

The Dark Eye



ARIVOR'S
DOOM



ARIVOR

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fortress of the Horas' Legion 2. Tournament Field 3. Devotional object peddlars 4. Temple of Travia 5. Kuslik Gate 6. Saladan Forges 7. Saladan Villa 8. Temple of Boron and Marbo 9. High Castle of the Ardarites 10. Temple of Saint Geron and Saint Adare 11. Palazzo Acano 12. Old Castle 13. Theater of Arivor 14. Hotel Sevenstroke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Rockgate 16. Heainde's Temple of the Arts 17. Darando Trade Office 18. Aqueduct 19. Rose of belhanka bordello 20. Temple of Ingerimm 21. Odds and Ends Market 22. Palazzo Leonis 23. Garrison of the Bandiera Bianca 24. Old Temple of Tsa 25. Pig Market 26. Grand Winery ya Skallona 27. Temple of Sancta Kaijialina 28. Municipal Gardens 29. New Temple of Tsa
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MARBIDE MONASTERY

Arivor's Doom



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With thanks to all who helped create Aventuria.

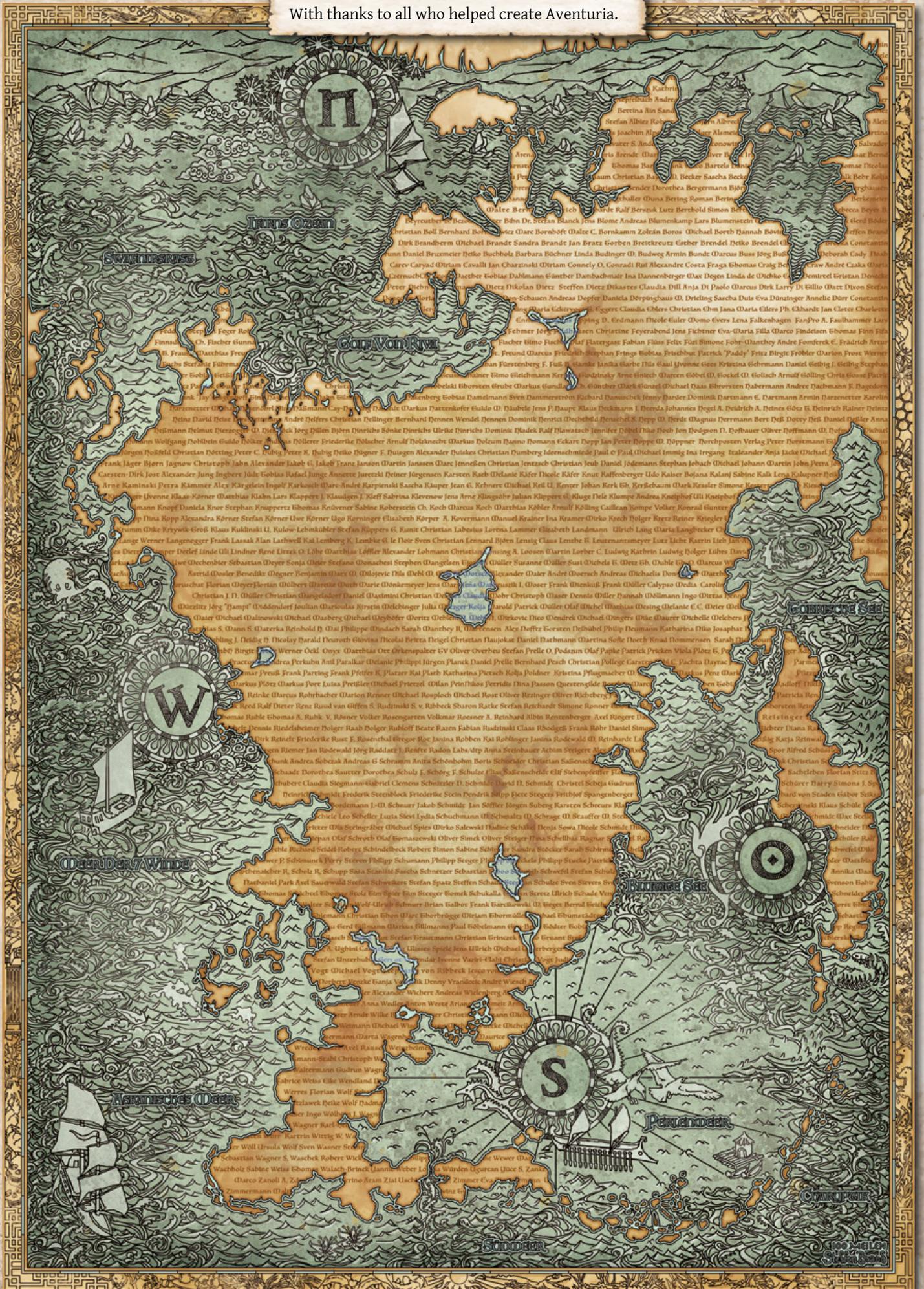


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To make a scene easier for the heroes, use the suggestions from this paragraph.



To make a scene more difficult for the heroes, use the suggestions from this paragraph.

Read-aloud Texts: Read this text aloud to the players, or paraphrase, if desired. It contains no GM-only information.

GM Information: This text is intended mainly for the GM but may include information that the heroes are supposed to discover as the adventure progresses.

Last Words: This book includes suggested last words for certain NPCs that are likely to die during this adventure. It also includes suggestions for how to stage their death scenes. Some NPCs survive and go on to appear in future official adventures, but do not feel obligated to make sure they survive in your campaign. We include suggestions for the deaths of these NPCs, too. Since the deaths of these NPCs

These boxes contain important information regarding the game!

are optional, their last words appear in brackets to distinguish them from other NPCs.

Non-player characters come in three categories, as follows.



These NPCs play vital roles in the official history of Aventuria and appear in future products. Swapping out, killing, or otherwise altering these NPCs creates troublesome conflicts with other TDE publications.



These NPCs should survive as they play important roles in other official adventures. However, you may exchange these NPCs for others from your campaign as long as they fulfill the same basic function (such as being mentors, antagonists, or the rescue squad).



These NPCs are completely exchangeable. They play a role in this quest but do not appear in other official adventures.

For the GM

The Twelve be with you! The events about to unfold before you and the players in your gaming group (and of course their characters) are part of the *Starfall*, a mysterious event that marks the dawn of a new age of heroes in Aventuria.

In *Arivor's Doom* the heroes witness nothing less than the destruction of one of Aventuria's largest cities! And the heroes are right in the middle of the catastrophe, struggling to survive and trying to save whomever is left. Can they save themselves and other citizens from the dying city while dealing with collapsing buildings, landslides, looters, and new terrors from beneath the ground? Will this be their doom or the most thrilling escape of their lives? The destruction of Arivor is designed to emulate your favorite classic Hollywood disaster movie. Drop the heroes right into the action. Let them prove their mettle and show that they can act with honor even when facing annihilation.

The Story Thus Far...

Stars fall from the sky. Aventurian history is full of examples. Consider the Star of Elem, which plunged into Selem Sound over 1,000 years ago, or the Svellt Valley star showers ten years ago. Ever since early 1039 FB, however, increasingly strange phenomena have continuously changed the night sky. Some previously stable stars began to flicker in the constellation of Rondra, and the eye of the Dragon constellation simply disappeared, as if the dragon went to sleep. Since the month of Travia, more stars have faded or fallen from the sky, and comets and shooting stars appear constantly in the night skies of Aventuria. In some places, falling stars have come crashing down onto the ground, entire stellar constellations have shifted, and rumbling is shaking the very fabric of the Spheres.

The constellation of The Sword represents Rondra and is part of the Circle of the Twelve, the Aventurian zodiac. A short time ago, Sarstar, the star that formed the tip of the sword, disappeared from the constellation. Even though it did not crash onto Dere (thank the Twelve), worshipers consider the sudden disappearance of Sarstar a very bad omen. Despite the prophecies in old Rondranian texts, the Sword will not gain a twelfth star in this, the Twelfth Age. Rather, it will lose a star.

Just one month later, in Rahja, 1039 FB, while Empress Rohaja of the Middenrealm is waging war upon the armies of the Traitor Haffax in the far away Shadowlands, and the Sword of Swords, Ayla Armalion of Shadowground, is standing watch over Ferricum, a star falls in Horasia.

It lands in the hills of Gerondrata, not far from Arivor, where Dottora Fulmina Meissini, a scholar of derography and derology, is studying local rocks. She theorizes that these hills, which are made of very porous rock, are riddled with former magma chambers. She believes that caverns run beneath the surface, with the largest sitting beneath the

city of Arivor. She does not know that she (and possibly the heroes) is about to witness a starfall and a terrible disaster (when the star hits, giant cracks open in the ground and spread rapidly towards Arivor).

The residents of Arivor are blissfully unaware of their fate. In fact, since the 20th of Rahja, the city has been celebrating and enjoying its annual tournament. The city now contains twice the usual number of people, and every one of them faces deadly peril....

What Will Happen?

This scenario offers three different ways to introduce your heroes to the adventure. Two of them are red herrings, wherein the heroes enter the tournament themselves or else arrive in the city as the bodyguards of a noble who either enters the tournament or simply visits. The third introduction places the heroes in the service of the scholar Meissini, leaving them well placed to see the catastrophe at hand and possibly warn the people in Arivor.

All three intros lead the heroes to the famous Theater of Arivor, where the gala premiere of an epic play is about to go terribly wrong: up becomes down, buildings collapse, screams fill the air, and panic spreads! The ground swallows the heroes alive, but they survive and find themselves far beneath the ruins of the theater. While the group fights their way back to the surface, they rescue or otherwise acquire a train of survivors who are desperate to find their loved ones and see the sky again.

Only when they reach the surface do the heroes finally grasp the full scale of the disaster. The theater was not the only structure to collapse. Huge cracks opened up beneath the town. Many buildings and even entire quarters of the city disappeared into the depths. Dead, wounded, and displaced people are everywhere. Plunderers loot the ruins at will.

The heroes must decide how best to escape the disaster, and quickly discover that leaving town is far more difficult than they presumed. The heroes must also decide whether to go on their way or stay and help with the rescue efforts. Everywhere they turn, they find people in need of help. The relief effort is inspiring, but treason, selfishness, and greed soon begin to raise their ugly heads. Also, certain buildings need protection from an even darker fate, and church officials call upon the heroes to undertake important missions of hope such as salvaging important relics from the ruins of the Temple of Rondra.

And if all of that wasn't difficult enough, a new terror descends on the blighted area. As night spreads across the land, horrific, never-before seen creatures emerge from unknown depths of the earth to prowl the surface. These creatures of eternal darkness flee from strong sources of light, but nonetheless they spill forth from the ground in search of easy prey.

In spite of all the trouble, the heroes should survive the events described herein and succeed with most if not all of their heroic deeds along the way. Arivor, however, is lost. The few buildings that still stand become little more than shelters for courageous pilgrims seeking Rondra's blessing in the middle of a broken land.

No one is able to discern if the fallen star was indeed the tip of the Sword, or whether the fate of Aventuria's two most powerful Blessed Ones of Rondra has something to do with the ominous change in the constellation. Ayla of Shadowground becomes well known in Aventuria, while Nepolemo ya Torese dies during this adventure. Are these events related? Nobody who witnesses the catastrophe believes that this terrible blow to Rondra's Church and the changes to her constellation in the heavens are a mere coincidence....

How is This Adventure Supposed to Unfold?

This quest starts with three possible ways. Choose the one most appropriate for your heroes. All three entries lead to a visit to the theater right before disaster strikes. From here, the plot is quite linear. The theater collapses, victims become trapped underground, and the heroes must fight their way back to the surface in a manner reminiscent of a traditional dungeon crawl.

After that, the plot becomes modular, and events occur only as the heroes stumble upon them. Every location in this book is an individual scene with background, NPCs, and encounters of its own. Each includes information about possible side quests, advice for running an adventure in a city hit by disaster, and suggestions for increasing the danger and drama even more.

Which Kinds of Player Characters Are Suitable for this Adventure?

This adventure is designed for *Competent to Masterly* heroes with a few adventures under their belts (or at least ones generated specifically with this level of experience in mind). Great responsibility will be thrust upon them, and they will move among Horasian nobility under situations of extreme duress. You can easily adjust the challenge to suit a less experienced group by making some slight changes (lowering difficulties, making tasks easier to accomplish, adjusting the abilities of foes, and so on). Socially- and physically-oriented characters are ideal for this quest and have the most opportunities to make good use of their skills and abilities. Heroes need neither arcane nor divine powers to complete the adventure, though of course these abilities come in very handy in certain situations. Note: remember that magic adds unique possibilities to the heroes' arsenal. For example, a witch's ability to fly on a broom can render some scenes too easy, but then again, it just might inspire entirely new challenges, side quests, and options.

Chronology of Events

- **Early Rahja, 1039 FB:** Dottora Meissini begins her survey of the rocks of the Gerondrata.
- **Middle of Rahja:** While traveling in northern Horasia, the heroes get recruited into one of the three introductions.
- **Rahja 20th:** Arch-Ruler Nepolemo ya Torese opens the Grand Annual Tournament of Arivor.
- **Rahja 20th to 22nd:** The tournament proceeds. The heroes either participate (see *Swordwielder*) or arrive accompanying Jucco of Tomrath (see *Lounge Lizards*).
- **Rahja 22nd:** Dottora Meissini (along with the heroes, if you chose the intro *Prospectors*) witnesses a starfall near the hamlet of Aquiliano, some miles east of Arivor. The hamlet is destroyed and crevices spread downhill in the direction of Arivor.
- **Rahja 23rd, morning:** The epic play entitled “Victory Over the Demon Master” opens in the famous Theater of Arivor. The heroes are seated in the audience.
- **Rahja 23rd, noon:** The disaster strikes. Parts of the theater collapse. The heroes are caught in the collapse but survive. They start to fight their way up out of the abyss and back to the surface.
- **Rahja 23rd, afternoon:** The heroes escape the ruins of the theater. They begin to make their way out of the town, helping people along the way.
- **Rahja 23rd, evening:** Ghosts and terrors spring from the ground. Near the crater that was once Arivor’s city center, many Blessed Ones of Tsa, Legionaries of the Horas, fighters from the Arivoran Warrior Academy, and hired mercenaries help evacuate survivors who have made it this far.
- **Rahja 23rd, night:** The heroes finally escape Arivor in the company of throngs of survivors (and perhaps with some important relics in tow).
- **Rahja 24th:** The day after. The situation seems to be under control. Fewer survivors leave the town. Members of the Horas’ Legion and warriors from the Arivoran Academy cordon off the area to prevent others from getting injured in the ruins.
- **Rahja 25th to 30th:** With the Days of the Nameless One near at hand, the survivors flee the area and seek refuge under the roofs of friends and family in nearby towns.



Arivor

The Days Before



This chapter gives you an overview of Arivor in the days prior to the disaster, starting around Rahja 20th. It describes the city's quarters and important buildings. The Grand Annual Tournament of Arivor is underway, and knights from all of Horasia have gathered in the town. Hundreds of guests, nobles, and their entourages swell the city's population to almost twice its normal size. Even so, there are fewer fighters and spectators in attendance this year as opposed to last year, when the Horas attended to honor the 450th anniversary of the founding of the Ardarite Order. Nevertheless, spirits are high and the festivities are at their peak. The chapter closes with descriptions of important NPCs.

Arivor—Hoard of Tradition

“Arivor has served as the Old Realm’s enduring home of The Lioness for more than 2,000 years. Rondra holds her protecting shield over the stone houses, the castles, and the sanctums, as well as the good people of Arivor and every welcome pilgrim.”

—Nepolemo ya Torese

“Far too adamant for my taste, but full of tradition and very old. Nowadays, she seems more holy to Phex than to Rondra. Every year, relic merchants sell so many hands of the one-handed Geron that our most honored hero must have been an octopus. However, the city’s Sparkling Bosparaniard is simply divine! You should never refuse a glass of this fine vintage.”

—Madalea ya Montazzi, patrician from Belhanka

One immediately sees Arivor as a bastion of martial virtues and age-old tradition and standards. Its castle-like structures rise from the Golden Helmet, which sits in the middle of a sunny, yet dry, rolling country where farmers cultivate wine and oil on the hillsides. The proud and adamant walls bear the scars of a long history of sieges successfully repelled. The oldest part of the castle has served as residence for the head of the Church of Rondra since before the Fall of Bosparan, and this Church has birthed the two most holy Orders of the goddess.

As the adventure begins, the city's annual knightly tournament is already underway. Scheduled to run from Rahja 20th to Rahja 25th, the tournament has attracted hundreds of dashing knights and their entourages, courageous Blessed Ones of Rondra, and pious pilgrims. Spectators, jugglers, wandering folk, and bards have gathered, too. All in all, Arivor's population has doubled over the past few weeks. The pilgrim inns that line the Field of Swords are more than full. Colorful knights' tents spring from every strip of fallow land, and not one inn or hotel in



Region: Horasia, Gerondrata

Population: 12,000 (20,000 including tournament guests and pilgrims)

Government: Arch-Ruler Nepolemo ya Torese, plus the Datarium, an advisory board of 12 highly-honored citizens (of whom no more than half may be from the Church of Rondra). The current leader of the Datarium is Arch-Castellan Gaspare ya Stellona

Temples: Boron/Marbo, Hesinde, Ingerimm, Rahja, Rondra, Travia, Tsa

Trade and Craft: pilgrim inns; Saladan weapons manufactories; Grand Winery of the ya Stellona Family; female master smith Horanthe ya Ferragon (maker of real Arivoran Rondra's Crests)

Special: Old Castle (winter residence of the Horas); Theater of Arivor; the Golden Helmet; Field of Swords, with jousting lists, tents of knights and pilgrims, and various sanctums displaying relics of the Church of Rondra; old legionary fortress just outside the city; cavern-riddled bedrock

Atmosphere in Arivor: The town is proud of its history and tradition, and thus a little backward and conservative. Self-confident city patricians vie for power with country gentry devoted to Rondra yet need the symbolic presence of the Arch-Ruler for their trade business with pilgrims.

Arivor In-game: the city's year-round pilgrim traffic fosters trade but raises the level of religious zeal and fills the city with strangers. During the tournament, disputes and arguments occur everywhere. Some even devolve into duels (between members of the Horas' Legion, the Rondranian Ardarites, knights from elsewhere, and mercenaries such as the Bandiera Bianca, for example). More than once, a Blessed One of Rondra serves as official witness to such a duel. Aside from religious disputes, social differences become more pronounced during the tournament. Thieves ply their trade, tricksters exploit pilgrims, and tavern brawls break out around every other corner. Strangers aren't always to blame for these fights, as poor citizens from Saladania are just as capable of quarrelling with outsiders.

the city has even a bit of floor space to spare. More than one Arivoran is earning some coin by renting space in their homes to guests for exorbitant fees.

The weapon smiths stocked a great number of their precious goods in preparation for the influx of visitors, for Arivoran steel is famous throughout all of Aventuria. Devotional objects and fake relics change hands often, in a Phex-worthy manner. Jugs of local red wine such as the rich Arivoran Blood, and crystal glasses full of famous Sparkling Bosparaniard are served by the thousands each day—a sight that is very pleasing to Rahja. Joy and gaiety are everywhere, and even the city looks its best: Walls and houses show off fresh coats of paint. Coats of arms decorate the family palazzi, and flags wave from every tower. The temples are open for pilgrims seeking to marvel at holy relics, especially the relics of Rondra.

The Golden Helmet

Arivor's grandly named city hill rises 180 feet above the town proper and is crowned with the **Old Castle (12)**. 2,000 years ago, this castle was the winter residence of the peace-emperors. Today most of it has been rebuilt. Today, flags bearing the crest of Arivor fly from its towers. The southern wing is home to members of the Imperial Family when they are in town. It also houses other high ranking guests. It is the site of the famous *Crystal Chamber of Yulag-Horas*, with its famous wall of giant, stained glass windows. The entire wall faces south, creating a colorful display when sunlight shines through the glass.

5' walls surround the main building, which sits at the northern end of the hilltop. At first glance, the enclosed grounds appear to be overgrown with flowers and vines, but there is order in the chaos, and the plants are well tended. Those who wander its trails eventually find its centerpiece, the *Mosaic Hall of Asmodena*. The plants that grow between and seemingly through the stones give the hall's mosaics of various animals the semblance of life. Also located within its walls is *Niothia's Cherry Tree*, which has grown here since ancient times.

The ancient **Theater of Arivor (13)** dates back to Bosparan times and is capable of seating 5,000 people. It is built into the slopes on the eastern foot of the Golden Helmet.

Opposite the theater, on the *Piazza Sancta Lutisana*, is **Hesinde's Temple of Arts (16)**, the storage site of a huge collection of theatrical plays, including gems like the 3,000 year old *War Against the Hjaldings* and *Balan Cantara*, an ancient Gyldenlandic drama written in Myranian, and many notes from Comto Morguno of Ascream, the so-called *commander of poets*. Not far from this temple lies a tavern called *'tis Ascream*, which is a popular attraction for intellectuals and other patrons of the theater.

The city's central hill, just like all the surrounding land, is made of volcanic rock. The soil is quite advantageous for growing grapes, but it proves fatal during this adventure, as the rock is honeycombed with huge caverns and old magma chambers. When the meteor hits Aquiliano, a chain reaction leads to the collapse of these caverns and the destruction of Arivor.

The Golden Helmet itself is lucky, and the **Old Castle (12)** remains almost undamaged after the impact. The heroes, of course, find themselves involved in the **Theater's (13)** collapse (see page 29), but almost half of that building survives the catastrophe as well. Once they are free of the rubble, the heroes can choose to help save some of the valuable books and scrolls from the **Temple of Arts (16)** before it collapses.



Field of Swords

To the west of the Golden Helmet, outside the city walls, lies the town quarter known as the Field of Swords. During the annual tournament, celebrants in this section of town are filled with Rondra's spirit.

Golden Helmet's Western Slope

On the steep western slope of the city hill stands the **Highcastle (9)**, the mighty fortress of the Ardarites, a military Order loyal to Rondra. The Order's keep, the largest in the city, is home to the order's chronicles, registers, and lists, as well as the *Armorium Ardariticum*, an almanac of weapons, armor, and fighting styles that has been in continuous publication since 883 FB.

