

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

2nd Edition

Official Game Adventure

Cleric's Challenge



by L. Richard Baker III

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Cleric's Challenge is a ONE-ON-ONE™ adventure designed for a single player character and a DUNGEON MASTER™. The adventure can be used as part of a small campaign, or to give a character a chance to earn some extra experience outside of the normal party of adventurers. *Cleric's Challenge* can even be used by a large group of player characters, but the DM should not allow the players to find as many NPC allies.

This adventure is suitable for a 2nd- through 4th-level priest PC. Clerics will have the best chance of successfully completing the adventure—if the PC is a specialty priest, make sure that he or she can turn undead. It is also important that the character's spheres of access or selection of kit will still allow him a good choice of armor, weapons, and spells.

Characters of other classes can attempt this adventure. A paladin of sufficient level to turn undead would do well, but PCs of any other class will need to be 4th- to 6th-level to compensate for their lack of turning ability.

Allies and Hirelings

The key to this adventure is the pool of prospective allies and henchmen in Pommeville. A single character acting alone can easily be overwhelmed by trouble. On the other hand, a PC who hires a couple of sturdy men-at-arms and puts together an effective striking force will multiply his firepower exponentially, as well as increase his chances of surviving. The DM should help the player to see that asking for or hiring help is allowed and encouraged. After all, clerics are good at organizing and working with people.

In some respects, the DM is expected to take the place of a well-balanced party. Role-play these NPCs carefully; they each have special motivations and mannerisms to make them unique, and in a small adventure like this the NPCs will be much larger and more important than in a multi-player scenario. Last but not least, remember to let the player remain in charge and call the shots.

DM Overview

Cleric's Challenge begins as the player character arrives in Pommeville after a long day of travel. Pommeville is a sleepy little town in a relatively civilized area. The DM should not hesitate to change the name to match his own campaign. The town and its residents are described in detail in the next few pages.

Things seem pretty routine, until night falls. As the moon rises, a terrifying catastrophe befalls the town—the dead rise and walk through the village, slaying anyone they can catch! This first scene is covered in Part One, **A Night on the Town**.

At sunrise, the zombies shamble back to their graves. In Part Two, **A Grave Situation**, the PC investigates the events of the night before and recruits allies to help him. An exploration of the graveyard reveals a secret temple hidden beneath the town.

The temple is an evil place, and in a secret vault the hero discovers the remains of the high priest. It is clear that they have been recently disturbed, and upon investigation the PC discovers that a seal that had imprisoned the evil of the temple is now broken. To save Pommeville, the seal must be restored—but a crucial part, the Rod of Astar, is missing.

In Part Three, **The Missing Rod**, the PC begins a quest for the Rod of Astar. The DM can customize the adventure and adjust the difficulty in this chapter. The most dangerous resolution of this part requires the PC to venture into the countryside in search of a lamia's lair. The hero also learns more of the temple's history and Pommeville's troubles.

After defeating the lamia and recovering the Rod of Astar, the cleric will be ready to return to the ancient temple. In Part Four, **Conclusion**, the hero attempts to restore the seal. Of course, the evil beneath the town has grown strong while the PC searched for the means to destroy it. . .

The Real Story

Centuries ago, Pommeville was the site of a temple dedicated to a dark power. The high

priest of the temple was a powerful and evil cleric named Nedrezar. His servants controlled much of the surrounding area.

Nedrezar aspired to lichdom, seeking to extend his power beyond the grave. During the process of transformation, he was betrayed by a lieutenant who wanted the high priest's power for himself. Nedrezar's soul was trapped in a crystal skull, and his body was entombed. Nedrezar fell short of transformation and did not become a lich.

The factions of the evil temple fell into a power struggle that weakened them all. A few years later, the forces of a nearby good kingdom attacked the evil temple and destroyed it. The force was accompanied by Bishop Astar True-heart, who discovered Nedrezar's hidden crypt. Astar knew that some evil slumbered within, and he prevented the king's men from removing the skull. He also consecrated the site and set a holy seal upon the crypt door to contain the evil within.

As the years passed, the town of Pommeville grew up on the site of the old ruins. The people of Pommeville knew little of the region's dark history. A week ago, a cleric named Giles arrived in Pommeville, searching for the temple. Giles was following the trail of Bishop Astar as recorded in the histories of the neighboring kingdom, and he discovered the old temple. Giles and his companions entered the temple and unwisely broke the seal, removing Astar's rod. Not realizing what they had done, they left.

Giles and his companions did not get far. To make the adventure easier, the DM can place Giles in Pommeville or Arden, where the PC will be able to quickly find him. Otherwise, Giles and his companions were set upon by a lamia and her minions a few miles north of town and were killed or captured.

With the rod removed, Nedrezar has awakened and is seeking escape. He requires the energy of living creatures to break free of his imprisonment, and is animating the zombies to bring him victims.

The Town of Pommeville

Pommeville lies in the shadow of a dark, rocky knoll known as the Cairn. The Cairn overlooks the Volar river, a deep and swift mountain stream that is fordable here. An ancient road known as the Stoneway crosses the Volar in the Cairn's shadow, and many caravans and travellers pass through the town along this path.

History

The town is older than most of its residents believe it to be. For hundreds of years, the Stoneway has carried trade and armies beneath the Cairn. People have always lived in this area, farming the land and keeping inns for the passing traders. Nearby realms have occasionally posted garrisons or built stockades on the site.

About 240 years ago, a dark temple was raised on the Cairn. The temple was allied with monsters and ambitious nobles of the nearby realms, and was the seat of much evil over the next 40 years. After the fall of the High Priest Nedrezar, the temple was destroyed as a series of wars ravaged the area.

For a few decades, the ruins of the temple and the ford of the Volar were shunned. As the wars faded into history, a new generation of farmers and hunters wandered into the area. Pommeville was founded about 170 years ago, along the river's banks. The town has grown and prospered since.

The Town

Pommeville is shown on the inside front cover of this booklet. It is surrounded by cultivated fields and orchards that are tended by people who live in the outlying farms. The town itself is rather small, and the total population is only about 300 people (including the outlying farms).

Most of the townspeople make their living as farmers or serve the caravans who pass along the Stoneway. Pommeville is noted for its apple and pear orchards, and its fields produce an ample supply of grain, vegetables, beef, and dairy products.

The folk of Pommeville tend to be open and

friendly; the land has been at peace for many years, and there's no reason to be suspicious or hostile towards strangers. As long as travellers keep their swords in their sheaths and spend money, they're welcome to stay.

Pommeville is ruled by the Lord Squire Tomas Avergnon, in the name of the Lord Baron Gerald Lemieux. In practice, Lord Tomas allows the village to govern itself. The townspeople elect a Mayor every three years to look after things. Currently, the Mayor is a popular farmer and landholder named Nichole Theneuse.

1. Lord Tomas' Manor. The Lord Squire is an aging nobleman who enjoys his quiet retirement. Tomas Avergnon is a friendly but dignified gentleman who likes to discuss the weather and his apple orchards. He can often be found with a pair of clippers, trimming and pruning the trees on his manor.

Lord Tomas's wife died some years ago, and his only child is his daughter Cerene. Cerene is a strong-willed and intelligent woman of 30, who has studied the arcane arts at some length. She is often away in the capitol, but is currently visiting her father.

Lord Tomas employs a butler named Steven, a gardener named Elias, two chambermaids named Lisa and Elsie, and occasionally hires a couple of fieldhands from the town to help him during planting or harvest. His home is comfortable, well-appointed, and very strong; if barricaded, it will keep out anything short of a battering ram.

Lord Tomas and the rest of his staff will aid the PC in any way they can once trouble starts, but they are all 0-level villagers with no weapons or armor. (Five shields and two long swords can be found in the manor, if the PC looks.) Cerene is a potential ally.

2. Portos the Cartwright. Portos lives in a large, comfortable cottage with a spacious workshop beside it. Wagons, wheels, and fittings lie scattered about in various states of repair or construction. Portos himself is a surly man of about

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35, with a short and burly build and a bushy black beard. Portos shares his home with his wife Maria, who seems to be the only person Portos is civil to. Portos and Maria have four small children.

3. Gwalmai the Smith. Gwalmai is a journeyman who wandered widely before settling in Pommeville. His shop is very disorderly and Gwalmai himself seems somewhat absent-minded. Despite appearances, he is actually a very skilled smith. Gwalmai lives alone here, but is courting Owen's daughter Rosalie.

Gwalmai's shop contains many serviceable hammers and blades that can be used as weapons. The smith himself is a fair warrior and a potential hireling.

4. Theriault the Miller. One of the wealthiest men in town, Theriault is a stout townsman of about 50, with an endless store of good cheer. He built the mill with his own hands 25 years ago, and keeps it spotless. Theriault's wife is an apple-cheeked woman named Edna, who shares his good nature and love of stories.

5. Owen the Shield. Owen is a retired soldier who moved to Pommeville several years ago to take up farming. Owen's land runs for some distance to the south, but he works it himself with no help. He is a tall, stonefaced man who never uses two words when one will do. His home is kept by his wife Yvonna, and the two have three daughters.

Owen keeps a suit of mail and a sword beneath his bed, but will only fight in the defense of his home or neighbors.

6. Darian the Tanner. Various hides and pelts can be found hanging out to cure by this house, and the area reeks of the tanner's trade. The business is owned and operated by a graceful and energetic woman named Darian. About ten years ago, she became a widow at a young age, and took up tanning to support herself and her son Robert (now age 12).

7. The Sign of the Green Griffon. One of the largest buildings in the town, the Green Griffon is a fine inn that caters to travellers along the Stoneway. Its common room passes for a town hall, and in the evening dozens of villagers gather to enjoy a mug of ale and a song or story.

The Green Griffon is owned by a short, stocky man named George Marsett, whose family has operated the inn here for several generations. George is assisted by his wife Aubrey, his younger brother Marco, and Marco's family. George's daughters and Marco's young sons work as chambermaids and stablehands, while Aubrey runs the kitchen.

The inn has a total of eight guest rooms upstairs. The rooms are small, but well-kept and comfortable. George rents them for 1 gp per night, or 5 gp for a full week. Three of the rooms are currently occupied: one by a passing trader named Shanna Whitelock, one by a wandering monk named Friar Nicholas, and the last by Captain Miles of the King's army.

Friar Nicholas, Shanna, and Captain Miles are all potential allies for the PC.

8. Annelle's Stables. This weathered old building is in poor repair, and the horses are of average to poor quality. Annelle herself is a lazy woman of middle years with a vicious streak to her temper. She supervises a pair of young stableboys; the sons of local farmers.

9. Rene the Cabinetmaker. Rene Marault is an old craftsman who lives alone in this tidy cottage. He avoids people, spending his days working with wood. Rene was a formidable hunter and warrior in his youth, but will not ally with the PC.

10. Andres Silversmith. Andres is a skilled jeweler and pewtersmith who manufactures a variety of useful and decorative items. He is a thin, balding man of about 50, who lives here with his wife Annette and four young children. He is a kind but timid man. Andres has a brawny

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apprentice by the name of Lars who is a potential hireling.

