

The Beast Within

A RAVENLOFT® adventure for the
ADVENTURER'S GUILD™ Retail Play Program

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Inside every human heart is a ravenous beast, the people of Villebois say. If people do not keep their emotions in check, tightly under control, then they run the risk of becoming wild animals—not just metaphorically, but quite literally . . . or at least that seems to be the case in Villebois. Every inhabitant can name no less than eight villagers who have succumbed to their inner beast in the last three years: unfortunates who had to be executed to prevent them from ravaging the village. And that doesn't count the travelers—strangers from other towns or other lands. Too often, these “hot-tempered, passionate strangers” begin preying on the people of Villebois the very night of their arrival, and they too must be executed to protect the safety of the village.

Indeed, Villebois labors under a lycanthropic curse, but the nature of the curse is not what the villagers believe. Only one lycanthrope, a loup du noir, has fed upon the townspeople in the last three years, but he has always managed to find a scapegoat, either a villager convinced of his own guilt or a hapless stranger unable to offer a believable alibi. This werewolf is the mayor of Villebois, Charles de Tantoine.

One evening, in the cold of Dementlieu's late autumn, a group of adventurers—the PCs—approaches Villebois. They enter the village and fall under the suspicious gaze of the villagers. As has happened so often in the past, the arrival of strangers in the village signals the start of another rash of killings, and the PCs are arrested under suspicion of lycanthropy. They find an unlikely ally in another lycanthrope, the werewolf Tomas Drekezhnyi, who hopes to find the real killer before he himself falls under suspicion and his true nature is discovered. While avoiding the vigilante justice of the villagers, the PCs must piece the evidence together until they can unmask Charles de Tantoine as the monster he truly is.

The text that follows places Villebois in the domain of Dementlieu. The PCs should be a small, balanced party of low level (4 to 6). The adventure begins as the heroes travel through the region in the late autumn cold.

Scene One

Read the following text to the players:

As the sun sinks into late afternoon, the shadows of the forest around you lengthen and darken your way. Night comes early in this land. The path ahead already starts to disappear into the darkness. As the light falters, your eyes begin to play tricks on you, seeing movement in every shadow, shapes flitting at the edges of your vision, beasts of your imagination hulking in the gathering darkness.

A cold fall breeze bites into your faces, carrying a stench of blood to your nostrils. Far ahead, in the shadows just off the path, you can just make out a dark shape swinging from a tree branch. The wood softly creaks as the thing swings slowly back and forth in the wind.

If the PCs decide to investigate, or simply continue along the path, read the following text:

A closer look reveals the swinging shape to be nothing more than a deer hung up for the blood to drain out. It looks like a

fairly fresh kill; you must be approaching something like civilization.

Let the players breathe for only a second, then call for surprise rolls with a –2 penalty as a huge wolf leaps on them from the dark woods. If any PC is surprised, that character (or one of them, determined randomly) becomes the target of the wolf's attack; otherwise, choose the PC with the worst Armor Class. The wolf attacks once, at the end of its leap, and then flees back into the forest.

The wolf is Charles de Tantoine, mayor of Villebois, in his animal aspect. He welcomes strangers to his village, since they provide an easy scapegoat, allowing him freely to hunt his preferred prey—the villagers. His aim in this encounter is to terrify the PCs, inflict enough damage to raise the specter of lycanthropic infection, and escape with the deer carcass. His resistance to most weapons, his low AC, and his high movement rate should be enough to ensure his survival at this point.

If Charles hits his target, roll a d12 along with the damage roll. On a 7 or better (5 or better if the PC is size S), the PC is knocked to the ground. Read the following text to that player:

The wolf's fangs dig into your shoulder, and its weight forces you to the ground. For an instant the beast pauses, its huge paws pinning you to the ground, your own blood dripping from its slaving maw. Its eyes meet yours, and the evil intelligence you see there fills your heart with dread. Then it leaps again, yanking the deer carcass from the tree branch and bounding back into the forest.

If the PC does not respond appropriately, you may wish to force a fear check.

Even if the wolf does not succeed in knocking the character to the ground, you should describe the wolf's bite in unsettling detail:

The wolf's fangs dig into your shoulder, and its weight forces you backward, nearly knocking you off your feet. For an instant the beast pauses, your own blood dripping from its slaving maw. It glares at you, its eyes meeting yours, and the evil intelligence you see there fills your heart with dread. Then it leaps again, yanking the deer carcass from the tree branch and bounding back into the forest.

If the wolf's attack is not successful, the beast is still uncomfortably close:

The creature's hot breath hits you full in the face, though its teeth fall short of your flesh. Its body crashes into you, its weight nearly knocking you off your feet. For an instant the beast pauses. It glares at you, its eyes meeting yours, and the evil intelligence you see there fills your heart with dread. Then it leaps again, yanking the deer carcass from the tree branch and bounding back into the forest.

If necessary, de Tantoine will abandon the deer carcass to make his escape. The werewolf's statistics are presented in full at the end of the adventure text.

Scene Two

As the sun finishes its descent, the road on which the PCs are traveling winds its way through land progressively more populated: cleared and tilled fields, farm houses, and finally the crossroads which form the center of Villebois. Read the following text to the players as the PCs enter the village:

With night falling, the people of this sleepy village seem to be turning in: You notice doors being closed and barred, windows shuttered, and lamps extinguished. You also smell the food cooking on the hearths of these small homes, and your stomachs begin churning in hopeful anticipation of a real cooked meal—it could be your first in days.

The characters quickly discover that Villebois boasts no inn, and they soon notice as well that suspicious eyes watch them from behind every set of shutters in the village. If the PCs knock on any doors, they receive no answer, though sounds from within the tiny buildings reveal what is going on: Children begin to cry while parents hush them, fearful voices whisper, “They’ll go away if we ignore them,” and dogs bark ferociously in defense of their homes. The folk of Villebois know all too well what often happens when strangers come to town: people die.

If the PCs cause any trouble with the townsfolk, or when the players begin to show signs of frustration, a town soldier named Jacques D’Orean accosts them. Read the following text:

“The citizens of Villebois don’t like strangers, as a rule.” The voice comes from the darkness beside a nearby home. As you look in that direction, a tall man steps from the shadows and into the fading light. He wears a burnished breastplate with a fantastic white ruff surrounding his neck. His moustache and beard are almost ridiculously pointed, but he really drives his point home by leveling a musket upon you, obviously ready to fire if given cause. “Most are afraid, but some are just careful, like myself. Now why don’t you tell me who you are and what you’re doing here.”

Jacques does not hesitate to fire on the PCs if they cause trouble, but he is equally willing to listen to them. More importantly, if they can convince him of their innocent intentions, he allows them to stay in the tiny shed behind his house. Before doing so, he must be satisfied that the PCs have given him forthright and honest answers about their identities, their destination, and their purpose. If he senses any deception in them at all, he advises them to leave town at once . . . and be careful of beasts in the forest.

Jacques D’Orean: INT Very (12); AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; Fighter 3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (matchlock caliver) or 1d6+1 (rapier); SA caliver does cumulative damage on roll of 8 and ignores armor at short range; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13.

The shed behind Jacques’s home is small but offers sufficient shelter for the party from the cold night wind and any creatures that may be lurking about. Jacques helps them get

settled in the shed, brings blankets from the house, and even offers them a rich, thick stew to warm their bones and help them sleep. The PCs may notice the white faces of Jacques’ wife and three small children peering out the windows of the main house while Jacques walks between the two buildings—they are obviously as nervous as the rest of the townspeople about having strangers in the village.

Jacques is not willing to talk much about Villebois. The PCs are likely to ply him with a barrage of questions, which he answers curtly if at all. He shows absolutely no emotion during all the PCs’ interaction with him. Some likely questions and Jacques’s answers are listed below.

- **“Why are the people so afraid of strangers?”** “Bad things tend to happen when strangers come to town.”
- **“What sort of bad things?”** “To speak of evil is to invite it in for supper.” (He glances uneasily at the stew he is handing to a PC.)
- **“Who’s in charge here?”** “Mayor Charles de Tantoine.”
- **“What’s he like?”** “He’s the perfect example of all he teaches.”
- **“What does he teach?”** “That mastery of the emotions is the only way to control the Beast within.”
- **Any request for more detail:** (With a sigh:) “It’s time for bed. Sleep well. If you remember nothing else while you remain in Villebois, remember to keep a tight leash on your passions.”