An arcade leads to the **Temple of Saint Geron and Saint Ardare (10)**, the house of the goddess Rondra. It is fronted by columns, from which a wide staircase leads to the main entrance. A huge statue of Mythrael in the forecourt watches over the *Crownstreet* and the Field of Swords. The **Palazzo Acano (11)** belongs to the Arch-Ruler, who by tradition moves from building to building depending on his function. As Master of the Covenant, he preaches in the temple. As Seneschal, he addresses the knights of the Order in the Highcastle. As Arch-Ruler, he receives nobles in the palazzo.

To the north, in the middle of the steep slope just below the walls of the Ardarite fortress, lies the **Temple of Boron and Marbo (8)**. It is the city's main site of worship of Boron's gentle daughter. The narrow *Path of Sorrows* leads to the **Rockgate (15)** that marks the way to the patricians' crypts and the grottos of the dead, which branch out in all directions beneath the city. Huts and booths of many **traders of devotional objects (3)** (so-called relic merchants) line *Crownstreet* and the tournament field. These days their customers are the guests and competitors in town for the tournament, but their main customers are the many pilgrims that flock to the city.

Tournament Field and Pilgrim's Town

On the plain in front of the hill lies the **tournament field (2)** where workers erected the tournament lists and camps for the attendees. Hundreds of colorful tents bearing the coats of arms of knights and nobles crowd the combat circles, the training areas, the lists for jousting, and the wooden stands for spectators.

To the south, the city wall ends abruptly at the extravagantly decorated **Kuslik Gate (5)**, which marks the place where the expansion of the city was halted. Pilgrim inns surround the **Temple of Travia (4)**. Normally travelers can easily find shelter here, but every bed in Arivor is currently rented. People in search of tales of faraway lands, tournament favorites, or ancient legends spend their evenings here. At the *Black Lion Inn*, a typical establishment for this area, customers pay inflated prices for rather poor standards. At the far western end of the tournament field, the local

fortress of the Horas' Legion (1) houses two regiments of legionaries.

Old Arivor

Old Arivor, as residents call the inner city, is just east of the Golden Helmet. Its narrow alleys, winding stairs, and dark corners hug the hillside and are often the site of duels. However, this is not a quarter of the poor and lost. Wealthy craftsmen and patricians live here in sturdy and elegant palazzi. The dell'Accorda family's **Hotel Sevenstroke (14)**, located here, is widely regarded to be the best inn in town.

Below the inner city lies the market district where the streets and palazzi burst with booth after booth. The **Odds and Ends Market (21)**, located in front of the **Palazzo Leonis (22)** (the meeting place of the Datarium, the city council) is a place for public political discourse. Nearby, the **Temple of Ingerimm (20)** is the rumored center for crafters' protests against the weapon manufactories in *Saladania*. The **Darando Trade Office (17)** takes a wholly different view of the crafters' situation. This ancient trading house from Neetha profits mainly from Arivoran weapons but does not care who produces them, since competition keeps wholesale prices low. The old town is full of taverns, such as the *Crenellation Ring*, which is popular among market criers, cheap, and nestled in a calm and shaded alleyway.

After a long, intense, and public debate about finding a building with more room for children in a newer quarter of the city, the Blessed Ones of Tsa are finally moving out of their **old temple (24)**. The **new Temple of Tsa (29)** is located outside the city in the quaint rural village of *Sotto Morguno*, which is due south of the municipal gardens. The new temple provides daycare for Arivoran children who are too young to attend a temple school or help in their parents' workshops. These little ones spend their days playing games with temple residents and taking excursions to the area's fields, vineyards, and farms.

An **aqueduct (18)** completed in 1031 FB transports water from a spring in the hills almost directly to the Odds and Ends Market, making it possible for a **brothel** called **Rose of Belhanka (19)** to offer wealthy customers a luxurious bath. To the southeast, next to the city wall, sits the **garrison of the Bandiera Bianca (23)**, which houses the White Riders, a mercenary unit that is very proud of its long history and noble descent, and the lineage of its fine horses. Its proud soldiers polish their white plate armor to a high shine (hence their name) and wear it openly and uncovered.

Morgunora

South of the inner city yet still inside the city walls lies a quarter that is devoted to *Rahja* in her aspect as the goddess of wine. Vintners from the hinterlands bring their harvests to the vineyards to be processed into Arivor's finest wines. The largest and most famous vineyards belong to the **Grand**

Winery of the ya Stellona family (26). Morgunora is also the site of the **Temple of Sancta Rahjalina (27)**, which celebrates Rahja as the patron of vintners. Almost every vineyard operates its own tavern to serve its products, and even though the town is crowded with pilgrims, the taverns compete heavily for customers. Cellar criers advertise their houses loudly while giving free tastes. A cheap but rather shady place for wine tasting is the cellar tavern known as *Bloodharvest*. Most taverns are easily recognized by the colorful paintings that adorning their outside walls. In addition to wine, they offer hearty food, dancing, music, and social company—free as well as paid.

Far to the east lies the **Pig Market (25)**, where you can buy freshly slaughtered pork. The **Municipal Gardens (28)** are crop fields maintained within the city walls as a nod to defense against sieges.

The old town and Morgunora are almost completely destroyed by the disaster and lie in ruin afterwards. Some rock beneath this part of Arivor survives, however, leaving some buildings mostly intact. The **brothel (19)**, the **Hotel Sevenstroke (14)**, and the **Grand Winery ya Stellona (24)** are among the lucky structures. As they make their way through the ruined streets, the heroes might be able to rescue people and property from these buildings. The **aqueduct (18)**, however, turns into a deadly trap.



Kingsground

Kingsground is a mansion district named in honor of the fallen queen, Salkya Firdayon. It was built only a few decades ago on the east side of Arivor. Today it is home to rural gentry who wish to avoid mixing with the city patricians. Some Ardarite veterans choose to live in this district when they retire.

Saladania

This part of Arivor was named after the famous master smith, Saladan of Arivor, who ran his workshops north of the Field of Swords in 991 FB but died as a traitor in 1030 FB. He lived in the **Saladan Villa (7)**. After his death, his **Saladan Forges (6)** were subdivided into half a dozen smaller workshops that today belong to the steel barons who fight over profits. Little of this profit makes its way into the hands of the more than 1,000 workers that live and labor in this quarter. They are so poor that some streets offer little more than rag sellers, soup kitchens, and hedge-taverns.

Outside the City

South of Arivor, nestled between scenic vineyards and gardens, a **Marbide monastery** provides hospice care to the dying in a peaceful atmosphere. The *Warrior Academy in Honor of Anshag of Glodenhof* is juts a few hours from Arivor, on the road to Aldyra.

The districts of Kingsground and Saladania both lose about half their land area during the catastrophe. The remaining halves stay (mostly) sound. The **Saladan Forges (6)** are either cast into the abyss or remain in precarious existence on terraces at the edge of the crater—your choice! Everything that remains sits directly adjacent to the disturbingly large hole in the ground, and as such these areas are possible exit points for heroes who wish to leave the city (see *Terra Firma*, page 63).



What Does My Character

Know About Arivor?

Dole out this information piece by piece as the heroes explore the city. It is quite helpful if the heroes know their way around Arivor before the disaster strikes. Heroes that grew up in Arivor might already know some of the following facts. Either hand out the appropriate information or grant a bonus of 3 points for skill checks.

Skill check *Religions (Rondra)*, +1 modifier

QL 1: of all the Twelvegods, Arivorans worship Rondra the most. The famous Rondranian *Order of the Ardarites* maintains its headquarters here. Its master, Nepolemo ya Torese, is a paragon of Rondra's ideals and traditions. Many relics of saints from Rondra's Church are on display in the city's temples.

QL 2: Arivor attracts many visitors traveling *Geron's Way*, a pilgrim route that connects important sites in the history of Rondra's Saint Geron. One such site is the *Great Hall of Glory* with its 100 columns depicting Aventuria's greatest heroes. *Geron's Way* swells with people on various holidays, and Rahja 20th, the time of the great tournament in Arivor, is no exception. Arivorans also hold Rahja in high esteem, because Saint Rahjalina Stellona, the inventor of Sparkling Bosparaniard, was a native of Arivor.

QL 3 –Geron performed many great deeds besides the seven for which he is most famous. For example, he defeated Ranafan the water dragon at the nearby *Geron's Lake*. And in the hills to the east he is said to have bested seven times seven Siburinxes, insect-like monsters that issued forth from the ground. Furthermore, legend has it that Geron defeated the mysterious stone-creatures and their king.

QL 4+: Salkya Fidayon's crypt, more widely known as the Queen's Chamber, has been a popular pilgrimage destination for ten years now. During the succession war a few years ago, Saint Salkya sat on the Horasian Throne only briefly (and for which she is sometimes known as the *Queen of a Hundred Days*). In addition to this information, the hero can name all of the relics listed on page 52.

Skill check *Geography (Horasian Empire)*

QL 1: Arivor is a city in the northern core regions of the Horasian Empire.

QL 2: Arivor is situated in a region called Gerondrata, named after the famous saint of Rondra, Geron the One-handed, who is said to have accomplished many heroic deeds in the area.

QL 3: The warm and dry hills of Gerondrata are ideal for growing wine. Rain is uncommon during the summers here, but when it rains, it comes as a thunderstorm worthy of Rondra.

QL 4+: The hero recalls the theories of Dottora Fulminia Meissini (see page 13), which propose that the hills east of Arivor are riddled with caverns.

Skill check *Etiquette (Rumors)*

QL 1: Arivor and its hinterlands are organized under an arch-rulership. The Arch-Ruler of Arivor is Nepolemo ya Torese. He is said to be strict and traditional, and to embody Rondra's ideals.

QL 2: Nepolemo ya Torese is more than 70 years old. 12 counselors, half of whom are patricians, advise him on important matters. Torese is also the head of the Ardarite Order, making him the second most powerful Blessed One of Rondra in all of Aventuria. He is outranked only by the Sword of Swords, Ayla of Shadowground.

QL 3: A power struggle has developed between the patricians and the Rondra-worshippers, but both sides need each other—no pilgrims means no business, and no business means no money for the Church. The so-called Bosparaniard Baron, Gaspare ya Stellone, a wealthy wine producer, is a personal rival of Torese. The hero also knows select information (GM's choice) about various Arivoran nobles (see *NPCs of Arivor*, page 11).

QL 4+: The crest of the royal family of Firdayon (a red dragon on a silver field) is not flying from the Old Castle, which means that none of them is attending the tournament. However, a flag bearing a silver, three-tailed fish on a blue field flies from the tower, meaning that the Duke of Berlinghan is in residence. The hero knows many details (GM's choice) about the nobles of Arivor (see *NPCs of Arivor*, page 11).

Skill check *Streetwise (Asking Around)*

QL 1: The pompous epic "Victory Over the Demon Master" is set to debut at the city's famous theater. The seats are highly coveted and it is rumored that there will be more actors on stage than spectators in the stands.

QL 2+: Tickets for the event are made of a rare material called mammuton to prevent the sale of fake tickets. The demand for tickets to this premiere has already resulted in duels, broken wedding engagements, and revocation of written contracts.

Skill check *Carousing, -1 modifier*

QL 1: Saint Rahjalina Stellona, the inventor of Sparkling Bosparaniard, was a native daughter of Arivor. Sparkling Bosparaniard is a very expensive, fine sparkling wine, and a real luxury. However, almost any dry red or white from Arivor is very good and often much cheaper.

QL 2+: *Arivoran Blood* is a very rich, sweet, and famous red wine that is said to be the first choice of the Arch-Rulers. However, the undisputable leader of wines is *Stormhale*, a deep red Bosparaniard made exclusively by the Grand Winery ya Stellona.

Skill check *Metalworking (Blacksmith)*

QL 1: Arivor is famous for its weapons factories. The late Saladan was their most important producer. One of his students, Horanthe ya Ferragon, is the only smith still crafting *real* Arivoran weapons of the highest quality, such as the legendary Rondra's Crests, in her workshop in the Saladan Villa.

QL 2+: Horanthe is not much of a businesswoman, so it might be possible to strike a bargain in the villa. Competition is fierce among weapons manufacturers, especially between the two steel barons, Curon Mondayo and Tyandel ya Catrava. Both are unscrupulous businessmen.

NPCs of Arivor

Depending on the turn of events, the following NPCs may play vital roles in this adventure. They may support the heroes, assign them quests, or serve as their antagonists. The heroes might meet some or even all of these NPCs prior to the disaster, depending on the way you choose to start the adventure (see *Arivor—The Days Before*, page 7). Some are present when the theater collapses (see *The Collapse*, page 29), while most of the others can be encountered in the city when the heroes try to flee Arivor after escaping the theater ruins (see *Escape from the Theater*, page 29).

Dottora Fulminia Meissini, Scholar of Derography and Derology

Profession: competent scholar

Motivation: She lives for science and her research. However, there is little academic acknowledgement of her work. Scholars in her position tend to become overzealous, but not Meissini. The dottora wants to warn Arivor of her findings and save lives.

Agenda: She tries to warn everyone everywhere, without concern for her reputation. After the disaster strikes, she helps rescue and evacuate wounded people.

Role: She is a stereotypical scientist and the only person who really understands what is going on and why. However, when she attempts to warn the authorities and citizens of Arivor, no one believes her.

Background: Fulminia (early 40s; dwarven-made eyeglasses



Fulminia Meissini

COU	13
SGC	16
INT	14
CHA	13
DEX	13
AGI	12
CON	11
STR	11
LP	28
AE	-
KP	-
INI	13+1D6
DO	6
SPI	2
TOU	1
MOV	8
FtP	3
PRO/ENC	-/-

Social Standing: free
Advantages: Exceptional Sense (Touch), Sense of Direction
Disadvantages: Bad Habit (talks to herself), Incompetence (Body Control)
Special Abilities: Area Knowledge (Arivor), Skill Specialization *Geography (Horasian Empire)*, Skill Specialization *History (Horasian Empire)*
Languages: Bosparano III, Cyclopean II, Garethi III, Rogolan III, Tulamydya III,
Scripts: Kuslik Signs, Rogolan Runes, Tulamidyda Signs
Combat Techniques: Daggers 10, Brawling 10
Dagger: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+1 RE short
Unarmed: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short
Skills
 Physical: *Body Control 0, Carousing 3, Climbing 3, Dancing 1, Feat of Strength 3, Flying 0, Gaukelei 0, Perception 7, Pickpocket 0, Riding 3, Self Control 4, Singing 1, Stealth 3, Swimming 4*
 Social: *Disguise 1, Empathy 4, Etiquette 7, Fast-Talk 5, Intimidate 0, Persuasion 4, Seduction 2, Streetwise 6, Willpower 5*
 Nature: *Animal Lore 7, Fishing 0, Orienting 12, Plant Lore 7, Ropes 0, Survival 6, Tracking 6*
 Knowledge: *Astronomy 6, Gambling 1, Geography 16 (specialization: *Horasian Empire*), History 14 (specialization: *Horasian Empire*), Law 8, Magical Lore 5, Math 12, Mechanics 9, Myths & Legends 13, Religions 9, Sphere Lore 8, Warfare 2*
 Crafts: *Alchemy 7, Artistic Ability 8, Clothworking 1, Commerce 4, Earthencraft 11, Leatherworking 0, Metalworking 4, Music 1, Pick Locks 1, Prepare Food 0, Sailing 0, Treat Disease 2, Treat Poison 1, Treat Soul 1, Treat Wounds 2, Vehicles 4, Woodworking 6*
Equipment: Dagger, Clothing (regular), Measuring tools, 23 silverthalers in a purse

(very short-sighted); wears her wavy, Rahja-like hair in a prim yet practical chignon; overly intellectual; ponderous; a little bit clumsy) is a scholar from the University of Methumis. She comes from a merchant family, and teaches studiosi at the university when not out on an expedition.

Place Encountered: possible prime motivator for the adventure; alternatively, the heroes meet her near the theater or on the tournament field, trying to get the Arch-Ruler to listen to her.

Role Playing Tips: Speak quickly and use many real or invented geological terms (do not forget to use 'dero' in place of 'geo'). Explain your theories with examples from everyday life. When your predictions come true, show resignation, because no one wanted to listen to you. Then switch and become full of zest for action; give practical advice but always keep an ear open for useful suggestions from the heroes.

Fate: Fulminia survives the disaster and earns (now unwanted) recognition for her theories. She becomes quite well-known in the Horasian Empire in the aftermath of the catastrophe.

(Possible Death: Although she is supposed to survive, Fulminia can die in the disaster if you wish. Her death would most likely be due to a lethal misconception. Maybe she miscalculates in her panic and winds up sheltering in a place she thought was entirely safe.)

Special: No one knows the rocks and derology of Gerondrata like she does. She is the only one who correctly predicts the disaster (all related skill checks receive a +2 bonus).

"Imagine woodworms eating their way through your bed frame. You can still sleep in your bed, perhaps even for years, but one night, when you least expect it—BAM!—your bed turns into a heap of rubble with you in the middle. This is basically the same thing."

(Last Words: *"This building will not collapse. Do you see this bedrock? Inside this place we're as safe as if we were in the arms of Sumu herself!"*)

🏰 Nepolemo Fulgur ya Torese, Arch-Ruler of Arivor, Master of the Covenant, Seneschal of the Ardarites

Profession: legendary Blessed One of Rondra, competent politician



Motivation: He wants the best for his city and her citizens, and he is willing to give everything to get it. In return, he expects loyalty and integrity from his subjects.

Agenda: He wants to save what can be saved. Nepolemo remains rational and capable of making tough decisions. However, he cannot overcome the disaster all by himself and must trust the abilities of others.

Role: He is the ruler of a doomed city, the very model of a heroic president or dutiful military officer.

Dottora Meissini's Theory of the Sumutonic-Cavern Hill Lands

The dottora has been studying the rocks of Gerondrata for a long time now. According to her theory, the hills around Arivor are laced with caverns, and by extension so are the hills under the city (which grow larger and larger the closer one gets to Arivor). Her theory is predicated on the fact that the Golden Helmet is an ancient volcano, and she believes its former magma chambers stretch out underground in all directions. However, she has no proof. And since unproven theories make for uninteresting displays in a museum, people usually react to her work with a smile and a shrug. People grow especially skeptical when Meissini launches into her description of the threat of cave-ins.

Furthermore, the dottora finds the current drought even more worrisome, as she fears that this has further weakened the bedrock. She feels that there is a chance that one big tremor could start a chain reaction of cave-ins and collapses that could result in the destruction of the entire area.

The Cavern Theory of Yagomil Montazzo

Yagomil Montazzo, the self-proclaimed researcher of peoples and legends, has taken Dottora Meissini's theory one step further. Academics sneer at his theory, but sensationalists love it. The wanderer wrote countless papers that do not stand up to scrutiny. These papers focus on such things as conspiracy theories involving hidden enemies from long ago that now threaten mankind. His newest cavern-related theory states that the magma chambers below the Gerondrata are inhabited by monsters of all kinds. He draws a connection between the magma chambers and Geron's heroic deeds (the Saint fought monsters in the Gerondrata because they issued from the caverns below the region, just like the legendary chimeric ogre, or the water dragon, Ranafan, who is thought to have lived in a subderanian lake.

Yagomil admires the dottora for her research (even though he thinks her too conservative and unwilling to pursue her work to its natural conclusion), but Meissini despises this charlatan. She feels that Montazzo disparages her theories by the addition of fairy tales.

Background: Nepolemo (76; large, steel-gray eyes; strict; haggard face) watches proudly over his subjects and his Order, even though he is very old. He makes an energetic appearance at this year's tournament in a very Rondranian manner, wearing full plate armor, a red doublet, and a white tabard bearing the Ardarite's crest (red long sword on a white field). He moves about, greeting knights and nobles, and showing both presence and endurance. He wears a badge of honor, his sword Fulgur (lightning bolt), the talisman of the Old Realm, at his side.

Nepolemo is one of the most powerful Blessed Ones of Rondra in all of Aventuria. His charisma inspires ardent enthusiasm. He doesn't just talk about the holiness of personal honor and Rondranian virtue, he is a living example. The old champion has seen and overcome many troubles, yet he remains undaunted and always keeps a clear head. He is a shining example to his citizens.

Place Encountered: Theater of Arivor, or at the tournament.

Role Playing Tips: Speak with a motivating and zealous tone. Give the heroes the feeling that *they* are especially important for everyone's well-being. Stress that Nepolemo relies on their abilities and that he is grateful to have them here. Later, use heavy breathing and show signs of suppressing pain to hint at his fading strength.

Fate: Nepolemo dies a hero's death.





Nepolemo ya Torese

COU	19
SGC	16
INT	17
CHA	17
DEX	12
AGI	15
CON	12
STR	13
LP	35
AE	-
KP	58
INI	17+1D6
DO	6
SPI	9
TOU	2
MOV	6
FtP	3
PRO/ENC	4/2

Mechanics 6, **Myths & Legends** 14, **Religions** 16, **Sphere Lore** 6, **Warfare** 16
Crafts: **Alchemy** 2, **Artistic Ability** 2, **Clothworking** 1, **Commerce** 7, **Earthencraft** 1, **Leatherworking** 4, **Metalworking** 5, **Music** 3, **Pick Locks** 0, **Prepare Food** 1, **Sailing** 2, **Treat Disease** 3, **Treat Poison** 3, **Treat Soul** 5, **Treat Wounds** 10, **Vehicles** 5, **Woodworking** 4

Blessings: *The Twelve Blessings*

Liturgical Chants: *Divine Guidance* 13, *Divine Sign* 17, *Encourage* 18, *Enforce Honor* 16, *Protect the Defenseless* 18, and many more liturgical chants of Rondra's Church

Ceremonies: *Sacred Armor* 15, *Lion Shape* 10

Equipment: Rondra's Crest, Long Sword, Chainmail Armor

Combat Behavior: Although aged, Nepolemo knows many combat techniques and always uses them in a Rondra-pleasing manner. He prefers to end fights quickly because his endurance has been waning for quite a few years now and he does not want his foes to suffer. He favors a series of feints to quickly deal damage.

Escape: The Arch-Ruler does not flee. He will surrender to protect others, but he will never try to evade his destiny.