11. Pierre the Trader. This general store is operated by Pierre Quantrell, a fastidious and stuffy man of 40. Pierre serves passing caravans and the local farmers, and keeps a wide selection of goods in stock. Most routine items of clothing, equipment, tack and harness, or rations from the PHB can be bought here for a markup of 10%. Weapons are not in demand, so Pierre only stocks daggers, bows, arrows, and sling bullets. Other items that could come in handy include small hammers, axes, knives, sickles, crowbars, and other tools.

Pierre's wife passed on recently, but he has two young sons who help him with the store.

12. Gerard's Wares. Several large warehouses and a small office building make up this business. Gerard is a tough old trader who rents space in his buildings to merchants from out of town who need a place to stockpile supplies or goods. Business has been slow lately, and Gerard is very foul-tempered. He is hiding a secret stock of arms for a merchant in one warehouse. The cache includes 10 suits of chain mail, 30 suits of ring mail, 20 shields, 40 spears, and 20 short swords. Gerard can be persuaded to part with this gear for the town's benefit, if the PC discovers the secret cache.

13. Mayor Theneuse's House. An elegant home on the hillside, this manor overlooks the town. Its stately pillars and gardens can be seen from most of the streets in Pommeville. Nichole Theneuse is a serious woman of about 45 who owns extensive orchards and farmlands outside of town. Nichole is a childless widow, but her younger brother Terence and his family live in the manor. A butler and a pair of maids help them keep house.

Nichole is quiet and listens well, but she is very conservative and skeptical. Terence is a boisterous and good-natured man who spent several years adventuring widely. He is a potential ally for the PC.

14. Sadie the Baker. Sadie is an older woman who has retired. She only cooks for her own pleasure now, selling pies and bread when she wants a little spending money. Sadie lives alone in this small cottage.

15. The Shrine of Reflection. Important note: this shrine is dedicated to the PC's patron deity. It is a small, rwi-down temple used by travellers and a few of the townspeople. The shrine is tended by Brother Montrel, a priest of the PC's faith. Brother Montrel is a very old man who maintains the shrine with a little help from some of the more generous villagers. He is delighted to see a fellow priest and will gladly aid the PC in any way he can. The shrine's most important resource is its library of local history and legend,* but the PC probably won't need that until later in the adventure.

16. Tower of Reginard. Reginard Runestave is the local sage and wizard, a kind-hearted old man who absolutely despises disorder or chaos of any kind. His talents as a mage are on the wane, but he could still be very helpful to the PC.

17. The Graveyard. The folk of Pommeville have been interring their deceased here for more than 150 years. The PC will become much more familiar with this area soon ...

18. The Ruins. Most of the people of Pommeville have no idea what these ruins might be. Many small trails wind around on top of the Cairn; the area is popular with local children and lovers. The ruins are thickly overgrown and barely visible from the village.

Allies and Hirelings

Most of the people in Pommeville are 0-level townsfolk with little desire to join the PC in any dangerous undertaking. However, a number of unusual personalities can be recruited to help the PC against the threat of Nedrezar. The player should not be forced to accept NPC assistance, but the PC stands a much better chance of saving Pommeville if he or she is wise enough to get help.

Cerene Avergnon (W4): Human; AC 5 (*bracers of defense* AC 6, Dex); MV 12; hp 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (*dagger +1*); Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 13; AL LG; THACO 19 (18).

Weapon Proficiencies: dagger. Nonweapon Proficiencies: etiquette 13, riding

16, herbalism 15, ancient history 14. Spells: *charm person, chill touch, protection from evil, flaming sphere, levitate.*

Equipment: noble riding clothes, cloak, pouch with spell components, spell book, *bracers of defense* AC 6, *dagger +1*, *wand of magic missiles* (17 charges), *potion of healing*.

Cerene is a haughty and commanding woman who is used to being in charge. She can be downright icy at times, but underneath she is a wise and compassionate person. Cerene will throw in with the PC only after it has become clear that the town is in immediate and serious danger, but will want to see things through once she becomes involved. If Cerene witnesses an act of cowardice or stupidity on the part of the PC, she will not hesitate to point out the character's flaw and strike out on her own. Cerene prefers to avoid physical combat.

Gwalmai the Smith (FI): Human; AC 4 (chain mail and shield); MV 12; hp 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (long sword, Str) or 1d4; Str 18/14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12; AL N; THACO 20 (18 with Strength bonus).

Weapon Proficiencies: long sword, crossbow, hammer, dagger. Nonweapon Proficiencies: blacksmithing 18, fire building 7, armorer 8.

Equipment: chain mail, shield, helm, long sword, light crossbow, 12 bolts and 4 silver-headed bolts, boots, cloak, waterskin, 6 torches, tinder box, 50' rope.

Gwalmai served as a man-at-arms and mercenary before taking up smithwork. He doesn't speak of his military experience, since the companies he fought with were not careful in choosing their causes. He is a quiet, somber man who will avoid getting involved in the town's troubles unless the PC makes it worth his while. Gwalmai can be hired for 2 gp per day, or he can be persuaded to ally himself for free by an exceptionally strong appeal to his sense of responsibility.

Lars, the Silversmith's Apprentice (FO):

Human; AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 7, Cha 13; AL NE; THACO 20.

Weapon Proficiencies: dagger, club, crossbow. Nonweapon Proficiencies: silversmithing 10, gaming 13, animal handling 6.

Equipment: leather armor, cloak, dagger, club, rucksack, waterskin, wine flask.

Lars is a brawny young man with a bad attitude. He is the town bully, picking on smaller and weaker lads. If he hears that the PC is collecting a band to fight for Pommeville, he will insist on going with the party to impress the other townsfolk and prove himself a "true hero." Unfortunately, he is concerned only with his own hide. He would let the other characters meet a grisly doom if it meant that he could stuff his own pockets with gold. Lars has no agenda or plans to betray the party, he's just a bad egg.

Allies and Hirelings

Captain Miles (F3): Human; AC 1 (*plate mail +1*, shield); MV 12; hp 25; #AT 1 (3/2 with bastard sword); Dmg 1d8+4 (*bastard sword +1*, Str, specialized); Str 17, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14; AL NG; THACO 17 (13).

Weapon Proficiencies: bastard sword (specialist), dagger, crossbow, spear. Nonweapon Proficiencies: direction sense 13, heraldry 13, riding 15, tracking 12.

Equipment: *plate mail +1*, shield, helm, heavy crossbow, 20 quarrels, *bastard sword +1*, 2 daggers, hooded cloak, lantern, flask of oil.

Captain Miles is an officer of the King's army, passing through Pommeville on his way to his next assignment. He is an honest, forthright man who won't leave Pommeville until he knows the town is safe. Miles is willing to defer leadership to the person he thinks is most qualified to deal with undead. He views everything in military terms, referring to villagers as "friendly auxiliaries," and the zombies as "enemy assault troops."

Brother Montrel (P2): Human; AC 10; MV 6 (age); hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Str 6, Dex 10, Con 7, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14; AL LG; THACO 20 (-1 penalty for low Strength).

Weapon Proficiencies: staff, sling. Nonweapon Proficiencies: healing 13, ancient history 12, local history 14. Spells: *bles*, *cure light wounds*, *light*, *protection from evil*.

Equipment: robes, holy symbol, staff.

Brother Montrel tends the Shrine of Reflection and is a fellow priest of the PC's faith. He is an old man who is losing his vigor, but he still has a sharp and clear mind. He will want to accompany the PC and aid him against the evil threatening Pommeville, but it is obvious that the elderly priest is far too fragile for such activities.

Brother Montrel will offer any assistance he can to the PC, including healing, free spells, and access to the shrine library.

Friar Nicholas (PI): Human; AC 10; MV 12; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace, Str); Str 16, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 9; AL LG; THACO 20.

Weapon Proficiencies: mace, sling. Nonweapon Proficiencies: animal handling 13, cobbling 11, local history 9, religion 14. Spells: *cure light wounds*, *detect evil*, *light*.

Equipment: robes, sandals, backpack, one week of rations, waterskin, holy symbol.

Friar Nicholas is a strapping young monk who belongs to an order that wanders through the land, aiding the common folk. He is very quiet and easily embarrassed, and tries to avoid most social interaction. The friar can belong to the PC's religion if the DM chooses, but this is not necessary—he will willingly follow a charismatic priest of a level higher than his own, so long as the religions are not diametrically opposed. All the PC need do is ask for the Friar's help.

Reginard Runestave (W6): Human; AC 7 (*ring of protection +3*); MV 9 (age); hp 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 13; AL LG; THACO 19.

Weapon Proficiencies: dagger, staff. Nonweapon Proficiencies: ancient history 17, ancient language 18, reading/writing 19, spellcraft 16, herbalism 16. Spells: *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *friends*, *sleep*, *invisibility*, *know alignment*, *protection from evil 10' radius*, *suggestion*.

Equipment: robes, cloak, staff, pouch with spell components, spell book, silver dagger, *potion of flying*, *potion of healing*, *ring of protection +3*, *wand of fire* (12 charges).

Allies and Hirelings

Reginard is a likable old sage and alchemist who spends much of his time poring through ancient tomes in his tower. He enjoys sharing his knowledge (i.e., rambling on for hours) warmly. Reginard is very popular with the children of the village, who constantly besiege him with requests for demonstrations of real magic. The grown-ups of Pommeville generally think of Reginard as a harmless, if eccentric, old man.

Reginard will be happy to help the PC in any way he can, but like Brother Montrel, his adventuring days are long past. Reginard recognizes this, and if he accompanies the PC he will avoid conflict or serious physical exertion. Montrel and Reginard are the best of friends, but badger each other endlessly.

Shanna Whitelock (T5): Half-elf; AC 4 (*leather armor +1*, Dex); MV 12; hp 18; #AT 1 and 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (*short sword +1*) and 1d4 (dagger); Str 13, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 15; AL CG; THACO 18 (17 sword, 20 dagger).

Weapon Proficiencies: short sword, dagger, light crossbow.
Nonweapon Proficiencies: appraising 13, disguise 13, tightrope walking 17, tumbling 17, riding 13, swimming 13.
Thief Abilities: Pick Pockets 50%, Open Locks 40%, Find/Remove Traps 40%, Move Silently 45%, Hide in Shadows 40%, Detect Noise 35%, Climb Walls 90%, Read Languages 5%.

Equipment: *leather armor +1*, *short sword +1*, dagger, riding clothes, cloak, riding horse, belt pouch with thieves' picks, waterskin.

Shanna is a beautiful and vivacious half-elven woman who passes herself off as a wandering merchant and investor. She does buy and sell goods on occasion, but the major portion of her income is derived from her thieving activities. Shanna feels that it is only right to take from people who can spare the loss, and believes the best theft is one that won't even be noticed.

Shanna will want to avoid becoming entangled in Pommeville's troubles, believing that she is out of her depth in dealing with the zom-bies. She will point out that she is "just a trader,"

OLAFO.II^ ^M-IL "J*_ I-txiiCv^t.t-"JLI"- -I-'S^L'- "MML/^--JJ ^ , ^^,^' ble demonstration of the character's effectiveness against the undead.

Terence Theneuse (R3): Human; AC 6 (studded leather, *cloak of protection +1*); MV 12; hp 29; #AT 1 and 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (battle axe, Str) and 1d6+4 (*hand axe +1*, Str); Str 18/38, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10; AL NG; THACO 18 (17 battle axe, 16 hand axe).

