



GOING FOR A JAUNT?

A Web Enhancement for the *Book of Challenges*

The *Book of Challenges* offers dozens of exciting traps, mazes, and other intriguing dungeon features to keep the player characters (PCs) on their toes. This web enhancement by the book's editor offers Dungeon Masters (DMs) an idea for what to do if the characters try to circumvent the dungeon's challenges with a quick *etheral jaunt!* To use this web enhancement, you must already have the *Book of Challenges*. This bonus material is exclusive to the official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® website: <www.wizards.com/dnd>.

Dungeon Masters take care and setup intricate encounters focusing on dungeons, mazes, and surprises.

One challenge they may face is that a party of characters utilizes spells and magic items to circumvent their elaborate plots easily. For instance, a character with *etheral jaunt* can scout ahead, find all the correct turns in an intricate maze, and locate all the opponents, allowing the rest of the party to bypass the danger.

Sometimes player characters need a reminder that the Ethereal Plane is not their personal playground.

ETHEREAL FAVORITES (EL 3)

Two creatures native to the Ethereal Plane and eminently suitable for a solo ethereal encounter are the ethereal filcher and the ethereal marauder. Few spellcasters want to venture where they're apt to get their pocket picked or fall under attack when they're alone. These critters are apt to drive the scout back to the Material Plane for help.

- **Ethereal Filcher:** hp 22; see *MONSTER MANUAL*®. This creature will happily lurk near magic-laden parties, seeking a good opportunity to use its Pick Pocket skill to snatch a magic goody.

- **Ethereal Marauder:** hp 11; see *MONSTER MANUAL*. This ethereal creature is a fierce opponent for a lone sorcerer or wizard who's using *etheral jaunt* to scout.

Remember that a creature's Challenge Rating is balanced when it's facing four characters. If you're launching an ethereal attack against a lone scout who can't expect reinforcements on the Ethereal Plane from his party, you probably want to pick a lower EL than if the whole party were present.

USING TEMPLATES

For a fuller challenge, use the ghost template on a different creature. It can be added to almost anything. It's reasonable to assume that, as the player characters

Credits

Design: Gwendolyn F. M. Kestrel
Editing and Typesetting: Sue Weinlein Cook
Editorial Assistance: Penny Williams
Web Production: Julia Martin
Web Development: Mark Jindra
Graphic Design: Sean Glenn, Cynthia Fliege

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combat and kill the denizens of a dungeon, an occasional foe might come back to haunt them.

Even more interesting encounters might use multiple templates. Say a creature here starts with a base of a simple chaotic evil minotaur. Adding the half-dragon template from a gold dragon makes the creature much tougher and changes its alignment to lawful good. Finally, after overlaying the ghost template, the creature becomes an incorporeal undead, allowing it to be any alignment. In this instance, I'll decide to make it neutral.

Since a ghost can rejuvenate, include a short history to show what is necessary to lay it to rest. Choose something suitable for its motivation: Does it seek revenge? Is it a guardian? Did it leave something undone?

Our half-dragon minotaur, P'Cku, manifested aspects of both her gold dragon mother and her minotaur father. She sought to live as a good being with her mother, but found that dragon society spurned her. She ran away, leaving no word for her mother.

Humanoid folk also wanted nothing to do with her, however. She retreated to this underground complex where she lived and eventually died, very lonely. She returned as a ghost. She's a bit mad with loneliness and the trauma of being undead. She hates corporeal, living creatures and will attack them.

She feels guilty that she left her mother without any word. The only way to set P'Cku to rest is to agree to carry a message to her mother that P'Cku has died but that she loved her.

➤ **P'Cku (against ethereal):** P'Cku: Female half-gold-dragon half-minotaur ghost; CR 8; Large undead (incorporeal); HD 6d12; hp 39; Init +0; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Atk +13 melee (1d8+8, bite) and +8 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws), or +13/+8 melee (2d8+8/x3, Huge greataxe) and +8 melee (1d8+4, gore) and +8 melee (1d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (30-ft. cone of fire), charge 4d6+12, frightful moan, malevolence; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities, incorporeal subtype, low-light vision, manifestation, natural cunning, rejuvenation, scent, turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 27, Dex 10, Con -, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4, Intimidate +8, Jump +14, Listen +18, Search +17, Spot +18; Great Fortitude, Power Attack.

Breath Weapon (Su): P'Cku can breathe a 30-foot cone of fire that deals 6d10 points of damage (Reflex DC 20 for half).

Charge (Ex): P'Cku typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent, lowering her head to bring her mighty horns into play. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows her to make a single gore attack that deals 4d6+12 points of damage.

Frightful Moan (Su): P'Cku can moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed at a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by P'Cku's moan for one day.

Malevolence (Su): Once per round, P'Cku can merge her ethereal body with a creature on the Material Plane.

This ability is similar to *magic jar* (caster level 10th), except that it does not require a receptacle. If the attack succeeds, P'Cku's body vanishes into the opponent's body. The target can resist the attack with a

successful Will save (DC 15). A creature that successfully saves is immune to P'Cku's malevolence for one day.

Immunities: P'Cku is immune to fire and to paralysis and sleep effects.

Incorporeal Subtype: P'Cku can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. She is immune to all nonmagical attack forms and has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as *magic missiles*, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons). She can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will, and her attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields (though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally). P'Cku moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

Low-Light Vision: P'Cku can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Manifestation (Su): As an ethereal creature, P'Cku cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When manifest, she becomes visible but

Oh lost, and by the wind grieved,
ghost, come back again.

—Thomas Wolfe,
Look Homeward Angel!

remains incorporeal. In this state, she has no attacks available except her frightful moan and her malevolence. While manifested, she remains on the Ethereal Plane but can be attacked by opponents on both the Material and Ethereal planes.

Natural Cunning (Ex): P'Cku's minotaur heritage gifted her with innate cunning, which renders her immune to *maze* spells, prevents her from ever becoming lost, and enables her to track enemies. Further, she is never caught flat-footed.

Rejuvenation (Su): It's difficult to destroy P'Cku through simple combat: Her "destroyed" spirit restores itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are often only temporary solutions. If P'Cku would otherwise be destroyed, she returns to her old haunts with a successful level check (1d20+6) against DC 16. The only way to get rid of her for sure is to deliver her desired message to her mother.

Scent (Ex): P'Cku can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Turn Resistance (Ex): P'Cku is less easily affected by clerics or paladins. When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, she is treated as a 10-HD creature.

Undead Traits: P'Cku is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-influencing effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. She is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. Negative energy heals her, and she is not at risk of death from massive damage but is destroyed at 0 hit points or less. She cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if she is willing.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel is an editor for Wizards of the Coast's Roleplaying Games R&D department. Recent credits include editing *Faiths and Pantheons*, *Oriental Adventures*, *Magic of Faerûn*, *Defenders of the Faith* and *Book of Challenges*.

Addicted to education, Gwendolyn is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in cognitive studies with the University of Washington's Department of Education. Check out the website she created for her fiancé, the game designer Andy Collins, at <www.andy-collins.net>.