Scene Three

In this brief scene, the PC who was attacked by the werewolf in Scene One experiences a nightmare. The PC’s nightmare tonight and on subsequent nights (see Scene Seven) is the result of Charles de Tantoine casting a *neverending nightmares* spell on the character he attacked in the woods. (For the sake of the story, you may assume that the character failed the saving throw, or you may roll the saving throw for the player. Remember that de Tantoine is a specialist enchanter, so the PC suffers a –1 penalty to the roll. If the saving throw is successful, ignore this scene, but roll the save again each night as de Tantoine makes repeated attempts to infiltrate the PCs’ dreams.) Because the spell was cast so soon after the encounter with the wolf, the beast figures prominently in the PC’s nightmares.

Like most dreams, the nightmare fades quickly from the PC’s memory, so describe only fleeting images. Pass a note to the player with only a few words on it: “hot breath, evil eyes, burning poison, blood everywhere.” While the player is reading the note, quickly read the following text to the players:

A wolf howl—no, a scream pierces the night air. You wake up sweating, looking around in the darkness. Your companion is on his feet, his eyes wide open in fear, apparently from a bad dream.

If necessary, explain to the player that all his character remembers of his nightmare are the images in the note. If the PCs decide to explore or patrol the village, everything seems perfectly normal, and they find no sign of a wolf.

Scene Four

When the PCs awaken the next morning, they immediately become aware of a hubbub nearby. The entire population of the village is gathered in the center square. When the PCs arrive on the scene, read the following text:

There can't be more than a hundred people in Villebois, but it looks like they're probably all here right now, and the square is quite crowded. As they see you, they stare suspiciously and keep their distance, but their attention is directed toward the center of the square. A row of stocks are set up on a small stage there. A wiry man is held in one, his head and hands protruding from the holes in the heavy timber. As you watch, six other townspeople walk from the crowd up on to the stage, where a man in a black hood fastens the stocks around each one. When all seven are fastened in, the hooded man produces a gleaming silver dagger and positions himself behind the wiry prisoner. At the same time, another man steps up to a wooden podium erected in front of the stage and begins to speak. He is the picture of stylish elegance, by the standards of Dementlieu, with a black top hat and short black cape, a wide ruff around his neck, a waxed moustache, and a gold-headed walking stick.

"Once again the Beast has emerged in our village," the stylish man begins. As he speaks, the first prisoner in the stocks grimaces silently, in obvious pain as the hooded figure works his craft. "Blood has been shed once more, because another human heart has succumbed to the passions of the Beast." The black-hooded man moves behind the second prisoner, a big, muscular fellow who could be a blacksmith. "Good people, do you not know the cause of this malady? Have I failed in my duty as mayor? Have I not taught you the means to control the Beast within you?" As if on cue, the burly smith cries out in agony. "Control!" the mayor shouts in answer, turning toward the smith. Wagging his walking stick in the direction of the stocks, he continues in a softer voice: "You must keep those passions under control. Even pain must be subdued, kept on a tight leash to control the Beast within."

The PCs might well interrupt before Charles de Tointoie reaches this point in his diatribe; otherwise, he continues in much the same vein for some time, while the torturer works his way down the line of "prisoners." In truth, these seven men and women have willingly volunteered for this public display in order to prove that they are innocent of the murder committed the previous night. The torture is not extreme, but the townspeople believe that severe pain, inflicted with a silver dagger of course, will force a lycanthrope to transform.

Soon, Charles spots the PCs in the crowd and turns his attention to them, making them the target of his speech. "You outsiders have not learned to leash the Beast. You vent your emotions to suit your whims and fancies, ignorant of the deadly consequences. Was it one of you who stalked the streets last night? Did you wet the fangs of the Beast with that poor man's blood?" If his words alone do not provoke the PCs to make a scene, he subtly weaves a *taunt* spell into his harangue, forcing them to roll saving throws vs. spells at -1 or attempt to attack him. (The slug he surreptitiously hurls in their direction as the spell's material component might tip them off to what's actually going on, especially if a PC who

makes his saving throw can also make a spellcraft proficiency check—but knowing what's happening does not inhibit the spell's effectiveness.)

If the PCs do attack or cause any kind of scene, they are immediately surrounded by a dozen armed soldiers. Whether they fight or surrender, Charles uses their outburst as evidence of their guilt. "Take them to the jail! There they shall learn to keep the Beast under control. Clearly, poor Jacques's fatal flaw was his hospitality—may he rest in peace." He assists his soldiers, if necessary, with his spells, but flees if his life is threatened.

Soldiers (12): INT Average (9–10); AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; Fighter 1; hp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; THACO 20; #AT 1/2 or 1; Dmg 1d8 (matchlock caliver) or 1d6+1 (rapier); SA caliver does cumulative damage on roll of 8 and ignores armor at short range; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 11.

The mayor's statistics are presented in full at the end of the adventure text.

If the PCs submit to arrest or are defeated, proceed with Scene Five, below. If they escape arrest, Tomas Drekezhnyi finds them a little later. He hurries them into hiding in the woods, if they have not already made their way there, and the adventure continues with Scene Six.

Scene Five

Upon their arrest, the PCs are brought to the tiny village jail, located just down the street from the center square. Read the players this description:

For such a small village, Villebois has a strong jail. The door is thick, solid oak, reinforced with iron, and the bars on the windows look equally formidable. Inside, it's a simple but effective arrangement: a wall of iron bars makes half the building into a single large cell, devoid of furnishing. The other half contains a chair, which must be for the jailer, and a long, empty table.

The soldiers push the PCs into the cell, and their leader turns a great key in the door's lock. Then he pulls the chair over and sits down just out of reach, sizing the PCs up. Two soldiers take up positions on either side of the entrance, while the rest file out.

The guard captain, Marcel Rameau, has the job of warming the suspects up for their interrogation by the mayor himself. He begins with routine questions: "What is your name?" "Where are you from?" "Where are you traveling?" "Why did you stop in Villebois?" Once he's run out of these, he moves to more provocative questions: "How many of you are lycanthropes?" "How long have you been lycanthropes?" "How many times have you transfigured into your bestial form?" "How many people have you killed in your bestial form?" And, pointedly, "Are you bothered by nightmares?" He completely ignores the PCs' answers to all his questions, sometimes even cutting them off in mid-answer to ask his next question. At no time does he show the least emotion or excitement, carrying on his questioning as if he were playing a riddle game. His real purpose is simply to anger and frustrate the PCs, hoping that they will provide ample

evidence of their own guilt by unleashing their passions. If they do express violent emotion, Marcel simply cocks an eyebrow and watches impassively, observing whether the PCs are about to undergo a physical transformation.

When he has run out of questions, Marcel stands abruptly, informs the PCs, “The mayor will question you shortly, with his assistant,” and leaves the building, taking the two soldiers at the door out with him. The PCs have ample opportunity to plan their own escape, should they so desire. A successful bend bars roll will open the bars enough to allow the PCs to squeeze through, or an open locks roll at –10% will allow a thief to open the cell door. The outer door to the jail is not locked, but two soldiers are still standing guard outside. They sound an alarm if given a chance, but it takes three rounds for anyone to respond to their call.

Soldiers (2): INT Average (9–10); AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; Fighter 1; hp 5, 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1/2 or 1; Dmg 1d8 (matchlock caliver) or 1d6+1 (rapier); SA caliver does cumulative damage on roll of 8 and ignores armor at short range; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 11.

If the PCs do manage to escape on their own, Tomas Drekezhnyi still seeks them out, finding them wherever they may hide by tracking them in his animal aspect. He hurries them into hiding in the woods, if they have not already made their way there, and the adventure continues with Scene Six.

If the PCs do not attempt to escape, they sit in their cell for about half an hour. Then Tomas Drekezhnyi, a werebear and a member of the village soldiery, comes and rescues them himself. He kills the two guards at the door, and uses his own key to open the PCs’ cell. Read this description to the players:

From the sounds of quiet conversation drifting in the window, you gather that there are still guards standing outside the jail door. But now you hear a dull thump and a throaty growl, and the conversation stops. A long moment passes in silence, then the jail door swings open. Standing in the doorway is a remarkably tall man—he must be nearly 7’. Thick brown hair streams from his head over his muscular shoulders. He wears a metal breastplate over a leather coat, a high-crowned helmet, and a saber at his belt. Like most of the men in this region, he has tried to wax his beard into a short point, but his thick curly hair seems to resist any attempt at controlling it. He smiles grimly at you, then pulls a key ring from his belt and approaches the cell door.