Weapon Proficiencies: battle axe, hand axe, dagger, long bow. Nonweapon Proficiencies: tracking 15, riding 17, direction sense 15, hunting 13, animal lore 13, mountaineering. Ranger Abilities: Hide in Shadows 20%, Move Silently 27%, species enemy: ores.

Equipment: studded leather armor, *cloak of protection +1*, boots, long bow, quiver with 20 flight arrows, battle axe, *hand axe +1*, dagger, backpack, one week of rations, waterskin.

Terence is something of a local hero. As the younger son of the Theneuse family, he wandered widely in the forests and hills around Pommeville as a young man. He eventually became a skilled ranger. Terence is often gone for days at a time, patrolling the region. He is famed for killing four ores in one fight to save an outlying homestead from the raiding monsters.

Terence is a cheerful and happy-go-lucky sort who gets along well with others. His wisecracks and attitude belie his fighting skills. He will aid the PC if asked.

Beginning the Adventure

Cleric's Challenge begins when the PC arrives in Pommeville. The DM will have to invent a reason for the character's visit; the PC may have been summoned to a distant temple, he may have gone to visit relatives, or he may be engaged in another mission (carrying a message, seeking a sage, or whatever). The important thing is for the DM to provide the player character with a reasonable excuse for passing through Pommeville.

When you are ready to start, read the boxed text below to the player:

You have spent the day travelling through the rolling hills and farmlands of Vosgone, a peaceful region that has been settled for generations. You have passed through this area on several occasions in your career. The grey skies and chilling showers of early Spring have been with you all day, and you are looking forward to a hot meal and a warm bed.

You are following an ancient road known as the Stoneway. As darkness falls, you find yourself descending through a wooded valley towards the ford of the river Volar, and the small town of Pommeville. You are tired and cold, and it's a good time to stop.

The Volar is cold and swift, and you lead your horse across the ford and into the town. Pommeville is a prosperous village, and you can see stores and cottages to either side of the road. A steep, wooded hill rises above the town, hiding ivy-grown ruins on its crown.

You spy the welcome light of an inn, with the sign of a green griffon proudly displayed. Few people are out and about, but from inside the inn you can hear voices in conversation and the clink and clatter of dishes.

The hero can do whatever he or she wishes, but should be encouraged to stop and rest at the inn. It will be very hard to press on in the dark-

Beginning the Adventure

ness and drizzle. The PC may also want to try **Speaking to a Villager**, or looking for **The Shrine of Reflection**.

The Sign of the Green Griffon

The inn is the Green Griffon, area 7 on the map. At some point in the evening, the PC should end up here as he tries to secure a place to stay for the night. When the PC arrives, read the text below:

Shaking off the cold, you hitch your horse and step inside. The inn's common room is comfortable, with a dozen or so villagers and travellers enjoying a roaring fire and tankards of ale. A short, broad-shouldered man with a drooping mustache approaches with a smile. "Welcome to the Green Griffon," he says. "My name is George Marsette, and I'm the ostler. Have a seat by the fire, and I'll have my nephew look after your horse."

Taking a seat, you look over the crowd. Most appear to be villagers—a tall man in a smith's apron, a brash young man dressed as a craftsman, a pair of weathered old farmers—but you also see a couple of travellers. One is a handsome soldier in uniform, one is a towering monk, and a third appears to be a half-elven trader or merchant of some kind.

The PC can talk to as many of the tavern's customers as he wishes, but since nothing unusual has happened in Pommeville yet, the hero won't hear anything alarming or disturbing. The smith is Gwalmai, the brash craftsman is Lars, the farmers are Owen and one of his neighbors, the soldier is Captain Miles, the monk is Friar Nicholas, and the trader is Shanna Whitelock. As long as the PC is civil, the inn's patrons will happily answer any routine questions and pass along a few unimportant rumors.

If the PC mentions that he is a priest or asks after local temples, one of the NPCs will tell the PC about Brother Montrel and the Shrine of Reflection further up the road.

If the PC inquires about the ruins on top of the hill, the locals shrug and say something to the effect of, "They've always been there. Last week a couple of adventurers explored them, but I don't think they found anything."

When the PC retires for the evening, go on to Part One: A Night on the Town.

Speaking to a Villager

The PC can knock on just about any door in town and meet the people of Pommeville. Most villagers are friendly and helpful, and will direct the PC to the Shrine of Reflection or the Sign of the Green Griffon. None of the villagers know anything more about the ruins or have any special information to pass on.

The Shrine of Reflection

Ahead of you rises a small temple dedicated to your deity. Inside, you find a few well-polished pews and a simple altar. You note that the proper observances have been kept, but that it appears that few people have been here recently. In a few minutes, an aged priest shuffles out to greet you. "Welcome, welcome," he says in a warm voice. "It's been a long time since another of our order visited me. I am Brother Montrel, and I have tended this shrine for many years."

The temple has no facilities for visitors, so Brother Montrel will offer to put the PC up at the Green Griffon. He is desperate for news of the doings of the church, and will eagerly question the PC concerning other priests and bishops. Most of these have passed on or retired. If the PC visits Montrel before trouble starts, there's not much for them to talk about besides gossip. Montrel will show off his library of local history.

Montrel knows that the ruins on top of the hill are the remains of an evil temple, but he believes it to be safe; children often scamper and play around the ruins. It won't occur to him to mention the ruins unless asked.

Part One: A Night on the Town

During the night, Nedrezar animates the dead of the cemetery and sends them against the village. The DM should feel free to have fun with this scene. Zombies shamble about after screaming, panicking villagers, dragging them off in terror to an unknown fate.

The first encounter is **A Rude Awakening**, which actually occurs in the Sign of the Green Griffon. After the PC fights off the zombies in the inn, go on to **The Walking Dead**. This part of the adventure ends as the zombies retreat, in **Dawn's Early Light**.

A Rude Awakening

In the middle of the night, Nedrezar's undead minions rise and head towards the village. The PC is sleeping soundly in his or her room when the zombies arrive.

You are awakened by screams in the distance. Sitting up in bed, you listen, and for a moment all you hear is the moaning of the wind and the rustling of leaves. Then there is a piercing shriek from the hallway, and something thumps and fumbles at your door!

You spring to your feet just as the door gives way. In the darkness, you can make out a horrible, shambling form that advances on you, claws outstretched. Your stomach turns at the stink of the thing in your room!

A zombie is forcing its way into the room to attack the PC. The hero has not had time to don armor, but he may be able to seize a weapon and a shield at the DM's discretion. There is a window behind the PC's bed, and if he wishes to, he can leave the room by that means. The room is on the second floor, and the drop will inflict 1d6 points of damage.

Out in the hall, two zombies have Shanna cornered, one zombie is in Captain Miles' room, and another is attacking Brother Nicholas. Two more are in the ostler's quarters, and George and his brother Marco are valiantly trying to fend them off while their families cower behind them.

The hallway is dark, and filled with the stench of the grave. You can see the other guests fighting for their lives, dressed only in nightshirts or robes. The trader Shanna is trapped at one end, fighting off two zombies, and you can see two more at the other end of the hall attacking George and his family. You can also hear fighting in Nicholas' room, but Miles' room is disturbingly silent.

The PC can earn allies by aiding Shanna or getting to the zombie in Miles' quarters before it kills the sleeping captain. Nicholas will follow the PC if the hero makes any effort to recruit him or organize a defense. There is no timetable for when the zombies begin to strike and kill victims; the DM should let people down zombies, or vice versa, for dramatic effect in portraying this scene.

Zombies that are successfully turned will retreat to the graveyard.

George, Marco, and family: 8 0-level humans; AC 10; MV 12; hp 5 (George and Marco) or 2 (everyone else); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); AL N; THACO 20.

Zombies (7): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 11 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

As the last of the horrid things fall, George blanches and cries out in despair. "That was my uncle! And there's Regil, the farmer! They were buried years ago!"

The survivors turn away, horrified by the grisly scene. Suddenly, you hear a whinny of terror from the inn's courtyard! George dashes past you to the window and looks outside. "The town! The dead are walking! There must be hundreds of them!"

The Walking Dead

Obviously, this is a very good time for a hero to step forward and take charge of the situation.

Part One: A Night on the Town

If the PC is timid or hesitant, the DM can have George charge out of the inn to do something himself, while Aubrey shouts for someone to go and look after him. If the PC simply runs out to see what's happening, the other NPCs will follow.

There are about 100 zombies shambling through the streets of Pommeville. They will continue to terrorize the town all night. The PC may choose to deal with this in a number of ways, described in the **Strategies** section below. He or she may also need to collect a quick band of **Allies**.

Once the PC has decided on a course of action, the DM will need to present several encounters during the course of the night, including **The Mayor's Band, Carried Off**, and **The Shrine Besieged**. In addition to these encounters, the DM should use **The Thirst of the Dead** several times to keep the PC off-balance and frightened.

Allies

The PC has several potential allies with him at the end of **A Rude Awakening**. These are:

George and Marco: Either of these two villagers will come with the PC if asked. However, one will remain behind to bar the door and watch over the women and children.

Captain Miles: The Captain intends to go out and fight zombies, but recognizes that assembling a party is a very good idea. If the PC refuses to take charge of the situation, Captain Miles will. He'll ask the PC to go with him and help him defend the town.

Friar Nicholas: Nicholas wants to defend the town, and will follow any leader who asks him for his help. He would prefer to let the PC lead, pointing out that, "As priests, we are best-suited for laying these dead to rest."

Shanna: It will take a fair piece of argument to convince Shanna that she should risk her life for the villagers. A particularly charismatic or well-spoken and courageous PC can win her over. If the PC can't explain to Shanna why she should join the band, she will wait and watch over the innkeepers' families.

Strategies

There are several basic strategies the PC may follow in defending the town from the attack of the zombies. If the player feels overwhelmed by the chaos and confusion, the DM can offer a hint or two to get him moving again. Some of the strategies are:

Hunt the Hunters: The PC assembles as many villagers as he can and tries to exterminate the zombies. When the PC seems exhausted, tell him that dawn is near and the dead are slowly moving out of town.

Bar the Door: The PC tries to group the townspeople in a single, defensible place. Most of the NPCs will suggest the Shrine or the Lord's Manor. As the townspeople assemble, a massive wave of zombies attacks the building they are in.

Flee: The PC tries to get people to safety by leading an evacuation of the town.

The Thirst of the Dead

Use this encounter as many times as necessary throughout the night. Each time, alter the exact location and NPCs involved. For example, the second time this encounter is used, it may occur in the dark alleyways by Gerard's warehouses, and it may be Gerard himself who is in danger.

The key to this part of the adventure is to keep the player on the edge of his seat, but not to bore him with endless waves of zombies. Be creative and inventive in presenting these zom-bie attacks, and don't be afraid to reward clever role-playing or courageous action.

It is cold and wet outside, with an evil mist rising from the ground. There is only a sliver of a moon tonight, and the shadows are deep and threatening. Bursting out of the inn's common room, you are horrified to see dozens of moaning zombies prowling through the town. A villager across the road screams and falls beneath the clutching claws of three of the awful things. Even as you take in this terrible scene, you realize that you may be next! Dark, leering forms are closing in on you from every direc-

Part One: A Night on the Town

tion. You count half a dozen in a single glance, with more staggering down the road towards the inn.

