

ABOUT THIS BOOK

INTRODUCTION

The flexibility and detail of the SRD rules allows players and GMs to create any characters they want, but creating those characters can be labor-intensive — not the sort of thing to be attempted on the fly in the middle of a game session.

That's where *Uncommon Character* comes in. Here you will find three dozen pre-generated characters, ready to be used in several different ways.

AS-IS NPCs

First, the characters presented here can be used exactly as written, as NPCs to play parts as opponents, allies, and acquaintances in the affairs of the player characters. When planning an adventure, the GM can flip through the characters here, looking for an NPC of a particular race, class, or level, or an interesting adventure seed, or someone whose personality would be an excellent foil for the predominant style of the player characters. None of the character backgrounds are linked to a published setting, making it easy to swap elements and integrate the NPCs into any campaign — with the change of a single word, Othon III, exiled duke of Penault (page 40), becomes the exiled ruler of whatever duchy the GM needs.

READY-MADE PCs

The characters here can also be pressed into service as PCs when a new player doesn't have time to create a character before a game session, or to replace a PC who dies during an adventure. If an NPC from this book is already playing a role in the campaign, the GM can simply assign the character to the player. Not all NPCs in this book are suitable for player use, though. Duig Lacidem (page 24), for example, has a magic weapon far out of keeping with his level. A player ignoring Duig's history and personality might be tempted to simply sell the item and live a long, happy life off the proceeds.

GENERIC NPCs

In a pinch, the stat blocks of the characters here can be used for other NPCs of the same type. Need stats

for a 6th-level dwarf fighter? Murgo Pouchgut's (page 75) will do.

Of course, not every NPC in *Uncommon Character* is likely to be useful in this way. Most of the characters in this book are designed to be quirky, different, and unique; they're not average examples of their race or class. Which is great for their intended purpose, but how many campaigns need more than one nixie paladin like Aquef, Protector of the Conch-Tar (page 4)?

IDEA MINING

A fourth way to use the NPCs in *Uncommon Character* is for the GM to read through them looking for inspiration. Events and characters mentioned in the background of these NPCs can become adventures or NPCs of their own — adventures that need not involve the NPC they're originally found with. For example, a GM can stat-up the mad cleric Knarf as a genocidal villain in the campaign without reference to Ruktar "Skull Crusher" (page 114) if the hobgoblin isn't of interest.

CONNECTIONS

Connections can be made between *Uncommon Character* and other Penumbra books. Slygette's orc tribe (page 117) could easily be substituted for one of those in the adventure sourcebook *Splintered Peace*, as described in her adventure seeds. Or a GM might decide that Balur Drodash, the duergar hiresword (page 44) was so affected by his encounter with the dwarven creator god that he became a mystic, a class described in the adventure *Unhallowed Halls*.

In the few cases where a cross-reference to another Penumbra title has been made explicit, the link is either minor and easily broken (Aurelia Aeydale's spell list (page 8) contains a single spell found in the *Penumbra Fantasy Bestiary*) or involves offstage entities (the Forge is a group detailed in *Touched By The Gods*, of which Bezmurn the Befuddled (page 47) is a member) which can be ignored without major consequence if the GM doesn't have that particular book.



AQUEL



**2nd-Level Nixie Expert (Shellsmith)/
5th-Level Paladin**

CR 6; SZ S (fey); HD 2d6+2, 5d10+5; hp 44; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 15 ft., Swim 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor); AC 19 (+4 shell armor, +4 Dex, +1 size); Atk melee +13/+8 (1d6+1/x3, +2d6 vs. chaotic, +1 lawful light lance) or +13/+8 (1d4+2/crit 19-20/x3, +2 dagger), ranged +11 (1d8/crit 19-20/x2, light crossbow); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA *Charm Person*, *Smite Evil* 1/day (+4 attack/+5 damage), Spells, Turn Undead 7/day; SQ Aura of Courage, *Detect Evil*, Divine Grace, Divine Health, *Lay on Hands* (20 hp/day), Nixie Traits, *Remove Disease* 1/week, SR 16, *Water Breathing*; AL LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 18

Skills: Animal Empathy +9, Craft (shellsmithing) +10, Handle Animal +13, Heal +6, Hide +15 (+16 underwater), Listen +8, Perform (dance, melody, storytelling) +7, Ride +9, Search +3, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8, Swim +12

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Craft: Shellsmithing), Weapon Finesse (dagger), Weapon Finesse (light lance), Weapon Focus (light lance)

Languages: Common, Aquan, Sylvan

Aura of Courage (Su): Aquel is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within ten feet of him gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

Charm Person (Sp): Can cast *charm person* three times per day as a 4th-level sorcerer (save DC 15, duration 24 hours).