If the PCs try to talk to Tomas, he hushes them and hurries them out of the jail and into the nearby woods. He gives them his name but little more until they are safely away from the village. As the PCs follow Tomas into the woods, allow each PC a Wisdom check to notice the bodies of the two guards clumsily concealed under a leafy branch.

Scene Six

Tomas helps the PCs because he wants their help. He knows that the mayor’s teachings are false: he is obviously aware that unrestrained passions do not cause lycanthropy. Therefore, he believes (correctly) that someone has been scapegoating the many people who have been executed for

lycanthropy over the years. His greatest fear is that if things continue as they are, suspicion will eventually fall on him and his lycanthropy will be discovered. He has not put any effort into investigating the situation, however, preferring to lay low and let someone else do the heroic work.

Tomas reveals little of this to the PCs, of course. No one knows that he is a werebear, and he wants to keep it that way. He shares his suspicions with the PCs, and implores them to find the true lycanthrope “before more innocents suffer.” He can also fill in the PCs’ knowledge of past events in the village, as he understands them.

At the time that de Tantoine arrived in Villebois, a pair of werewolves had been menacing the village. De Tantoine quickly hunted down the alleged culprits: two villagers who confessed to lycanthropy and were promptly burned at the stake. De Tantoine was hailed as a hero and immediately elevated to the position of mayor (vacated during the werewolf attacks).

De Tantoine began teaching the villagers his misguided ideas about lycanthropy immediately after he assumed the mayoral post. The villagers adopted these teachings readily and started striving to rein in their emotions at all costs. In the three years that de Tantoine has been mayor, 14 lycanthropes (eight villagers and six strangers) have confessed to murder and been executed in Villebois. The village has suffered deeply under the predations of these alleged lycanthropes—its population now is roughly half what it was three years ago. Still, de Tantoine is almost universally respected and admired, and he is credited with bringing all 14 lycanthropes to justice.

While the PCs are talking with Tomas, an angry mob is forming in Villebois’ village square. The PCs—whether they avoided arrest at the outset or escaped from the jail—are now outlaws, believed to be dangerous lycanthropic killers. Whenever the conversation with Tomas begins to drag or wind down, read the following description to the players:

Tomas falls silent, and his eyes lose focus as if he’s staring at something very far away. After a moment, he seems to snap back to reality, and he hisses, “Listen!” The forest is eerily silent.

Being a lycanthrope, Tomas is blessed with very keen senses. He not only hears the baying dogs and distant shouts of the mob but also smells their torches. A thief who makes a successful detect noise roll, or a character with exceptionally keen hearing (at your discretion), can also hear the sounds of the mob before the other PCs. Long before the other characters can make out any sound at all, Tomas is urging them to move, to flee more deeply into the forest. Unless the PCs offer a better suggestion, Tomas plans to separate from the PCs, circle around behind the mob and try to lead them in the wrong direction.

Scene Seven

The PCs are being chased by an angry mob of villagers armed with dogs, torches, and pitchforks with silver-coated tines. Less heroic individuals would simply flee the area and never look back. Instead, the PCs face the daunting task of uncovering the true lycanthrope while avoiding a mob

convinced they are the killers. And their only ally in the village is another werebeast!

This scene and the resolution of the adventure depend heavily on the PCs' own initiative. The pieces of the puzzle are in place, but it falls entirely to the PCs to assemble them and find a way to bring Charles de Tantoine to justice. Rather than describing the course of events, which will depend on the PCs' actions, the following paragraphs simply flesh out the puzzle pieces, offering additional information and suggestions for how the resolution might come about.

The Angry Mob

Unless the PCs actually seek a confrontation with the mob, it is best encountered from a distance—angry shouts, flickering torches seen through the trees, the baying of dogs . . . and if they get close enough, the glint of silver on the tips of pitchforks. If the mob catches the PCs, no amount of rhetoric (without magical aid) or even hard evidence will convince even a single member of the mob that the PCs are innocent.

The mob should be a constant presence in the remainder of the adventure. If the PCs stay in any one place for too long, the mob finds them there and forces them to keep moving. The presence of the mob should make the players feel rushed, as if they are racing against time to find the werebeast before the mob finds them.

The mob consists of roughly 40 men, ages 16 and up, as well as a handful of women. Most just carry torches; some are holding dogs and only a few have pitchforks dipped in silver. Almost all are 0-level humans, but a few members of the city soldiery have joined the mob as well. Any wanton act of violence against the mob (such as a *cloudkill* spell) is cause for a Powers check, with at least a 2% chance of failure.

Average mob member: INT Average (9–10); AL LN (G); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1–6 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (pitchfork 1d6, torch 1d4+1); SZ M; ML 9.

Soldier: INT Average (9–10); AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; Fighter 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1/2 or 1; Dmg 1d8 (matchlock caliver) or 1d6+1 (rapier); SA caliver does cumulative damage on roll of 8 and ignores armor at short range; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 11.

Dog: INT Semi- (2–4); AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 8–10.

Tomas Drekezhnyi

Tomas is something of a loose cannon in this final scene. He wants to help the PCs, but he desperately clings to the façade of normal human life that he has maintained for so many years in Villebois. He tries to avoid being identified by the mob as an ally of the PCs and does not willingly change to his animal or hybrid aspect. However, the possibility exists that he could be forced into a transfiguration if he is injured in battle. As described in *Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts* and *Children of the Night: Werebeasts*, if Tomas is reduced below 50% of his hit points in his human form, he must make a saving throw vs. polymorph at –2 or succumb to bloodlust, immediately changing to his hybrid aspect and attacking every living thing in sight.

It is possible that the PCs may become suspicious of Tomas in the course of their investigation. Aside from his physical characteristics, which do suggest his bestial nature, his behavior during the adventure might also raise some questions in the PCs' minds. If they investigate him at all, they might turn up some facts which cast further doubt on his real nature. As a true lycanthrope, he must feed daily, requiring about 50 pounds of fresh meat a day. At dire risk to himself, he leaves Villebois late every night to hunt deer and rabbits in the woods. Also suspicious is the fact that he lives alone, despite a plentiful selection of marriageable young women in the village—this is certainly a topic of much gossip among the villagers, which the PCs might overhear if they can avoid detection. He is also one of only two inhabitants of Villebois who was not born and raised in the village, the other being Charles de Tantoine. Folks speculate openly about his past in Falkovnia, but no one knows anything for certain.

Tomas will never freely admit to being a lycanthrope. If the PCs discover the truth, he protests his innocence of the killings and, if necessary, attempts to flee the village. If the PCs capture or kill him, this rash of killings does stop, and the PCs are exonerated of the charges against them—Charles has found a suitable scapegoat. However, once Tomas has been executed and the PCs have gone on their way, the bloodlust wells up again in the mayor's bestial heart and the cycle begins all over again.

Tomas' statistics are presented in full at the end of the adventure text.

The Bitten PC

The PC who was attacked by the wolf in the woods (whether or not that character actually suffered damage from the attack) continues to face some uncertainty during the remainder of the adventure. If the PCs sleep at any time (despite the pursuing mob), the character continues having very disturbing nightmares (thanks to de Tantoine's *neverending nightmares* spell—see Scene Three). Images of blood and gore become dominant themes in these nightmares, and the PC is unable to get a restful night's sleep. Though there is no clear evidence to suggest it, the PC should at least wonder whether he might have been infected with lycanthropy by the wolf. If the PC talks freely about his nightmares, his companions may begin to suspect him as well.

Beyond the initial *neverending nightmares* spell, Charles de Tantoine finds that, as a rule, he needs to do very little to encourage these sorts of suspicions in his intended scapegoats. The nagging nightmares take a heavy emotional toll on the affected character. When the moment of accusation arrives, Charles simply uses a *suggestion* spell: "You are the lycanthrope that has been terrorizing the village!" and his victims offer a convenient confession. Because of the nightmares, the saving throw against this suggestion is made with an additional –2 penalty.

Charles de Tantoine

The mayor of Villebois is, naturally, the key piece in this final puzzle. There is abundant evidence pointing to him, but (as Dr. Van Richten has pointed out) people have a very strong tendency to overlook even obvious evidence when it would prove inconvenient, embarrassing, or horrifying. Recognizing

the beloved village mayor, renowned as a lycanthrope hunter, as a werebeast himself would certainly be all three of those things.