Social Standing: noble

Advantages: Blessed One, Inspire Confidence, Noble III, Weapon Aptitude (Swords)

Disadvantages: Obligations III (Church of Rondra), Personality Flaw (Arrogance), Principles III (Code of the Church of Rondra)

Special Abilities: Alertness, Area Knowledge (Arivor), Charge, Combat Reflexes III**, Defensive Posture, Disarm, Enemy Sense, Feint III**, Forceful Blow III***, Inured to Encumbrance II*, Iron Will II, Leader, Mounted Combat, Quickdraw*, Suppress Pain

*These special abilities are inactive, as Nepolemo no longer meets the requirements due to old age.

**The 3rd level of these special abilities is inactive.

***Levels 2 and 3 of these special abilities are inactive.

Languages: Garethi III, Bosparano III, Tulamydya III, Ancient Tulamydya III

Scripts: Kuslik Signs, Tulamydya Signs, Ancient Tulamydya

Combat Techniques: Swords 18, Two-handed Swords 17

Sword: AT 19 PA 9 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Rondra's Crest: AT 17 PA 7 DP 2D6+2 RE medium

Skills
Physical: *Body Control* 15, *Carousing* 4, *Climbing* 13, *Dancing* 4, *Feat of Strength* 12, *Flying* 0, *Gaukelei* 0, *Perception* 16, *Pickpocket* 0, *Riding* 16, *Self Control* 17, *Singing* 5, *Swimming* 8, *Stealth* 0,

Social: *Disguise* 0, *Etiquette* 15, *Empathy* 16, *Fast-Talk* 10, *Intimidate* 16, *Persuasion* 17, *Seduction* 3, *Streetwise* 4, *Willpower* 16

Nature: *Animal Lore* 7, *Fishing* 1, *Orienteering* 8, *Plant Lore* 5, *Ropes* 3, *Survival* 7, *Tracking* 3

Knowledge: *Astronomy* 5, *Gambling* 4, *Geography* 6, *History* 13, *Law* 13, *Magical Lore* 11, *Math* 6,

Mechanics 6, *Myths & Legends* 14, *Religions* 16, *Sphere Lore* 6, *Warfare* 16

Death: He is seriously injured during the collapse of the theater, and his body is almost entirely crushed. Later, after he proves himself a great leader one last time, he dies from his wounds.

Special: As a Blessed One of Rondra, Nepolemo can cast liturgical chants and perform ceremonies.

"I speak on this dark day not as your Arch-Ruler, not as the Master of the Covenant, and not as Seneschal of the Ardarites. No, I speak humbly and as the simple knight that I am. You can achieve anything that I can achieve. Meet the danger with faith and never lose hope."

Last Words: *"No, it is too late. My time has come! Without me you might have a chance of survival. Go now, in the name of Rondra, and remember me! GO!"*

Gaspare ya Stellona, Arch-Castellan and Cavalliere

Profession: masterly courtier (diplomat) and trader

Motivation: Gaspare wants to increase his fortune. He thinks that everything and everyone has their price and believes that other people live by this precept, too.

Agenda: Gaspare wants to secure his fortune and save his life. He only accepts tasks that he deems safe, yet he unscrupulously makes other people do the dirty work and knowingly sends them to their deaths.

Role: He is the stereotypical "capitalistic dog" who happily sacrifices others for his own well-being or to increase his riches. He thinks that he can solve every problem with the right amount of money.

Background: This so-called Bosparaniard Baron (mid-50s; very obese; several chins; deep, bass voice) is the patriarch of the vintner's dynasty known as ya Stellona and a direct descendant of Saint Rahjalina, the inventor of Sparkling Bosparaniard. He is highly regarded, very rich, and, as head of the Datarium, very powerful. Although he is despised by many, and Rondranians find him suspicious, he somehow always comes out on top. He is a tough negotiator, but he is a patron of the arts. He sees himself as some kind of artist, but his poems share traits with the cracks and caverns below Arivor (namely, they are abysmal...).

Place Encountered: Theater of Arivor, near the Grand Winery ya Stellona, or near the Palazzo Leonis.

Role Playing Tips: Gaspare speaks with a deep, bass voice. Keep in mind that the Arch-Castellan is very obese. One way to simulate this is to pause for a deep breath after every third or fourth word. Tinge your voice with false kindness, and ignore characters with low social standing except when they are (or might become) useful to you.

Fate: Gaspare dies a villain.

Death: He flees from a combat like the coward he is, gold and other valuables clutched in his arms and spilling from his pockets and pouches, while his servants struggle to defend his property from looters. Gaspare either is killed by a rummaging bugbear that appears suddenly in his path, or,

as he maneuvers near a crevice, he trips on an overly-long string of pearls and falls into the abyss, screaming loudly.

“If I may come back to the question of how we will divide the valuables we will find. As painful as these thoughts might be during this disaster, we should be wise and think of our financial security in the coming days.”

Last Words: *“Carry that and follow me. Those fools chose their own fate, but we can still escape. Follow me and I will make you rich!”*

Travian di Faffarallo, Mercenary Captain and Murderer of Saints

Profession: talented mercenary

Motivation: Since he lost his honor, he wants to make the world see its own hypocrisy. He views his momentary situation as an unjust punishment for a mistake that wasn't his fault.

Agenda: Over the past few years, Travian learned how to survive, and he is well aware of just how much people hate him. He does not count on help from others, but instead takes advantage of the situation by teaching a lesson to all who condemn him.



Social Standing: noble

Advantages: Aptitude (Trade)

Disadvantages: Fat, Negative Attribute (Greed for Gold, Envy)

Special Abilities: Alertness, Area Knowledge (Arivor), Counterfeiter, Fencing Stolen Goods

Languages: Garethi III, Bosparano III, Cyclopean II

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Combat Techniques: Crossbows 10, Daggers 10, Impact Weapons 11, Brawling 10, Swords 7

Unarmed: AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

Dagger: AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6+1 RE short
Skills

Physical: Body Control 4, Carousing 14, Climbing 3, Dancing 0, Feat of Strength 7, Flying 0, Gaukelei 0, Perception 11, Pickpocket 0, Riding 1, Self Control 5, Singing 2, Stealth 5, Swimming 4

Social: Disguise 3, Empathy 14, Etiquette 11, Fast-Talk 15, Intimidate 7, Persuasion 4, Seduction 4, Streetwise 11, Willpower 13

Nature: Animal Lore 7, Fishing 2, Orienting 7, Plant Lore 11, Ropes 2, Survival 3, Tracking 2

Knowledge: Astronomy 2, Gambling 7, Geography 4, History 4, Law 8, Magical Lore 3, Math 9, Mechanics 4, Myths & Legends 5, Religions 5, Sphere Lore 2, Warfare 2
Crafts: Alchemy 9, Artistic Ability 8, Clothworking 1, Commerce 15, Earthencraft 2, Leatherworking 2, Metalworking 2, Music 2, Pick Locks 2, Prepare Food 14, Sailing 2, Treat Disease 2, Treat Poison 6, Treat Soul 1, Treat Wounds 1, Vehicles 8, Woodworking 3

Equipment: Dagger

Combat Behavior: Gaspare fights only if he must defend his life. Otherwise, he lets others fight for him.

Escape: Gaspare flees when he loses 50% of his LP.



Gaspare ya Stellona

COU	14
SGC	15
INT	15
CHA	14
DEX	12
AGI	10
CON	12
STR	13
LP	29
AE	-
KP	-
INI	12+1D6
DO	5
SPI	2
TOU	1
MOV	8
FtP	3
PRO/ENC	0/0

Role: He is the despised murderer of saints who became a cynical veteran. He finds the anarchy and chaos of the disaster a welcome change. He stands against anyone, even the heroes, if necessary. However, in reality he is tired of fighting and killing challengers. If the heroes show him respect and grant him at least some honor, he overcomes his bitterness and becomes their ally.

Background: Travian (50; stout; short, red curls; always freshly shaved; paws like a bear) is Condottiere of the mercenary unit known as the Brothers of the Blood. He is one of the best-known leaders of the Succession War, more commonly known as the War of the Dragon. During said war, he slew the Arivoran queen, Salkya Firdayon, even though did not intend to. Travian was cleared of all charges by a Church-appointed court, yet he must forever bear the label *murderer of saints* (even though he killed only one), especially in Arivor. Throughout the year, whether during tournament season or not, people constantly challenge him to duel. This has honed him into one of the best swordsmen in the country.

Place Encountered: random (for example, fighting a duel somewhere on the Golden Helmet, or hanging around on the tournament field)

Social Standing: free

Advantages: Luck II

Disadvantages: Principles I (Mercenary Code of Honor)

Special Abilities: Alertness, Area Knowledge (Arivor), Charge, Combat Reflexes II, Defensive Posture, Disarm, Enemy Sense, Feint II, Foray, Forceful Blow III, Hammer Blow, Inured to Encumbrance II,

Travian di Faffarallo

COU	16
SGC	12
INT	15
CHA	13
DEX	13
AGI	17
CON	15
STR	19
LP	40
AE	-
KP	-
INI	19+1d6
DO	9
SPI	2
TOU	3
MOV	8
FtP	5
PRO/ ENC	3/0

Leader, One-Handed Combat, Quickdraw, Shield-Splitter

Languages: Garethi III, Rogolan I, Thorwalian I

Scripts: Kuslik Signs

Combat Techniques: Impact Weapons 17, Swords 20

Long Sword: AT 23 PA 14 DP 1D6+9 RE medium Skills

Physical: Body Control 12, Carousing 11, Climbing 10, Dancing 2, Feat of Strength 14, Flying 0, Gaukelei 2, Perception 14, Pickpocket 2, Riding 15, Self Control 15, Singing 3, Swimming 7, Stealth 11

Social: Disguise 3, Empathy 10, Etiquette 6, Fast-Talk 7, Intimidate 12, Persuasion 4, Seduction 5, Streetwise 13, Willpower 11

Nature: Animal Lore 6, Fishing 4, Orienting 7, Plant Lore 5, Ropes 4, Survival 7, Tracking 5

Knowledge: Astronomy 2, Gambling 10, Geography 8, History 3, Law 5, Magical Lore 4, Math 6, Mechanics 4, Myths & Legends 5, Religions 4, Sphere Lore 2, Warfare 16

Crafts: Alchemy 1, Artistic Ability 4, Clothworking 2, Commerce 10, Earthencraft 2, Leatherworking 3, Metalworking 6, Music 2, Pick Locks 2, Prepare Food 2, Sailing 2, Treat Disease 4, Treat Poison 2, Treat Soul 0, Treat Wounds 9, Vehicles 5, Woodworking 4

Equipment: Long Sword, Healing Potion (QL 4), Leather Armor

Combat behavior: Travian knows all dodges and fights with utter efficiency. He uses feints, forceful

blows, and hammer blows whenever possible. He tries to catch foes off guard with forays and charges. However, the murderer of saints never underestimates anyone. He tries to control the fight and end it as quickly as possible, instead of wasting time with an enemy.

Escape: Travian is prepared to fight to the death. He flees if doing so gains him an advantage, but he will sacrifice his life if he deems it reasonable.

Role Playing Tips: Make it clear that everyone and their dog recognizes the murderer of saints, whispers behind his back, and reacts to his presence with loathing and contempt. Travian has grown used to this treatment and responds with biting cynicism. His voice is harsh. He does not care about social status and speaks in a straightforward manner, revealing whatever thoughts cross his mind. His reputation cannot possibly get worse, so why care? Be mocking, even in the face of death. Act bitter and show no mercy, for Travian has forgotten how to be merciful. Let your hand rest on an imaginary pommel, as if he is always ready to draw his sword.

Fate: Travian survives and will forever be regarded as the murderer of the saintly queen, Salkya Firdayon, no matter what he does during the disaster. In fact, afterwards people hate him even more than before (if that is possible)

because he made it out of Arivor alive while so many beloved knights perished.

(Possible Death: Travian dies fighting one of the heroes.)

“There are times when you must do what needs be done. Only the strongest survive and come out victorious, while the weak get buried. Which of those do you wish to be?”

(Possible Last Words: “Finally, an opponent with talent!”)

👤 Jucco of Tomrath, a noble scion

Profession: inexperienced courtier (noble scion)

Game Stats: see *Typical Noble* (page 48)

Motivation: Jucco has no real idea of where to go or what to do with his life. This dreamer finds inspiration easily, especially in the fine arts... and this, and that... and something else.

Agenda: When the disaster hits Arivor, he heeds the heroes' advice and follows after them anxiously. However, his courage grows, and he soon desires to become a hero and save his family and city.

Role: If you choose *Lounge Lizards* as the opening of the adventure, Jucco is placed in the heroes' care. They are hired to protect him and must see their assignment through. At first Jucco seems to be a weak youngling, but when faced with real danger, he overcomes his doubts and fears, discovers his courage, and grows up.

Background: Jucco (17 tender years old; long, flaxen hair; girlish looks; slim build) is a noble scion from the tradition-rich, Rondranian House Tomrath. He is fond of the fine arts, but his father, a very traditional knight, has a completely different career in mind for his son.

Place Encountered: theater, tournament field, or Hesinde's Temple

Role Playing Tips: Enthuse about the fine arts—especially poetry, sculpture, and painting—and culture. Act bored at the thought of spending the day at the tournament. When the catastrophe strikes Arivor, speak with fear in your voice. Shriek, stutter, and tremble at everything. Hint that you wish to distract yourself from the events at hand by talking about inappropriate things that have nothing at all to do with the situation. Then, as time passes, grow more confident and speak with a firmer voice.

Fate: Jucco's fate is entirely up to you. Depending on the course of the game, he may die or be rescued by the heroes, or even become a hero himself (although within reason).

(Possible Death: If you do kill Jucco, have him die together with a beloved person, holding each other in one last embrace, before they are slain by debris or pulled into the deep.)

“Is this really necessary? I would rather...”

(Possible Last Words: “Thanks to you I have learned to really live. Now I can leave this world without sorrow or regret and sink into Boron's arms.”)

🗡️ Hardo Berlinghan, Heir of Duke Eolan IV Berlinghan of Methumis

Profession: masterly knight

Game Stats: see *Masterly Knight* (see page 28)

Motivation: He wishes to prove himself worthy of his heirloom and be admired for his heroic deeds.

Agenda: Hardo is accompanied by two bodyguards (for stats, see *Experienced Knight*, page 28), who are fiercely loyal to him, but keep him out of any kind of trouble according to their sworn duty. Because of this, he constantly tries to escape them in order to achieve something good and helpful.

Role: He is the important guy that everyone wants to keep safe and out of trouble. This gives him the air of an arrogant and bloated aristocrat. However, he is a man of action, and is courageous, encouraging, and actually very useful, if anyone would ever let him prove himself.

Background: Hardo (early 30s; dark red curls; very tall; always cheerful; fondness of swashbucklers and dashing hats) is heir to the throne of his uncle Eolan IV Berlinghan, the Duke of Methumis. As a member of the Horasian aristocracy, he will become one of the most powerful men in the empire when he inherits the throne. He already represents his uncle in the Crown Council. Hardo is well-educated and quite intelligent, but his boldness fuels his desire to do things his own way.

Place Encountered: theater, tournament field, or the Old Castle on the Golden Helmet

Role Playing Tips: Put a smile on your face and switch to a firm voice. Give strict orders while at the same time cracking jokes. Remember that his bodyguards try to keep him safe and out of any kind of trouble at all times (usually by hindering his actions). Talk to common folk in the third person, and use the royal “we” for yourself (“*He shouldn’t worry, good man. We just want to help him!*”).

Fate: In official Aventurian history, Hardo survives and often fondly retells stories about his heroic deeds during the fall of Arivor.

(Possible Death: If you want to kill Hardo, you may do so, but he must die fending off some danger in a truly heroic manner while saving the lives of others.)

“We do not intend to stay out of the thick of the action and let him claim the glory all for himself. Hand us our sword, at once!”

(Possible Last Words: “*I don’t care what my uncle’s goons might think. I can very well look after myself!*”)

👤 Lessandra dell’Accorda, Noble Daughter from a Good House

Profession: inexperienced courtier (truant girl)

Game Stats: see *Typical Noble* (see page 48)

Motivation: Lessandra loves the idleness that comes with a life at court, which at any rate is the only life she has ever known. However, she is very invested in planning and pursuing her courtly career.

Agenda: During the disaster, she acts very insecure. She follows anyone who gives clear directions and seems to know what they are doing. Her foremost concern, however, is for her dogs.

Role: She is the archetypal damsel in distress. Lessandra must be rescued, a task made more difficult not just by her hysterical crying and screaming, but by the two small but fat Bosparaniel dogs she keeps in her arms.

Background: Lessandra (22; slender, almost scrawny; dressed and made-up to the latest fashion; long, blonde hair) is a daughter of the dell’Accorda House, the rich patrician family that runs the Hotel Sevenstroke. She has been pampered her entire life and had every wish fulfilled, which basically turned her into a typical spoiled young noble.

Place Encountered: theater, Hotel Sevenstroke, or near one of these buildings

Role Playing Tips: Depending on the situation, speak either with an artificial and arrogant tone or with a whimpering voice, and stress out to the tiniest trivialities. Do not forget to talk to your dogs once in a while as if they are human babies.

Fate: Lessandra’s fate is entirely up to you.

(Possible Death: Should you choose to end her life, she trips in her inappropriate shoes and falls into the abyss after chasing her little dog Khadan, which spots a female dog beyond a 60’ wide crack in the street and gives chase. Khadan runs towards the female dog, Lessandra chases after Khadan... and the rest is a loud scream and the sudden disappearance of the young woman.)

Special: Lessandra cuddles two twitchy, overfed Bosparaniel dogs that are the size of a handbag. She insists on keeping Khadan and Amene with her and does not leave them behind under any circumstances.

“No, I really don’t know how get rid of this dog poop. Usually, of course, a servant takes care of that.”

(Possible Last Words: “*Khadan, nooooooooooooooooooooo!*”)

🗡️ Elvena d’Abbastanza, Knight of the Goddess and Marshal of the Tournament

Profession: masterly Blessed One of Rondra

Game Stats: if the need arise for stats for Elvena, use Nepolemo ya Torese’s stats as a guide.

Motivation: Once she fervently fought the Novadis, but nowadays she is the self-styled chronicler of her Church. All she ever wanted in life was to be a brave and strong fighter for her goddess.

Agenda: Elvena senses this day will be her last. She does everything she can to save the heritage of the Ardarites and Rondra’s Church from the ruins, a task for which she is prepared to give her life.

Role: The honorable Blessed One who sacrifices herself for her Church.

Background: Elvena (early 70s; warrior who grew old gracefully; gray hair; clear expression) is the tournament

organizer. As chronicler, she is responsible for the Hall of Glory as well as many relics and sanctuaries within the city limits.

Place Encountered: random, either on the Golden Helmet or in the Field of Swords

Role Playing Tips: Speak calmly, clearly, and without traces of doubt or fear. Inject comments about the troubles of old age once in a while.

Fate: Elvena dies during the disaster.

Death: During the chaos, with the Hall of Glory collapsing around her, Elvena sits down and makes her last entry in the annals, recording the events of the past few hours. With prayers to Rondra upon her lips, she fulfills her duty as the goddess' chronicler. When she finishes writing, she hands the annals to a young Blessed One waiting near the portal.

The young priest carries the chronicles to safety, while what remains of the walls and ceiling of the Hall of Glory comes crashing down, burying Elvena beneath.

Special: As a Blessed One of Rondra, Elvena can cast the liturgical chants and ceremonies of her goddess.

"Why are these drops of Saint Adare's blood so important? 700 years ago, they flowed from her wounds when the Sun-legion murdered her. They help us remember that we must be prepared to defend our values at all times, even if it costs us our lives. They are a sign of hope for all who worship the Twelvegods."

Last Words: *"Our Lady grant that we may meet again in Rondra's Halls. Take this to safety."*

Glossary of Horasian Terms

Castello – castle

Cavalliere/Cavalliera – knight (m/f)

Condottiere – mercenary captain

Maestro/Maestra – salutation and title of a master crafter, scholar, or magister (m/f)

Mercenario/Mercenaria – mercenary (m/f)

Palazzo – noble's townhouse (pl. *palazzi*)

Piazza – a town square

Signor/Signora – typical form of address for people of higher social standing (like Master/Mistress in the Middenrealm)

Via – a street

Villa – noble's country house (pl. *villas*)



Starting the Adventure

Rahja 19th to 22nd

This chapter gives you three options for starting the adventure. All three place the heroes in the famous Theater of Arivor when disaster strikes the city.

- **Lounge Lizards:** In this opening, the heroes are approached by an Arivoran noble family to look after their house's scion. The assignment carries a hint of intrigue. If the heroes accept the job, they are with Jucco of Tomrath, serving as his bodyguard, when he visits the theater.
- **Protectors:** In this opening, the heroes are hired by a scholar who hires the heroes for protection while she collects rock samples. The heroes witness a starfall, giving them insight into how the catastrophe is mounting and also the opportunity to try to warn Arivor.
- **Swordwielder:** In this opening, the heroes are in Arivor for the tournament, either as spectators or to take part. While attempting to conduct business in the city or simply enjoy the festivities, they somehow obtain one of the rare and expensive mammuton tickets to a big theater premiere. Choose this entry if your gaming group prefers more action. This path can easily begin *in medias res*, with the heroes already competing in the tournament.

Opening Option 1: Lounge Lizards (Evening of Rahja 19th)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You stand on the cool patio of a typical palazzo on the slopes of the Golden Helmet. The garden teems with blooming plants, a small fountain fills the air with a refreshing humidity, and mosaics and statues of saints serve as pleasant distractions from your thoughts.

"Her Ladyship will soon be with you, gallant warriors," purrs a servant with a soft voice as she serves you glasses of Sparkling Bosparaniard or delicious fruit juices. Yes, you could get used to this lifestyle, especially the waiting part, truly.

This opening is especially well suited for socially adept or renowned heroes, or heroes that earned a name for themselves in service to Rondra, the Horasian Empire, or a noble from the realm. It is in reality a red herring designed to make the heroes think the adventure focuses on intrigue in the Horasian court. The disaster catches the heroes unprepared and steers the adventure in a totally unexpected direction.

Quest I: In Hesinde's Service

The old and noble Arivoran family of Tomrath has a long history of devotion to Rondra. The heroes' employer, her



ladyship Minerva of Tomrath (mid-40s; petite; perfectly styled blonde hair; refined manner of expression; artistically inclined), is the mistress of the House and a born Ascream. She warmly welcomes the heroes to her home on Rahja 19th, the evening before the tournament. After a short but polite conversation, she leads the group into the study, where she explains the task she has in mind for them. However, before she begins, she asks for their utmost discretion. The heroes' word of honor is enough.