Eight zombies are moving to attack the PC and his allies. If the character is armed, the zombies strike to kill; otherwise, they will attempt to grapple the PC and drag him off to face Nedrezar. In subsequent encounters, there will be 3d4 zombies present and 1d2 villagers.

Zombies (8): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

The Mayor's Band

Nichole Theneuse, her brother Terence, and a group of six armed villagers are also working to save as many of the people of Pommeville as they can. This encounter provides the PC with a chance to meet Nichole and steers them towards **The Shrine Besieged**.

Distant screams and the sounds of fighting still reach your ears as you pause to take stock of the situation. Your small band gathers around, resting for a moment. Suddenly, you sight a group of stealthy shadows moving towards you and your companions!

"Who goes there?" cries a voice in the dark. The shadows creep closer, and you see that they are armed villagers led by a stern-faced woman wearing leather armor.

One of your companions nudges you. "That's Nichole, the mayor," he says.

Nichole is a quiet and reserved woman, but she will be visibly pleased to find adventurers helping the people of Pommeville. She will introduce herself and ask the PC if he has any idea of what's happening or why.

"You're a priest? Good," Nichole says. "I'll need to talk to you when this is finished. My

companions and I will try to move everyone into the shrine, so that we can defend them all together. We've seen the creatures dragging people off towards the northeast, where the old graveyard is. Can you and your band follow them and try to rescue the people who have been carried off?"

If the PC agrees, go to **Carried Off**. If not, Nichole will be very disappointed and will not aid the PC in Part Two. She will scowl and mutter something to the effect of, "Don't trouble yourself, then," split her own band, and ignore the PC and his companions.

Carried Off

The zombies were sent by Nedrezar to bring him captives to feed upon, but their understanding of the orders was limited. Many of the zombies were consumed by blood-lust once they reached the town, and began to mindlessly attack anything that moved. Only a few remembered to capture victims for their master Nedrezar.

Those zombies are bringing their captives to the graveyard, and holding them there while Nedrezar feeds. The undead priest is there, animating a corpse with his own spirit. In effect, his spirit occupies a body and transforms it into a wight.

The zombies' trail is not hard to follow. Tatters of clothing and splatters of blood clearly show their path. They dragged their victims north along Pommeville's main road, and turned off at a winding lane that leads into the woods. Your companions tell you that the path goes to the cemetery.

As you approach, you can make out an eerie witch-light pulsing over the graveyard. The eldritch foxfire plays on the cold stones and silhouettes a macabre scene. Ten zombies are standing in a circle in the graveyard's center, clutching five villagers in their filthy hands.

In the middle of the ring, a tall and well-preserved zombie stands with its hands locked

Part One: A Night on the Town

around the head of a shrieking villager. Evil light burns like green fire in the zombie's eyes, and with a moan of hellish pleasure it drains the life from the hapless farmer, whose ash-grey corpse tumbles to the ground. The other zom-bies drag a fresh victim before the creature in the center of the ring.

Nedrezar will kill the next villager in one round if the PC does not intervene. Once the PC and his group make their presence known, Nedrezar will lead his minions to the attack. The villagers will be temporarily forgotten, and quickly flee the scene.

Priests suffer a -2 penalty to turn attempts in Nedrezar's immediate presence. The ancient priest will gloat as he attacks the heroes, hissing threats and proclaiming his strength. "Fools! I have mastered death itself! I shall drink of your souls, and you shall serve me for all eternity!"

Note that Nedrezar's spirit can be driven out of the corpse it is animating by a *dispel magic* spell, and prevented from approaching by a *protection from evil* spell.

Nedrezar's Wight Form: AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 26; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magic weapons; SZ M; AL LE; XP 975.

Zombies (10): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 11 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

When Nedrezar is defeated or all the zombies are downed, he abandons the corpse he is animating and returns to his tomb. He loses control of the zombies for one round (the heroes may strike with a +4 to hit and damage), and then re-animates them. Read the following text:

Part One: A Night on the Town

Suddenly the evil light fades from the corpse's eyes, and it sags to the ground. A spinning ball of green witch-fire leaps out of the body and streaks away to the south, disappearing in the thick tangle of trees. The other zombies slow and stop, some even sink to their knees. After a long pause, the zombies awaken, and renew their attack.

The Shrine Besieged

At some point in the night, Mayor Theneuse and the other villagers will gather the survivors in the Shrine of Reflection. The zombies mass and attack the shrine. If the PC helped to gather the townspeople and stayed with them, he is inside the shrine when the attack comes. Otherwise, the character is somewhere outside and will be able to intervene by counter-attacking from the rear. Only read the parenthetical information if the PC travelled to the graveyard and fought with Nedrezar.

Dozens of zombies surround the small temple, milling about uncertainly. Inside, more than one hundred villagers have gathered to make their stand. Children wail in fear, and the able-bodied men of Pommeville take up clubs or heavy rocks to defend their families from the ghastly horde.

Suddenly, the zombies lurch and turn towards the temple. In the middle of their ranks, two horrible figures appear. (You recognize two of the villagers who were killed in the cemetery, ordering the other zombies to attack!) Their eyes burn with eerie green fire, and they are much swifter and stronger than the lesser zombies around them.

If the PC is inside the shrine for this encounter, the zombies pound on the door for a few rounds until the door gives way. Each round, five zombies enter through the shattered gate. Most of the villagers are busy fending off zombies who try to climb through the windows or come in through the back door of the temple.

A group of six villagers armed with stones and clubs will help the PC and his companions to defend the main gate of the temple. Each group of zombies tries to push through the defenders to get at the defenseless people just inside. At a critical moment, the two ju-ju zombies move in to commit themselves to the attack.

If the PC is outside and attacking the zombies from the rear, 1d4 zombies per round will turn away from the temple to deal with the heroes. (The villagers inside will barely hold the zombies off, but will lose several men in the process.) Once the heroes have diverted ten or more zombies from the attack, the ju-ju zombies will move to the rear to drive the PC and his companions away.

The ju-ju zombies were created when Nedrezar *energy drained* two of the villagers that were captured and brought to him. The appearance of the ju-ju zombies brings cries of terror from their former families and friends.

Villagers (6): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level fighters; hp 5 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club).

Zombies (40): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

Ju-ju Zombies (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 27 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SD hit only by +1 or better magic weapons, type B and P cause 1/2 damage, spell immunities; SZ M; AL NE; XP 975 each.

Dawn's Early Light

After the shrine is defended, the night's activities are at an end. Read the text below:

Exhausted and wounded, you are surprised to see the zombies suddenly give up their assault. The horrid things turn and begin to stagger away, leaving the town. All around you, the zombies have given up and are returning to the graveyard. You are quite puzzled by this, until you notice a rosy glow in the sky to the east. Sunrise is only a few minutes away.

Part Two: A Grave Situation

In this part of the adventure, the PC helps the town recover from the attack and organizes an expedition to locate and destroy the source of the evil influence. In **Aftermath**, the hero surveys the damage and is asked to help put an end to the restlessness of the dead. In **Collecting Allies**, the PC can assemble a group of friends and hirelings to help him in his task. The **Investigations** encounter covers the results of any research or exploration in the area. Lastly, **Nedrezar's Crypt** describes the ruins of the ancient temple.

The player should start in the **Aftermath** encounter, but after that the course of action is up to him. If he wants to investigate first and collect allies later, that's his prerogative.

Until Nedrezar's crypt is sealed again, the zombies will awaken each night when the moon rises. They will continue to terrorize the town while the PC tries to figure out how to lay them to rest. The people of Pommeville will be pre-

pared this time, and will gather in a few easily-defended strongpoints to fight off the attacks. Very few people will be killed or taken by the zombies in the town, but the undead will begin to range across the local countryside, seeking easier prey. Travelling around the town and its vicinity by night will result in repeated encounters with the zombies (see **The Thirst of the Dead**.)

The zombies resist most attempts at destruction. Even ones that were "killed" on previous nights return the next day. *Blessing* the bodies will have no effect. If the PC wants to exhume and burn or dismember every body in the cemetery, the folk of Pommeville will very reluctantly follow his orders and set about the grisly work— but note that Nedrezar will still be free to work mischief in other ways.

Part Two: A Grave Situation

The Aftermath

After the sleepless, terror-filled night, most of the townspeople begin the new day with a couple of hours of exhausted slumber. By mid-morning, the villagers will be hard at work cleaning up the battle sites, counting the dead, and strengthening the defenses of their homes against a possible return of the zombies. Scouts will check on the graveyard and report back that the walking dead of the previous night have returned to their graves, and are quiescent in their coffins and mausoleums.

A Friend in Need

While the PC is out and about, surveying the damage, a tall, bony lad runs up and tugs on his cloak. "Please, my lord," the boy cries. "My ma is hurt. Can you help her?"

The boy is Robert, and his mother is the tanner Darian. She fought off a zombie last night, but was hit and reduced to 0 hit points (out of her normal 4). If the PC goes with the boy and helps Darian, either by casting *cure light wounds* or using the healing nonweapon proficiency to tend to her injuries, he will find that his charity will help win allies.

The Mayor Returns

If the PC has acted heroically in the defense of the town, Nichole Theneuse seeks him out at some point in the morning. If the PC rescued the villagers who were **Carried Off**, Nichole is much warmer and more respectful of the PC's abilities, and will offer any help that she can in the PC's investigations or in collecting allies, including volunteering Terence's assistance.

You are approached by the mayor, Nichole Theneuse, and a strapping young fellow who bears a family resemblance to her. Nichole's face is set in a hard frown, and you can see deep anger smoldering in her eyes.

"By my count, we lost six people last night, and dozens more were injured," she says quietly. "We need to find out what caused this and

put an end to it. You fought courageously on Pommeville's behalf last night, and I think we'll need your help to see us through this."

The young man beside her speaks. "I'm Ter-ence Theneuse, Nichole's brother. I'd like to help you, if I could."

Nichole would prefer to appeal to the PC's sense of duty, but if necessary she will offer a substantial reward (up to 200 gp) for proof that the cause of the previous night's troubles has been found and dealt with.

If the PC has no idea where to begin or what to do next, Nichole suggests that he find a few sturdy men-at-arms or adventurers to help him out. Nichole can recommend most of the NPCs that appear in the **Collecting Allies** section. She thinks that the PC should examine the graveyard, which is where the trouble seemed to start. She may also suggest that the PC visit Reginard or Brother Montrel.

Collecting Allies

There are a number of NPCs who can be gathered into a tough adventuring party, if the player character tries to get their help. They are all described under the NPC section, earlier in the adventure.

Cerene Avergnon: Cerene is recommended by Nichole only if the PC helped Robert's mother, Darian. The PC must visit Cerene at the manor, where he will first encounter her father, Lord Tomas. If the hero is respectful and sincere in dealing with Tomas and asking for her help, Cerene will agree to join the party as a full partner.

Gwalmai the Smith: Most villagers know that Gwalmai is a good man in a fight. The smith remains neutral, carefully considering an offer to join, and then replies that he'll need to be compensated for taking time to aid the PC. He can be hired for 2 gp per day.