However, the PCs have no such emotional investment in the mayor's innocence. The facts relayed by Tomas Drekezhnyi in Scene Six could already be enough to point to de Tantoine as the lycanthrope. Beyond his direct actions involving the PCs, several lines of evidence point to him. Among other ways, the PCs can discover this by questioning Tomas, or even by capturing a member of the mob (perhaps in an attempt to reason with him or her).

The Victims

The previous mayor of Villebois was one of the first victims of lycanthropic attack, conveniently leaving the position vacant for de Tantoine. Since that time, political opponents of the mayor have always been among the victims of the werebeast.

Personal Habits

Every member of the village council knows that the mayor is not to be disturbed before noon. He is cursed with insomnia, they believe, and often sleeps until late in the morning after a sleepless night. His compulsive hand-washing is also well-known by those who deal with him on a daily basis.

Lairs

De Tantoine's house in the village is of course his primary lair. In every way it befits a gentleman of his station: It is a spacious mansion adorned with the finest art and decoration. One room, however, stands out from the rest. While most of the house is furnished with the utmost taste and subtlety, a small sitting-room near the master bedroom is almost garish in its adornment. A wolf pelt (*the* wolf pelt) hangs above a fireplace in this room, opposite a large, vividly colored painting of a fox hunt. A deer head is mounted above the entrance, and an exotic white bear skin serves as a rug. Small statues line the mantle, each depicting a scene of combat or killing—a warrior locked in battle with a minotaur, a hawk with a rabbit in its talons, two men fighting with swords, a wolf pack bringing down a deer.

De Tantoine also has a favorite spot in the woods outside the village, a secondary lair which he uses in his bestial aspect. It is a small cave in a rocky outcropping, barely big enough for him to turn around in. He often, though not always, brings his kills here to eat, and the interior of the cave is filthy with the remains of his victims: tatters of cloth, trinkets of jewelry, and bones. There is nothing in the cave or the area to identify de Tantoine, but a skilled tracker could follow the werewolf's trail between the wilderness lair and de Tantoine's house. A tracking proficiency check must be made, with a -5 penalty because de Tantoine always takes care to transfigure into his human aspect in a place where his tracks will not easily be found, or will be lost among other human tracks.

None of this evidence is incontrovertible, and even taken as a whole it will not convince anyone in Villebois (with the exception of Tomas Drekezhnyi) of the mayor's guilt. The only irrefutable proof that de Tantoine is a werewolf is witnessing his transfiguration. Naturally, he will try everything in his power to avoid transforming in front of a

witness, including exhausting his full complement of spells in self-defense. If he finds his life in serious danger, however, he flees to his sitting-room (if possible) and dons the wolf skin. The ensuing battle should be fast and furious, as suggested in *Children of the Night: Werebeasts*. Force the players to declare their PCs' actions quickly, and keep the combat moving at breakneck speed. The battle can only end with de Tantoine's death or the elimination of the PCs.

The mayor's statistics are presented in full at the end of the adventure text.

Conclusions

Unless Charles de Tantoine transfigures to or from his wolf form in full view of the angry mob or another sizeable group of villagers, the mob will continue hunting the PCs, adding murder of their mayor to the list of crimes for which the PCs must pay. If the villagers do witness his transformation, they fall into stunned silence. It will take days, in some cases weeks, for the folk of Villebois to make sense of the events of the last 3 years—particularly since the people have become accustomed to stifling their emotions. The PCs have earned their respect, but the people are not forthcoming with expressions of gratitude—they are too much in shock. Still, the heroes find much more hospitality than when they first arrived.

Over the course of the next month or so, life slowly begins to return to normal in Villebois. Children are heard to laugh, once in a while, and—perhaps most important—the people begin to grieve for the many dead. With the tears comes anger, and after the anger, some measure of healing.

Charles de Tantoine

7th-Level Loup du Noir Enchanter, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	6 (3)	Str	9
Movement	12 (15)	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	7 (6+3)	Con	10
Hit Points	15 (27)	Int	17
THAC0	18 (13)	Wis	12
Morale	15	Cha	16
No. of Attacks	1		
Damage/Attack	1d3 (walking-stick) or 2d6 (bite)		
Special Attacks	Seize throat, spells		
Special Defenses	Silver or <i>blessed</i> weapon to hit, half damage from magical weapons, spells		
Magic Resistance	Immune to <i>charm</i> and <i>hold</i> , +4 bonus to saves vs. other mind-affecting spells		

(Statistics in parentheses are for de Tantoine's wolf aspect.)

Charles de Tantoine is a loup du noir, a werewolf who assumes his bestial aspect by donning the skin of a wolf. He is also the mayor of Villebois, a tiny village in Dementlieu.

In human form, Charles is the picture of noble elegance, by the fashionable standards of Dementlieu's high society. He stands just shy of six feet, with a stylish black top hat bestowing several additional inches. He wears black breeches and white hose, a dark green doublet, and a short black cape. A wide ruff graces his neck in the height of fashion. His black hair reaches to his shoulders, and his moustache is waxed to twin points. A rapier and main-gauche hang at his side, but they serve mainly as decoration. He carries a walking-stick with an elaborate gold head, which he can use as a weapon if necessary.

In his animal aspect, de Tantoine is a huge, black wolf, standing over 4' at the shoulder.

Background: As a loup du noir, Charles de Tantoine is the victim of a self-inflicted lycanthropic curse. He was born in Port-a-Lucine and grew up under the harsh discipline of a wealthy but unloving father. Seeking to escape his unhappy home life, Charles began his study of the arcane arts as apprentice to an equally harsh and disciplinarian mentor. Once, following a severe beating from his master, Charles curled himself up in a wolf skin and cried, wishing he had the power to strike back at the people who struck him. The Dark Powers must have been listening, for no sooner had the wish formed in his mind than he found the wolf skin enfolding him and fusing with him, transforming his body into that of a monstrous wolf.

Without a second thought, young Charles sought out his mentor and ripped out the old wizard's throat. Running swiftly on his wolf feet, he returned to his home and sought out his father. To his surprise, he watched his father transfigure into a wolf himself, and the two creatures locked in battle. Youth and hatred gave Charles the advantage, and his father became his second victim of the night. Filled with bloodlust, he went on a rampage through Port-a-Lucine, killing anyone he found, until the morning light brought him back to his senses. Slinking off into the woods, Charles removed the wolf skin and returned to his human form.

Having been forced his whole life to abide by strict discipline and to keep his emotions tightly under control, Charles was simultaneously thrilled and disgusted with what

he had become. He resolved never to don the wolf skin again . . . but he still brought it with him as he traveled south to Chateaufaux. His resolve lasted for a month, but by then he could contain the bloodlust within him no longer. He has followed the same pattern ever since: long periods of self-control and denial seem to make his violence all the worse when it finally finds release.

The thrill and disgust remain with him, locked in irreconcilable tension. His strong feeling of self-loathing is what accounts for many of his behavior patterns. Above all, it causes him to construct elaborate plans that allow him to vent his bloodlust without being discovered or punished for his actions. Central to these plans are his scapegoats. He uses his powerful magical abilities to help convince innocent people that they are in fact lycanthropes—using *suggestions* and even infiltrating their dreams. He brought about the condemnation of many innocents in Chateaufaux before leaving that town for greener pastures. His actions in Villebois have been the crowning glory of all his scheming.

De Tantoine arrived in Villebois about three years ago. By night, he prowled the farms around the village in wolf form, slaughtering villagers and spreading terror. During the day, he moved about surreptitiously in human form, using his magic to convince two different villagers that they were lycanthropes and were responsible for the killings. After a few days of this, he staged an arrival in the village and quickly hunted down the two "werewolves" who were responsible for the murders. Proclaimed a hero by the villagers, he quickly became mayor (since the previous mayor had conveniently fallen victim to the werewolves) and began promulgating his doctrine of emotional suppression. Over the three years he's been in Villebois, he has condemned eight villagers to death for his own crimes, as well as six travelers from outside the village. Most horrible of all, each of these unfortunate victims went to the gallows convinced of his own guilt.

By cleverly playing on natural superstition and xenophobia, de Tantoine has convinced the people of Villebois that lycanthropy is the natural result of a failure to control one's emotions. He has turned the entire population of the village into emotionless, quiet, and docile followers—just as he was forced to be in his childhood. As long as he remains in his human aspect, he seems to be the perfect embodiment of his own teachings—completely impassive, avoiding any appearance of anger, enjoyment, pain, or any other emotion.

