leaving a charred skeleton behind in the cabin. His spirit lingers in the Border Ethereal manifesting as a giant, floating, spectral head. He departs only if the adventurers fix a flaw in the magical item he was attempting to activate. Macreadus's fate will be shared by anyone who dies in the Black Cabin: they will not be able to move on to an afterlife, but will linger in the Border Ethereal, manifesting in a form they choose. A black cabin spirit can interact with the Material Plane only in limited ways. A spirit can see other spirits in the Border Ethereal, and it can move around inside the cabin and in the area within 30 feet of it. A spirit can also attempt to move small Material Plane objects around, perhaps to write a message in the dust or to tap someone on the shoulder. Sources: *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* (5e).

Terithran

These strange hairless humanoids made their first appearance in the pages of *White Dwarf* #13. Terithran spend most of their lives asleep in Deep Ethereal tombs made entirely of the ether. A terithran views arcane magic as an abomination. If magic is used on the Material Plane that is powerful enough for a terithran in the Ethereal to sense, it will awaken and travel to the Material Plane to punish the offender. Although a terithran can slash with its sharp claws, it is its array of magic powers that is more likely to end the life of a magic-user. It can drain all of a wizard's memorised spells, *cause serious wounds* or use a *blast of power* to flay anyone nearby. Since it can use its powers only a limited number of times while visiting the Material Plane, a terithran usually drags an opponent back to the Ethereal to finish them off. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (1e), *Planescape MC Appendix III* (2e).



Thaumavore

These monstrous, eel-like creatures are native to the Deep Ethereal. A number of these creatures were trapped in Krynn's planar sphere when Takhisis stole the world and moved it through the Ethereal sea. This imprisonment has driven many of them to madness and hostility, and they seek only to absorb enough magical energy to be able to transport themselves back to their home Plane. Thaumavores appear insubstantial, since they exist partially in the Ethereal, and appear to move through the air by swimming. They have mouths filled with razor-sharp teeth and their eight-foot long bodies radiate a noxious purple-green aura. Thaumavores can detect magic and seek out strong sources so that they can consume the magical energies, much like a *rod of absorption*. While magic drained from a spellcaster does return over the next few hours, the draining process removes prepared spells, often leaving the caster relatively helpless. A thaumavore will plane shift home once it has absorbed enough energy. Thaumavores have a number of other spell-like abilities, but they must expend some of the magical energy they have drained to use them. Sources: *Towers of High Sorcery* (3e).

Thought Eater

A thought eater is a three-foot long skeletal creature resembling a platypus. It has wisps of ethereal protomatter for flesh. Thought eaters lurk on the Border Ethereal. When they detect a target—someone with psionic capability or high intelligence—they shift into the Material Plane to attack. They can only remain there for a limited amount of time, as their ethereal flesh quickly dissipates, killing them. Thought eaters drain psionic ability or intelligence.

Early versions can do this at a distance, and can attack Material targets from the Ethereal. The 3rd Edition version must make a touch attack to drain a target. Sources: *Eldritch Wizardry* (OD&D), *Monster Manual* (1e), *Monstrous Manual* (2e), *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (3e).



Thought Slayer

A far more powerful cousin of the thought eater, the thought slayer can instantly consume the mind of its prey merely by meeting its gaze. Like the thought eater, a slayer can only last a short period of time in the Material Plane before its wispy ethereal body dissipates. As well as a *mind-consuming gaze*, a thought slayer has a range of other psi-like abilities that it will use



against any foe that resists its gaze. Huge in size, the slayer's skeleton looks like that of a powerful feline with the skull and claws of an over-sized bird of prey. It has eyes that glow with an eerie, pale luminescence. Sources: *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (3e).

Tween

The tween is another creature originating in the pages of *White Dwarf*, first appearing in issue #8. Native to the Ethereal Plane, it is a parasitic creature. On its home plane, a tween looks like a short, squat, ugly humanoid with stubby limbs. A tween lives vicariously through a chosen host. This host must be an intelligent creature living on the Material Plane. Once it has chosen a host, a tween begins to assume the shape and characteristics of the host, appearing as a nearby shadowy outline. A tween remains bonded to its selected host until either it or the host dies. Tweens can see slightly into the future, and feed on luck, absorbing it from those nearby, but boosting the host's luck. This is a mixed blessing for a host belonging to an adventuring party. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (1e), *MC14: Fiend Folio Appendix* (2e).



Vision

These beings were created by a high-level illusionist conducting misguided magical research. Visions look like shadows, and exist partially in the Ethereal Plane and partially in the Material Plane. They are summoned from an unspecified plane, to which they cannot return until their physical manifestations in the Ethereal/Material are destroyed. This trapped existence makes visions frustrated and hostile; they attack anything they encounter. However, they have no physical capabilities and can only attack by using a magical suggestion to convince a target that it has aged a decade. The target suffers any ill effects of advancing age. A target making a save against a suggestion attack realises that it is illusionary, and all ageing caused by the vision immediately vanishes. However, if an aged character kills the attacking vision and then fails a save, the ageing immediately becomes real and permanent. Magic or silver weapons are needed to strike a vision, but it is also vulnerable to a *dispel illusion* spell. The Mystaran vision is an undead being, clearly not related to the 1st Edition vision. It is ethereal in nature and classified as a type of phantom. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (1e).

Xill

Four-armed, red-skinned humanoids, xill have both reptilian and insectoid features. They live in the Deep Ethereal but are able to easily move between the Material and Ethereal planes, even while grappling someone. They visit the Material Plane to find hosts for their eggs. A suitable victim is first grappled and paralysed by the xill's bite, then taken back to the xill's Ethereal lair to be implanted with an egg. Four days later, the egg hatches. It takes another week to eat its way out, finally killing the paralysed, but still conscious host. Xill have two subcultures, a more civilised High Clan, the members of which engage in crafts and trade, and a Low Clan, who are more barbaric in nature and seem to live only to reproduce. Sources: *Fiend Folio* (1e), *Planescape MC Appendix III* (2e), *Monster Manual* (3e), *Mordenkainen's Fiendish Folio Volume 1* (5e).



Yeth Hound

A yeth hound is a massive, black-furred canine that stands as high as a human. It has a human face with glowing red eyes. In 5th Edition, yeth hounds are created by powerful Fey and serve them as hunting dogs, often in packs. In earlier editions they were servants of evil forces in the lower planes. Yeth hounds can communicate telepathically with their masters. They lack wings, but can fly. The hounds cannot be harmed by normal weapons. Sunlight causes yeth hounds to vanish into the Ethereal Plane, so they stop hunting and return to their lairs before dawn. The baying sound of a pack of yeth hounds strikes fear in the hearts of those that hear it. Once each month, a yeth hound needs to eat a warm-blooded creature, preferably humanoid. Sources: *Monster Manual II* (1e), *Planescape MC Appendix I* (2e), *Monster Manual* (3e) *Monsters of the Multiverse* (5e).



That brings us to the end of *Monsters of the Ethereal Plane*.

Which of these monsters have you encountered or used in a game? What are your favourites?
Are there any older monsters here you'd like to see updated to 5th Edition?

Please visit [ENWorld](https://www.enworld.org/) if you'd like to provide feedback or comment on this Collector's Guide.

This is version 1.0 of the PDF release.