- She wants the heroes to accompany and protect her son, Jucco of Torath (see page 16), while he attends the tournament.
- Jucco has no idea that his mother believes he is in danger. She tells the heroes that, on more than one occasion, she saw people lurking in the shadows and watching the house at night. Minerva once went out to confront one of them, but he ran away.
- She cannot name specific enemies, but many people envy her family (the ya Stellona family, the knights from House Westfar, or those ya Rostich parvenus, for example).
- Arrangements have been made for the heroes to participate in all the amusements Jucco enjoys: visits to the tournament, bard contests, readings, even a theater premiere. Jokingly, Minerva says that mere possession of those theater tickets is reason enough for some people to hate her family.
- She is not worried about the safety of her husband or herself. Both will remain indoors during the tournament. It is much cooler inside the house, and besides, they are not very fond of crowds.
- Minerva offers the group 10 ducats in advance plus another 3 per hero, per day. If nothing happens during the tournament, or the heroes do a perfect job keeping Jucco out of trouble, they will receive a bonus of 10 more ducats (total). Expenses must come from these sums, but Minerva arranged to have the heroes stay in the nearby Hotel Sevenstroke, the best hotel in Arivor. The hotel bill has already been paid.

If the heroes accept the job, they should return the following morning to accompany Jucco to the tournament field.

Quest II: In Rondra's Service

When Minerva finishes her presentation, she introduces the group to Horasius of Tomrath (50; large and square-built; experienced knight, through and through), Jucco's father. He is here to have a look at his son's new bodyguards. He flatters the heroes and either personally walks them to the hotel or shares another drink with them. He, too, wishes to ask the heroes to perform a task regarding his son, as follows.

- Horasius thinks Jucco is mollycoddled. The boy seems to be drawn more to Hesinde than to Rondra. However, the Tomraths come from old nobility, and have close ties to the Ardarites. Horasius assumes his wife, an artistically talented Ascream, is the reason why his son is growing ever softer.
- He does not deem his son lost to the cause of the goddess. He asks the heroes to give Jucco a taste of the

Of Brooches, Brides, and Brigands

Some of the people Minerva spotted are paid spies in service to the ya Rostich family. They have orders to report whenever the wearer of a certain brooch leaves the Tomrath house. Said brooch shows a black sword on dark green malachite. That is all the spies know. They were hired through an intermediary, so they do not even know the true identity of their employer. They are more cautious now that someone has spotted them, and they relocate to the tournament field to keep an eye out for the wearer of the brooch.

Why are the ya Rostichs after this specific brooch? Because it's design bears a striking similarity to their family's coat of arms. Not long ago, Minerva came into possession of the brooch in an auction after bidding against the ya Rostichs. She had no motive other than to buy something nice for her son's Tsa's Day. The ya Rostichs, however, need the brooch, which dates back to the time of King Albron Firdayon (around 800 FB), to prove that the history of their house stretches back more than 200 years. As upstarts from the ranks of the patricians, the recently ennobled ya Rostich family stand to gain an immense amount of influence if they can prove such a claim, and this brooch is all the proof they need. They now plan to use the disruption of the tournament to obtain the brooch from Jucco (see *In The Name of Phex*, page 21).

The ya Rostichs are not the only ones trying to get their hands on Jucco. The dell'Accorda family has sent spies, too, but their spies don't intend to harm Jucco. They simply want to keep track of his whereabouts. Why? Because the dell'Accorda family, owners of the Hotel Sevenstroke, resemble the ya Rostichs in that they, too, were quite recently ennobled, but they have a daughter named Lessandra (see page 17). Their goal is to have Jucco and Lessandra meet *completely by accident*, over and over again, so they fall in love and enter a Travian bond that ultimately ties the two families together. The only thing the Tomraths would gain from such a bond is a pleasant daughter-in-law. The dell'Accordas, however, would immediately climb several steps on the social ladder. For more about the dell'Accordas' plans, see *In Rahja's Service*, below.



tournament and do everything in their power to see that he has a good time.

- If the heroes succeed, Horasius is willing to pay the group yet another 10 ducats, of which he offers 5 coins in advance for their expenses.

More Quests

Quest III: In Rahja's Service

On their first night in the Hotel Sevenstroke, the heroes realize that they are receiving generous treatment. The servants bring them whatever they ask for, and even ignore other guests in order to serve the heroes first. They find that even the most expensive Bosparaniard is on the house, and the food is of truly royal quality.

When they ask for their rooms, they are shown to the Royal Suite, which occupies the entire top floor of the hotel. If they ask why they have better accommodations than they were led to expect, the concierge tells them a story about a group of nobles that arrived earlier that evening without reservations and demanded rooms. The heroes' original rooms were all that were available.

However, a most noble guest unfortunately had to cancel his visit on short notice, and the upgrade is meant to compensate the heroes for the inconvenience. Furthermore, the concierge whispers that it would be no problem to arrange for company from the most distinguished **Rose of Belhanka (19)**, if the heroes were of such a mind. If the heroes ask whether they will be responsible for the cost of these special services, the concierge just shrugs, smiles, and waves them off.

A successful check on *Empathy (Discern Motivation)* reveals that there will of course be a price for all this luxury. If the heroes try to nail down this price through interrogation or intimidation, the concierge summons the owner of the hotel to speak with them. If the heroes do not press the concierge further, the owner of the hotel presents himself to the heroes during the next day's breakfast. Acco dell'Accorda (54; consummate host; small-framed; delicate, waxed mustache; exceedingly tactful and polite) approaches the heroes with a request for a favor. He reveals his plan to arrange matrimony between his daughter, Lessandra, and Jucco of Tomrath. He goes to great lengths to describe every romantic aspect of the intended liaison, as well as his daughter's happiness, if only the heroes could help arrange the meetings. However, he reveals nothing about his real plan (raising the reputation and standing of his own family's name).

Aside from friendly words and luxurious treatment, he also offers the heroes the very respectable sum of 50 ducats if they help create the bond between Jucco and Lessandra. For this, they need do nothing more than bring the lovebirds together and introduce Lessandra to the young man. Almost as an aside, Acco subtly urges the heroes to look the other way in questions of manners and decency, and let Rahja work her wonders through Lessandra.

Quest IV: In The Name of Phex

If the ya Rostich family's thieves fail in their appointed task (see below), one of the family's spies approaches the heroes during the tournament and whispers that *someone* is willing to pay them 50 ducats to obtain Jucco's brooch, the exchange to take place a few days later, during the last act of a big theater premiere. An agent will be waiting with the money in the vestibule of the theater's huge and magnificent antechamber.

Days of the Tournament

The following morning, the heroes enjoy breakfast in their hotel and then return to the Tomrath's to fetch Jucco, escort him to the tournament, and take him anywhere else he might wish to visit. During this time, the heroes are free

to influence the boy, fend off thieves, or even rob Jucco themselves.

For the following competitive checks, QL represents the heroes' final QL (that is, QL (heroes) minus QL (target/foe). Of course, a final QL of 0 or less means failure for the heroes. For example, a thief attempts to steal Jucco's brooch and the heroes have a final QL of 0. The brooch is gone, and it is likely that no one notices until too much time has passed to do anything about it.

Competitive check of *Fast-Talk (Hard Sell, Manipulate, or Sweet-Talk)* vs. *Willpower (Resist Fast-Talk)*

QL 1: Jucco follows the heroes' advice hesitantly and with little enthusiasm. He soon wishes to do something else.

QL 2: Jucco agrees and quite enjoys the activity, but he does not ask for more. Instead, he asks to do something he truly likes.

QL 3+: not only does Jucco agree, but his enthusiasm is kindled. He wants to know everything about the activity and asks if there is more like this. He willingly follows the heroes' advice (which means he follows the will of the heroes' employers...).

Competitive check of *Perception (Spot)* vs. *Pickpocket (Steal from Person)* (Skill level 7, attributes 11/14/13)

QL 1 – The thief is driven off but may be pursued (see the *Core Rules*, page 349), if desired, through rough terrain. He has a *Body Control (Running)* 7 (attributes 13/13/12) and a half movement of 4. His lead is 45 feet.

QL 2: as above, but with a lead of only 21 feet.

QL 3+: The heroes apprehend the thief.

Competitive check of *Pickpocket (Steal from Person)* with a modifier of -1 vs. *Perception (Spot)*

QL 1: The hero steals Jucco's brooch but the young man immediately notices it is missing and starts to search for it, demanding that the heroes help. With a second check on *Pickpocket (Slip Item)*, the hero in question can return the brooch unnoticed and fast-talk Jucco into believing that he simply overlooked it.

QL 2: The theft succeeds; Jucco notices his brooch is missing either later that same day or, at the latest, immediately prior to visiting the theater.

QL 3+: The theft succeeds and goes unnoticed until just prior to the theater visit.

Event Timeline:

How Events Are Supposed to Unfold

- ☛ **Morning of Rahja 20th:** Jucco and the heroes watch Nepolemo ya Torese open the tournament on the **tournament field (2)**.
- ☛ **Afternoon of Rahja 20th:** Jucco attends the bard's tournament on the edge of the **tournament field (2)**.
- ☛ **Evening of Rahja 20th:** Jucco visits a tavern called 'tis

Ascream, near the theater, to mix with other Hesinde-minded people, scholars, and patricians.

- **Morning of Rahja 21st:** Instead of watching yet another brutal and bloodthirsty tournament fight, Jucco visits a reading lounge in the **Temple of Arts (16)**.
- **Rahja 21st, noon:** Lunch at the **Hotel Sevenstroke (14)**.
- **Afternoon of Rahja 21st:** Stroll through the streets and alleyways of Morgunora, with a short visit (and donation) to the **Sancta Rahjalina Temple (27)**.
- **Evening of Rahja 21st:** Dinner (delicious food and rare fine wines) in the noble restaurant of the **Grand Winery ya Stellona (26)**; Gaspare ya Stellona fawns over Jucco and the heroes.
- **Rahja 22nd, morning to afternoon:** more tournaments of the bards alongside the **tournament field (2)**
- **Evening of Rahja 22nd:** Attend a bard's concert in the Black Lion Inn, located in the pilgrim's town south of the tournament field.
- **Morning of Rahja 23rd:** Attend the gala premiere of "Victory over the Demon Master" in the **Theater of Arivor (13)**.

In The Theater

On the morning of Rahja 23rd, Jucco and the heroes attend the theater. Jucco mentions his concerns that the play's quality might suffer from overly pompous gimmickry, and stops to discuss his ideas with some friends in the vestibule. The reception before the show gives the heroes a chance to mingle with Arivor's nobility.



The brooch is a talisman blessed by Rondra (for more information about *blessed objects*, see the *Core Rules*, page 315). Furthermore, at the right moment (GM's choice), it casts the *Encourage* liturgy (QL 2) on its wearer.



For more information about the play, see page 29. Jucco and Lessandra dell'Accorda might begin flirting with each other during the reception and could even continue during the play itself via fan language, for example. The heroes can try to find a way to steal Jucco's brooch, kindle his enthusiasm for the more Rondranian aspects of the play, or encourage his budding romance, depending on their goals.

Suddenly, turmoil is heard outside in the vestibule (it is Dottora Meissini, trying to push through to the Arch-Ruler), and then the disaster strikes Arivor! The adventure continues in *Escape from the Theater*, on page 29.

Opening Option 2: Prospectors (Rahja 22nd)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

"Help the dottora," they said. "Explore the wilderness," they said. "Face wild animals and dangerous mountain passes," they said. You have been out here laboring under a burning hot sun for days, and what have you been doing? Collecting stones. STONES! And recording hundreds of technical terms in Rogolan, the language of the dwarves! Well, at least that makes sense because that's the technical language of dereology, according to Dottora Meissini. You are not sure whether the buzzing in your head is due to sunstroke or the words that the dottora constantly throws in your direction like some kind of weird mantra or strange spell. Broomsom (small, brittle, porous stone), broschtor (dense, hard rock), magambrom (porous, volcanic rock), murbrom (red, porous ore)...

Getting Hired

In this option, the heroes answer an ad for employment posted by Dottora Fulminia Meissini (see page 11) somewhere in northern Horasia. The posters read as follows.

Valiant companions wanted for scientific expedition!

Experience in wilderness living, physical privation, and the ability to defend ones' self and others required. Knowledge in dereology and stonelore advantageous but not necessary.

Payment according to abilities. Minimum of 5 silverthalers per day.

Come to Arivor in mid-Rahja, and meet me in the cellar tavern called Bloodharvest.

Dottora F. Meissini

You can place the meeting point, a cellar tavern named Bloodharvest, anywhere near the **Sancta Rahjalina Temple (27)** in Arivor's **Morgunora** quarter (see page 9). You can role play the scene where Meissini hires the heroes, or you can abbreviate that bit and jump straight into the opening of this adventure. If you decide to play the scene, the heroes have a chance to haggle over the payment. If it looks like they will be especially useful on the trip, Meissini agrees to pay up to 3 ducats extra per day. She pays each hero individually, so keep track of their earnings.

This opening is best suited for heroes who most closely match the stated prerequisites. Scholars of all kinds might receive an invitation from the dottora to take part in her expedition. Note that this opening prepares the heroes for the disaster that is about to happen, in which case the main surprise awaiting them is the speed and scale of Arivor's destruction.

Starfall

The Expedition's Route

The heroes accompany the dottora through the hills surrounding Arivor for several days. They march along the road to Aldyra for about five miles, but then leave the road near the village of Tomrath and make for the hills to the southeast. They stop frequently to collect stone samples, slowing their progress, and they take an entire day to reach the village of Taresellio (3 miles from Tomrath as the crow flies, and 5 miles from Arivor). Here they establish a base camp for further expeditions into the surrounding hills.

Over the next two days they follow a zigzag course in the direction of the next village, Alicorno. The heroes restock their provisions at noon on their way through the hamlet of Aquiliano, near the road from Taresellio to Alicorno. They take time to buy some wine from last year's harvest and chat with the peasants. Sunset finds them in the wine hills above the hamlet. The southern exposure and volcanic substrate of this area helps produce a very good, dry, white wine. At this point the group is about 15 miles from Arivor.

At the Campfire

After a day of collecting stone samples under a burning hot sun, Praios finally decides to close his fierce eye. The dottora puts the finishing touches on her notes for the day while one or two of the heroes prepare dinner and the others make camp.

Play out a little scene by the fire to give the heroes and the dottora a chance to know each other a little bit better. Maybe she explains her theories regarding the hills and the underlying caverns (see page 13), or the group hypothesizes about the disappearance of certain stars. At some point during the evening, the following occurs.

The Falling Star

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The campfire sends flickering sparks up into the dark of the night, and you look up at the stars while you eat your evening meal. One after the other, Phex's jewels appear in the sky and form the familiar constellations. Some people say that the stars reveal what will happen in the future.

It looks like Phex spread his best sparkling diamonds across a dark blue drape. One of the stars is especially bright tonight, and, you realize, moving... quite quickly, in fact. It is a shooting star! Those are supposed to bring good luck.

Shooting stars normally vanish after a few moments—just enough time to make a wish—but this one sticks around. It dashes across the sky and then suddenly dives toward the ground, growing larger by the second! By all the Twelve, a star is falling from the sky! The air grows much brighter, lightning flashes, and then you hear the star hit the ground! At first you can see only a dim glow where it struck. Then you hear a profound roar and feel a mighty shockwave. Even here, far above the site of the impact, it knocks you off your feet.

The heroes witness something exciting, but when the dust settles, they quickly grasp that something horrible has happened. Moments ago, the hearth fires of Aquiliano flickered peacefully in the dark. Now, nothing remains of the cheerful hamlet except for some burning debris at the edge of a smoking crater.

Investigating the Crater

Skill check on *Perception (Search)*

QL 1: The hamlet is gone. The impact extinguished all life in the blink of an eye, leaving behind some charred bodies and pieces of wood but no survivors. Furthermore, huge crevices in the ground spread out from the crater in all directions.

QL 2+: The heroes find 1D6 pieces of meteoritic iron, a very rare and valuable material that is used for magical effects and to forge weapons with uncanny abilities. If they continue to search, further successes with *Perception (Search)* add more meteoritic iron (worth 5 ducats per QL of the check) to their collection. However, every check after the first incurs a loss of 1 unit of time (see *Time Goes By* on page 24). If any heroes have a Negative Trait (such as Curiosity or Greed for Gold), call for a *Willpower* check. On a failure, they continue their search for more meteoritic iron.

Investigating the Crevices

For the dottora, this event presents a rare opportunity. Aside from the sheer luck of witnessing a starfall, it might be just the thing she needs to prove her theories. She sets out to investigate both the crater and the crevices. If the heroes agree to help, she even climbs down into the deep. Apply a modifier of -1 to her *Climbing (Mountaineering)* check for each

additional hero. Note that every successful check costs **1 unit of time**, while every failed check costs **2 units**. Botches cost **3 units of time** (see *Time Goes By* on page 24). It may take time, but a thorough and successful investigation of the crater leads to important new findings and grants a +1 bonus to *Persuasion* checks later, as the dottora can support her claims with hard derologic facts and samples of meteoritic iron. Most importantly, the group learns that the caverns below Gerondrata will soon collapse and drag Arivor into the abyss....

A Race Against Time

As soon as the crater, the crevices, and the remains of the hamlet have been searched, the dottora returns to Arivor as soon as the group finishes searching the hamlet for survivors and studying the crater and the crevices. She now knows that this is not the end of the event. The crevices are spreading in the direction of Arivor, and a collapse of the caverns below the city would cause a disaster of apocalyptic proportions. The scholar is both excited and horrified to realize that the catastrophe proves her theories.

Returning to Arivor along the direct route (about 15 miles) costs the heroes **8 time units**. Marching at double speed reduces the cost to **5 time units**, but the heroes suffer 1 level of *Stupor* (see *Core Rules*, page 34) as a result and don't get time to rest for at least three hours after they arrive in Arivor.

In Arivor

The description of the city starts on page 7. The heroes arrive from the east. They manage to travel a bit faster than the crevices, so cracks are not yet visible from the city walls. However, the dottora calculated that the cracks will reach the town in a matter of hours. She wishes to inform the Arch-Ruler or the Datarium (the city council) as soon as possible, but the throngs of pilgrims and visitors in the streets make progress difficult. At this time of day, much of the crowd is headed toward the tournament field or the markets in the old town.

Arch-Ruler Nepolemo ya Torese and the members of the Datarium are at the **theater (13)**, watching the premiere of the battle epic. No one suspects what is about to happen. The dottora heads for the theater as soon as she learns of the Arch-ruler's whereabouts. It is very important that the heroes accompany her as she searches for the Arch-Ruler.

If she has time, the dottora tries to warn as many people as possible. In this matter she gratefully accepts an advice the heroes can offer. At this point, a speech in the marketplace ("We have dire news...") would serve just as well as a bold lie ("The Novadis are coming!"). The heroes simply need to be very persuasive. No matter how hard they try, however, the number of people they persuade to leave the city is limited (see *Time Goes By*).

Time Goes By

Here we present two means to keep track of the time it takes the heroes to reach Arivor and spread the alarm before disaster strikes. You could (a) estimate how much time your group spends investigating the crater and running back to Arivor, or (b) use the following system of *time units*.

If you choose the former, simply declare that the heroes persuade X number of people to leave the city, based on the success of their efforts.

If the latter, the heroes start with a total of 16 time units and lose one or more for various delays. This gives you a tool for calculating how much time the heroes have to warn people, and also gives the image of a clock relentlessly counting down the minutes until the city falls. Keep announcing the remaining time to put pressure on the heroes, or remain silent and simply start the catastrophe when the countdown ends.

- Start with a total of **16 time units**. Each unit represents one hour that passes since the Starfall. Arivor is destroyed after 16 hours.
- Delays of any kind reduce the total number of time units. Subtract 1 per hour that passes (and the amounts given above, if the heroes perform any of the listed actions). The time required to return to Arivor is included in the travel times listed above.
- Once the heroes start warning people in Arivor, call for a check on *Persuasion (Oration)* once per time unit they wish to invest. The number of people who get out of town and reach safety before the catastrophe occurs is equal to 1000 x the combined QL of these checks. Remember that the heroes must persuade these people to leave. Simply running through the city crying wolf saves no one.

How Many Time Units Does My Action Cost?

- Every reasonable warning action cost 1 time unit, meaning it takes one hour.
- Every failed attempt costs 1-3 time units. Rerolling failed checks or trying alternate methods costs 1 additional time unit each.

Example: The heroes investigate the crater (-1) and travel through the night at normal speed (-8). Thus they arrive in Arivor 9 hours after the impact. This mean that 16-9=7 hours remain before the catastrophe occurs, so the heroes have a maximum of 7 hours to warn people to leave the city. If every Persuasion (Oration) check results in at least QL 1, they can save at least 7,000 lives.

However, they also need to find the Arch-Ruler. First, they spend one hour warning people (-1 time unit, and succeed with QL 2). Then they search for the Arch-Ruler for two hours (-2 time units) before they finally learn that he is at the theater. They arrive and try to gain an audience with the Arch-Ruler but are deemed crazy and the guards throw them out. They give another speech in the streets (-1 time unit, and succeed with a total of QL 3), and are able to persuade a wine merchant to smuggle them into the theater during the intermission (-1 time unit).

7-1-2-1-1=1 hour left to storm the stage and persuade the audience to flee Arivor or meet certain doom!

So far, the heroes have managed to save (QL 2 + QL 3 = QL 5) x 1,000 = 5,000 people.



Searching For Someone in Charge

- The city council usually meets in the **Palazzo Leonis (22)**, but the building is guarded.
- The crowd on the **tournament field (2)** is huge. It is not easy to reach the Arch-Ruler's box. Also, the chairs for the Arch-Ruler and the Council are well protected by regular guards and Ardarites.
- The heroes gain admittance to neither the **High Castle of the Ardarites (9)** nor to the Arch-Ruler's **Palazzo Acano (11)**.
- Using *Streetwise (Asking Around)*, the heroes can learn that (QL 1) the Arch-Ruler and the Council are not attending the tournament today. Instead, (QL 2+) they are in the theater.
- To get information from a guard, call for a competitive check of *Fast-Talk* or *Intimidate* vs. *Willpower* (SR 5, attributes 12/13/10). On a success, the heroes learn the location of the Arch-Ruler and the Council.
- Another success with the same check as above (or with *Persuasion (Conversation)*) gets the heroes past the guards at the theater. However, these checks incur a -2 modifier because the guards take their duties very seriously.
- If the heroes try to sneak past the guards, call for a competitive check of *Stealth (Sneak)* vs. *Perception (Spot)* (SR 7, attributes 11/13/13).
- The heroes may break into the Palazzo Leonis (a red herring) or the theater with a successful check on *Climbing (Walls)*.

