The Spectral Dead

Spectral Undead are some of the toughest opponents the group will face. How do you deal with an opponent that has no material form? What weapon do you use against a ghost that is able to pass through walls as if they were air?

Well, you don't use a sword…

And it doesn't burn…

A ghost can pass through a blazing fire as if it does not exit. To the ghost it doesn't.

So what to do?

Well, to determine that you have to realize what a ghost is.

First, I have to say that in these pages the term ghost is used to describe a special type of undead creature known as a Spectral Dead. A spectral dead is created when a soul continues to exist on the earthly plane. This is the one common aspect of all spectral dead; for one reason or another, the soul of a living being fails to go or fails to be taken to one of the rooms within Kaminari's Dungeon of the Dead.

A ghost is a perfect example to use when describing a spectral undead. Whenever I use the word ghost, assume it applies to all spectral undead unless I say specifically that it does not.

Ghostly Form

A ghost is not always visible. In the souls natural state, it is not visible, even to spells that detect invisibility. A fairy's ability to see a soul allows the fairy to see the soul in its natural form. In this form the soul appears as a puff of smoke that drifts through the air. Normal or natural physical barriers do not stop the soul. When it comes to a door, it simply passes through it. The fairies ability to see a soul does stop at real world physical objects.

When a ghost wishes to be seen, it will manifest itself on the earthly plane. Basically, all this means is that it takes on a semi transparent image that can be seen by normal sight. Most ghosts that are seen take on the appearance they had in life. Some have the ability to take on other forms and shapes, appearing as they did in life, or changing to become things of horror. Any such ability is described on the stat sheet of the spectral undead being described.

Radiate Cold

One of the indications that a ghost is in the area is that the area will feel cold. It never gets cold enough to do physical damage to a character, but it will get cold enough to be uncomfortable.

Wounding a Ghost

The spectral undead does not have wounds in the sense of a living, breathing creature. In fact, a ghost's wounds represent the ghost's connection to the Earthly Plane. This means, that you have to decrease the ghost's wound total to zero, if you want it to leave the Earthly Plane.

This is not an easy task because conventional weapons and methods are useless against a ghost. Things that work to decrease the wound total of a living being do not work against a spectral undead. The sword passes right through the ghost. You always hear the stories of a ghost walking out of a burning building or fireplace. In fact, fire, cold, electricity, all the things that can kill a person will not harm a ghost. The ghost has no flesh to harm since it is not a material object on the earthly plane.

This means that you must use non-material objects and spells to kill the ghost, and remember, when I say kill, I mean sever its connection to the Earthly Plane.

Using Weapons and Spells

Some weapons are made to wound a ghost. A sword's blade can be turned from solid to spectral. Although rare, the sword will directly damage the ghost when used against it. The problem with using such a weapon normally becomes one of keeping the ghost from leaving as you try to hack it to pieces.

You can try to use magic to kill a ghost, but again, the magic is very specific and must be magic that will affect a Spectral creature. So this again becomes something that is hard to obtain.

Banishment and Exorcism

The next alternative is banishment or exorcism. Some deities grant either one or both of these abilities to their followers. Both work by doing round to round damage to the ghost's wound total. The priest stands reading the holy book while the room explodes around him. Banishment or exorcism is not instantaneous. You are fighting the spirit and weakening its tie to the earthly plane. Do enough "damage" and it is gone.

Generally, banishment and exorcism produce the same result although their execution differs. You banish a ghost from an area. You exorcise a ghost from a living-breathing creature.

With banishment and exorcisms, the higher the priest's devotion, the greater the quicker the banishment or exorcism will be.

Possessed Characters

 The last and final solution is a tough one but does work, but to know why it works you have to understand how the ghost interacts with the Earthly Plane.

First off, remember that the ghost is a soul. It is the remains of the divine once the original vessel has died. Although the soul should have moved on it did not. For whatever reason it is still attached to the Earthly Plane.

With this in mind I will tell you now, that a Ghost's attachment to the prime material plane never heals or increases. This means that once that attachment is set, it can only weaken. It will never grow stronger.

Most spectral undead have the ability to possess a target. This is a great and terrible ability but is not without its risks for the ghost using it. When a spectral undead possesses a body, it must create a link to the earthly plane. This link is its weakness. So long as the ghost is in control of a creature, it takes the damage the creature takes. If the creature takes a five-wound hit, the ghost will suffer the same wound. As the creatures wound total decreases, so does that of the ghost.

As you can imagine, this is a dangerous weakness to exploit. Killing a ghost is possible if you keep killing off the individuals and creatures that it possesses. The rather large downside to this is that you may end up killing off some of your own group trying to ride the area of the ghost.