

ALLIES & ADVERSARIES DUNGEON DENIZENS

NOT EVERYTHING IN A dungeon wants to kill the PCs. In fact, some dungeon denizens are quite nice. Use these five strange and surprising NPCs to fill your random encounter tables or methodically insert them into your favorite dungeons. These folk see the adventurers as an opportunity to satisfy some need of their own, and they are willing to help the PCs in exchange for gold, favors, or the occasional goblin skull. While some of them may have unsavory appetites and devious minds, these denizens are more than willing to strike a deal—if it's mutually beneficial.



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RUBY

A petite woman leans against a nearby wall, hanging from her belt a strange collection of monstrous scalps. Her unnatural orange eyes glow faintly in the darkness, and she acknowledges your presence with a wink and a pout. Her slit-like pupils dart up and down, examining you—until she raises her long-nailed hand in greeting and you see her skin glint ruby-red in the dim light. She smirks as you begin to realize she's not entirely human.

Ruby is a **cambion**, a half-demon born on the Material Plane to an elven mother who had fallen in love with a deposed demon prince. Although shunned by other elves of her age, her mother showered her with love and embraced her dual nature. When Ruby came of age, her demonic father captured her mother and demanded that Ruby return with him to the Abyss and live out her days as a princess in his kingdom of chaos. She refused and now evades her fathers' divinations with powerful spells of her own. Ruby hopes to one day rescue her mother as well, but for now is only just able to evade the watchful gaze of her Abyssal father. Ruby is witty and flirtatious and has a particular fondness for dwarves.

Profit from Parts. Ruby's protective enchantments require rare components. She travels the planes looking for the lairs of strange monsters and enlists adventurers to carve up the beasts for her. In exchange, she trades information, rare spell components, and occasionally a one-way trip to the Abyss for those interested in such a passage. Ruby has collected a wealth of information over the years, including the true names of several powerful demons that work in her father's service. Ruby can cast *plane shift* on up to 8 willing targets once a day, and although it transports them to an Abyssal layer of her choice,

Ruby remains behind and unable to recall those she sends into the Abyss. Additionally, given an hour and ingredients harvested from a Type 3 or greater demon—horns, wings, claws, tongues—Ruby can create any one uncommon or rare potion of the PCs' choice.

BLACK BONES

At your feet, a bone-thin black cat purrs quietly, its small paw resting upon the bones of a long dead mouse. Its green eyes look up at you with a pitiful hunger. Its fur is nearly unblemished coal black, with only a single white diamond of fur resting on the center of its brow. It meows gently and its green eyes look to your pack as it sniffs the air.

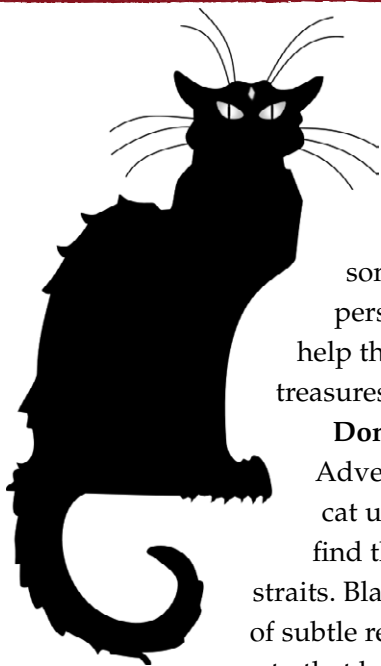
Black Bones, a scrawny black **cat**, was formerly the familiar of a powerful witch who was destroyed over a century ago while exploring the depths of the earth. Perhaps the strange energies of the dungeon realms or the magical prowess of her master have allowed Black Bones to survive so unnaturally long. Whatever the reason, she now travels the passages of the deep and hunts for scraps within the dungeons and tombs she inhabits. She has a special interest in adventurers, because they remind her of her master and they often have cheese, which Black Bones devours with a passion.

Follow Me, I Live Here. Black Bones is an unerring guide and an incredibly stealthy scout. A party that befriends the cat with playful behavior and plentiful offerings of food (especially cheese) will find her to be a constant companion who can show them safe routes to treasure and safety. Adventurers who befriend and follow Black Bones ignore the first hostile random encounter they have in a day. Black Bones herself is constantly under the effects of a *find the path* spell. She

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usually uses this ability to help adventurers find their way to a dungeon's exit, but sometimes she can be persuaded or bribed to help them find its greatest treasures or secrets.

Don't Cross a Black Cat.

Adventurers that treat the cat unkindly, however, find themselves in dire straits. Black Bones is a master of subtle revenge. No member of

a party that has offended the cat can

successfully complete a long rest, as their sleep is troubled by a distant caterwauling. Wounded groups will find that Black Bones is as adept at leading monsters to them as it is at leading them to monsters, doubling the chances of the PCs encountering wandering monsters as long as they remain in her territory without making amends.

PRINCE VELM DUCROIX

A corpulent human wearing a short cape and ill-fitting leather armor appears suddenly from the mists. His chubby fingers are decorated with gaudy rings and he presses a chalice to his lips as he approaches you. Wiping his mouth with a frilled bracer, he lets the chalice drop to the ground at his feet. A smear of blood still showing on his teeth, he smiles and performs a curt but practiced bow.