Lars, the Apprentice: Once the PC has allied with at least one NPC, Lars tracks the hero down and demands to join the party. He boasts that he is the best fighter in town.

Part Two: A Grave Situation

Captain Miles: Miles joins the party if the PC personally saved his life in **A Rude Awakening**, and he is asked to help. If the captain survived without the PC's help, he will begin organizing his own expedition and asks the PC to join *him*.

Friar Nicholas: The friar will accompany the PC if asked.

Shanna Whitelock: If the PC aided Shanna in **A Rude Awakening**, she can be persuaded to join the party. If the PC ignored her plight, Shanna realizes that the hero considers her expendable and will only join if the PC is extremely persuasive and sincere.

Terence Theneuse: If the PC saved the villagers in **Carried Off**, Nichole will volunteer Terence's assistance. If the hero did not help the villagers, Terence will join if the PC cured Dar-ian. Otherwise, Terence will decide to work independently.

Investigations

Obviously, there are a few questions that the PC must find answers to if Pommeville is to return to normal. Why did the zombies rise? What were they after? How can it be stopped?

There are several places that the PC can go to find some answers. He can talk to **The Villagers**, visit **Reginard or Brother Montrel**, search **The Graveyard**, or search **The Ruins**. There may be other sources of information for a resourceful player, such as using a *Speak with Dead* spell to question a zombie or making use of other divinatory magic. The DM should handle these special cases as they arise.

The Villagers

Most of the villagers know little more than the PC does—they were awakened in the middle of the night by the attack of the zombies, and have no idea what caused the dead to rise. Many of the villagers are stricken with grief at the deaths of friends or loved ones.

If the PC takes several hours to speak to people and interview them at length, he will come up with a little information. The only thing that seems to have been unusual in Pommeville over

the last few days was the arrival of a small band of adventurers, led by a young priest named Giles. Few people will even think to associate the arrival of the adventurers with the rise of the zombies.

Giles and his friends explored the ruins on the Cairn and found something of interest, but they did not speak to any of the townspeople about their discovery and rode off the next day. The villagers know that Giles and his band were headed for the village of Arden, about eight miles to the east of Pommeville.

Reginard

The people of Pommeville enjoy the stories and magic tricks of their local wizard, the venerable Reginard. If the PC asks the villagers about people who might know about magic or zombies, he will be referred to Reginard, who "knows just about everything," as the villagers say.

Reginard can be found in his tower, where he has spent the day scrying and trying to identify the magic that was used to animate the zombies. He is a pleasant and chatty old fellow, who sincerely appreciates the PC's interest and attention.

Reginard can tell the hero that the zombies were controlled by powerful *animate dead* magic. He believes that no ordinary spellcaster could raise such a large number of zombies at once, and suspects the influence of some kind of magical artifact. He thinks that the life-draining zombie was a normal corpse inhabited by an evil spirit of some sort, and then abandoned.

Reginard knows a little of the area's history, but he will refer the PC to Brother Montrel. "He has a surprisingly complete library, after all. You should ask him about the ruins."

Brother Montrel

The aged priest is more than happy to offer any assistance possible to the PC. He has spent most of the day tending to the injured as best he can, and re-interring the zombies who were destroyed in the town. He has no idea what may have caused the zombies to rise, but he is suspi-

Part Two: A Grave Situation

cious of the adventurers who came through the village, and their search of the ruins.

"Most people here don't know it, but that place has an evil history. About 200 years ago, it was a powerful evil temple that was destroyed by the King's men. The ruins seemed harmless enough, but I suppose that maybe Giles and his friends disturbed something that should have been left alone."

Brother Montrel's collection of texts and scrolls concerning the history of the area can be swiftly perused in 1d4+2 hours with a successful reading proficiency check, or 1d4+4 hours if the check fails. The PC learns of Pommeville's history (see page 3) and also learns that Bishop Astara True-heart, a leader of the victorious army, set his seal upon the crypt of the High Priest Nedrezar.

The Graveyard

The town's graveyard is littered with the scattered bodies of the zombies. Some have returned to their crypts or mausoleums, others have burrowed into their own shallow graves, while dozens more simply collapsed once they reached the cemetery. It is a horrible sight.

None of the zombies will respond to any attack or action during the day. Without Nedrezar's magic, they are only corpses. The PC can destroy 2d6 zombies per hour by dismembering or burning the bodies, provided he has some assistance.

There is no sign of the creature that the PC saw during the **Carried Off** encounter. A search of the tombs and vaults will require a couple of hours; the DM is encouraged to role-play a couple of these, just to put the PC on his guard. Once the PC has been in the graveyard for a time, read the text below:

You have searched through the graveyard for an hour or so, examining crypts and opened graves. Everything you have seen is consistent with the rising of the zombies under some magical influence—coffins are splintered and

smashed from the inside, heavy marble slabs have been pushed aside, vault doors hang open on their hinges, and so on. It will take a concerted effort to re-bury all the town's dead, and you're not sure that re-interment will stop them from walking again.

You are getting ready to leave when you notice something odd—there is an old, weathered vault that has *not* been opened. Ivy grows over the walls, and the door seems to be sheathed or plated in green bronze.

If the PC searches the ground around the doorway, have the character make a Wisdom or Intelligence check (whichever is higher.) If the PC succeeds, he notices that the door has been opened (there are fresh scrape marks on the ground) and that several people have entered and exited the vault.

The door is locked, but the lock can be picked by a thief with a successful Open Locks attempt. The door is very sturdy, and characters trying to force it roll as if the door were barred.

The crypt is very dark and moldy, and seems far older than the others you have investigated today. The ceiling is low, and the stone flooring is cracked and uneven. Black mud oozes in the joints and cracks of the stone dressing. To either side, cobweb-fouled burial niches hold the moldering remains of ancient warriors in rusted hauberks of mail.

At the back of the crypt you can see an unusual sign or seal of some kind, glinting in the weak daylight.

If one or more characters enter the crypt to examine the seal, continue with the text below:

You creep closer, trying to see what kind of emblem watches over the warriors' rest. You hear an odd creaking sound, and whirl just in time to see the bronze door slam shut! The darkness is total, and as you hurry to strike a light you hear the rustle and clinking of rusty mail all around you.

Part Two: A Grave Situation

The emblem at the back of the crypt is a large decorative bas-relief or embossment of the ancient temple's seal. It conceals a secret door that leads to **The Temple**. A very observant PC will note the tracks in the mud and mold of the crypt leading up to the emblem. Nedrezar uses this entrance to bring victims to his chambers, and is trying to discourage the PC from further investigation.

The ancient priest used his powers of *telekinesis* to slam the door shut behind the explorers. Nedrezar wants to trap as many people as he can, but he'll settle for getting one or two. Once the door is shut, he animates the skeletons of the dead temple guards and directs them to attack the trapped characters.

Skeletons (12): AC 5 (chain mail hauberks); MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

If the party proceeds through the secret door, go on to **The Temple**.

The Ruins

On top of the Cairn are the remains of Nedrezar's fortress; the evil Temple of Maur. The temple was razed at the end of the wars that ravaged the kingdom long before Pommeville's founding, and the ruins are no more than a few weathered stones and broken walls. Ivy grows over the rubble, and small animal paths lead here and there on top of the hill. The folk of Pommeville like to come up to the ruins for the view and the sunshine.

After a short scramble up the steep, bramble-grown hillside, you reach the top of the Cairn. The town is spread out below you, and you can follow the silver ribbon of the Volar for miles before it disappears around a bend.

The ruins lie around you, covered in moss and ivy. At first glance, they do not seem unusual. Children's graffiti is scrawled in several places. Spreading out to search the site, you come across the evidence of a more serious

interest in the ruins—a partially-excavated hall or basement, with a wooden winch-frame and evidence of a campsite. Apparently, this is the site of the previous adventurers' explorations.

The excavation that Giles was working on is a large, exposed foundation. A wooden frame stands over the open basement, and a wooden ladder leads down into the working area. It appears that the explorers left in a hurry. Heaps of rubble surround a dark stairway leading down. When the PC and his group descend the stairs, go on to **The Temple**.

The Temple

The Cairn is honeycombed with passages that were created when the Temple of Maur was active. Since most of the passages have been sealed since the temple's fall, no natural monsters have crept in to make lairs here. However, there are some traps and tricks that the PC should be wary of.

Most of the dungeon is made of stone-dressed corridors that are in good shape. A few small insects can be found, such as spiders and centipedes, but there is little decay or debris.

The stairs are still choked with rubble and debris, but you can make your way down with care. The air is cold and damp, and the musty smell of age is thick in your nostrils. You wind down 30 to 40 feet before the stairway ends, opening into a dark corridor.

1. The Lower Hall.

Two open chambers are joined by a narrow passageway. The stairs you followed brought you into the joining passage between the two rooms. Another set of stairs like the one you just descended heads back up into darkness across the hall. You can see several doors in the outer chambers, and a set of low steps to the right that leads up to a great double-door. An unusual seal or symbol in the shape of a coiling dragon is emblazoned across the doorway.

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The floor of this room is littered with several skeletons, and a few bits and scraps of armor and weaponry. The walls are lined with several ruined tapestries, broken sconces, and soiled banners. In one corner there is a new lantern with 6 flasks of oil beside it, a 50' coil of rope, 12 pitons, and a small hammer. The equipment was left by Giles and his friends.

There is nothing else of interest here.

2. Well Room.

This chamber seems to have been the well for the fortress above. A rickety wooden frame and several smashed pails lie beside a dark well, lined by a low wall of brick. You can hear the dripping of water from somewhere far below.

The framework is too weak to support any weight; if a character tries to secure a rope to it to explore the well, the framework will collapse

and the character will suffer 5d6 damage as he falls 40 feet into the bottom of the well.

3. Sacristy.

Splintered furniture and heaps of debris fill this room. At one time, a row of wooden pegs along the wall probably held a number of dark, hooded robes, but the pegs have disintegrated and the robes are small piles of rotten cloth on the floor. Against one wall there are several sacks of rotten grain and the sour smell of old vinegar fills the room.

Rummaging around the old sacks of grain will turn up a nest of giant centipedes. The person who searched the grain sacks suffers a -2 penalty to his or her surprise check. The centipedes can scuttle through areas otherwise choked by rubble, and occasionally scavenge through the dungeon for food.

In the pockets of one of the robes is a golden

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medallion worth 15 gp. It features a smaller version of the coiled dragon seal. There is a secret door located in the east wall.

Giant Centipedes (9): AC 9; MV 15; hp 2; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison; SZ T; AL N; XP 35 each.

4. The Lower Shrine.

The double doors leading to this chamber are propped open by a shiny new helmet. Inside, you see a large room with deep niches along the walls and a dark altar at the far end. The floor is tiled with a mosaic depicting the coiled serpent or dragon emblem of the old temple. Overhead, a groined vault supports a ceiling 20 feet above the floor.

The niches contain grotesque statues of horrifying creatures, with fang-filled maws and vicious spikes. The altar sits on a raised dais, and is decorated with sinister carvings and human skulls. Flanking the altar are two iron braziers. In the corners of this evil shrine stand two taller statues of dark, armor-clad warriors.