The heroes eventually manage to arrive in the stands near the Arch-Ruler and the Council, but just as they are about to explain themselves to these important people, the catastrophe strikes and the theater collapses! The adventure continues in *Escape from the Theater* on page 29.

Opening Option 3: Swordwielder (starting on Rahja 20th)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

It was a long journey but worthwhile. Knights in shining armor, helmets adorned with plumes of feathers, bright tunics, and colorful tents spread out as far as the eye can see. The panting of noble steeds and the clank of training weapons sound from all around you. This is the place to be! You thrill at the prospect of dueling for glory and prizes!

This opening option is best suited to heroes that could reasonably be expected to stand on the field of honor, including all kinds of warriors and other fighters, although the tournament also offers singing and storytelling contests for bards, drinking and card games in the various taverns, and opportunities for jugglers to earn a few coins. And shady characters might try their luck acquiring this and that in a Phex-pleasing manner...



The heroes obtain their mammuton tickets to the theater either as a reward in the tournament, as a gift, as a prize in a game, or as loot obtained from a wealthy spectator. Of course you may combine these options as you see fit, as long as the heroes wind up attending the premiere in the theater.

Overview of the Various Contests

Buhurt

The first contest of the tournament involves several rounds of buhurt, a form of simulated mass combat fought with blunted weapons. Anyone brave enough (and willing to pay one ducat as an entrance fee) may participate. The buhurt is a traditional means for squires to earn their first laurels.

Infantry Combat

Almost anyone can enter these contests, which involve one event for single-handed weapons, and another for two-handed weapons. Participants must provide their own weapons (which, in the case of Arivor's tournament, must be made of wood), shields, and armor. The entrance fee is 5 ducats. The rules are essentially the same as for jousts, but more fights are held each day, and contestants must leave the competition after their second defeat instead of their first.

Game Rules: Bohort and Infantry Combat

Use the regular combat rules. A wooden tournament sword deals 1D6+1 points of damage (Combat Technique: Swords; Damage Threshold: AGI/STR 16; AT/PA modifier 0/0; medium reach). The weapon breaks upon dealing 7 or more DP with a single blow, and the wielder must change to another wooden weapon (the opponent scores 1 point for this). Undeclared hits are worth 1 point. The first to score 5 points wins the fight.

Two-handed tournament swords are made of wood, too. A wooden two-handed sword deals 1D6+3 DP (Combat Technique: Two-handed Swords; Damage Threshold: AGI/STR 16; AT/PA modifier: 0/-2; medium reach). It breaks when it deals 9 or more DP with a single blow (the opponent scores 1 point for this). Undeclared hits are worth 1 point. The first to score a total of 3 points wins the fight.

The bohort is a mass combat between two groups marked with ribbons of two different colors (usually worn on one arm). Victory goes to the last person standing, but can also be awarded to everyone in one group if every combatant from their opposing group falls. Contestants may use one- or two-handed wooden weapons. Depending on their choice of weapons, appropriate rules for single combat apply.



Jousting

Entering the joust is not easy, as restrictions apply and the entrance fee is high. Prospective contestants must meet the following requirements.

- Contestants must supply their own equipment (horse, full plate armor, shield, tournament lances)
- Contestants must be an acknowledged Horasian Tournament Rider, meaning they must be citizens of the Horasian Empire and be of noble birth (advantage *Noble I*)
- Foreigners of noble blood may also enter the joust, as may warriors from any Warrior Academy, if they present their license for inspection. Applicants who are not of noble birth but able to provide their own equipment may submit to thorough testing (qualities such as renown, riding abilities, and so on); suitable applicants gain admission to the joust. Since Horasian mercenaries and non-noble patricians participate in tournament jousts, it should be possible for heroes as well.
- Contestants must know how to ride and joust (meaning characters must have SR in the appropriate skills)
- Contestants must be able to afford the entrance fee of 20 ducats

In the first round, judges choose pairs of challengers and defenders randomly. Each pair takes as many runs as needed, until one is unhorsed. For subsequent rounds, judges assign pairs according to very complicated rules which consider each contestant's social standing, involvement in feuds, and

previous jousting titles (and the ease or bravery with which they were won).

This year's joust is not only the last in the ages-long history of the Arivoran Tournament, it will also remain unfinished, as the final rounds are scheduled for Rahja 24th and 25th

Shield and Ring Jousting

To enter these contests, one needs only a horse and either a spear or lance. Noble blood is not a requirement. The shield and ring jousting contests are planned for Rahja 21st and 22nd.

Game Rules: Shield and Ring Jousting

These contests require checks on AT with the Combat Technique *Lances*. For each contest, ten riders compete in 3 turns each, trying to score as many points as possible by collecting rings with their lances. The five riders who collect the most points advance to the next round. Normally, three such contests occur on the first day, while the finale occurs on the second day (15 riders start the finale).

During each turn, riders try to collect one of three rings: the largest and easiest to collect is worth 1 point, the middle ring is worth 2 points, and the small ring is worth 3 points. Obtaining a ring requires a check against AT (*Lances*), modified by 0 (large ring), -2 (middle ring), or -4 (small ring). Failure means the rider scores no points for that turn.

Shield jousting is a contest against the feared "Sir Alrik of Wood," a wooden knight whose shield must be hit with the contestant's lance. In order to win this contest, Sir Alrik's shield must be struck (AT (*Lances*)) so that he swings around at least 180 degrees. Furthermore, contestants must successfully evade the swinging weight that hangs from the wooden knight's weapon arm (*Riding (Combat Maneuver)*) or be unhorsed (DP 1D6+2 from the weight, plus the damage from the fall (see *Core Rules*, page 340). The contest continues until only one participant remains. Victory does bestow some honor on the winner but is of no real consequence, since knights consider shield and ring jousting to be squires' games compared to the proper military disciplines of the other Arivoran Tournament events.



Chariot Race

The popular spectacle of the chariot race is scheduled for the last day of the tournament (Rahja 25th), and everyone anxiously awaits its running. Of course, it will never actually happen.

Other Contests of the Tournament

- Besides the official Tournament of the Bards, various taverns stage unofficial bard contests. Apart from honor and glory, the grand prize winner of the official contest

Game Rules: Jousting

Jousting uses the regular rules for mounted combat (see *Core Rules*, page 239). Each contestant must possess the maneuvers *Tilt* and *Mounted Combat*. Challenging an opponent of higher social rank requires a check on *Etiquette (Manners)*, and the challenger must achieve a QL of at least one higher than the social standing of the challenged (see *Core Rules*, page 338). One may automatically challenge an opponent of equal or lower rank. Challengers that fail this check can joust only against opponents of lower rank this day.

- Even though opponents clash simultaneously during jousts, you may compare each mount's INI to determine which opponent gets to roll the dice first
- Contestants must make a *Riding* check to charge their opponents
- Contestants must use tournament lances
- For the first roll, the contestant rolls against AT (Lances)
- Failure means the contestant misses the target
- On a success, the target attempts to parry with a shield. Successful Parries reduce DP by half.
- A hit with a tournament lance deals 1D6+8 DP (which includes all modifiers)
- A target struck by a lance must make a *Riding (Combat Maneuvers)* check, subtracting (damage taken/2). On a success, the target rider stays in the saddle. On a failure, the target rider falls to the ground, suffers falling damage (reduced by 2 for soft ground), and gains a level of the condition *Stupor*. However, the QL of the target's *Riding (Combat Maneuvers)* check may reduce the duration of the *Stupor*'s effect.
- One joust lasts 30 seconds or less. The intermission between jousts depends on the condition of the riders. Sometimes the next joust begins immediately. On other occasions, riders are permitted a few minutes rest while

squires remove pieces of broken lances from the lists, bring new lances to the contestants, or check wounds for severity. Tournament judges rarely grant extra time to contestants, and those who try to stall for time sometimes find themselves disqualified...

Quality Level	Duration of <i>Stupor</i>
QL 1	3 hours
QL 2	1 hour
QL 3	30 minutes
QL 4	30 seconds
QL 5	10 seconds
QL 6	1 CR

- A tournament lance breaks when it deals 11 or more DP in one blow. To stay in the joust, the rider must use a new lance. Tournament lances cost 30 silverthalers each.
- Special, bespoke tournament armor provides better protection against tournament lances. This special suit of full plate has PRO 8 and an ENC of 5. Jousting plate costs at least 3,000 silverthalers.
- The other opponent now attacks.
- As mentioned above jousting attacks occur simultaneously, which means both opponents can be struck from their saddles.
- The joust continues until one opponent falls to the ground, gains the state of *incapacitated*, or yields.
- Victory goes to the knight who remains in the saddle the longest. If both riders fall at the same time, the jousters tie and may joust against each other once more. In case of another tie, both riders advance to the next round.



Sample Contestants

- Rosalie dell'Armadur / Ronderin ter Corazza (Experienced; use stats for a typical knight)
- Illyrica ay Hylphur (Experienced; very proud; cyclopean knight with little money)
- Cesara della Carenio (Experienced; member of the Order of the Holy Blood; strong sense of honor)
- Merkan of Farsid (Experienced; bastard son of the Duke of Grangor; very loyal to his father)
- Nevinia ya Stellona (Competent; niece of Gaspare ya Stellona, but does not like him due to his demeanor)
- Saryun Mezzetta (Competent; brutal; an unpopular opponent)



- Valdivia ya Plantanego (Competent; 34; Eskadron leader of the Bandiera Bianca mercenaries; auburn hair; distinctive chin)
- Malrizio ya Duridanya (Competent; 40; a baron from the Belhankan hinterlands; tournament rider and patron of the arts with a poet's soul; black curls; handsome; generous; loves splendor)
- Haqim Lionpride of Arivor (Masterly; 37; Blessed One of Rondra; converted Novadi; well groomed; handsome; eyes like smoldering embers)
- Grifone da Cavalcanti (Masterly; 43; Condottiere of the Bandiera Bianca mercenaries; black goatee; half-bald head; chiseled face; seldom sleeps)
- Hardo Berlinghan (Masterly; see page 28)
- Travian di Faffarallo (see page 15)



receives one of the rare and expensive **mammuton tickets** to the premiere of "Victory Over the Demon Master."

- Opportunities for **gambling** abound in most taverns, card and dice games being the most popular.

Typical Knight (Experienced/Competent/Masterly)

COU 13/14/15 DEX 11/11/11 SGC 12/12/12 AGI 13/14/15
INT 13/14/15 CON 14/15/16 CHA 12/12/12 STR 14/15/16
LP 33/36/39 SPI 1/2/2 AE - TOU 2/3/3 KP - DO 5/5/6
MOV 8 INI 11/12/13+1D6

Longsword: AT 11/13/15 PA 6/7/8 DP 1D6+4/1D6+4/1D6+5
RE medium

Two-handed Sword: AT 11/13/15 PA 3/4/5

DP 2D6+4/2D6+4/2D6+5 RE medium

Tournament Lance: AT 11 DP 1D6+8 RE medium

PRO/ENC 6/2 (already calculated into all values) or 8/4
(MOV, INI, DO, AT, and PA: -2 each)

Advantages/Disadvantages: per individual: typically
negative traits or personality flaws

Special Abilities: Inured to Encumbrance I, Mounted
Combat, Tilt, Forceful Blow I

Skills: *Body Control* 6/8/10, *Feat of Strength* 7/9/11, *Intimidate*
5/7/9, *Perception* 5/7/9, *Riding* 10/12/14, *Self Control* 10/12/14,
Stealth 0/0/0, *Willpower* 3/5/7

Combat Behavior: per individual

Escape: surrenders after losing 25% LP

- Several **troupes of jugglers** have set up in Old Arivor, Morgunora, and the Field of Swords. The troupes compete with each other and court the audience for their attention.

The Mammuton Tickets

Every hero must obtain one of the mammuton tickets for the theater premiere. This should appear to be some kind of crazy coincidence, for the heroes' fate is to be in the right place at the right time, so they can survive the disaster and prove themselves. Use the following suggestions.

- One ticket could be the prize for reaching the next round in the tournament.
- One ticket could be a special prize for honorable behavior, given to a defeated hero in the tournament. Tournament Marshal Elvena d'Abbastanza **may**, for example, witness the hero behaving honorably while facing defeat at the hands of an opponent who is using a permitted but dishonorable trick to win.
- The heroes heal a knight who is wounded heavily during the joust, and he gives them his own ticket in gratitude.
- A patron of the arts, such as Malrizio ya Duridanya (see page 27), might present a ticket as a gift to a talented artist among the heroes (and perhaps to one of her friends, as well), but not without ulterior motives. He is a known bon vivant, after all....
- Heroes trying their luck at picking pockets might obtain a purse (successful check on *Pickpocket (Steal from Person)*) that contains a mammuton ticket instead of money.

Game Rules: Other Contests

Resolve other contests via competitive checks. Possible skills would be *Gaukelei*, *Body Control (Acrobatics)*, *Singing (Bard's Ballad)*, *Dancing*, *Carousing*, *Gambling*, *Myths & Legends*, or *Music*. The heroes' opponents have SR between 8 and 13 (1D6+7) and attribute values between 12 and 14 (1D3+11).



Arivor is a city of heroes and saints whom the people worship in various temples, praying to them as intermediaries between gods and mortals. Entertain the heroes with legends and exploits of famous people during one or more of the bard's contests, or even the tournament.



The Horas, Heroes, and Holy People

Comto Morguno of Ascream: former Sword of Swords (around 800 FB); author of several famous plays, for which he is called the "Commander of Poets"

Dapifer ter Bredero: former seneschal of the Ardarites and former Arch-Ruler of Arivor; predecessor of Nepolemo ya Torese

Mythrael: Alverianar (Messenger) of Rondra; chooses the greatest heroes from among the fallen

Niothia-Horas: Horasian Empress around 400 before the Fall of Bosparan

Salkya Firdayon: The third child of former Horasian Empress Amene; abdicated her throne to join the Ardarites; reclaimed her throne during the Succession War and died a hero's death on the battlefield; worshipped in Arivor as a local saint.

Saint Bogumil: last Grand Master of the Order of the Theater Knights; burned at the stake in the Theater of Arivor by the Priest-Emperors

Saint Geron: also called *Geron the One-handed*; mythical saint of the Church of Rondra who, more than 2,000 years ago, wielded the divine blade *Sevenstroke* and slew innumerable monsters

Sancta Ardare: High Priestess of the Temple of Rondra in Gareth who defended her house of the goddess against the Priest-Emperors' Sun Legion in 335 FB. The Order of the Ardarites invokes her virtue and self-sacrifice to this day.

Sancta Asmodena: Asmodena-Horas was the second Peace Empress of the Bosparanian Realm (800 before the Fall of Bosparan); said to have been a great patron of science, art, and craft; worshipped today as a saint of the Church of Ingerimm.

Sancta Lutisana: banished the goblins from the Dulcet Domain; co-founder of the Order of the Theater Knights

Sancta Sylvette: harness maker said to have crafted Saint Geron's horse tack; worshipped as a saint of the Church of Ingerimm.

Sancta Thalionmel: The Lioness of Neetha; died in 767 FB while defending her home town against the fast-approaching Novadi forces.

Yulag-Horas: Horasian Emperor around 700 before the Fall of Bosparan

Escape from the Theater

Noon, Rahja 23rd

In this chapter, the heroes witness firsthand the collapse of the famous Theater of Arivor and its subsequent plunge into the depths when cracks from the meteorite impact finally reach Arivor and splinter the caverns deep below the city. One such cavern lies directly beneath the theater. The heroes are trapped more than 120 feet below the surface. They must lead survivors through dangerous caves and corridors if they wish to see the light of day again.

The Collapse

Just Before It Happens

All three opening options lead to this point: the heroes are in the theater, whether watching the premiere or trying to get through to the Arch-Ruler. The epic drama “Victory Over the Demon Master” starts just before noon on Rahja 23rd and is expected to go on for several hours. While they enjoy the play, servants serve the audience food and drinks. Acts are separated by intermissions, during which the audiences’ attention strays to more important things, like seeing and being seen, flirting with a prospective good catch, and practicing fan language.

What the Play is About

If the heroes ask about the subject of the play, use the play’s timeline (see below) to summarize the various acts as they occur. The play itself is of no real significance for the adventure and merely serves as a backdrop to the main event (the catastrophe).

- Prelude, Part I: An epic battle of mages with lots of special effects and (mostly) red stage decorations, set in the Gor Desert. Rohal the Wise defeats the sinister Black Mage, Borbarad.
- Prelude, Part II—the Failure: The dark mage Liscom of Fasar, greedy for power and evil magic, comes down from his tower to kidnap children and enslave a dragon. He obtains the dragon’s mysterious carbuncle to free Borbarad from the chains of the gods and restore him to life. However, the dragon takes human form and, with the help of others, kills the dark sorcerer. The prop dragon is very impressive—a mechanical wonder that can actually beat its wings and breathe fire.
- The Return, Part I—the Disembodied Spirit: Years later, the undead Liscom returns and twists Time itself to bring Borbarad back. He succeeds, mainly because the conservative Middenrealm fails to act in time. However, Liscom can only restore Borbarad’s disembodied spirit, which then proceeds to whisper ideas into the minds of many of the most important characters, thus manipulating them.



- The Return, Part II—Crafting a Body: wintertime; in an orgy of violence (involving many buckets of red paint), vampires collect blood for their mistress, the dark elven witch Pardona, who labors to fashion a body for Borbarad. Pardona’s appearance is quite shocking (since the theater’s entire budget for mechanical and magical effects was spent, they had to reduce the amount of Al’Anfan silk used for the witch’s costume). Once again, the stubborn Middenrealm fails to save the world.
- Victory of the Horasian Empire (in two acts): Borbarad tries to conquer the land using a magical plague. Courageous Horasians foil his plans. It is a very patriotic staging.
- Meanwhile in the East (several more acts): Intrigue brews on Maraskan and in the Lands of the Tulamydes. Altruistically (and sincerely), the Horasians try to mediate, but the other nations do not listen. Only the Horasians realize that the Demon Master’s power is growing.
- The Battle of Heroes (two acts): Somewhere in far, dark Tobria... Borbarad spreads havoc during the first act, but a regiment of indomitable heroes stops him in the second act (at least for the moment).
- If it has not already happened, the disaster strikes NOW.

Ask the players to describe their heroes’ reactions to the play and anything else they wish to do while the play is running. If you employed the opening option *Lounge Lizards*, the heroes might be pulling strings to arrange a meeting between Jucco and Lessandra, or protecting the boy from thieves, or even trying to steal his brooch. If you opened with *Swordwielder*, the heroes might be enjoying the play and (more importantly) the honor of sitting near the box of the Arch-Ruler Nepolemo ya Torese. As *Prospectors*, the heroes might have just fought their way to the vicinity of the Arch-Ruler’s box to warn him, or else be storming the stage to warn everyone in the audience about the looming disaster.

Whatever the heroes do in the theater, this is the moment that doom falls upon Arivor. Let slip the beasts of chaos and open the gates to the Netherhells....



The Catastrophe

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Just as the booming voice of Borbarad fills the theater and his demonic hoards charge at the Horasian heroes, a sound like thunder and a loud cracking noise punctuating the scene. What a wonderful effect by the stage mages! But why do the actors look so shocked?

Then the gate to the Netherhells opens and all chaos breaks loose—not on the stage, but behind you! You feel the floor of your box give way, then suddenly up is down, everything spins, the thunder turns into a cacophony of shattering stone, and the theater collapses!

The back wall of the theater and the vestibule are the first sections of the building to collapse. The ground opens up and everything falls into the depths. Then other parts of the theater begin collapsing as well. There is not much time for the heroes to react, and there is no time to escape. They all go down with the building.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

With deafening cracking sounds, wood frames and stone walls burst apart. A seemingly bottomless pit opens before your eyes. It looks like giant jaws devouring walls, beams, marble floors, and staircases. Then you and everything else fall into stygian blackness.

After the Collapse

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The sound of bursting stone and wood slowly fades and finally falls silent. Isolated cracking sounds persist as the rubble continues to shift. The dust slowly settles and you find yourself in total darkness. Gasps and moans of the wounded come from all around you. You cannot tell if you have been unconscious, but when you stand up, you feel bruises all over your bodies. The pain makes one thing certain, though. You are still alive.

The heroes find themselves in a huge cavern beneath the collapsed vestibule, either on the **crater floor (5)** or on one of several **platforms (3)** that formed in the crater. The fall might even have separated the members of the group. Other survivors begin to call for help, many of them seeking relatives or friends who had been seated right next to them. Some of these are discovered among the dead, resulting in screams of despair and agony. Some are missing, giving rise to the hope that they might have escaped falling into the pit. Others embrace and burst into laughter at the thought that they are still alive. People ask the heroes whether they have seen specific persons, or mistake the heroes for someone else. The survivors slowly come to realize the gravity of their situation. They might have survived the fall, but they are trapped beneath tons of debris far below the surface of the ground.



The heroes do not, of course, fall 120 feet all at once. Rather, they tumble in stages to the bottom, grabbing at wooden beams and such or finding temporary purchase on ledges along the way. Still, wouldn't they take massive damage from this punishment? By rights, shouldn't they be dead? Each hero takes 4D6+4 DP (as if falling from a height of 4 yards onto hard ground), from which they may subtract their armor PRO. If you wish to make things even easier for the heroes, allow skill checks for *Body Control (Jumping)*. Each QL reduces the damage by 2 points.

Alternatively, divide the scene into several falls, each causing between 1D6+1 and 3D6+3 DP but always allowing armor PRO and a skill check on *Body Control (Jumping)* to reduce the damage. Between falls, allow the heroes one action each, to at least maintain the illusion that they have a chance to take control of the situation. Note that actions like trying to catch hold of each other, throwing ropes to each other, or using magic might indeed grant them a chance to reduce the amount of DP or even halt their fall entirely. However, you should hold a countdown from 10 to 0 for each hero, to rush their actions. When the count reaches 0, the hero hits something and takes damage (use a maximum of 5 such impacts for each hero).