Every night, de Tantoine stands for some time staring at the wolf skin that hangs above his mantle like a hunting trophy. Many nights, his will triumphs and he goes quietly to bed. But other nights, the passions within him win out, and he pulls the skin down, wraps it around him like an elegant cloak, and ventures out to hunt.

When he returns from the hunt, de Tantoine is filled with revulsion and self-loathing. He compulsively washes himself and his wolf skin as soon as he returns from the hunt, then collapses in fitful slumber until late in the morning. He compulsively washes his hands throughout the day, so deep is his sense of being unclean.

Combat: In human form, de Tantoine avoids combat if possible. The people of Villebois are loyal to their mayor, and he has a small cadre of soldiers to defend him from attack. If pressed, he will resort to magic first, but he can defend himself with his walking-stick if necessary, inflicting 1d3 hit

points of damage with a hit. He is not proficient with the rapier, but can wield it with the standard -5 nonproficiency penalty. He is proficient with the main-gauche, but prefers his walking-stick.

De Tantoine can cast spells only in human form. He typically has the following spells memorized: (1) *charm person, friends, hypnotism, sleep, taunt*; (2) *forget, ray of enfeeblement, scare, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*; (3) *dispel magic, hold person, suggestion*; (4) *emotion, neverending nightmare* (described in Domains of Dread). He has an enchanter's normal resistance (+1 to his saving throw) to spells in the enchantment/charm school. Likewise, his victims suffer a -1 penalty to his spells in that magical school (including all of his standard memorized spells except for *dispel magic*).

In wolf form, de Tantoine's vicious bite inflicts 2d6 hit points of damage, and an unmodified roll of 20 indicates that he has grabbed his victim's throat, causing double damage. Anyone bitten by the wolf has a 2% chance per point of damage suffered of becoming a werewolf (not a loup du noir). In his animal aspect, he is immune to normal weapons. Silver weapons or those that have been *blessed* inflict full damage on him, while magical weapons (unless they are also silver or *blessed*) inflict half damage. In addition, the magic used to effect his transfiguration, in conjunction with his own mastery of enchantment spells, makes him immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, and gives him a +4 to his saving throws vs. other mind-affecting spells.

Tomas Drekezhnyi

Werebear, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	5 (2)	Str	18 (19)
Movement	12 (9)	Dex	12 (15)
Level/Hit Dice	7+3	Con	15
Hit Points	45	Int	13
THAC0	13	Wis	11
Morale	13	Cha	9
No. of Attacks	1 (3)		
Damage/Attack	1d12 (snaplock musket) or 1d3/1d3/2d4 (claw/claw/bite)		
Special Attacks	Hug for 2d8		
Special Defenses	Cold-forged iron or magical weapon to hit		
Magic Resistance	None		

(Statistics in parentheses are for Drekezhnyi's bear or hybrid aspects.)

Tomas Drekezhnyi is a native of Falkovnia who fled that land when his parents were hunted down and slaughtered. In his human form, he is a remarkably tall man, approaching 7', with a muscular build. Thick brown hair streams from his head over his shoulders, and mats of curly hair cover most of his body as well. According to the fashion in his adopted homeland of Dementlieu, he attempts to keep his unruly beard under control with wax, but try as he might, it will not hold a point.

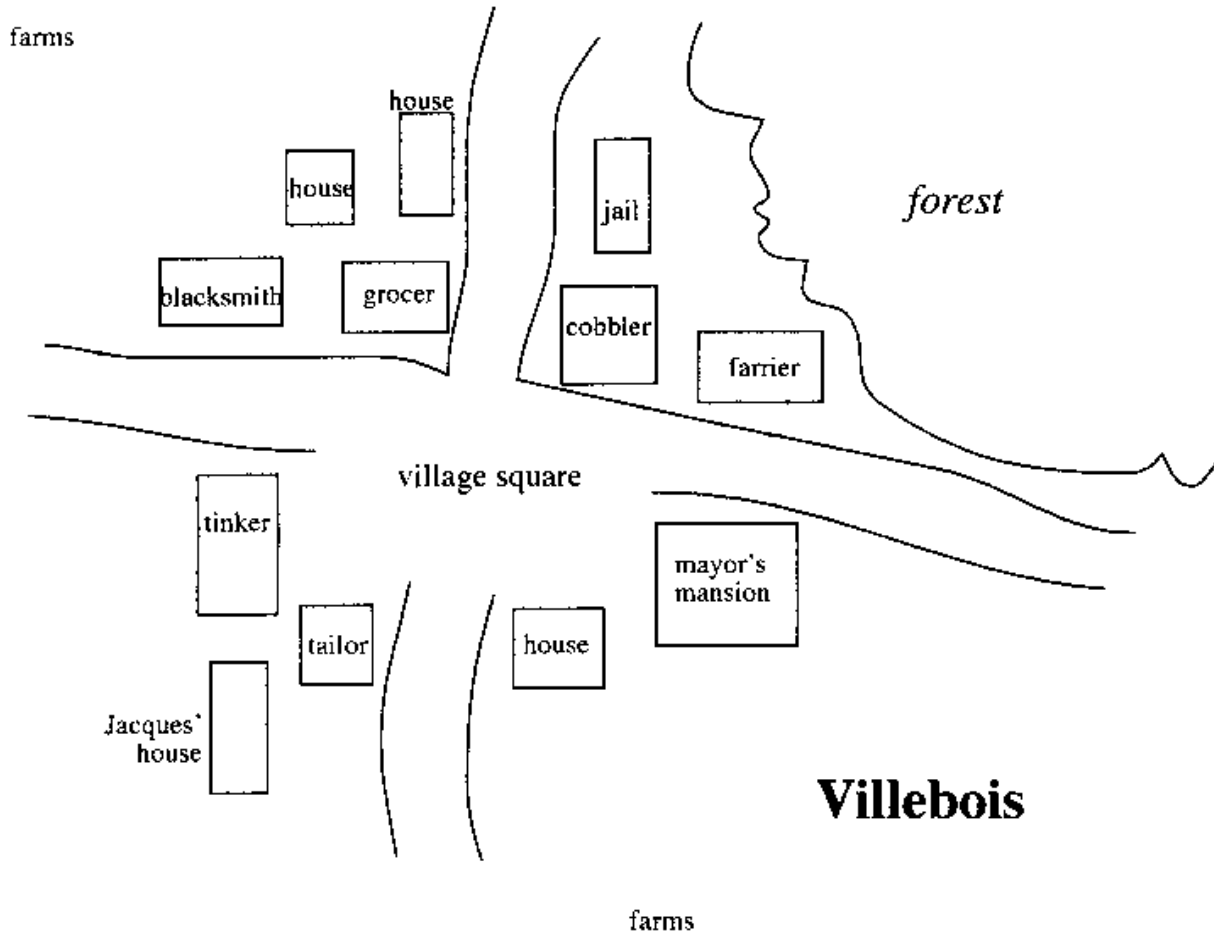
Drekezhnyi is a member of Villebois' small force of soldiers. As such, he wears a metal breastplate over a leather coat, a high-crowned helmet, and a saber at his belt. He also carries a musket over his shoulder.

Drekezhnyi has two additional forms: a huge brown bear and a hybrid man-bear form. In bear form, he stands a full 9' tall, resembling a grizzly or Alaskan brown bear. In his hybrid aspect, he is 8' tall, and covered with thick brown hair. His head, hands, and legs are bear-like, while his arms and torso retain their human proportions.

Background: Since his parents' death, Drekezhnyi has tried to deny his lycanthropic heritage. He strives to live as a normal human, an ordinary part of society, though he cannot suppress his body's need for fresh meat. He meets this need by hunting deep in the forest, feeding only on rabbits, deer, and game birds. With the ever-increasing hysteria about lycanthropy among the people of Villebois, Drekezhnyi has been sorely tempted to flee the village for safer pastures. He knows that the villagers are wrong about lycanthropy and its causes, but his main concern has been maintaining the appearance of normalcy in order to avoid suspicion falling on him.

Combat: Drekezhnyi's musket inflicts cumulative damage: if the damage roll is a 12, the die is rolled again and added to the 12 originally rolled. This process continues as long as a 12 comes up on the die. Like other firearms, the musket also ignores any armor worn by the target if it is fired at short range.

