

*Ethereal Entities: Denizens of the Unseen Realm* by Alec Lawrence is a slim hardback book with a leather cover dyed a deep, midnight blue. Its title and author's name are embossed in silver script along the spine and front cover, and the corners of the book are adorned with small, silver filigree resembling ethereal wisps. Its pages are filled with neatly-written text and beautifully detailed illustrations.

The book is a treatise on the Ethereal Plane and the creatures that dwell within or visit it. It contains a bestiary divided into the following three sections:

- ***Etherborn: Natives of the Deep Ethereal***, containing information about creatures that are said to dwell solely in the Deep Ethereal, such as the mythological mistfiends, ethershades, and shimmerlings.
- ***Phantomfolk: Travelers from the Border Ethereal***, containing information about incorporeal creatures that dwell in the Border Ethereal and often cross into the Material Plane, such as **ghosts** and **phantom warriors**.
- ***Veil-Walkers: Visitors to the Ethereal***, containing information about physical creatures that can cross into the Ethereal Plane, such as **night hags**, **nightmares**, and **phase spiders**. (See **Matrons of Malevolence** below for the chapter on night hags.)

The subsection discussing **phase spiders** includes a brief sidenote discussing the immunity that most incorporeal undead have to elemental, natural, and nonmagical weapon damage while on the Material Plane, as well as the natural means that phase spiders have developed to counteract those immunities through the use of their fangs and venom. It notes that a spellcaster can deal damage to an incorporeal spirit normally by using a phase spider's fang as an additional material component to cast their spells, while a martial combatant can deal damage to an incorporeal spirit by coating one weapon or up to three pieces of ammunition with phase spider venom or holy water.

The subsection discussing **night hags** includes a brief sidenote discussing a ritual that uses a night hag's **heartstone** and the energies of a leyline to replicate the effects of the *Etherealness* spell for up to ten individuals for one hour on the night of the full moon.

The chapter regarding **night hags** is titled "Night Hags: Matrons of Malevolence." It reads as follows:

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Sly and subversive, night hags are the epitome of wickedness. They represent all that is evil and cruel in the world and want nothing more than to see the virtuous turn to villainy: love turned into obsession, kindness turned to hate, devotion to disregard, and generosity to selfishness.

Once, night hags were creatures of the Feywild, a realm of enchantment and beauty. However, their foulness saw them exiled to the bleak realm of Hades long ago, where they degenerated into fiends. The foul taint of Hades twisted their once-fey nature, and the night hags have long since spread their malevolence across the Lower Planes.

Though night hags resemble withered crones, there is nothing mortal about them. Their withered faces are framed by long, frayed hair and curled ram's horns; horrid moles and warts dot their blotchy pale-blue skin; and their long, skinny fingers are tipped by claws that can slice open flesh with a touch.

All hags possess magical powers, including the ability to alter their forms or curse their foes. A hag also bears some resistance to magic and mortal weapons alike, though the touch of silver wounds her like any other.

Arrogant to a fault, hags believe themselves to be the most cunning of creatures—and very often are. They are open to dealing with mortals, and will always keep their word—but a bargain with a hag is always dangerous. Hags enjoy watching mortals bring about their own downfall through these bargains, which often involve compromising their principles or giving up something dear.

A night hag's ultimate prize, however, is the soul of a corrupted mortal. While her victim sleeps, the night hag passes into the Ethereal Plane through the aid of her twisted onyx heartstone—an artifact that allows her to become Ethereal at the speed of thought. There, she invades her victim's very dreams, filling their head with doubts and fears in the hope of tricking it into performing evil acts in the waking world.

Night after night, she continues her visitations until the victim finally expires in its sleep—at which point she traps its corrupted soul in her soul bag as a dark trophy of her success. The blacker the stains upon the soul, the greater the night hag's bounty.

Like all hags, night hags propagate by snatching and devouring human infants. A week later, the hag gives birth to a daughter who appears human until her thirteenth birthday—at which point the child transforms into the spitting image of her hag mother.

Some hags raise the daughters they spawn, creating covens that magnify their power. The members of a coven gain a slew of unnatural abilities, including the power to control the elements and—once each day—to dispel foreign magic in the vicinity of their lairs. As is true for all hag magic, however, such power comes at a price—for a wound suffered by a single hag in a coven is suffered by all.

To combat their inherently selfish natures, the hags in a coven must enter into a written contract with the others, signed by each hag's true name. The hags of a coven guard their contract jealously, often sealing it within the heart of their lair, ever-careful to keep their names from falling into enemy hands.