If the disaster is not threatening enough, declare that armor PRO is useless, or simply deal out much greater damage totals, such as 7D6+7, or do both. Some heroes might be severely wounded as a result, requiring attention and healing from their comrades before they can continue with the adventure.



The heroes may help other survivors by healing (see *Core Rules*, page 340). Successful *Treat Wounds (Enhance Healing)* checks allow recipients to regain more LP during their next regeneration phase (+1 per QL). The survivors are very exhausted and need to rest at some point during their climb back to the surface. The **lower cave (7)** is an ideal spot for a break.

Some survivors are only bruised (total loss of less than 25% LP), some are wounded (total loss of more than 25% LP), and some are in mortal peril (less than 0 LP remaining). Some of the dying may be saved with a successful check on *Treat Wounds (Stabilize)*. For more about this procedure, see *Life-Saving Measures and Death* in the *Core Rules*, on page 340).

Bodies of the dead lie everywhere, outnumbering the living by two to one. The survivors (including the heroes) should count themselves lucky, indeed.



Worsen the wounds of the survivors to put increased pressure on the heroes.



- 1 Collapsed vestibule (debris)
- 2 Makeshift roof (debris from the vestibule)
- 3 Platforms (debris from the vestibule)
- 4 Cavern
- 5 Crater floor
- 6 Water-filled corridor
- 7 Lower cave
- 8 Shaft
- 9 Upper cave
- 10 Waterfall crevice
- 11 Staircase
- 12 Well
- 13 Sanctuary
- 14 Crypt
- 15 Hidden Room
- 16 Crevice
- 17 Cellar
- 18 General equipment
- 19 Equipment room
- 20 Dressing rooms
- 21 Animal cages
- 22 Elevator shaft
- 23 Stage
- 24 Galleries
- 25 Former vestibule



Help, My Players Aren't Doing What I Expected!

Let's be honest. You want to give your players a thrilling dungeon experience after they plunge into the crater. However, things might not go as planned. Even though all three opening options place the heroes inside the theater at the moment it collapses, the heroes' choices might logically result in some or even all of them being elsewhere when the disaster strikes. For example, the group may have split up or abandoned their quest for some reason, or they might use magical or other means to avoid plunging into the abyss. Any of these reasons could keep them from experiencing this entire section of the adventure. This is perfectly okay if you do not want to force them into the deep.

However, they can still become involved if they hear news of the collapse or even witness the catastrophe themselves from a few streets over. They soon learn (or already know) that Jucco of Tomrath, Fulminia Meissini, or the Arch-Ruler Nepolemo ya Torese were inside the building at the time and are now missing. Is there any hope of finding survivors? The heroes cannot get below ground through the demolished vestibule, but they can reach the **crevice (16)** or the **elevator shaft (22)** via the **stage (23)**, and from there make their way into the deep. These are intended to be the exit points from the underground, but they serve equally well as entrances, too.

In this instance, we suggest that you make the trip down to find the survivors on the **crater floor (5)** easier (see  in the descriptions), and make the trip back to the surface harder (see  in the descriptions) because the heroes now have survivors to care for and must fend off threats that they did not encounter on the way down.

Alternatively, make the trip down much harder and then just summarize the return trip in a few sentences, as the heroes would have already cleared the dungeon on their way down.



Buried in the Deep

The following descriptions provide an overview over the rooms and corridors beneath the collapsed theater. All rooms are marked on the mini-map (see page 31).

The Collapsed Vestibule (1–5)

Because the theater collapsed into an existing hollow, a funnel-shaped, 120 foot deep crater formed under the theater's vestibule. Parts of the theater's seating, especially the boxes for honored guests, were dragged into the abyss, too. The roof's mighty beams together with the marble paneling and stones from the walls create an unstable cover over the crater that holds only for a moment, but cracking sounds and other ominous noises indicate that this temporary, multi-ton ceiling might collapse any minute. The walls and floor of the crater are composed of soil and porous rock. Debris from the theater lies everywhere.

Heroes and other survivors trapped in the crater can begin to search for a means of exit once they tend to their wounds. There is no way to dig directly through the ceiling, even though hints of daylight shine down into the crater through a few tiny cracks and openings, illuminating columns of dust in this huge cavern.

Who Else Survived?

This is the moment to decide who, besides the heroes, still lives after the fall into the deep. Choose freely from the list of important NPCs (see *NPCs of Arivor*, page 11), but we recommend that you include at least Nepolemo ya Torese, Fulminia Meissini, and Gaspere ya Stellona. Feel free to add as many other NPCs as you like. It is sufficient to introduce a few of them to the heroes to show that they are there, and then just mention one or two dozen others, who remain silent. They all follow the heroes as they make their way up and out, so remember that the heroes are not alone (alternatively, the heroes are free to leave the other survivors behind, but that would not be very honorable). Also, the NPCs have their own opinions, fears, and peculiarities. You as the GM are their voice. Have one of them speak up now and then.



Increase the drama by announcing that the ceiling's groaning indicates that it will surely collapse in 1D6+1 CR. Falling stones and other pieces of debris herald the nearing collapse. The group of survivors must leave as quickly as possible or else be buried under tons of marble, wood, and stone. Each falling piece of debris causes 3D6 DP but may be dodged. The only apparent exits lead to a small **cavern (4)** and a **corridor filled with water (6)**. When the ceiling finally does collapse, some of the NPCs get killed while others escape to safety alongside the heroes.

Collapsed Vestibule (1)

Like a cork in a bottle of Bosparaniard, the debris from the former vestibule seals the crater, admitting only a few scarce rays of sunlight.

Makeshift Roof (2)

Some columns, beams, and stone plates from the collapsed vestibule become accidentally wedged together and form a makeshift roof, sealing the crater from the rest of the world. This new ceiling holds for now, but no one can tell how long now will last.

Climbing up to the roof gives the heroes the opportunity to call for help. Small holes in the roof are just large enough for rescuers to lower food, water, and small pieces of equipment (torches, lanterns, pickaxes) on ropes. However, any attempts to dig through the ceiling reveal its instability and speed up its collapse (see  above regarding increasing the drama). In short: this is not a way out, but it is a potential source of information and useful items.

Platforms (3)

Several unstable platforms formed throughout the crater from large debris wedged into the walls. People can use these platforms to climb up and down the crater.

Cavern (4)

One wall of the crater holds a small opening to a natural cavern, and even though its rocky walls and floor are slippery, it provides safe shelter if the vestibule comes crashing down.

Finding the Thin Wall

The western wall of this cavern is surprisingly thin, a fact that is revealed only if someone investigates the cavern's walls. A successful check on *Perception (Search)* reveals that this is the source of the moisture seeping into the room.

The Crater Floor (5)

Debris is everywhere. Broken stone tiles and panels, splintered beams, and rocks of various sizes make it difficult to walk around. Hidden behind a pile of gravel to the west is a small pond of murky water.

Hazards in the Theater

The city is full of environmental hazards (see *Environmental Hazards*, page 41), and the collapsed theater is no exception. When the heroes encounter one of these challenges, follow the associated rules. Dangerous situations inside the theater are as follows.

Climbing up to the ceiling of the vestibule (1): *Climbing*; requires a cumulative check on *Climbing* (10 minutes per check) with a modifier of -2. Failure means falling up to 120 feet (see *Core Rules*, page 340).

Balancing on the platforms (3): *Balance*; requires a check on *Body Control (Balance)*.

Destroying rock walls (4): cf. *Force Open*; requires a cumulative check on either *Feat of Strength (Breaking & Smashing)* or (if the heroes find suitable tools) *Earthencraft (Break Stone)*. Each check takes 10 minutes; maximum of 7 checks.

Cave diving (6): *Dive*; requires a check on *Swimming (Diving)* with a modifier of -1.

Climbing out of the cave (8, 9, 10): *Climb*; requires a check on *Climbing (Mountains)*.

Clearing away debris (11, 13, 14): *Feat of Strength*; requires a cumulative check on *Feat of Strength (Lifting)*. Each check takes 10 minutes; maximum of 6 checks. Failure leads to cave-ins that deal 1D6 DP.

Climbing up (or down) the sides of the crevice (16): *Climb*; requires a check on *Climbing (Mountains)*.

Debris in the cellar (17): *Landslide*; victims suffer 1D6 DP, or, if falling into an even deeper room, 4D6+4 DP.

Opening the jammed trap door at the end of the elevator shaft (22): *Force Open*; requires a check on *Feat of Strength (Pushing & Bending)*.



Searching Among the Debris

If the heroes search the rubble, they might find some useful things. The vestibule was lighted with torches, which can now be found among the debris. Other pieces of wood can be used as improvised clubs or to support unstable areas in the debris.



If you want to give the heroes some help, place some more useful things or even valuables among the debris (some guests may have left their belongings in the vestibule's cloak room). Use the Equipment List from the *Core Rules* for ideas of what might be available. Fencing weapons, daggers, bags (such as backpacks or slingbags), small purses containing a few ducats, some jewelry, or a Vinsaltian egg (a small pocket watch), or vials of various alchemical products such as a healing or love potion, or even some kind of poison (but the heroes will never learn what the original owner intended to use it for).

The Pond

A successful check on *Perception (Search)* reveals another exit. The pond is quite deep and has a detectable current, indicating that the water is coming from somewhere else.

The Natural Caverns (6–10)

These chambers are the very caverns proposed by Dottora Meissini's theories, but ultimately they are the reason for the disaster. These caves are stable and will not collapse, but the heroes do not know this. If the dottora is with them, she examines the walls and ceilings of the caverns and concludes that the survivors are safe here—at least from falling rubble or further collapses. The cavern's walls and ceilings formed naturally and exhibit old stalagmites and stalactites. The walls are moist, and water flows through some of the caves (see map on page 31).



Water-filled Corridor (6)

A corridor connects the **crater floor (5)** with the **lower cave (7)**. However, this corridor is filled with cold, murky water.

Lower Cave (7)

This huge cave has an uneven floor and a large opening in the ceiling. Just past the opening a short shaft leads up to the **upper cave (9)**. A murky pond sits in the eastern corner of the cave. If the heroes approach from the **crater floor (5)**, they most likely enter this cave through this pond. A more hidden, second exit from the lower cave can only be reached by diving back into the pond. A short distance back along the water-filled corridor is a small room with a **cleft (8)** that leads up. This is the shaft that is reached through the thin wall in the **cavern (4)** at the side of the crater.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Even though it is dark, you observe something moving along the floor—it seems to be a huge, crawling mass. You point your light in that direction and see giant stag beetles rushing towards you, each one at least as long as your arm!

The heroes face (number of heroes +1) giant stag beetles, which are a small taste of the dangers yet to come, as much more dangerous creatures lurk in the depths.

Exit from the Cave

If the heroes examine this cave after the battle, they find no exits other than an obvious opening in the ceiling. They can reach the **upper cave (9)** through this exit by *climbing*. One hero must climb up first (check on *Climbing (Mountains)* with a modifier of -2) and affix a rope to one of the stalactites on the ceiling. The rest of the survivors may then climb up one at a time with a simple check on *Climbing (Mountains)*.

Shaft (8)

A steep narrow shaft leads up from the half-flooded chamber between the **water-filled corridor (6)** and the **lower cave (7)**. Climbing it (either up or down) requires a check on *Climbing (Mountains)*. It rises for many feet. The upper third of the shaft is made of brick, and at the bottom is a **well (12)**. This is the same shaft reached by breaking through the thin wall in the **cavern (4)** at the side of the crater. People falling down this shaft end up in the small half-flooded chamber but take no damage, as the water breaks their fall.

Upper Cave (9)

A large hole in the floor of this bizarre looking limestone cave leads to the **lower cave (7)**. It also has a passage leading down at a slight angle. Flowing water can be heard below. The sound resembles that of a small waterfall or water rushing down a pipe. If the heroes explore the passage, they come to a **crevice filled with water (10)** rushing down into the deep. On the east side of this cave, a brick passage leads to a **corridor (11)**.

Waterfall Crevice (10)

A little creek rushes down this crevice and disappears into the deep. Its source is rain water trickling through the porous bedrock of the Golden Helmet. Even though the Gerondrata suffers from a long-standing drought, enough water still trickles through the bedrock to feed the creek and thus create the **water-filled corridor (6)**.

The Secret Rooms of the Theater Knights (11–15)

The Staircase (11)

This corridor connects the **upper cave (9)** in the west with the **well (12)** in the east. A steep staircase leads up from the

Giant Stag Beetle

Size: 8 to 9 feet long

Weight: 100 to 140 pounds

COU 15 **SGC** 9 (a) **INT** 11 **CHA** 8

DEX 13 **AGI** 13 **CON** 16 **STR** 14

LP 40 **AE** – **KP** – **INI** 12+1D6

DE 7 **SPI** 0 **TOU** 2 **MOV** 3

Bite: AT 16 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Mandibles: AT 12 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

PRO/ENC 5/0

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I (Bite, Mandibles), Locked Jaws (Bite)

Skills: *Body Control* 4 (13/13/16), *Climbing* 5 (15/13/16), *Feat of Strength* 7 (16/14/14), *Intimidation* 6 (15/11/8), *Perception* 7 (9/11/11), *Self Control* 12 (15/15/16), *Stealth* 7 (15/11/13), *Swimming* (no check allowed—giant stag beetles cannot swim), *Willpower* 8 (15/11/8)

Number: (# of heroes +1)

Size Category: medium

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 40 rations of meat, trophy (pincers, 15 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Giant stag beetles normally avoid humans, but if forced, they fight until seriously injured.

Escape: loss of at least 75% LP

Animal Lore (Monster or Wild Animals)

QL 1: Giant stag beetles do not hunt human-sized creatures but do consider them a threat and attack when they meet one.

QL 2: Their armor is weaker on their underbelly.

QL 3+: Unlike with most other animals, fire does not repel giant stag beetles.

Special Rules

Locked Jaws: The creature makes a bite attack at a penalty of -2. If the target does not defend, the creature locks its jaws. In the following CR the creature's bite attack succeeds automatically (the GM does not have to roll). The bite attack does +1 additional DP per CR (no additional DP in the first CR, +1 DP in the 2nd CR, +2 DP in the 3rd CR, and so on). Roll damage as per usual and add the appropriate bonus, if any. Also, the target suffers the state *immobilized*. The creature's defense drops to 0 as long as it holds the target in its jaws. The creature can either release the target at the end of a CR (by spending a free action) or continue to hold on.

Weak Spot: The giant stag beetle has PRO 2 on the belly, and PRO 0 at the base of its leg joints. For more information about targeting these areas, see the Level I Focus Rules for Hit Locations in the *Aventurian Compendium*.



corridor at its mid-point. The heroes must clear some of the fallen rocks in the corridor before they may pass or use the stairs.

What the Theater Knights Built...

Long ago, deep below the Theater of Arivor, the Order of the Theater Knights excavated chambers out of the porous rock of the Golden Helmet. These secret vaults have apparently remained hidden, until today.

Check on History (*Horasian Empire*)

QL 1: A group of knights founded this Rondranian Order in the Theater of Arivor shortly after the fall of the city of Bosparan (3 FB). The Order took its name from the theater. The current Ardarite Order traces its rules and traditions to the Theater Knights.

QL 2: Over the centuries, splinter groups within the Order strayed from its original traditions and belief in Rondra. Some even joined with other cults to worship bloody Kor, the belligerent son of Rondra.

QL 3: This idolatry was a welcome pretense for the destruction of the powerful Order about 300 years after its founding. The fanatic Priest-Emperors put an official end to the Order of the Theater Knights when they executed its last Grand Master, Bogumil of Arivor, in 336 FB.

QL 4+: Around 100 years later, in 435 FB, descendants of the Theater Knights founded the Order of the Ardarites in Arivor, where it still exists to this day. Some Theater Knights likely built these secret chambers below the theater during the time of prosecution from the Priest-Emperors.

...and What Kor Added

Chambers 13–15 form a temple dedicated to Kor. These rooms have never been desecrated and still bear all game-related effects of a temple of the gods (see the *Core Rules*, page 312). Furthermore, the strident and bloodthirsty presence of Kor

still fills these rooms. As soon as the heroes and any other survivors enter the sanctuary, a strong urge for violence and quarrelling begins to take hold in their minds. Before long they start arguing violently about trivial matters and recent events. It starts with minor things, like one survivor shoving another over an imagined slight or trading barbed comments about another survivor's weakness, but then builds to the heroes' abilities coming into question ("Who made them the leaders, anyway?"). When combined with the hazards in the caverns, the survivors soon become their own worst enemies.



In game terms, some survivors gain a temporary Personality Flaw (Feistiness), and any existing Prejudices, Arrogance, and Envy come into play as well. After a while, Kor's presence in these rooms might even activate Negative Traits such as Short Temper and Vengefulness, resulting in a -1 penalty to all checks on social skills. The longer the survivors stay here, the greater the chance for violent outbursts and fist fights. The heroes are not immune to receiving one or two of the listed disadvantages as long as they remain in the sanctuary. If a hero already has a certain disadvantage, simply increase the penalty by another -1. The survivors must get out! A prolonged stay in Kor's sanctuary inevitably incurs the state of *bloodlust* (see *Core Rules*, page 34), wherein victims attack everyone nearby. These negative effects vanish one CR after the group leaves the sanctuary.



Grant the heroes *Willpower* checks to shield themselves from these effects for the first 15 minutes. After that, they can no longer ignore the negative effect of Kor's presence.

The Well (12)

The dominant feature in this small room is a huge well with a **deep shaft (8)**, which used to provide these hidden chambers with fresh water. A **staircase (11)** connects the well room to the corridor.

The Sanctuary (13)

A large, stone altar stands in the middle of the chamber, and the walls are carved with detailed reliefs of bloody battles and combat scenes, executions of goblins and animals, and other, more bestial scenes. The eastern part of the room has collapsed, leaving a big hole in the ceiling.

The Altar

Heroes examining the altar find curlicue-shaped signs and writings all over the huge stone table. Some of these carvings form grooves that channel blood off of the altar. It was obviously built for some kind of blood sacrifice or ritual. The blood channels run along the floor towards the east where they vanish beneath the rubble. A hero with at least 1 level in *Bosparano* may make a check on *Religions* (*Rondra* or *Kor*). A success reveals that the writing is a list of the aliases of Kor, a bloodthirsty demigod that happens to be the son of Rondra. The listed names are *Brother of the Blood*, *He Who Walks the Battlefield Laughing*, *the Merciless*, *the Pitiless*, *the Black*

Manticore, *the Relentless*, *Thundering Rider of Heaven*, *Dragonson*, *He to Whom Murder Is a Delight*, *Slavering Reaper*, *Father of Death*, *Master of the Nine Deadly Strokes*, *Lord of Battles*, *Headman of the Cosmos*, *Rondra's Headman*, *Black Prince of Chimeras*, *Wielder of Sokramor...* The list goes on.

The Crypt (14)

Sealed graves line both walls of a long corridor behind the **sanctuary (13)**. Pedestals holding some old, dusty ledgers are all that stand between the heroes and the graves of more than a dozen famous Theater Knights. A staircase leading up from this corridor is blocked the same way as the one in the other **corridor (11)**.

Up The Stairs

Much debris needs to be pushed aside to make this staircase passable. While the heroes work, their anger continues to rise, and they soon realize that these stairs lead nowhere. In fact, they end at the massive ceiling. Apparently, this staircase was blocked up long ago.

Looting the Crypt

All told, the graves hold several weapons (two blessed Rondra's Crests, six long swords, and two battle axes) and funerary goods worth 50 ducats. Opening a grave requires

a check on *Feat of Strength (Breaking & Smashing)*, all while tempers continue to flare. Furthermore, Blessed Ones and other gods-fearing people warn against disturbing the peace of the dead.

Heroes with *Afraid of...* (the Dead) suffer the condition *Fear* as soon as the first grave is opened. Also, it can be dramatic to have survivors start arguing about whether the graves should even be opened and searched. No matter what the heroes find morally justifiable, at least one survivor protests against them. And this can work both ways. If the heroes wish to leave the graves untouched, at least one survivor wants to open and loot them (this is especially true for Gaspare ya Stellona, if he is present). This behavior leads to a heated argument and might even start a fight.



The Hidden Room (15)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Stone after stone, you shove debris to the side. Eventually, the light from your torches reveals a room behind the blockage. The flickering light doesn't reveal much, but what you do see freezes the blood in your veins. A huge, angry lion glares at you from the shadows! Some of the other survivors shriek and jump back in fear, and one of them cries, "Run!"

Soon, everyone realizes that the giant lion is just a statue. However, it is a huge statue. It depicts a muscular mantichore with the chimeric grimace of a man, the body of a feline predator, and a scorpion's tail that curves up to the ceiling, seemingly ready to strike at any moment.

Examining the Statue

Heroes examining the statue discover that it is covered in old, dried spatters of blood. A battle axe has been rammed deep into one side of the body. Pulling it free requires a check on *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* at -1. If successful, the hero acquires an ancient battle axe that is as sharp as the day it was made (uses the stats of a battle axe; see *Core Rules*, page 366). In addition, for this person (and this person only!) it counts as if it is blessed with the *Sanctify Object* ceremony (see *Core Rules*, page 333).

The Theater's Cellars (16–22)

Upon leaving the sanctuary of the Theater Knights, Kor's negative influence soon ceases. Though the survivors have only reached one of the cellars of the theater, they are nearing the end of their quest to escape from having been buried alive. This is a good place to have them meet other survivors, such as actors and stagehands who were behind or underneath the stage at the time of the catastrophe. Introduce the survivors as reinforcements or as additional victims in dire need of help.



Clearing the entrance to the chamber not only takes time, it also strains the tempers of any survivors assisting with the effort. Kor's influence is growing stronger and stronger, and even those who are not affected realize (after a check on *Empathy (Discern Motivation)*) that this aggression is not due to natural causes. Those already suffering from the effect's influence cannot make checks on *Empathy*.

The visage of the statue leads to more panic and violence, but the key to solving the problem lies with realizing what this means:

Check on Religions (Rondra or Kor)

QL 1: The mantichore statue symbolizes Kor, the demigod son of Rondra. Kor is the god of mercenaries, combat frenzy, blood, anger, and mercilessness.