In his bear or man-bear form, Drekezhnyi attacks with two massive paws and a ferocious bite. If both claw attacks hit, in each subsequent round he automatically inflicts 2d8 points of damage with a bear hug. In these forms, he is immune to nonmagical weapons unless they are made of cold-forged iron.



Gem

3rd-Level Human Thief, True Neutral

Armor Class	1 (<i>armor</i> spell, Dex, and ring)	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	18
Level	3	Con	13
Hit Points	14	Int	14
THAC0	19	Wis	8
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	15
Special Attacks	backstab (x2)		
Special Defenses	<i>armor</i> spell (5th level)		
Paralyzation, Poison, Death Magic	13		
Rod, Staff, Wand	14		
Petrification, Polymorph	12		
Breath Weapon	16		
Spell	15		
Equipment	long sword (1d8/1d12), 2 daggers (1d4/1d3), thief tools, backpack		
Money	2 gp, 9 sp, 4 cp, 200 gp in jewelry		
Magical Items	<i>ring of protection +1</i> (gift from Derek), <i>buckle knife +1</i>		
Thieving Abilities	PP 50, OL 50, FT/RT 20, MS 35, HS 40, DN 35, CW 80, RL 10		

Gem is a slender young woman of 17 summers. She has dark blond hair that she typically wears in a ponytail. Her eyes are bright blue, set in a face that is the very model of classical beauty. Her voice supplements her good looks, and it carries the elegance of someone who was raised among nobles.

Gem typically dresses in practical trousers, soft black boots, and loose-fitting shirts that are either black or dark brown. She is equally at home in the elaborate gowns worn by women of the upper-classes, however. When the party is traveling or adventuring, she wears a long sword, but when they are in cities the only visible weapon she carries is a dagger. She also always has a dagger hidden in her left boot.

Proficiencies: long sword, dagger, appraising (14), dancing (18), etiquette (15), reading/writing (14), tumbling (18)

Languages: Common

Background: Gem's real name is Gewa Carimar, and she is the oldest daughter of a petty noble of Nyron. Her father was a corrupt man interested in nothing but furthering his own wealth and power, and part of these efforts involved having his daughter marrying the son of a more powerful noble. The marriage was to have taken place on her 14th birthday, but Gewa, disgusted with her father's grasping ways, would have no part of it. She fled the estate with the majority of her mother's jewels in her possession. Gewa eventually arrived in the City of Greyhawk where she came to the attention of the thieves' guild while trying to pawn her mother's jewels. The guild immediately saw the use for an attractive young thief with the bearing and looks of a noble, and she was offered training and position. Gewa accepted, and quickly showed an aptitude for cat-burglary and staking out homes masquerading as a young noble woman attending balls. (She also quickly developed the skills for relieving guests of their jewels while still at the ball.) Thus, she came to be known by the nickname, "Gem."

Gem ran afoul the other characters a few months ago when she was tried to steal a set of jewels they had been tracking—neither she nor the guild knew the jewels were keys to an ancient tomb. Although she was initially irritated that the group of "adventurers" almost spoiled her heist, she soon took a liking to Derek, the group's wizard. At his request, she traveled with the party to the ancient tomb. She hasn't been back to the city since and is having the time of her life. Who would have thought life as a "grubby hole-crawler" (as her father used to call adventurers) could be so fun—and profitable?

Gem is a strong-willed and somewhat self-centered young woman. She's not sure about the party's current mission, though. Who cares if some old bat is being abused by her husband? She shouldn't have married in the first place, or she should have found a good man—like Derek. But, Gem is loyal to her friends, and so she joined them on this trip.

Relationship With Other Characters: Gem is deeply in love with Derek. Although their relationship started rocky, she quickly grew to appreciate his good looks, his wit, his charm, and his trustworthiness. She thinks he is perhaps the only truly decent man she has ever met. If she ever decides to get married, she wants to marry Derek. Draloe and Dungannon are both stuffy, obnoxious, holier-than-thou jerks. The dwarf is particularly irritating because it seems he goes out of his way to be rude to both her and Derek. Nuri, although she tends to lecture, is far more tolerable. Gem often wishes her own mother could have been more like Nuri. Hespero is nice enough, but his foppish ways are a bit much, and although she is perfectly willing to brush out his hair every evening, she's getting a bit fed up with his lectures on her choice of clothing.

Derek Ravenclaw

5th-Level Human Enchanter, True Neutral

Armor Class	5 (<i>armor</i> spell and Dex)	Str	10
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level	6	Con	14
Hit Points	19	Int	17
THAC0	19	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Special Attacks	spells (5/3/2)		
Special Defenses	<i>armor</i> spell (5th level)		
Paralyzation, Poison, Death Magic	14		
Rod, Staff, Wand	11		
Petrification, Polymorph	13		
Breath Weapon	15		
Spell	12		
Equipment	dagger (1d4/1d3), spell book, spell components, selection of medical herbs, backpack		
Money	32 gp, 9 ep, 4 cp, 2x500 gp gems		
Magical Items	3 <i>darts of homing</i>		

Derek is a lanky man with dark hair and brown eyes. He is 22 years old, although an encounter with a ghost has left him with a stripe of gray at his right temple even though the years he gained from the angry spirit's aging attack were later stripped away a *potion of longevity*. He has a smiling, handsome face and always conducts himself with the manner and grace of a high-born gentleman.

Derek typically dresses in practical trousers, soft boots, and well-tailored shirts. He usually carries a dagger on his belt, although he has recently taken to carrying three magical darts as well when on an adventure.

Proficiencies: dagger, ancient history (16), dancing (15), etiquette (16), heraldry (17), herbalism (15), reading/writing—Common and Ancient Suloise (18)

Languages: Common, Ancient Suloise

Spells: 1st—*armor, audible glamor, cantrip, charm person, color spray, detect magic, friends, hold portal, hypnotism, identify, light, read magic, sleep, taunt, unseen servant*; 2nd—*blur, detect evil, detect invisibility, ESP, forget, invisibility, mirror image, scare, Tasha's hideous uncontrollable laughter, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, hold person, protection from normal missiles, sepia snake sigil, slow, suggestion*.

Background: Derek was born into an affluent merchant family in the City of Greyhawk. His mother was a former adventuring enchanter who had literally charmed herself into the arms of Derek's father, and when her son showed potential in the magical arts, she encouraged him to study under the enchanter who had taught her.

After completing his apprenticeship, Derek joined his current adventuring party. He became good friends with Leah, an invoker whose spellcasting abilities he was initially brought in to complement. When Leah lost one of her hands to a fiendish curse and retired, Derek became the only party wizard.

Derek prefers to avoid violent confrontations and uses his magic to either subdue or influence opponents before it comes to blows. He believes that manipulation through magical means is better than killing or otherwise physically harming a being—and it has the added benefit that any information they might be able to impart is not lost to the grave. It was this approach that first brought him into contact with Gem. By casting *charm* on her, he secured her assistance rather than opposition when their paths crossed while pursuing the same goal for different reasons. Little did he know that she would come to believe she was in love with him. Derek is a little bit at a loss as to how to handle the situation; he likes Gem and has genuinely grown to care for her, but he does not want to be like his mother. He dreads the day when the charm spell wears off, but he's equally afraid to tell Gem that he treated her like she's seen him treat several foes since joining the party. He cares about her too much to let her end up hating him. After years of playing with people's emotions and minds through magic, Derek finds himself in a moral and emotional bind for the first time.

Although Derek will never admit it, his ghostly encounter has left him with a fear of noncorporeal undead. He's not sure how he would hold up should the group encounter another one.

Relationship With Other Characters: Derek gets on well with everyone in the party, but he watches his step around Dunganon. He knows the fallen paladin doesn't care for him or his methods of using magic to influence the party's foes. Dunganon and Draloef think it's dishonorable, but Derek knows it's just plain *smart*. He occasionally grows frustrated with Draloef's rudeness toward Gem, but he realizes the old dwarf just can't get past his dislike of thieves. He also sometimes wishes Nuri would mind her own business. Sure, he's glad she's mentoring Gem, but he doesn't need her lectures on why he should release her from the charm spell and just trust in their shared emotions.