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Aquel can detect evil; this ability duplicates the effects of the spell *detect evil*.

Divine Grace: Aquel applies his Charisma modifier (+4) as a bonus to all saving throws.

Divine Health: Aquel is immune to all diseases, including magical diseases.

Lay on Hands (Sp): Each day Aquel can cure a total of 20 hit points as a standard action. He can cure himself or may choose to divide his curing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Alternatively, Aquel can use any or all of these points to deal damage to undead creatures like a touch spell.

“Aquel is unswervingly loyal to his tribe and goddess, putting both before any friendship.”

VALOROUS CHARACTERS

Aquel decides how many cure points to use as damage after successfully touching the undead creature.

Nixie Traits: Aquel can breathe water indefinitely, and has a +12 racial bonus to all swim checks (included above). While underwater, he receives a +5 racial bonus to all Hide checks. On land he can only breathe air for a few minutes, and suffers a -2 penalty to his Dexterity. He has Low-Light Vision that lets him see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, underwater, or in similar conditions of poor illumination.

Remove Disease (Sp): Aquel can remove disease, as per the spell *remove disease*, once per week.

Smite Evil (Su): Once per day, Aquel may attempt to Smite Evil with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma modifier (+4) to his attack roll and deals 5 extra points of damage. If he accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect but it is still used up for that day.

Turn Undead (Su): Aquel may use this ability seven times per day. He turns undead as a 3rd-level cleric would.

Water Breathing (Sp): Can cast *water breathing* once per day as a 6th-level sorcerer.

Paladin Spells (1; Base DC = 12 + spell level)

Aquel can cast one 1st-level paladin spell per day with a caster level of 2.

1st Level — *magic weapon*

Possessions: +1 lawful light lance, +2 dagger, conch horn of goodness, masterwork shell mail

BACKGROUND

Aquel had a childhood typical of the nixies of the Conch-tar tribe, frolicking among the weed beds of a voluminous lake and chasing the local fauna. When he was of age, he became an apprentice shellsmith, learning to craft mundane tools and to create shell mail armor for nixie warriors.

Like most nixie tribes, the Conch-tar's deity, the goddess Limna, chooses a divine protector for paladinhood. This protector serves the nixie leader loyally and often leads the tribe's warriors. In addition to tribal clerics, the paladin also serves as a spiritual leader and Limna's eyes into her children's affairs.

When the tribe's previous protector met an untimely end at the hands of an aquatic ogre that seized con-

trol of the tribe's rich freshwater oyster bed (the tribe's source of food, shells for mundane equipment, and occasionally fine pearls), Limna contacted Aquel in his dreams, calling him to the paladinhood. At first, Aquel ignored the call, preferring his secure existence as a shellsmith. When the aquatic ogre raided the tribe's algae beds, Aquel could no longer pretend indifference.

Wise enough to realize that he and the Conch-tar couldn't overcome the ogre, Aquel sought a new oyster bed for the tribe to colonize. A multi-day search led to a spectacular oyster bed safely hidden within a weed forest. Spotting an immense pearl in a huge oyster, Aquel thrust his arm in to retrieve it, and he became stuck in the giant bivalve. After an hours-long struggle, Aquel won free by relaxing, which prompted the oyster to relax. He then wedged a rock in the oyster's hinged maw and plucked the treasure free easily. After his escape, the rock tumbled into the oyster, taking the pearl's place.

Upon his triumphant return to the colony, Aquel dedicated the pearl in Limna's name and assumed his role as protector. He received the accouterments of his new office, including the tribe's magical conch horn. Days later he led the tribe to the new oyster bed, only to find the giant oyster contained a new pearl in its center; the ordeal had been a test and lesson from the goddess, teaching Aquel that strength does not overcome all obstacles, and teaching the tribe how to artificially produce pearls to ensure its wealth.

Over the next several years, the Conch-tar tribe flourished in its new location. Aquel the protector remained busy defending the hidden oyster bed from aquatic hobgoblins and other menaces. Aquel tried several times to defeat the aquatic ogre, but each time barely escaped with his life.

Recently, Limna rewarded Aquel with a divine mount, a giant eel. She summoned the nixie paladin to a deep cave known to be a breeding ground for the eels. Without weapons, he delved into the cave and selected a prime specimen. He wrestled the eel for several hours before it tired and allowed him to tame it. Aquel fed the beast and taught it to respond to his commands. To facilitate riding, Aquel had a sharkskin saddle constructed; the immense pearl mounted in its pommel.

NEW DEITY: LIMNA, LADY OF THE WAVES

Symbol: Seaweed-wrapped cresting wave

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Good, Protection, Water

Typical Worshipers: Nixies