QL 2: Worship of Kor is very controversial, even within the Church of Rondra. He is sometimes interpreted as being closer to the Netherhells than to Alveran. He might even be withdrawn from the ranks of Alveran some day because sacrifices of blood, booty, and—according to rumors, even fallen foes—play such an important role in his Church.

QL 3+: Kor is indeed appeased by such sacrifices. Only the divine works of his Blessed Ones set him apart from demons. Kor demands a price, but he is not excessive. Challenges and mercenary contracts, both driven by certain principles, are holy to him, too, while demons only know chaos.

If the heroes don't think of it, hint that an offering might serve to calm Kor. In actuality, it completely negates the influence of Kor in the sanctuary. Suitable offerings include the following.

- A large amount of blood. Depending on how long Kor's spirit has already been influencing the survivors, about 10 to 20 LP, total, should suffice. There is no need to slaughter one of the survivors. A collective donation from all of them (or at least a large group of volunteers) will do. The blood that the Theater Knights offered on the altar ran along grooves to the statue.
- The remains of the giant stag beetles from the lower cave (7).
- A weapon that recently killed a foe.
- Some kind of trophy that symbolizes a victory (be open to creative ideas from your players).
- Completely destroying the statue also solves the problem, but doing so attracts a belligerent and cruel sounding laugh from some distant Sphere. The hero who dealt the "killing blow" immediately loses one FtP, as if it was already spent during this adventure.



Two survivors could start a fight inside the hidden room, causing droplets of blood to splash onto the statue. The spirit of the idol calms down and the negative influence ceases at once.



The Crevice (16)

This gap opened during the disaster and runs from the surface down through the **cellar (17)** to the **sanctuary (13)**. The gap is very narrow near the surface.

Climbing Up or Down the Crevice

It is possible to climb up from the **sanctuary (13)** to the **cellar (17)** (or back down the same way). Doing so requires a check on *Climbing (Mountains)*. The upper part of the gap, which runs from the cellar to the surface, is too narrow to climb.



If you think the heroes could use a break, declare that the gap is wide enough to climb. The heroes may then reach the surface with a check on *Climbing (Mountains)* at -1.

Cellar (17)

The former cellar of the theater is full of rubble from the upper part of the **crevice (16)**. Part of the floor was dragged into the deep, while the remaining part is rough terrain.

General Equipment (18)

This room is full of countless costumes. And since the Arivoran Theater specialized in epic dramas involving huge battle scenes, many weapons and suits of armor stick out from between racks of dresses, pants, and blouses. However, these are only theater props. The weapons are blunt, and even though the armor is real, it has a very distinctive and theatrical—some would say pompous and exaggerated—look about it. The costumes are made of silk or fine linen and quite nice to look at, but useless in combat or on the road. Some costumes of monsters are designed to be operated by several persons. Several chests are scattered around the room, but they full of props.

Searching the Room

Heroes searching the room find the following objects (successful check on *Perception (Search)* to find each object):

- a theater rapier with retracting blade (worth 20 ducats)
- a large musical instrument, either complex (like a symphonia or a standing harp) or Rondranian (like a horn, a fanfare trumpet, or a drum)
- a suit of heavy plate or scale armor, gaudily decorated with kitsch (like feathered, artificial wings) that is probably colored or gilded. Due to all the decoration, the ENC value of this armor is 1 point higher than usual for armor of this type.
- an unlabeled vial that contains a colorful, shimmering liquid. A successful check on *Alchemy (Elixirs)* reveals that the vial contains a *Changing Potion* (QL 3) that turns the user into a magnificent, colorful peacock for five minutes, not including two minutes each for the painful transformation into the animal and back again (each of which deals one level of *Pain*). The imbiber retains all thoughts and memories, but gains the ability to fly (albeit neither very high nor far). Even in bird form, the imbiber may still use *Climbing* to get around obstacles.



The Equipment Room (19)

This cellar is packed with astonishing and strange-looking mechanical devices used to create special effects during performances. There are frameworks to help animate monsters on stage, lifts to raise actors above the crowds, wireworks to make actors fly, and even special vehicles such as chariots and such. It would be fun to spend hours searching through these intricate and wonderful machines, but sadly there is no time...

Searching the Equipment Room

A quick search of the room reveals the following objects (check on *Perception (Search)* needed to find each):

- One box contains some alchemical fireworks fueled by small amounts of Hylailan Fire (enough to launch a total of four rocket flares that explode with a loud hissing noise and bright colorful flames). These might be useful to alert others of one's position.
- Another box holds an unassembled block and tackle that could be used to repair the broken elevator in the **elevator shaft (22)**.
- A tool box contains several hammers and saws, a hand drill, and a small hand axe. These tools make *Woodworking* checks easier to accomplish, and could be put to use repairing the **elevator shaft (22)**.
- How much rope do you need? Plenty of it is kept here, though usually for climbing or fastening jobs on stage. There is even a rope ladder among all these ropes.
- If you don't have a hammer and nails, simply use glue! Anybody need a pot or two?

Dressing Rooms (20)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Something moves in the dim light. Your eyes strain to catch a glimpse of whatever lurks for you there. But what is it? A dreadful, tiger-like creature with disgusting, vomit-colored fur and several horns on its head, leers at you with a wicked gleam in its eyes. It is a creature straight out of the Netherhells. Indeed, this must be a legendary, fear-inducing Zant, a ruthless demon that shows no mercy. But how did it come to be here, in a theater's cellar in the middle of Arivor?

Of course, the Zant is not a real demon. It is only an ordinary tiger dressed in a costume for the play (see *Pantomime Zant*, below). However, it is impossible to tame tigers, which sometimes attack trainers that have been feeding them since they were little cubs. These big cats are predators through and through, and the situation in the dressing room can quickly turn very serious. If you think this scene needs some more drama, however, the room also contains a frightened actor who needs to be saved from the beast.

Amidst dressing tables, broken mirrors, overturned furniture, ragged clothes, scattered tubs of powder makeup, and stage jewelry, (apparently) a Zant demon blocks the heroes' way.

Animal Cages (21)

This room is full of cages. Many are destroyed. Some animals killed each other in their panic, but others seem to have escaped. An elephant dressed in a monstrous metal costume is on a rampage, charging anyone that comes within range. His trumpeting can be heard from afar.



Place as many animals in this room as you like, including some more fake Zantim (see page 39), which attack the heroes, the survivors, and maybe even each other (tigers are solitary creatures).



If the heroes have already suffered enough punishment, a fight against more than one tiger might very well end badly, even for an entire group. Use the deranged trumpeting of the elephant to scare off the heroes before they even enter the room full of animal cages.

Elevator Shaft (22)

This shaft rises up two floors and ends on the stage. In happier days, stagehands raised and lowered a wooden platform through this shaft, but the platform crashed to the bottom during the disaster. The machinery still seems to be operational. The wooden paneling in the shaft's walls is cracked in several places, and debris from the theater crashed down onto the smashed platform, burying it in rubble.

Repairing the Elevator

To repair the elevator, the heroes need spare parts and tools. Both can be found in the **equipment room (19)**. Once they



collect everything they need, the heroes may try to repair the elevator. Make a cumulative check on *Woodworking (Carpentry)* (QL 7 needed) and *Mechanics (Levers)* (QL 3 needed). Each check takes 15 minutes; six checks maximum. A success renders the elevator useable again.

The Ride Up

The platform holds up to six people, and the ride is a little bit rough and bumpy (the elevator still feels unstable even though it has been repaired). Two people are needed to operate the winches (make checks on *Feat of Strength (Lifting)*; each person beyond the first incurs a -1 penalty on the skill check). On a failure, the people on the platform must make a check on *Body Control (Balance)* or stumble and fall (on a botch, they fall off the platform). A stumbling passenger suffers 1D6 DP. A fall off the platform incurs falling damage (taking the appropriate damage for the given height). Someone falling a distance of 3 feet or less takes no damage.

The Blocked Exit

A trap door at the top of the shaft gives access to the stage. However, it is blocked by debris. The heroes must force it open, but they finally reach the surface! Fresh air, open sky, and the burning heat of the Rahjan sun....



Pantomime Zant
(Tiger in a Zant costume)

COU 14 SGC 11 (a) INT 13 CHA 14

DEX 11 AGI 15 CON 14 STR 16

LP 50 AE - KP - INI 16+1D6

DE 8 SPI -2 TOU 0 MOV 14

Bite: AT 15 DP 2D6+3 RE short

Paw: AT 15 DP 1D6+4 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions: 2 (max. 1 x Bite)

Special Abilities: Combat Reflexes I, Feint I (Bite, Paw), Locked Jaws (Bite), Pounce (Paw)

Skills: *Body Control* 9 (15/15/14), *Climbing* 5 (14/15/16), *Feat of Strength* 10 (14/16/16), *Intimidate* 11 (14/13/14), *Perception* 10 (11/13/13), *Self Control* 5 (14/14/14), *Stealth* 10 (14/13/15), *Swimming* 3 (14/15/16), *Willpower* 6 (14/13/14)

Number: 1

Size Category: medium

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 50 rations of meat, fur (15 silverthalers), trophy (teeth, 8 silverthalers)

Combat behavior: Usually, tigers hide up in trees or lurk in ponds while waiting for prey to wander by. They can remain absolutely still for up to half an hour before striking suddenly. Tigers also stalk prey. The tiger in the theater's cellar, however, does lie in wait. It attacks as soon as the heroes stumble upon it.

Escape: loss of at least 50% LP

Animal Lore (Wild Animals)

QL 1: This creature is not a real Zant; it is an ordinary tiger that someone dressed in a costume.

QL 2: Tigers are extremely dangerous. Even those born and bred in circuses can sometimes suddenly attack trainers or other familiar people after spending years (or even their entire lives) in captivity.

QL 3+: Tigers can climb trees and are good swimmers, but they usually sit still while lurking in water to ambush prey.

Special Rules

Locked Jaws: Tiger makes bite attack at -2. A target that fails to defend suffers DP and gains the state *immobilized*. Subsequent bite attacks automatically succeed and inflict +1 DP per CR (cumulative). Tiger's Defense drops to 0 while holding the target in its jaws. Tiger may release target at the end of any CR (a free action).

Pounce: Tiger makes Pounce attack at -4. Target that fails to defend gains the state *prone*. Initial attack inflicts 1D3 DP, but tiger gains an *advantageous position* (see *Core Rules*, page 238). To escape, target must spend an action and make a competitive *Feat of Strength (Lifting)* check at -6 (to escape and stand up at the same time, apply an *additional penalty* of -3). If Pounce attack fails, target may make an attack of opportunity.



Djagganoth (Elephant)

COU 13 SGC 13 (a) INT 13 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 11 CON 23 STR 28

LP 350 AE - KP - INI 12+1D6

DE 3 SPI 0 TOU 2 MOV 12

Trunk: AT 14 DP 1D6+4 RE long

Thrust: AT 12 DP 2D6+3 RE long

Trample: AT 8 DP 2D6+4 RE short

Stomp: AT 6 DP 2D6+10 RE short

PRO/ENC 4/0

Actions: 2 (max. 1 x Trample, 1 x Stomp)

Special Abilities: Clutch (Trunk), Mighty Blow (Thrust), Shield-splitter (Thrust), Stomp (Stomp), Trample (Trample), Forceful Blow II (Trunk, Thrust)

Skills: *Climbing* (no check allowed—elephants cannot climb), *Body Control* 6 (11/11/23), *Feat of Strength* 16 (23/28/28), *Self Control* 7 (13/13/23), *Perception* 6 (13/13/13), *Stealth* 0 (13/13/11), *Intimidate* 11 (13/13/13), *Willpower* 7 (13/13/13)

Number: 1

Size Category: huge

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 2,500 rations of meat, trophy (tusk, 200 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Elephants are peaceful animals that usually shy away from conflict. However, they do attack in groups, jabbing with their tusks if cornered or defending a member of their herd. Furthermore, this particular specimen is terrified due to the disaster. It attacks everyone it sees.

Escape: loss of at least 50% LP

Animal Lore (Monsters or Wild Animals)

◆ **QL 1** - This is not a demon, it is an elephant (a furless relative of the mammoth that lives in southern Aventuria).

◆ **QL 2** - Elephants are herbivores, but still pose a risk to humans if they feel threatened. Their tusks are much sought-after as trophies.

◆ **QL 3+:** these animals are trained and used as mounts and beasts of burden in the Lands of the Tulamydes and in southern Aventuria.

Special Rules

Clutch: clutch attack is -4, and target must have a smaller size category. Target suffers DP and gains the states *immobilized* and *bound*. Subsequent attacks automatically inflict DP (ignoring PRO) due to squeezing. Escape requires a competitive *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* check. Releasing target is a free action, and target must make a *Body Control (Combat Maneuvers)* check or gain the state *prone*.

Powerful Blow (passive): target must have size category of medium or smaller, and must make a *Feat of Strength* check at -4, even with a successful Parry, or suffer the state *prone*.

Stomp: Target must possess the state *prone* and have a smaller size category. After stomping, attacker suffers -2 Defense for the remainder of that CR.

Trample: Attacker must run at least 24 feet before trampling. If attack fails, target may make an attack of opportunity with additional penalty of -4. If Trample succeeds, target suffers -2 AT for that CR. Djagganoth ends its movement up to (MOV/2) yards from target (its choice).

The Ruins of the Theater (23–25)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Daylight at last! You finally break through to the surface and reach for the waiting hands of rescuers... but something is wrong. When your eyes adjust to the glare, you see the full extent of the catastrophe!

Where Arivor once stood, you now see only a wasteland scarred by huge crevices in the ground. Hardly one stone remains on top of another. Hundreds of houses vanished into the deep when the ground subsided. All around the Golden Helmet, you see only destruction and chaos.

On the surface, survivors help the group up onto the stage. Debris from the collapsed roof is everywhere. Standing now in ruins, the place actually looks much more like a theater of old. From its elevated position on the slopes of the Golden Helmet, the heroes can see what remains of the city.

The theater makes an ideal base camp for rescue missions and other expeditions into the ruined city. If he is still alive, Arch-Ruler Nepolemo ya Torese is here, too (either he crawled his way up from the deep along with the heroes, or else he was not in the theater when it collapsed, and chose this as the natural place to organize an aid station). Everyone gathered here looks to him for inspiration and directions. If Nepolemo is already dead, the heroes might take the lead after they report his death (eyewitnesses attest to the heroes' extraordinary efforts to rescue survivors). Many survivors have no idea what to do next (those who did know have already left the city; the rest are terribly frightened, or wounded, or both, and now in desperate need of help and strength).



The Stage (23)

The steep rock face of the Golden Helmet formerly served as the backdrop for the stage, which was erected on sandy stone. The play's sophisticated sets now lie in shattered pieces. The roof fell in, and only parts of the buildings' sides remain standing. Survivors who escaped the disaster without getting crushed established an emergency camp on the former stage to tend to the wounds of the less fortunate. Refugees from surrounding buildings and neighborhoods are gathering here as well.



The Galleries (24)

The galleries, which now resemble an ancient theater themselves, are also full of survivors. Thanks to the building's outstanding acoustics, someone standing on the stage can be heard clearly anywhere in the galleries. Right up until the end of the Succession War, the Theater of Arivor also served as the meeting place for the Crown-Convent, but the spaces reserved for the Arch-Ruler, the Horasian Emperor, and honored members of the Ardarites collapsed along with the walls.

Former Vestibule (25)

What was once a gorgeous entrance hall is now only a deep crater. People once discussed the merits of various plays on the wide stairs, but those stairs are no more. Sheets of stone, wooden beams, and marble slabs and columns became wedged together and sealed the crater opening during the disaster, but they won't hold forever. The blockage collapses completely later that day, sending tons more debris plunging into the crater.



City in Ruins

Rahja 23rd, Afternoon, Evening, and Night

The following chapter presents individual scenes rather than a continuous story arc, to grant the heroes the most freedom to explore the ruined city. Whether they stumble upon side-quests or simply try to find the fastest way out of the chaos, their decisions drive the action. Perhaps they stop occasionally to help those in need. Some heroes might consider it their duty to help survivors escape the ruins of the theater and flee Arivor. Others might leave all NPCs behind and strive only to save their own hides. Then there are those who start out alone but soon find survivors in need of help. The section called *How to Play in Arivor During the Catastrophe* offers rules, NPCs, lists of hazards, and options for increasing the drama and danger for heroes exploring the scene of this disaster.

Following the general overview, you will find descriptions of specific events and places for the heroes to witness or visit (see *Events and Locations in Arivor*, page 48). These scenes are designed in a modular fashion to be combined in any way you prefer. The final section of this chapter—*Terra Firma*—describes how the heroes and other survivors might finally manage to escape the city.

How to Run the Catastrophe

This part of the adventure presents guidelines on running adventures within the ruined city. It includes advice on how to present environmental dangers, how to scare the heroes with monsters, and how to incorporate the post-apocalyptic troubles and needs of frightened NPCs in the story.

Environmental Hazards

Arivor, now considered rough terrain, holds many surprises for the heroes. Most are dangerous environmental hazards such as deep cracks in the ground, buildings that collapse without warning, fires, floods, and so on. The heroes must make good use of their equipment and their wits to overcome the troubles at hand, as follows.

- Move over rough terrain
- Climb to/from various heights (on rock faces and house walls, for example)
- Balance on wooden beams and narrow paths at the edges of precipices
- Jump gaps and crevices
- Avoid falling into the deeps of the earth
- Move carefully through unstable debris, or risk triggering a landslide
- Tread carefully through badly-damaged houses that threaten to collapse
- Use *Feat of Strength* to clear debris and rubble from the path



- **Move** – Depending on how rough the terrain has become, the heroes need 30-60 minutes just to move 1 mile within the city. A check on *Body Control (Running)* reduces the required travel time by 10% per QL. Remember that the group may not move faster than its slowest member, meaning the lowest QL determines the group's top speed. Also, depending on the *escalation level* (see below), a check on *Orienteering (Position of the Sun or Starry Sky)* allows heroes to reduce the required travel time by another 5% per QL.
- **Climb** – climbing a wall or a rock face requires either a check on *Climbing (Walls)* or *Climbing (Mountains)*, using the general rules and modifiers for climbing (see *Core Rules*, page 189). Failure results either in losing time or taking damage (typically by falling a distance of 3D6 yards). Carrying another person while climbing incurs a penalty of -2.
- **Balance** – Walking along certain crevices, cliffs, or narrow beams requires a check on *Body Control (Balance)*. Failure means the hero may make no further progress. Heroes with *Afraid of... (Heights)* gain a level of *Fear*. A botch means the hero plunges into the deep...
- **Jump** – As described in the *Core Rules* (see page 349), a jump over a gap at least 3 yards wide requires a check on *Body Control (Jumping)*. Each additional yard of distance adds a -1 penalty to the skill check, with 8 yards being the maximum distance any hero can possibly cover. Jumps of less than 3 yards do not require a skill check. When jumping down from a height, heroes with *Afraid of... (Heights)* suffer the associated effects of *Fear*, as well. Failure means the hero aborts the jump—possibly right after jumping off, which could very well end in a *cliffhanger* where the hero literally hangs by the fingertips on the opposite side of the gap. A successful skill check on *Climbing (Mountains)* saves the hero's life, but another failure (or a botch) results in a plunge into the deep. Typically, the distance between structures in Arivor is 1D6+2 yards.
- **Plunge** – Anyone unfortunate enough to fall in Arivor these days will fall far indeed. *Falling damage* (see *Core Rules*, page 340) is 1D6 per yard fallen. The ground in Arivor is generally considered hard, adding between +1 and +4 to the total DP.
- **Landslide** – When crossing heaps of debris or rubble, a check on *Body Control (Balance)* determines whether the hero triggers a landslide. Landslides deal 1D6 to 5D6 DP. Those caught in a landslide can either *dodge* the landslide or try to reduce any damage by half by *parrying with a shield*.
- **Collapse** – Collapses deal 1D6 to 6D6 DP. Whether a hero may *dodge* a collapse (take no damage) or *parry it with a shield* (reducing any damage by half) is up to the GM. Collapses hinder vision (modifier of -1 (mild) or -2 (hard) to AT, PA, ranged attacks, and any skills that require sight) until the dust settles.
- **Force an Opening** – To move debris blocking a street or entranceway, make a check on *Feat of Strength*. Another way to accomplish this is to use *Earthencraft (Stonecutting)* while using the appropriate tools. Make checks individually or call for a cumulative check (GM determines the difficulty and number of checks permitted). Individual failures result in lost time, while total failure results in a dead end or the discovery that the blockage is too thick to penetrate (which means it has probably trapped some survivors).
- **Dive** – Heroes that fail checks on *Swimming (Diving)* start to *suffocate* (see below). Skill checks are still possible but suffer a modifier of -1 in addition to those incurred by suffocation. Heroes that lose consciousness suffer 1D6 DP plus an additional 1D6 per CR until rescued. Checks on *Swimming (Diving)* to transport an unconscious hero suffer a -2 modifier.
- **Heal** – For healing wounds, see the *Core Rules*, page 340. The wounded generally benefit from *Treat Wounds (Enhance Healing)*. Those who are heavily wounded (0 LP left) only benefit from a check on *Treat Wounds (Stabilize)*. Each treatment requires 15 minutes.
- **Suffocation** – Once a victim's air runs out, that person suffers a level of the condition *Stupor* every 25 CR. Additionally, and independently from suffering *Stupor*, the person also suffers 1D6 points of damage per CR after (CON) minutes.

- Use *Dive* to cross flooded tunnels, crevices, and basins full of murky groundwater
- Heal survivors
- Deal with the stray animals, most of which are guard dogs or hunting hounds, that freely roam the ruins seeking food (for stats, see *Core Rules*, page 360)

Finding Things in the Ruins

Searching the ruins for useful equipment (or simply trying to loot) requires a successful check on *Perception (Search)*, takes 15 minutes, and reveals a random find. This could be valuables or money (worth about 3D6 ducats), a means of lighting (torches, battered oil lamps, lanterns), tools for

climbing or *Earthencraft* (ropes, pickaxes, crowbars, climbing hooks), weapons, or alchemicae.

Searching for a specific object incurs an appropriate penalty (between -1 and -5; GM's choice). Length of search is up to the GM as well. Even in Arivor, searching for rare, fine mechanical objects (a Vinsaltan Egg) or specific alchemicae (a healing potion, a magic potion) can realistically take two hours to accomplish and incur a -5 penalty on *Perception* checks.