Draloef Stonegrinder

7th-Level Dwarf Fighter, Lawful Good

Armor Class	1 (Dwarven plate and shield)	Str	17
Movement	6	Dex	9
Level	7	Con	16
Hit Points	51	Int	10
THAC0	13	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	2	Cha	9
Special Attacks	Strength bonus (+1/+1)		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Paralyzation, Poison, Death Magic	10 (+4 bonus vs. poison)		
Rod, Staff, Wand	8		
Petrification, Polymorph	11		
Breath Weapon	12		
Spell	9		
Equipment	light crossbow, 8 light quarrels (1d4/1d4), short sword (1d6/1d8), backpack		
Money	12 pp, 8 gp, 5 ep, 12 sp, 3x 50 gp gems, 2x100 gp gems		
Magical Items	<i>axe +1, +2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures</i>		

Draloef is sturdy, 160-year-old dwarf with snow-white hair and beard. His eyes are steel gray, and they glint with the same deadly edge as a well-sharpened dagger underneath his bushy eyebrows. Despite the encroaching effects of the years, Draloef is still fit and trim, and his mighty strength is the envy of dwarves half his age.

When in towns or merely traveling with the party, Draloef dresses in conservative clothing of varying styles, but they always mark him as a man of means. Still, he usually wears his short sword, so thieves can tell he's a man of means who can defend himself; even at the finest balls, Draloef will at least have his short sword nearby. When adventuring, he always wears full battle gear and has his weapons at hand. His armor and shield were gifts from the lord of his village, and he liberated his battle axe from a foul ogre tribe. He views all three as badges of honor.

Proficiencies: battle axe (specialized, +1/+2), light crossbow (specialized, +1/+2), short sword, warhammer, blind-fighting, mining (12), mountaineering

Languages: Common, Dwarven

Background: Draloef was born into a family of miners in the Flinty Hills of Nyron. He was more skilled in the arts of war, however, so he left his family profession for a position with the town militia. He quickly rose through the ranks to become the Sergeant of the Nightwatch. It was in this capacity that he first met the holy warriors of Heiromonius, Nuri and Dungannon; the fire-happy wizardess Leah; and the foppish bard Hespero. The leader of his village encouraged him to stay with the adventurers in order to guide and influence them with his dwarven common sense.

Draloef has traveled with the party for the past five years. He has had only two regrets during that time. The first is that he didn't work harder to discourage Dungannon and Leah from falling in love; romantic attachments have no place between comrades-in-arms, he believes. The second regret is that he was not fast enough to rescue Leah when that foul beast from the Abyss tore her hand off and cursed her. Despite his knowledge that they were severely outmatched, Draloef believes that he could have cleaved that creature's head if he had only been fast enough. He is sure that if he had, Dungannon would still be a paladin of Heiromonius instead of a bitter, guilt-ridden shell of a man. (Still, if Dungannon hadn't fallen in love with Leah in the first place, he probably wouldn't have taken revenge by murdering that insane wizard who summoned the fiend.)

In some ways, Draloef is relieved that Leah sent the desperate plea for help. He is hoping that lending her assistance will allow Dungannon to put the past behind him once and for all, and perhaps even return to the grace of his god.

Relationship With Other Characters: Dungannon is Draloef's best friend, and the dwarf wants nothing more than to see the fallen paladin's spiritual suffering ended, but he knows that no one can heal Dungannon but himself. Similarly, he respects and admires Nuri's inner strength, as well as her tireless devotion to law and good. He thinks Hespero is a flake, but has no doubt that his heart is in the right place. He trusts these three implicitly and would put his life in their hands without hesitation.

He feels less comfortable with Derek and Gem. He thinks Derek is a man of poor character and is frequently disgusted by his use of magic to avoid an honest fight. To make matters worse, Draloef has noticed lately that the girl is giving Derek moon-eyed looks—she's in love with him! Draloef doesn't want a repeat of what happened with Dungannon and Leah, and for the girl's own good, he wants Gem out of the party. Unfortunately, the rest of the group feels they need her expertise with locks and traps, and Draloef can't disagree with their reasoning. He doesn't have to make her feel welcome, though.

Nuri

6th-Level Half-Elf Priestess of Heironeous, Lawful Good

Armor Class	3 (chain mail, shield, and Dex)	Str	13
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level	6	Con	15
Hit Points	40	Int	12
THAC0	18	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	10
Special Attacks	spells (5/5/2), turn undead		
Special Defenses	+2 to all saves against fear		
Paralyzation, Poison, Death Magic	9		
Rod, Staff, Wand	13		
Petrification, Polymorph	12		
Breath Weapon	15		
Spell	14		
Equipment	holy symbol, city clothes, medicinal and healing herbs, backpack		
Money	7 pp, 8 ep, 4x50 gp gems		
Magical Items	<i>mace of submission</i> (acts as a <i>trident of submission</i> , 7 charges remaining, 1d6+1/1d6)		

Nuri comes from mixed elf and Rhenni stock. She has short dark hair and dusky skin, with sharp, angular facial features and startling pale green eyes. Her exotic looks frequently draw the eye of humans and elves alike, but her response to any advances is that her life is devoted to the work of her god.

When in cities, Nuri dresses in the robes proscribed by the doctrine of her church, and when adventuring she wears a suit of chain mail she took from an evil priest she slew. Her primary weapon, a mace made from a strange magical metal, once belonged to that same, and she intends to use the mace until it becomes as renowned in the service of good as it had become infamous in the service of evil.

Proficiencies: mace, battle axe, sling, healing (14), herbalism (10), religion (16), spellcraft (10)

Languages: Common

Spells: 1st—*bless, combine, cure light wounds, detect evil, endure cold, invisibility to undead, light, magical stone, protection from evil, purify food & drink, sanctuary, shillelagh*; 2nd—*aid, barkskin, chant, resist fire, sanctify, silence 15' radius, slow poison, spiritual hammer, withdraw, wyvern watch*; 3rd—*animate dead, continual light, cure blindness or deafness, cure disease, dispel magic, feign death, glyph of warding, line of protection, magical vestment, negative plane protection, prayer, protection from fire, remove curse, remove paralysis, starshine, summon insects*.

Background: Nuri does not have any memories of her parents. She was abandoned as a small child in the City of Greyhawk. She had been forced into working as a dancer a particularly vicious tavern owner when a priest of Heironeous descended upon the den of iniquity. He single-handedly defeated the tavern owner and his henchmen and then took pity upon poor Nuri and took her into his home. He educated her, and she eventually entered into the priesthood of Heironeous herself.

Although Nuri was very efficient in spreading the word of Heironeous among the lower classes in the City of Greyhawk—actually presenting the tenets of the faith in ways they could relate to—it soon became apparent to her superiors in the church that Nuri was better fit for service beyond the walls of the City of Greyhawk. Too many men engaging in unchivalrous or unjust ways were falling victim to Nuri's righteous wrath, and when she soundly beat the son of the Lord Mayor himself, it was time for the church to get the zealous woman out of town. (Even priests of Cuthbert marveled at her commitment to dealing out physical punishment to transgressors.) They paired her with a young paladin named Dungannon, and the two joined up with an adventuring party to head out into the wilds to spread their faith and destroy evil-doers wherever they might be found. Since that time, however, Dungannon lost his paladinhood for murdering an evil wizard to avenge the mutilation of the party wizard, Leah, with whom he had fallen in love.

When Dungannon told Nuri about the letter he had received from Leah, there was no doubt in her mind that the party needed to go help her. First, her faith and personal beliefs told her that Leah must be liberated from her oppressive husband. Second, she hoped that reuniting Dungannon with Leah would finally allow her best friend to put his guilt to rest.

Relationship With Other Characters: Nuri feels kinship with Gem because they both spent time alone on the streets of the City of Greyhawk. Gem was lucky enough to avoid much of the suffering Nuri endured, but Nuri wishes to ensure that Gem never need return to the streets ever again. She subtly tries to discourage the girl's inherently greedy and selfish outlook every chance she gets, hoping to broaden her horizons to include a more selfless view. She is stymied by the heavy-handed approaches to morality instruction that are practiced by Dungannon and Draloef. Nuri is also subtly trying to convince Derek to release Gem from the *charm* spell he cast on her during their first encounter, which has caused Gem to fall in love with him. Nuri won't share the fact that Gem is charmed with anyone else in the group, because she fears their reactions. Hespero is a flighty artist and essentially a lost cause. Nuri knows he is very creative, brilliant, and good at heart—but the chaotic way in which he conducts himself maddens her. His flirty nature is also highly frustrating. She lectures him at every opportunity, but it never does any good. His nature is roguish, and she can't change that. She continues to share a deep friendship with Dungannon, and she continues to hope for his return to the path of righteousness.