Prince Velm Ducroix is a **vampire** and makes no attempt to hide it. He once ruled a large city, but his increasingly disturbed behavior enraged his fellow vampires, and they turned upon him. He barely survived and now wanders tombs to slake his strange thirst. If the adventurers attack him without allowing him to speak, he simply escapes as a cloud of mist and never approaches them again. Thereafter he will bad-mouth them and describe their whereabouts to any intelligent undead in the dungeon he happens upon.

A Taste Today. Ducroix is an unusual vampire in that humanoid blood no longer interests him. He has developed instead a taste for the life essence of other supernatural creatures, even entirely bloodless monsters. In fact, his most recent quest to taste a mummy almost ended in his true death, a story he loves to regale adventurers with. To this end he has gossiped with liches and ghouls across the world and knows the strengths and weaknesses of countless tombs and their guardians—not to mention where they keep all the best treasure in such places. In exchange for helping him feed his hunger, Prince Ducroix will help the PCs as best he can, short of wading into combat himself.

I'm Your Thirstiest Fan! Ducroix is languid and fragile, but cheers on battles with gusto. Despite his useless demeanor, the vampire has a mesmerizing voice and an encyclopedic knowledge of ancient tombs. During battle, on his turn, Ducroix's encouragement grants Bardic Inspiration (1d8) to a creature of his choice. Additionally, his wealth of gossip on ancient tombs grants him the ability to cast *legend lore* once per day as a spell-like ability, though he refuses to use this power on an empty stomach.

SATUIEL

A small, hirsute man walks on all fours down the passageway, an immense pack strapped to his back swarming with small black rats. Upon spotting you he straightens up and wriggles out of his pack as the rats on his back scramble over the straps; a pillow-shaped mass of the creatures then carry the pack and set it down by his side. Within the pack you glimpse a wide assortment of odds and ends. The small man twirls a whisker as he beckons you over to sample his wares.

Satuiel is a **wererat** who travels the hidden passages of the world with his family of diseased but very well behaved **rats**. Satuiel's lycanthropy is a family curse that has been in place for several generations; the rats that travel with him are his extended family that have succumbed to the curse completely and can no longer return to any

kind of humanoid form. They serve him out of a remembered sense of kinship, but otherwise seem to be normal rats.

Rat Pack. Satuiel's large satchel contains more lucre than its size might suggest. Any mundane item that can be found in a small city can be found amongst Satuiel's wares, at the GM's discretion. The wererat is a simple man; gold and gems are all he asks for in exchange for his items. Satuiel has another store of items that he only sells to adventurers that treat his rats with respect and trade with him honestly. For these special customers Satuiel unpacks a roll of silvered +1 *weapons*, including a greataxe, a pair of longswords, 3 daggers, and a three bundles of 20 arrows. For these items the wererat will only accept other magical gear in trade.

Satuiel's pack is a *bag of holding* of his own design. The bag allows Small-size or smaller creatures to enter and breathe normally inside it: when closed, it contains enough air for up to ten Small creatures to breathe for up to one week. Even if Satuiel should part with it, his rats have made their home in some secret extradimensional corner of the bag, and it is impossible to remove them without destroying the bag.

Wherever He Smells Profit. Satuiel often appears near dungeon features requiring specific tools to traverse, such as pitons or a rowboat. The wererat is mischievously fond of keeping ahead of an adventuring group through secret tunnels and appearing before them multiple times whenever they encounter such a difficult dungeon feature.

ADRIAN ALEXA

A lightly armored woman with blue-green skin and sleek aquatic fins kneels by a pool of still water. The ancient breastplate she wears allows for her to move with grace despite the undersea features that adorn her physiology. A kraken with a gold crown is all that remains of the faded crest on her chest. White nictitating membranes blink sideways across her pure black eyes as she watches you approach.

Her muscles do not tense as she stands and she has a noticeably regal bearing.

Adrian Alexa is the last living mortal daughter of an ancient sea goddess. While she appears to be and often claims to be a **merfolk**, in actuality she is a demigod on a quest to awaken her own divine nature. She seeks out artifacts and tablets of knowledge dedicated to her mother's worship. In the past, she relied on a coven of sea hags to collect her mother's treasures, but they betrayed her to a sahuagin tribe dedicated to Abyssal powers. Now Adrian turns to mortal adventurers for help, as many items in her birthright are dangerous to mortals—some are cursed objects that transform humans into deformed aquatic hybrids, some are ancient writings capable of spreading a plague of madness, and others are weirder and more dangerous still.

The Favor of the Sea. Adrian Alexa has only one thing to offer those who encounter her: the favor of the sea. With a touch she can grant anyone the ability to breathe underwater, survive the crushing depths and cold of the sea, and ignore damage or harm from wave or storm. Also, while the characters have the favor of the sea, any sea creatures or aquatic monsters they encounter that wish to attack them or impede their travels must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail this save do not attack or otherwise prevent the characters from traveling.

Both of these effects last for seven days, and Adrian Alexa will gladly grant them to PCs who present her with one of her mother's lost treasures or who convince her they have need of such protection to acquire one of her lost heirlooms. Characters who choose to betray Adrian and either steal the artifacts or refuse to turn them over to her will find her strangely calm. Instead of raging, the demigod will simply dismiss the characters and find other adventurers willing to steal the objects back for her collection. Beyond the favor of the sea, some ambitious adventurers may see the potential value of helping a demigod become a god in her own right. 