This chamber was once a hidden shrine for the larger temple above. It was used by a select circle of Nedrezar's priests. The statues are threatening, but harmless. The mosaic on the floor is not—if a good-aligned character sets foot on the serpent emblem (75% chance for anyone entering the room, unless the PC states that they are specifically avoiding it) he or she suffers an electrical shock that inflicts 1d4 points of damage. The serpent emblem can easily be avoided, once it is triggered.

The altar is even more dangerous. If a character sets foot on the dais without making the proper obeisances, the four skulls on the altar will darken and four shadows will emerge to attack the offender. The shadows ignore other people in their effort to slay the offender, unless one of the victim's comrades also steps on the dais.

Shadows (4): AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 21, 18, 17,15; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5 + special; SA

strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; AL CE; XP 650 each.

The warrior statue to the north has a concealed compartment in its chest. The statue is more than ten feet tall, so a character would actually have to climb onto the statue to find the compartment. Inside is a pouch containing six emeralds worth 100 gp each, two star opals worth 240 gp each, a scroll with *cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *remove paralysis*, and *dispel magic* on it, and a *ring of protection* +2. The cache was placed there by an underling of Nedrezar's who wanted a place to stash some emergency supplies.

The altar also conceals a secret door that leads to Nedrezar's crypt. The top of the altar slides aside to reveal a stairway leading down. The door is triggered by the skulls—the searcher must press the rear two skulls down together to open the door. The front skulls each conceal a poisoned needle that will prick anyone who handles the skull with bare hands. The poison is type B, and causes 20 points of damage if the victim fails his saving throw and 1-3 points if the victim succeeds. The poison is old and weak, and victims save with a +3 bonus.

The secret door in the northern niche is opened by pressing a concealed button in the back of the statue.

5. The Upper Crypt. A 200' passageway connects this mausoleum with the rest of the underground complex. The crypt is the same one described in **The Graveyard**.

6. Priests' Quarters.

The wreckage of old furniture and decorations litters this room. You can see the remains of four or five simple cots, several smashed trunks, a scorched writing desk, and several moldering tapestries and ripped-up paintings. To the south is another door.

A search of the wrecked desk reveals a blotchy old scroll that describes the gestures and prayers

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required to approach the altar in area 4 without summoning the shadows. If a PC priest uses these obeisances, the character's deity may become angry and deny the character spells until the cleric spends a day in atonement and reflection.

The area to the south, 6a, is a private priest's room. In the temple's heyday, the acolytes who lived in the outer room were supervised by a master of training, who lived here. A comfortable bed, a large desk, and a standing armoire have all been smashed to pieces and scattered around the room. The ruins of the armoire conceal a secret compartment with 2 gems worth 50 gp each and a sealed letter that notes the location of the cache in the statue in area 4.

7. Guard Chamber.

You notice that the door to this room is made of sturdy oak, bound with iron and fitted with a heavy lock. Fortunately, it isn't locked or barred. Inside, you see a small guard room with torches burning in the sconces and a rack of polearms against one wall. As you open the door, you see a couple of hulking shapes turn to face you. They resemble ogres, but it's obvious that they have been dead for a long time. Silently, they lurch towards you!

This chamber was used as a guard post and jailor's room in the days of the temple. Nedrezar has several villagers imprisoned in the dungeon, and is using the monster zombies to make sure that his captives don't escape. The zombies have been ordered to attack any living creature that enters this room, but will not leave the room.

Monster Zombies (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 31, 28; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4d6; SD undead immunities; SZ L; AL N; XP 650 each.

8. Interrogation Chamber.

The function of this room is clear. Implements of torture line the walls, most of them wrecked or broken. Several of the chamber's victims still

hang from their chains or lie trapped in the devices that killed them.

There are a total of six corpses in the torture room. Unlike most of the other skeletons the PC has met so far, these unfortunates will not animate and attack.

9. The Dungeon.

A rusty door of iron leads into a dank, narrow corridor. Inside, a few torches gutter weakly. Several doors of iron-sheathed wood line the hallway, with small barred windows set in them. The doors lead into small cells. As you begin to explore, you hear a weak cough from the end of the hall and a voice calls, "Please, help me!"

The cells are empty, except for the area marked 9a. In this cell, a villager named Marcel has been chained to the wall. Marcel owns an outlying farm to the north, and was captured early in the zombies' attack. He was brought here and thrown into the cell.

Marcel is a portly fellow, and is currently scared out of his wits. He was handled roughly by the zombies, and is in pretty bad shape. All he wants is to be set free and shown the way out.

Nedrezar had intended to save Marcel for later, or to use him as a lure to draw rescuers into a trap.

10. The Black Chamber.

The secret staircase from the altar winds down through solid rock, descending about 30 feet further into the Cairn. It emerges in a dark chamber of polished black granite. Directly ahead of you is a large double-door, emblazoned with the coiled serpent seal you've seen elsewhere in the ruins. Beside the door, a series of soft-glowing words are cut into the rock. On your left and right, a couple of smaller doors lead back towards the north. The room is unnaturally cold; your breath hangs in the air, and you can't suppress a wave of shivering that strikes you.

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The door to the south is trapped in the same manner as the mosaic in the upper temple. Any character of good alignment who touches the emblem will be shocked for 1d4 points of damage. The words were placed by the door by Bishop Astara as a warning. They read:

"In this Year, the 317th of the Realm, I set my seal upon the Crypt beyond this Door. Evil slumbers within. To Ward the Realm I have placed my Stave over the Tomb; let no Person disturb it. Heed this, my Warning. "

—*Prefect and Bishop Astara Trueheart*

11. Vault. The passageway leading to this room is guarded by a pit trap at the spot marked 'x'. On the wall beside the pit is a concealed catch that will lock the pit closed, but at the moment it is not set and the trap will function. The pit is 15 feet deep and the bottom is lined with rusty iron spikes. The fall does 1d8 damage and the victim suffers 0-5 (1d6-1) spike hits for 1d6 damage each. The victim may attempt a saving throw versus paralyzation with a -4 penalty to leap to safety once the pit opens.

The door to the vault is made of iron plate, with two sturdy locks (treat as barred for Open Doors attempts; the locks must both be picked).

This chamber was once used as a treasure vault. A dozen or more heavy chests have been broken open and their contents taken. There are also several sturdy coin sacks that have been ripped open and emptied. One wall holds a weapons rack with a pair of rusted old long swords, and many empty slots where other weapons once hung.

A thorough search of this room will turn up a total of 14 gp, 23 sp, and 60 cp that the raiders missed. One of the chests sits over a fake flagstone. The compartment inside holds a pouch of 3 rubies worth 260 gp each, plus a *peript of proof against poison* +2.

12. Priests' Crypt.

The air reeks of musty death as you open the door to this room. Inside you can make out the dark shapes of stone tombs. Several chests and coffers, remnants of ruined banners and tapestries, and corroded weapons and armor are scattered throughout the room.

Inside the room, you see four pale and haggard-looking adventurers. One seems to be a dwarven fighter, one a human priest, one a half-elven mage, and one a human minstrel. They glance up at you with dull expressions as you enter. They look like they've been in a fight.

If the PC is accompanied by any villager (Cerene, Gwalmai, Lars, or Terence) the NPC recognizes Giles and his party. If the PC thinks to point out that Giles supposedly left town, allow the NPC an intelligence check to see if the character realizes that this is a ruse.

As part of his preparation for lichdom, Nedrezar murdered several loyal followers. When he was betrayed himself, the lesser priests had already been killed and their tomb sealed. The priests became heucuvus, but escaped Nedrezar's domination.

The heucuvus were unable to leave their crypt until Giles and his companions opened the door a few days ago. They are using their *polymorph* ability to lure the PC and his companions into striking range. If the ploy works, the heucuvus gain a +3 bonus on their chance to surprise the party.

Heucuvus (4): AC 3; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14,12,12, 9; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA disease; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magic weapons; SZ M; AL CE; XP 270 each.

The chests and coffers of the chamber contain a small hoard of 1,340 sp, 380 gp, and 35 pp. Two golden statues are worth 60 gp each, and a copper bracelet studded with gemstones is worth 130 gp. Note that heucuvus are turned as wights.

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13. Nedrezar's Crypt.

In the center of this room lies a massive stone sarcophagus on a raised dais. The chamber has a high, vaulted ceiling of dark granite, and four braziers in the corners burn with a smokeless green flame that casts evil shadows throughout the chamber. Across the room you see a shelf or small altar, with a skull made of pure crystal resting on it. The walls and floor are bare of any decoration, and the air is as cold in here as it was in the chamber outside. The green light of the torches dances in the eyes of the crystalline skull.

Stepping closer, you see that the sarcophagus in the room's center is encircled by a protective circle of runes, cut into the stone floor.

Nedrezar is now aware of the PC's intrusion and will begin to summon zombies and skeletons to his defense. One turn after the hero enters, 1d4 zombies and 1d4 skeletons arrive. A

similar number of reinforcements will arrive every other round until the PC is driven out of the tomb. Nedrezar will wait for his first defenders to arrive and then occupy one of the zombies in his wight form to lead the attack. He will also *animate* the bodies of any NPCs that fall in battle. Each time Nedrezar uses one of his powers, the skull glows with an evil green light.

If a character attacks the skull with a magical weapon, it shatters on the first strike. It can also be destroyed by a variety of spells.

The tomb in the room's center is made from the same heavy, polished granite as the rest of the room. It is carved with horrible bas-reliefs, and around its lid is carved a terrible curse against would-be tomb robbers. Any character who opens the tomb must save versus spell or be struck blind for 99 days. (A *cure blindness* or *remove curse* spell will restore the victim's sight.)

Inside the tomb lies the withered remains of Nedrezar's corporeal form. If the form is

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attacked, Nedrezar will immediately return to defend it. Otherwise, he will let it lie, preferring to do his fighting from another body. His remains are richly appointed, with a golden pectoral worth 350 gp, gem-studded bracers that are actually *bracers of defense AC 3*, a jeweled miter worth 475 gp, and a gilded mace (actually a *mace +3*.)

In a secret compartment below the body there is a silk pouch containing 3 rough-cut diamonds worth 100 gp each, a *ring of warmth*, and a necklace of silver and emerald worth 850 gp.

An examination of the circle of runes on the floor shows that it is incomplete; the key element has been removed. From the size and shape of the depression in the floor, the PC can guess that the key part of the magical protection was a metal rod about two feet long. If the hero can read or has the religion or spellcraft proficiencies, he or she can determine that the circle was designed to trap an evil spirit within its confines and keep it there forever. The circle no longer functions with the rod removed.

The burning braziers are simply custom-tailored versions of a *continual light* spell.

Nedrezar

The crystal skull is the vessel that Nedrezar constructed to hold his spirit while his transformation into a lich was in progress. While it is intact, he is able to *magic jar* into any dead body within a one-mile area and occupy it as a wight. Because the process went awry, Nedrezar cannot occupy the body of a living creature.

Destroying the skull prevents Nedrezar from occupying any body he wishes to and traps him in his own body, within the crypt. He will never be able to take the wight form again. However, when his body is destroyed, Nedrezar can take another dead body, from within a one-mile area, re-creating his corporeal form. It requires 24 hours to do this. Nedrezar cannot voluntarily leave his corporeal body once the skull is destroyed.