Hespero the Harmonious

6th-Level Human Bard, Chaotic Good

Armor Class	7	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level	6	Con	14
Hit Points	27	Int	16
THAC0	18	Wis	14
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Special Attacks	spells (3/2)		
Special Defenses	armor spell (5th level)		
Paralyzation, Poison, Death Magic	12		
Rod, Staff, Wand	12		
Petrification, Polymorph	11		
Breath Weapon	15		
Spell	13		
Equipment	dagger (1d4/1d3), club (1d6/1d3), tin whistle, flute, harp, shaving kit, hairbrush, parchment, writing kit, spell book, spell components, three sets of clothes, backpack		
Money	2 gp, 29 ep, 4 cp, 4x100 gp gems		
Magical Items	<i>harp of charming, bracers of defense AC 8</i>		
Bard Abilities	PP 35, DN 40, CW 70, RL 55		

Hespero is a tall, slender, handsome man with blue eyes, a freckled complexion and red hair. Invariably, his eyes twinkle mischievously. He wears his hair loose when performing, but keeps it tied in a ponytail when adventuring. He is currently cultivating a narrow goatee, but takes great care to keep the rest of his face clean-shaven. He is similarly concerned with keeping his hair untangled.

Hespero dresses in the latest fashions whenever in a city, going so far as to investigate what they are when the party travels to a new region. When adventuring, he dresses in bright blue colors, wears high black boots and a wide-brimmed hat with a large white feather. He considers the feather a good luck charm.

Proficiencies: long sword, club, dagger, ancient history (15), artistic ability—music (14), artistic ability—poetry (14), gaming (16), juggling (14), musical instrument—flute (14), musical instrument—harp (14), reading/writing (17), legend lore (30%)

Languages: Common

Spell book: 1st—*audible glamer, cantrip, charm person, dancing lights, detect magic, friends, hold portal, read magic, unseen servant*. 2nd—*alter self, continual light, ESP, Tasha's hideous uncontrollable laughter*.

Background: A City of Greyhawk native, Hespero was apprenticed to a wizard at an early age. He did not have the patience for magical studies, however, and spent more time in gambling dens and taverns than on his studies. He also discovered that he loved music and storytelling more than magic. His master noticed this too, and he dismissed his incompetent student, providing him with a letter of introduction to the master of the Bard's College as a parting gift. The bards recognized Hespero's raw talent immediately and invited him into their ranks.

Upon completing his apprenticeship, Hespero started making a reputation for himself around the City of Greyhawk. His musical skill made him popular with everyone, and his good looks were a particular boon for the ladies. After he and one of his ardent admirers were interrupted by her husband, however, the bard had to get out of town in a hurry. While fleeing, he happened upon a band of fledgling adventurers. He joined their party, promising to use his considerable bardic talents to spread their fame throughout Greyhawk. The make-up of the band has changed over the years, but Hespero remains at its core, along with Nuri and Dungannon. It's odd company for a bard, but his most popular works have been inspired by their adventures together; his current oft-requested song is "The Ballad of the Sweaty Yeti."

Relationship With Other Characters: Hespero has always viewed himself as the light-hearted counterpoint to Nuri and Dungannon's serious, all-business attitudes. This role has become somewhat more difficult with Dungannon being somewhat absorbed in self-pity, but Hespero keeps trying to cheer up his old friend. Hespero also hopes Dungannon gets over the painful end of his relationship with Leah (the party's former spellcaster), as he has penned a fabulously tragic epic poem about the events. He's traveling with the party to Leah's current home in the hopes of a happy resolution—and perhaps even the chance to add another verse to his song. As for Draloef, Hespero learned long ago to not even attempt to entertain dwarves. He does consider the dour dwarf a friend and his happy to have him around. (Draloef's axe-swinging heroics have given rise to more songs than the actions of any other party member, even if the dwarf doesn't like Hespero's songs and is particularly unamused by "The Ballad of the Sweaty Yeti.") As for the two newest members of the group—Derek and Gem—Hespero enjoys discussing proper etiquette with Derek and keeps hoping that Gem will start paying attention to the fashion tips he gives her when she helps him brush his hair at night. She has the bearing and speech of a noble woman, so she should darn well dress like one when the group is in civilized areas. She could be quite the attractive young lady if she would only dress the part. He noticed the looks she's been giving Derek, and he thinks the only way she's going to notice her is if she fixes herself up a bit. (He wants to encourage the romance because swords and soaring hearts make for great ballads!)

Dungannon Jeratte

5th-Level Human Fighter (former paladin of Heironeous), Lawful Good

Armor Class	1 (plate mail and magical shield)	Str	17
Movement	12	Dex	12
Level	5	Con	16
Hit Points	46	Int	11
THAC0	16	Wis	13
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	17
Special Attacks	Strength bonus (+1/+1)		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Paralyzation, Poison, Death Magic	11		
Rod, Staff, Wand	13		
Petrification, Polymorph	12		
Breath Weapon	13		
Spell	14		
Equipment	short bow, quill, 10 sheaf arrows (1d8/1d8), holy symbol, mace (1d6+1/1d6), plate mail, backpack		
Money	8 gp, 5 ep, 4 cp, 3x 50 gp gems		
Magical Items	<i>shield +1, broad sword +2</i>		

Dungannon is a human male, 25 years of age, although his brown eyes seem to be those of a man twice his age. His face is frequently set in a troubled expression. He wears his sandy hair cropped close to his head.

Dungannon dresses in simple clothing while in town, clothes that might be considered more appropriate for a common laborer than one such as himself who is the son of high-ranking priests of Heironeous. The broad sword that is strapped across his back, however, ensures that no one mistakes him for a laborer. Unlike most his traveling companions, he has no interest in high society and fashion. When adventuring, he wears a set of ornate plate mail that was a gift from his father and uses a magical shield with the symbol of Heironeous on it that they party discovered while on a quest.

Proficiencies: broad sword, long sword, short sword, mace, short bow, heraldry (11), riding—land-based (16), religion (13)

Languages: Common

Background: Dungannon's parents were both priests of Heironeous in the land of Nyronnd, and from his earliest days he was surrounded by the brightest examples of chivalry and honor that the Flaeness had to offer. As he grew into manhood, he realized that he too wished to serve Heironeous but that his calling was among the god's holy warriors—the paladins. He completed his training and was called to the City of Greyhawk where he was to join a wandering priestess as her protector. The priestess was the exotic half-elf Nuri, and the pair swiftly became fast friends, developing a relationship closer than many brothers and sisters enjoy. They soon hooked up with an adventuring band and set forth to spread their faith and destroy evil wherever they traveled.

Dungannon eventually fell in love with a fellow party member, a fiery invoker named Leah; their relationship was the very example of opposites attracting. At the height of their love, Leah was taken captive by a demon-trafficking wizard, and by the time the party managed to rescue her, one of her hands had been consumed by some foul extraplanar beast. When it became clear that no magic could restore her lost hand, Leah retired from adventuring. Dungannon undertook a personal quest to destroy the evil wizard who had maimed his love and eventually captured and killed him, losing his paladinhood in the process. He wrote Leah a letter informing her of his deeds, but he has not seen her in over three years. He has been too embarrassed to face her, so disgusted is he with the deed he committed. Still, when her letter arrived asking for his help in discovering what evil has corrupted her new husband, Dungannon knew he had to go to her aid.

Dungannon still worships Heironeous and still conducts himself as though he was a paladin. His good friends Nuri and Draloef hold hopes that he can once again be restored to his place among Heironeous' chosen, but Dungannon knows better—he knows the taint on his soul can never be removed.

Relationship With Other Characters: Dungannon views Nuri and Draloef as his best friends. In fact, he trusts them, body and soul, and since losing his paladin status has taken to viewing them as the models of what he should aspire to be. He is hoping to purge his soul of the hatred he still feels for the wizard who maimed his beloved Leah, and he prays every day that Nuri and Draloef's model of behavior will help him to do so. Dungannon would like to get along better with Gem—since they are both from Nyronnd and share similar social stations—but her roguish attitudes stymies him every time. In fact, he frequently finds himself resisting the urge to give the girl a well-deserved thrashing. A high-born person such as Gem would do well to listen to the advice of Nuri, Dungannon thinks. Derek he views as a spineless cad with very little sense of honor. Hespero is little better than Derek, but at least the bard has occasionally shown courage over the years and doesn't use magic to avoid honorable battle.