When in his corporeal form, Nedrezar can drain life energy directly to make progress

towards lichdom, but he loses the ability to move his spirit from body to body.

Nedrezar can be destroyed by killing his corporeal form, smashing the skull, and restoring the special *protection* circle around his tomb to prevent his spirit from inhabiting another body. He can be trapped forever by restoring the circle.

Nedrezar's Wight Form: AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 26; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magic weapons; SZ M; AL LE; XP 975.

Nedrezar's Corporeal Form: AC 3; MV 12; HD 6+3; hp 42; THACO 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d12; SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magic weapons; SZ M; AL LE; XP 3,150.

While the skull is intact, Nedrezar can *animate dead* at will, within a range of one mile; he can *assume wight form* by inhabiting a corpse within one mile; he can use *telekinesis* once per day within the boundaries of the ruined temple; and he can use *clairvoyance* and *clairaudience* once per day within a one-mile range.

Nedrezar drains one energy level by touch. In his corporeal form, he can use the following abilities at will: *command*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *darkness*, *cause fear*, and *animate dead*. Once per day he can *cause serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, and cast a *glyph of warding*. Regardless of his form, Nedrezar is immune to charms or mind-affecting spells and cold-based attacks, and can only be hit by silver or magical weapons. In any form, he commands undead as an evil priest of 10th level.

Nedrezar needs to drain energy levels to power the completion of his transformation into a lich. The DM can use this as a plot device to make the ancient priest tougher as time goes by and he drains more and more levels.

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Hopefully, the PC discovered Nedrezar's crypt in the previous section and realized that the key element of the spirit's prison had been removed—the Rod of Astara. If the player missed the clues that indicated that the rod would be needed to finally defeat Nedrezar, have one of the NPCs approach the character and voice his or her concerns. Reginard, Mon-trel, and Cerene are all learned enough to realize that Astara's seal has been broken and a critical element removed.

The NPC may also point out that the priest Giles and his adventuring company had recently explored the ruins. Many of the villagers believe that the adventurers found something of interest in the ruins. Naturally, Giles left town a couple of days ago.

At this point, the PC may think to try **More Research, Finding Giles, or Reporting to the Mayor**. Eventually, the PC will have to set out **In Search of the Rod**.

More Research

The PC may decide that his investigation of the crypt turned up new and important facts. If he returns to Montrel or Reginard to attempt more research, he will find that Astara enchanted his rod of office and used it as the focus for the protective seal he placed over Nedrezar's crypt. It is clear that the integrity of the ward depended on the presence of the rod, which Astara left behind.

The rod is described as a "Rod of Bronze two feet long, graven with the Sunburst and Sword of Good."

Finding Giles

Most of the villagers can tell the PC that Giles and his company rode east, heading for the town of Arden. Arden is only about eight miles away, and some people observe that, "You can probably catch 'em if you hurry. They said they'd be in Arden for a week or more, and they only left two days ago. You know, they stayed at the Green Griffon. Maybe George knows more."

George only repeats what everyone else said, but if asked about a rod or staff of some kind he scratches his head and says, "Oh, yes, I almost forgot about that, what with all the excitement. The young priest had a funny-looking metal wand with him that he and the mageling were looking at. They thought it might be magic."

Reporting to the Mayor

Nichole is surprised to learn that such a dangerous area exists so close to her town. The ruins had never been a source of trouble until Giles and his companions opened the stairs and explored them. If the PC is clueless and relates all the facts of the investigation to her, Nichole will figure out that the rod must be put back to end the threat.

When the PC and/or Nichole realize what has happened, Nichole deputizes the PC on the spot. "Find the rod and bring it back. Tell Giles and his friends that we'll pay anything they want for it, but the right thing to do is to put things back the way they found them."

Nichole offers to provide mounts for the PC and his entire party, and can send a delegation of villagers if the PC desires. Any of the local NPCs can act as a guide and show the character the way to Arden.

In Search of the Rod

There are two options for the DM in this encounter. The first is described under **Arden**. The second is described under **Therise** and continues in **The Ruined Keep**. The **Arden** scene is much easier, and allows the PC to confront Giles directly and get to the root of the problem. **The Ruined Keep** assumes that Giles and his friends never made it to Arden, and the PC will have to retrieve the staff from a dangerous lamia.

Pommeville's Area

The map on the next page shows the area surrounding Pommeville. The map is intentionally left open, so that the DM can incorporate Pommeville into his own campaign or expand the region as he sees fit.

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Arden

The journey to Arden can be covered under normal Overland Movement rules (see page 125 of the DMG) or, because it is so near, the DM can just gloss over the trip. It shouldn't take more than a half-day by horseback. When the PC reaches Arden, read the following:

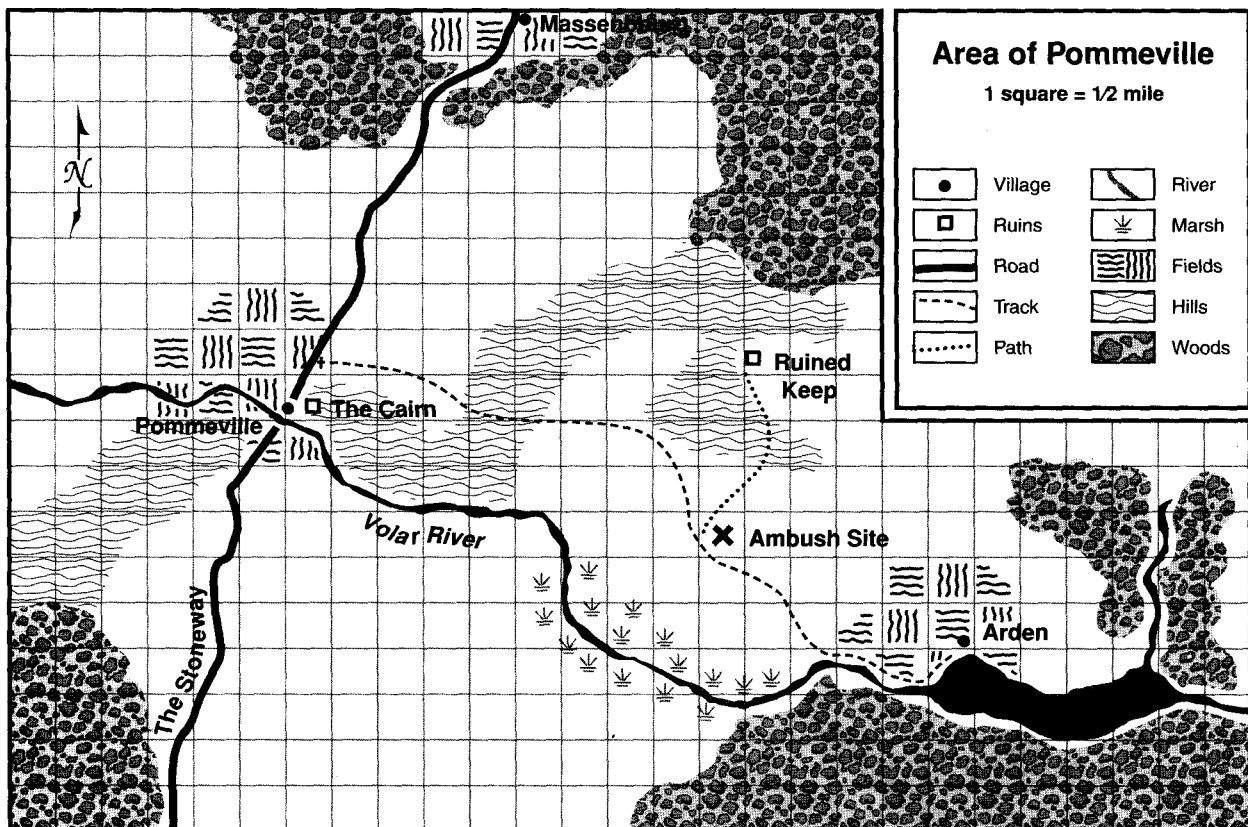
You find Giles at the Volarway Arms in the village of Arden. He and his company are planning some new misadventure around a corner table. Your companions recognize him instantly, and you all approach cautiously.

Giles is a young, enthusiastic scholar with spectacles and a clean-shaven face. His companions include a dwarven man-at-arms, a pretty human bard, and a scowling half-elven mage. The priest looks up as you come near. "Yes? What can I do for you?"

After the PC explains the situation, the small band puts their heads together and discusses the situation. The dwarf feels that they shouldn't surrender the obviously-valuable rod. The bard feels they should give it back right away. Giles and the mage are undecided. The rod is of some value as a historical artifact of the Bishop's days.

"We went to some trouble to recover Astar's rod," the priest says. "I'm not entirely convinced that we're responsible for Pommeville's problems. But we're willing to consider a trade for an artifact or object of about the same value."

The PC can arrange whatever deal he thinks is appropriate. Some trading points might be minor magical items belonging to the PC, a promise of gold from the town treasury, or agreeing to perform a service of some kind for



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Giles and his friends. The DM is encouraged to improvise and drive a hard bargain.

Therise

In the second scenario, Giles and his band never made it to Arden, falling prey to a lamia and her minions who waylay travellers along the path. The PC will have to recover the rod from the lamia.

You are about five miles outside of Pommeville, following a little-used cart track that parallels the course of the Volar. Arden is another hour or so away. The path winds over a small rise and down into a grassy dell. As you ride by a thicket close to the road, you hear a weak moan and the rustle of something moving in the bushes.

One of Giles' companions, the human bard Therise, is lying in the bushes beside the path. She has been wounded badly and has gone more than four days without food or shelter. Therise is in a very bad way, and if she is not aided immediately she will die.

Once Therise has been tended to (a *cure light wounds* spell or the use of the healing proficiency and some food and water will help) she will become lucid enough to answer the PC's questions and thank him for saving her life.

The woman is dressed in comfortable riding clothes, and wears a jerkin of soft leather armor and a red cloak. She is quite pretty, and among her possessions you find a short sword, a dagger, and a flute. After her injuries have been tended to, she begins to come around.

"Thank you for helping me," the woman murmurs. "I don't think I could have lasted much longer. My name is Therise, and I am a wandering minstrel. My companions and I were attacked by a horrible creature and its followers. I think the others were killed or captured; I managed to escape by casting a spell, but not before I was wounded.

Therise feels that she has no reason to conceal anything from the PC. If asked about the ruins, she will confirm that she explored them with Giles and the rest of the party, and she will also mention that they found a magical scepter or rod that Giles was very interested in. Giles was carrying the rod in his pack when the fight began.

Therise will ask that the PCs help her to go after her companions. She doesn't know if they are still alive or not, but she did see the bandits and their monstrous leader ("a horrible beast that spoke with a woman's voice") drag her friends off towards the northwest. Therise thinks the monster may have a lair nearby.

If the PC heads off in pursuit of Therise's attackers, go on to **The Ruined Keep**.

Therise the Minstrel (B4): Human; AC 4 (*leather armor +1, Dex*); MV 12; hp 15 (2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (*short sword +1*); Str 11, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16; AL NG; THACO 19 (18).

Weapon Proficiencies: short sword, dagger, sling.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: local history 16, reading/writing 14, musical instrument 16, disguise 15, tumbling 17, land-based riding 13. Spells: *sleep, charm person, invisibility*.

Bard Abilities: Climb Walls 80%, Detect Noise 35%, Pick Pockets 40%, Read Languages 15%, influence reactions, inspire allies.

Equipment: *leather armor +1, short sword +1, sling, two daggers, riding clothes, boots, cloak, pouch with spell components, waterskin*.

Therise is a member of the Company of the Silver Sword; Giles's band of adventurers. She will view her rescuers in a very good light unless they treat her badly. She will accompany the PC, but will stay out of the way until she is in better health.

If the PC is visibly angry at Giles for removing the rod, Therise will hold her tongue, figuring that the first order of business is getting the

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priest out of trouble. She hopes to arrange a reasonable discussion about the disposition of the rod after her companions are safe.

The Ruined Keep

Giles, Therise, and the others were attacked by a lamia named Chamille who preys on travellers and the occasional careless villager. Chamille is quite intelligent, and makes a point of restraining herself to avoid drawing attention. Over the past few years, many travellers have disappeared in the area, but they were not missed.

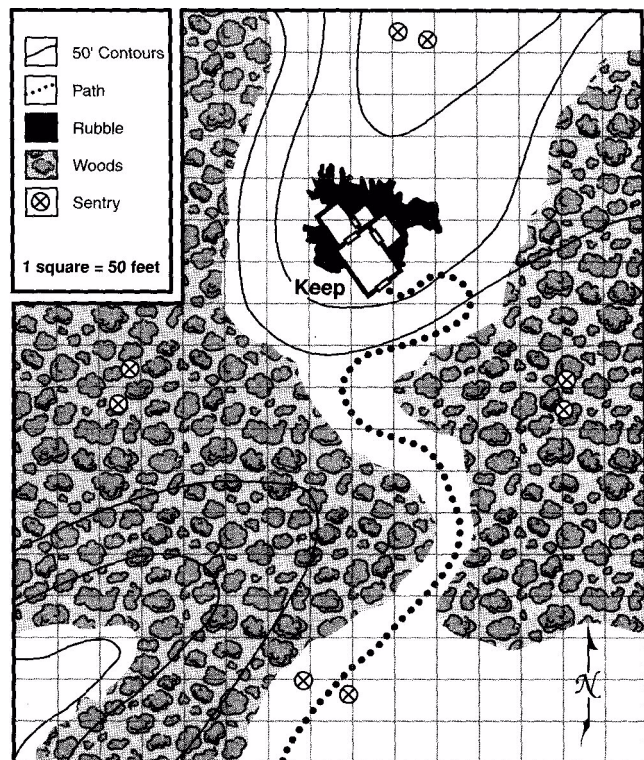
Chamille lairs in the ruins of an old wizard's keep. She wandered into the Pommeville area after being chased from her old lair by adventurers. She is still angry about abandoning her old home, and keeps a couple of *charmed* or wisdom-drained henchmen around to help her defeat or deceive intruders.

A quick search of the site where Therise was ambushed turns up a trail heading to the north. By your guess, several men were in the ambushing party. You also find the tracks of a large, powerful stag in and among the footprints of the bandits.

You follow the tracks for about two miles into a range of low, forested hills. As dusk begins to fall, you sight the moss-covered ruins of an old tower or keep perched on a hillside. As far as you can tell, the keep seems abandoned.

Refer to the map on this page. It shows the area surrounding the lamia's lair. Chamille thinks that someone may have escaped her ambush, and is taking precautions. She has posted most of her followers as sentries at the spots marked 'x' on the map.

When the heroes pass within 200 feet (four squares) of a sentry, they may have an encounter. Check normally for surprise. If the PC and his group are being careful (scouting ahead with a ranger or thief, carrying no lights, proceeding under a *silence* spell, etc.) the DM should assign the sentries a small penalty on their surprise roll, or give the heroes a bonus.



If the PC is surprised by a sentry, the sentry will avoid the encounter and go back to warn Chamille and the others at the keep. When the PC investigates the ruins, use the encounter described under **Chamille Prepared**. If the PC does not surprise the sentry, the sentry will try to flee the encounter to warn Chamille. Use normal encounter and combat rules to determine if the sentry escapes to warn the lamia in the keep.

If the PC is able to take care of the sentry before the lamia is warned, use the encounter described under **Chamille Surprised**.

Sentries (8): 0-lvl bandit; AC 6 (studded leather, shield); MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (crossbow) or 1d6 (short sword); SZ M; AL varies (most are *charmed*); XP 20 each.

Chamille Prepared

If the lamia is expecting the PC and his friends, she is a very dangerous foe. She will

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send the sentry who brought her the warning of intruders to go collect the other sentries and bring them to the keep. It will take 11-20 (1d10+10) rounds for the fellow to get the bandits together and bring them to the keep, where they will attack intruders on sight.

Inside the lamia's lair, Chamille will prepare by using her *illusion* powers to assume the form of a helpless maiden, bound and gagged. She has two guards in her lair—the dwarf Therek, one of Therise's band, and Giles himself. Therek has been wisdom-drained to 2, and Giles is *charmed*. (The mage was unfortunately devoured.) Both willingly follow Chamille's orders.

Giles and Therek tell the PC that they have just driven off the bandits who captured them and are about to rescue the maiden. They stall for time, waiting for reinforcements before attacking. An observant character will notice that they keep looking to Chamille for answers to tough questions by making an intelligence check. If Therise is with the party, she automatically notices.

When the gathered sentries arrive, Chamille orders Giles and Therek to attack, in an attempt to take the heroes at the rear of the party by surprise. She uses her own *charm* and *suggestion* powers to wreak havoc, avoiding physical combat.

Chamille Surprised

If the lamia receives no warning that the PC is coming, she will not have time to prepare an ambush. Instead, make a normal surprise check when the PC enters the ruined hall. Chamille is caught in her own true form (half-deer, half-woman) and Giles and Therek will be standing about with blank faces.

Chamille will order the priest and the dwarf into the fray, while she attempts to sow confusion in the heroes' ranks by using her *charm*, *suggestion*, and *illusion* powers to their best effect. The lamia has no concern for her minions and will force them to fight to the death. However, a *dispel magic* or counter-c/iffm could bring some allies back over to the heroes' side in the battle.

Chamille: Lamia; AC 3; MV 24; HD 9; hp 44; THACO 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (or by weapon); SA wisdom drain; SZ M; AL CE; XP 3,000.

Spells: *charm person*, *mirror image*, *suggestion*, *illusion* (once per day).

Giles (P3): Human; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; hp 12 (8); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace); Str 8, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 12; AL NG; THACO 20.

Spells: *bless*, *cure light wounds*, *entangle*, *light*, *aid*, *find traps*, *hold person*.

Therek (F2): Dwarf; AC 3 (plate mail); MV 6; hp 19 (16); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (battle axe, Str); Str 18/23, Dex 7, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 2, Cha 10; AL LN; THACO 19 (18).

If the PC finds some way to approach Chamille peacefully and offer to negotiate, the lamia is willing to listen. However, she does not plan to let anyone live with knowledge of the location of her lair. She may feign agreement or even offer to accompany the PC, planning to do away with the character at her leisure. An appeal to return the Rod of Astaras is useless—the lamia couldn't care less about what happens to Pommeville—but she may see just how far the PC will go to get the rod back.

Hidden in the rubble behind Chamille's lair is her cache of treasure. Over the years, she has accumulated 2,800 sp; 910 gp; a *shield +2*; a *long sword +1*; a *potion of extra-healing*; a *cloak of displacement*; a scroll with *detect charm*, *dispel magic*, and *cure serious wounds*; and the Rod of Astaras, which she removed from Giles when she charmed him. The lamia's treasure is locked in four wooden trunks, the keys to which she carries on a small chain.

With the rod recovered, the only thing left for the PC to do is to return it to Nedrezar's crypt and restore Astaras's seal. However, the ancient priest expects the heroes to return and will be ready for them this time.

After the first night of his attack on Pommeville, Nedrezar has not had as much success in capturing villagers—many people have taken shelter with relatives or fortified their homes against his undead hordes. However, he has managed to kill a few villagers and transform them into undead servitors.

Use the map on the inside back cover and the descriptions of the ruins and dungeons from Part Two as the PC re-explores the crypt. Some areas have changed since the PC's last visit, as described below:

1. The Lower Hall. Nedrezar has concentrated his defenses here. Eight skeletons and four ju-ju zombies stand ready to attack any intruders. The skeletons and two of the zombies attack anyone coming down the stairs, while the other two zombies stand several steps up on the facing stairway and use long bows against the invaders.

Skeletons (8): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

Ju-ju Zombies (4): AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 25 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4 (or 2d6); SD +1 or better magic weapons to hit, type B and P cause 1/2 damage, spell immunities; SZ M; AL NE; XP 975 each.

4. The Lower Shrine. The helmet propping open the door has been removed, and Nedrezar has set a *glyph of warding* on both the main and secret entrances. The glyphs *cause blindness* and inflict 10 points of acid damage if the victim fails to save versus spells.

5. The Upper Crypt. If the skeletons in this area were destroyed, Nedrezar replaces them with 12 new skeletons. The new skeletons will not have chain mail hauberks.

7. Guard Chamber. If the monster zombies in here were destroyed, they have been replaced by 6 normal zombies.

Zombies (6): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; AL N; XP 65 each.

9. The Dungeon. If the PC did not rescue Marcel before, the poor fellow has met his end and is now one of the ju-ju zombies in area 1.

10. The Black Chamber. Two ju-ju zombies are standing watch in here and will attack any intruders. The door leading to area 13 is guarded by a *glyph of warding* similar to the one in area 4.

13. Nedrezar's Crypt. If the crystal skull was destroyed in the PC's last visit, Nedrezar is here in his corporeal form. Otherwise, he is occupying the body of a zombie in wight form. Six zombies stand around the room as guardians. If the PC makes it this far, Nedrezar realizes that his back is against the wall, and he will do everything in his power to prevent the PC from replacing the rod.

As the PC nears the ancient circle that barred Nedrezar's tomb, the Rod of Astarra begins to glow with a soft, blue light. If the rod is replaced in its socket, the runes of the circle flash with a brilliant light as the seal is restored! Then with a cry of anguish, Nedrezar withers into dust and collapses to the floor. The zombies crumple, the evil will that animated them now gone.

Conclusion

This ends *Cleric's Challenge*. The PC has done well to overcome such difficult odds, and a special bonus of 1,000 or 1,500 xp is certainly appropriate in addition to the normal awards for defeating his foes.

What if the PC died in the attempt to free Pommeville? Consider bringing in the rest of the player characters from the player's group and letting them have a shot at ending Nedrezar's threat. Or, the player could continue to play as one of the many NPC allies in the adventure.

After the PC destroys or imprisons Nedrezar, the folk of Pommeville are grateful and offer a substantial reward for the PC's assistance in their hour of need. If the DM wants to continue to use Pommeville as a base for campaigning, the PC priest might take over for Montrel and manage the Shrine of Reflection as his own parish.