Vignettes

Read the following text to the players (or paraphrase), as needed, when resolving certain in-game actions.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

- Glancing down while you climb gives you the creeps, so you concentrate and carefully test every stone and handhold. The muscle-work must come from the legs, or your arms will feel soft as butter on a warm Praiosday.
- A foul reek issues from the floor of the gorge, nearly 60 feet below, and winds make standing on the rim dangerous. You carefully test the rim. It feels solid and should not crumble. The jumping distance is only 12 feet... Hah! Piece of cake!
- Laboriously, you scramble up a hill of slippery rubble and gravel. Each step knocks loose another stone that tumbles and rolls away, taking others with them as they make their way down the hillside. Hopefully, this won't cause a landslide...
- You carefully make your way through the debris field on the floor of the crater. To your left, the walls of a fallen house stick up at a strange angle. To your right, a rocky wall towers 70 feet above your head.
- Suddenly, you hear a clatter and rumble from above. A huge rock has broken loose and is tumbling toward you! As unpredictably as an imman ball, it bounces back and forth between the rock face and some debris from several houses, rushing in your direction. It will surely hit you. Do something, quickly!
- You hear a strange bumbling and hissing noise next to you. Suddenly a bright red pillar of flame bursts from the ground and shoots straight up into the air.
- You pick your way through sharp, slippery debris. Suddenly, you hear a faint voice and some muffled coughing coming from behind a nearby collapsed wall.
- Suddenly you are startled by some hushed voices issuing from a ruined house only a few yards away. One says, "Quickly, take only the most valuable things!" Another says, "By Alrik, this cask is too heavy! Take that stuff over there, instead." You have stumbled upon some looters at work!
- You hear loud sobbing near the path. A little girl is crying. Her father has a vacant, hopeless look in his eyes. "Come, come, sweetie," he says, listlessly, "Mommy is no longer here, she's with Mother Travia, sitting next to her hearth fire. Come, we must go see Uncle Alrico in Vinsalt."



Escalation Levels

A catastrophe like this wouldn't be so dangerous if the already chaotic situation did not worsen over time. If you like, slowly increase the pressure on the heroes by using the following escalation ladder. Soon, as the hours pass, the chaos of the disaster will turn into a full-fledged apocalypse.

Escalation Level 0: Starting Point (The First Hour)

The heroes save themselves and any other survivors from the crater below the Arivoran theater, and people seem to be getting things back under control. Weakened buildings collapse here and there, but the disaster appears to have passed. A pall hangs over the areas that were dragged into the deep.



Escalation Level 1: Aftershocks (Hours 1 – 6)

Once the heroes get used to the situation, introduce some aftershocks. More buildings collapse and more landslides occur. This leads to more crises. Survivors who thought they were safe in improvised camps are suddenly at risk again. Heroes standing on a supposedly safe cliff suddenly find their route back to camp cut off. Pathways through rubble and debris suddenly shift or vanish entirely, due to landslides. Many more people suffer injuries because they were unable to flee Arivor immediately. Use distant roaring booms and sounds of thunder to play mind games with the heroes. Did someone they saved an hour ago just die in this aftershock? Will there be any more big quakes?

Escalation Level 2: Panic and Looting (Hours 2 – 7)

The catastrophe continues to grow worse, and the ugly side of human behavior begins to surface. It starts with citizens who just want to salvage what they can from their ruined houses, but some people begin to take whatever they can from their dead neighbors' homes as well ("He won't need it anymore, will he?"). Things soon escalate into wild looting. With no guards, no town officials, and no Ardarites, who will stop the looters? Everyone is focused on personal survival. This creates dramatic and brutal scenes of survivors being injured or even killed for their possessions, especially valuables. The wounded can only sit and watch (or be killed for staring) while their former friends and neighbors loot their homes. Innocents who catch looters in the act in their homes are slaughtered on their own doorsteps. Many citizens who try to stop the looters and restore some order meet a similarly unfortunate end. Far from being the usual

shady suspects, most of the looters are formerly orderly townsfolk who have lost all hope and now struggle to acquire what they can, and the heroes risk being ambushed by crazed gangs.

○ **Escalation Level 3: Lava (Hours 4 – 8)***

• Lava and fire fountains deal fire damage (see *Core Rules*, page 341) that includes the state *burning*. If desired, allow heroes to attempt to dodge or parry this threat with a shield. However, a shield used to parry lava takes the same amount of damage. Lava causes 2D6 DP of burning damage per combat round. Heroes falling into lava suffer twice this normal damage.

Some of the magma chambers below the Golden Helmet (and Arivor in general) are still active and filled with steaming, pressurized lava. The molten stone surges to the surface through cracks, gaps, and crevices and erupts in hissing, fiery fountains.

Escalation Level 4: Thunderstorm (Hours 6 – 9)

As the sun sets, clouds darken the sky even further and heavy rain begins to fall. Soon the rain turns into a thunderstorm. After months

of drought, this would normally be a happy occurrence, and it is hard to tell whether Efferd is in a very giving (or a very bad) mood. The thunderstorm lasts 3 to 4 hours and dumps 7 inches of rain onto the ruined city. Countless caverns and hollows, many still holding survivors, fill up with water, and the rough terrain now counts as slippery, too.

- The combination of twilight and the thunderstorm impose visibility penalties (Level 2: -2 penalty to AT, PA, and all skill checks involving sight, -4 penalty to ranged attacks)
- Checks on *Body Control (Balance)* and *Climbing* suffer a -1 modifier due to the slippery conditions
- Flooded caverns and hollows are now only passable by *Swimming (Diving)*

Escalation Level 5: The Terrors of the Night (After 9th Hour)* ○

Night, dark and full of terrors, is a time for creatures to come out of their holes. And they do. Things that usually live hidden in caverns deep underground now walk the surface. They follow the scent of blood and fear calling to them from above, calling them forth to Arivor.

Rummaging Bugbears

Rummaging bugbears come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are the bane of miners and dwarves. Their dark gray skin is stone-like and cracked in appearance, they stand somewhere between 1.5 and 6 feet tall, and some are very skinny while others are fat. Their stony skin usually hinders their movement, so they are not the fastest creatures under Dere's surface. They are not very intelligent, but they do have a language of their own (not surprisingly, it sounds like stones being rubbed together).



Typical Looter

COU 14 SGC 11 INT 13 CHA 10
DEX 13 AGI 12 CON 12 STR 13
LP 30 AE - KP - INI 13+1D6
DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 1 MOV 8
Unarmed: AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short
Club: AT 12 PA 5 DP 1D6+2 RE short
PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I

Skills: *Body Control* 3 (12/12/12), *Climbing* 4 (14/12/13), *Empathy* 3 (11/13/10), *Fast-Talk* 3 (14/13/10), *Feat of Strength* 5 (12/13/13), *Intimidate* 5 (14/13/10), *Perception* 4 (11/13/13), *Self Control* 4 (14/14/12), *Stealth* 6 (14/13/13), *Swimming* 3 (12/12/13), *Willpower* 4 (14/13/10)

Number: varies

Size Category: medium

Type: Intelligent Creature, humanoid

Loot: per individual looter; random 2D6 halers

Combat Behavior: Looters attack in larger numbers, attacking each hero separately, if possible. Looters specialize in clubbing, forceful blows.

Escape: Looters flee if they lose at least 50% LP, if they realize their foe is too strong for them, or if outnumbered.

Bugbear teeth are so hard, and their jaws so strong, that they can easily chew through rock. They shy away from sunlight (their eyes are perfectly suited to the needs of an underground life). According to troll legend, rummaging bugbears are distant cousins that are simply not brave enough to leave the darkness, and trolls pity them. To dwarves and miners, however, rummaging bugbears are abominable pests that must be driven from the mountains as quickly as possible.

Contrary to the types of bugbears one usually encounters in Aventuria, the rummaging bugbears of Arivor tend to be aggressive. They have adapted to the area's frequent droughts by expanding their diet and now have no qualms hunting and killing dwarves, elves, and humans to put meat on their dinner tables.

Distribution

Rummaging bugbears live in every mountain in Aventuria, and can generally be found anywhere underground. They live in small family groups and clans, chewing their way through stone and rock. They are smart enough to train underground animals, such as stone lice, to serve as pets, but they lack the foresight needed to plan their tunnels. As a result, they frequently break into the mines of dwarves and humans and create chaos as a result.

- At night, visibility in the city is reduced to *starlight* (Level 3: -3 penalty to AT, PA, and all skill checks involving sight, -6 penalty to ranged attacks)
- The heroes can encounter creatures such as stone lice, rummaging bugbears, and even ghosts.

Lifestyle

Bugbears seem to exist solely to dig tunnels, even though they do so without rhyme or reason. They usually flee from every creature they regard as a threat, which basically means every creature larger than them (or any creature that walks on two legs). However, when cornered, they fight fiercely and can even work themselves up into a frenzy. Oddly, the rummaging bugbears from Arivor are less frightened of everything. They are just as likely to attack creatures that threaten them as run away, and when they are really hungry, they actively hunt them down. They have even been known to set traps or wait in ambush to catch their prey.

Stone Louse

This close relative of the crypt louse is about one and a half feet long, 4 to 9 inches tall, and grayish-white in color, but otherwise looks like a giant sow bug or pill bug. Its mandibles are very strong and quite capable of breaking stone, a task made easier by its acidic saliva. The stone louse's intelligence is comparable to that of a dog, but in large groups they act more like ants and can perform enormous feats. Most stone lice live in nests and reproduce by egg-laying. They have been known to live as long as ten years. Rummaging bugbears raise stone lice as domestic livestock. Since stone lice feel no urge to wander or leave their territory, keeping them as livestock requires little effort from the bugbears. Like their herders, stone lice avoid daylight and stay mainly underground.

Rummaging Bugbear

COU 10 SGC 8 INT 12 CHA 10
DEX 11 AGI 10 CON 17 STR 15
LP 40 AE - KP - INI 10+1D6
DO 5 SPI 0 TOU 4 MOV 7
Unarmed: AT 9 PA 7 DP 1D6+1
RE short
Bite: AT 8 DP 2D6+4 RE short
PRO/ENC 6/0

Actions: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Darksight II / Fear of Light III, Light-Sensitive

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I (Bite)

Skills: Body Control 4 (10/10/17), Climbing 10 (10/10/15), Fast-Talk 3 (10/12/10), Feat of Strength 9 (17/15/15), Intimidate 6 (10/12/10), Perception 4 (8/12/12), Self Control 4 (10/10/17), Stealth 10 (10/12/10), Swimming 0 (10/17/15), Willpower 3 (10/12/10)

Size Category: medium

Type: Intelligent Creature, humanoid

Combat Behavior: Rummaging bugbears usually flee. However, during the disaster of Arivor, they are terrified and fleeing for their lives. Finding violence all around them on the surface, they become violent in turn and remain this way even after the evacuation of Arivor. In addition, they discover a new source of food in the weak and wounded that remain behind or are too slow to flee or fight...

Escape: per individual; usually they avoid conflicts, but if cornered, they fight fiercely until they lose at least 75% LP.

Special Rules

Frenzy: When cornered, rummaging bugbears fall into a rage and gain the state of *bloodlust*. Arivoran bugbears, however, gain this state immediately upon being attacked. Starting with the next CR, they suffer a -2 penalty on any form of defense but gain +2 on AT and DP. Their *bloodlust* lasts until half an hour passes or their foe is killed (whichever comes first).



Distribution

These creatures have almost never been seen on the surface before, even though they have been living beneath the Gerondrata for a very long time. Up until now, they have been content to remain underground where they nested in hollows and caverns. However, with the meteorite strike and the resulting passages to the surface it created, these creatures have been leaving their nests to explore the possibilities of life under the open sky, though only at nighttime. The rummaging bugbears, terrified as they are of the changes to their environment, nevertheless want to keep their herds of giant crustaceans from escaping to the surface.

Natural History

When not facing a threat or feeding on prey, stone lice usually fall into a torpor, a kind of sleep paralysis that can last from hours to weeks. Stone lice derive their name from the way they search for food. They chew their way through stone and rock just like rummaging bugbears, though much more slowly, and they do not actually feed on stone. Rather they feed on insects and worms that live in crevices. The one exception is limestone, which stone lice consider a delicacy (soft stone attracts them almost like magic). Rummaging bugbears protect their herds of stone lice and even help break up harder stone for them. Like small, armored cows, stone lice produce milk. Their milk has an intoxicating effect on bugbears, similar to the effect humans feel from alcohol.

Spelunkers should not underestimate stone lice, which can coordinate their actions. Just like ants, they employ tactics such as using scouts to assess threats, attacking in large

Stone Louse

COU 12 SGC 10 (a) INT 12 CHA 10

DEX 11 AGI 12 CON 12 STR 13

LP 25 AE - KP - INI 12+1D6

DE 8 SPI 1 TOU 1 MOV 10

Bite: AT 15 DP 1D6+4 RE short

PRO/ENC 3/0

Actions: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Darkvision II /

Fear of Light III, Light-Sensitive

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I (Bite)

Skills: Body Control 6 (12/12/12), Climbing 13 (12/12/13), Feat of Strength 6 (12/13/13), Intimidate 10 (12/12/10), Perception 9 (10/12/12), Self Control 7 (12/12/12), Stealth 13 (12/12/12), Swimming 2 (12/12/13), Willpower 10 (12/12/10)

Size Category: small

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Combat Behavior: Stone lice attack when they feel cornered, when their bugbear master commands it, or when defending their nest. After the disaster, they appear on the surface at night, confused at first, but later in hunting packs to stalk prey.

Escape: loss of at least 75% LP

Special Rules

Acid: When wounded by a stone louse, roll 1D6. On 1-3, the louse's acidic saliva deals an additional 1D3 DP. The GM decides whether the acid also corrodes armor, clothing, or equipment.

Torpor: When inactive, stone lice fall into a sleep-like paralysis to save energy. They gain the state *incapacitated*, which lasts either until they suffer at least 1 DP or wake up on their own (after hours, days, or even weeks).



numbers, and setting up diversions to overcome a more powerful foe. Stone lice that try human flesh soon acquire a taste for it, and since they now have many opportunities to get to the surface, well...

Random NPCs

Use the following cookie-cutter stats for encounters with random NPCs. View them as allies or enemies with which to confront your heroes.

The Knight

Sample Names (f/m): Rosalie dell'Armador / Ronderin ter Corazza

Game Stats: see the *Typical Knight*, page 28

Profession: experienced knight

Motivation: always be an example; chivalrous ideals; personal honor; integrity

Agenda: A positive force in the face of the disaster; wants to save as many citizens as possible, and protect the innocent against looters and murderers.

Role: honorable helper who works hard to rescue survivors; conscience of the heroes; honest soldier who obeys orders

Background: in town for the tournament, or perhaps belongs to a local noble family

Place Encountered: Field of Swords, theater, Golden Helmet

Role Playing Tips: Stick out your chest, sit up straight, and use short, clipped sentences; speak in a clear and powerful voice that rings with honor and pride

Fate: GM choice

Possible Death: dies if the heroes order this NPC into a dangerous situation alone.

"The moment we stop fighting for each other is the moment we lose our honor."

Possible Last Words: *"As you command! I will scout the situation and report back soon."*



The Commoner

Sample Names (f/m): Encarnada Carmise / Vestidan Vermiliaris

Game Stats: see *Typical Arivoran*, below

Profession: average craftsman, peasant, or merchant

Motivation: prior to the disaster, different for each; after the catastrophe, simply to survive

Agenda: wants to save family and belongings, and then escape the disaster

Role: follows the heroes and offers expertise; glad that there are people to follow who seem to know what to do; accepts taking risks, if there is no other way

Background: once possessed a small (work)shop and modest wealth, but lost everything in the disaster

Place Encountered: random; depends on the individual

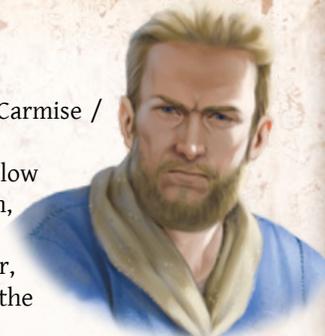
Role Playing Tips: accompany the heroes more or less silently; don't take the lead; look at your feet while wringing your hands or holding a hat in front of you. Always address the heroes as "Signor/Signora" or "Good Sir/Good Lady"

Fate: GM choice

Possible Death: Falls victim to a new and unexpected danger (rummaging bugbears, stone lice, the sudden collapse of a house, a lava fountain, and so on)

"Excuse me, Signor, I'm very sorry, but I overheard your conversation about <insert area of expertise>. By a lucky chance, I know how to do this."

Possible Last Words: *"Yes, I will go first, if you want me to."*



The Child

Sample Names (f/m): Aurelia / Shafirio

Game Stats: see *Typical Arivoran*, below

Profession: inexperienced rogue

Motivation: survival

Agenda: has lost everything; wants to find parents, or simply to be rescued and treated well

Role: follows the heroes around and help, if the heroes threat the child well; might grow into a courageous assistant

Background: around 9 years old; dirty; ragged clothes; clutches a one-eyed, one-armed doll; lost entire family during the disaster.

Place Encountered: random (for example, the ruins of a collapsed house)

Role Playing Tips: Talk like a child. Look at your feet, act shy, sob, and use child's terms such as "mommy," "daddy," "scary men," or "bad monsters."

Fate: Perhaps the heroes rescue and escort the child to the Temple of Tsa.

Possible Death: The child does *not* die!

"Are we going to die now?"



The Noble

Sample Names (f/m): Signora Coco ya Limasa / Signor Chemiso della Capense

Game Stats: see *Typical Arivoran*, below

Profession: experienced courtier

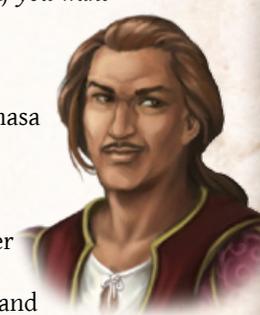
Motivation: before the disaster, per individual; afterwards, to survive

Agenda: get to safety, and look good and maintain social standards while doing so. Remain convinced that nothing bad can happen, for disaster only really strikes others. Bravely follow rescuers, or else wander through the ruins alone with the certainty of a sleepwalker, simply ignoring any and all dangers.

Role: Dreamer who is more worried about personal grooming and getting silk clothes dirty than any real danger. Constantly stumbles from one dangerous situation to the next and always needs rescuing.

Background: an Arivoran noble or a visiting noble from outside the city who came here to view the tournament

Place Encountered: theater, Old Arivor, Hotel Sevenstroke



Role Playing Tips: Look slightly down your nose at people, and affect a nasal tone when you speak. Show with every gesture just how much you detest your dirty surroundings. Be as artificial as possible, adopt a very posh manner (high Vinsaltan language standard) and use made-up words such as “bragguesque” (after the demon Braggu; meaning “frightening”) or “balihose” (after the town of Baliho in Weiden; meaning backwoods).

Fate: the noble manages to stay relatively clean until shortly before the end of the adventure, at which point a mud puddle appears out of nowhere. The noble falls in... and cries like a baby.

Possible Death: The harmless bath in the mud puddle, which everyone (except the noble) laughed about, suddenly turns fatal when the noble triggers a landslide and gets buried. Alternatively, the noble could just as well get run through by a large, pointy piece of debris.

“Oh, what is that smell? It’s unbearable!”

Possible Last Words: “Nooooo! Not my brocade vest!”

The Actress

Sample Names (f/m): Robará de Vermelac / Rojo Lamanga

Game Stats: see *Typical Arivoran*, below

Profession: average actor

Motivation: become famous, if not via mediocre theater plays, then at least by a heroic death

Agenda: seeks the greatest (and, most likely, last) performance

Role: comic relief; unwittingly sets terrible things in motion due to clumsiness; always volunteers for suicidal tasks, in search of a dramatic exit

Background: a mediocre actress from the second row of the Arivoran theater

Place Encountered: theater, Temple of Hesinde

Role Playing Tips: Speak as if you are reciting dramatic monologues from various plays. Use exclamations such as “Oh!”, “Alas!”, and “Woe is me!”

Fate: a theatrical exit dripping with pathos and self-sacrifice, accentuated by an extended monologue (and at least 10 to 20 minutes of dying).

Possible Death: exit the stage of life via an unhappy coincidence (probably in a situation that is everything but dangerous), or else actually go out in a truly dramatic fashion.

“In a role as small as mine, you must be a great actor to even be seen.”

Last Words: “The rest is silence.”



Typical Arivoran

COU 12 SGC 12 INT 13 CHA 12

DEX 13 AGI 12 CON 12 STR 12

LP 29 AE – KP – INI 12+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 1 MOV 8

Unarmed: AT 9 PA 5 DP 1D6 RE short

Dagger: AT 9 PA 5 DP 1D6+1 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions: 1

Skills: *Body Control* 4 (12/12/12), *Climbing* 3 (12/12/12), *Empathy* 4 (12/13/12), *Fast-Talk* 3 (12/13/12), *Feat of Strength* 3 (12/12/12), *Intimidate* 2 (12/13/12), *Perception* 2 (12/13/13), *Self Control* 2 (12/12/12), *Stealth* 3 (12/13/12), *Swimming* 3 (12/12/12), *Willpower* 2 (12/13/12), *crafting skill used for work* 7

Combat Behavior: Citizens almost never fight, and instead try to avoid conflicts.

Escape: Citizens flee after receiving one level of *Pain* at the latest.

Modifications for the Child: CON 9, STR 9, LP 23, SPI 0, TOU 0; *Climbing* 5, *Feat of Strength* 1, *Intimidate* 0, *Stealth* 5; **Unarmed:** AT 7 PA 4; no dagger

Modifications for the Noble: SGC 13, DEX 12; *Empathy* 6, *Fast-Talk* 5, *Willpower* 4; **Dagger:** AT 11 PA 6

Modifications for the Actress: CHA 14; *Perception* 4, *Empathy* 6, *Fast-Talk* 7

Modifications for an Alley Cat: CHA 13; *Body Control* 6, *Self Control* 6, *Empathy* 7, *Willpower* 5; **Unarmed:** AT 11 PA 6; **Dagger:** AT 11 PA 6

For stats for the Knight, see page 28.

Events and Locations in Arivor

This section describes specific events, most of which are tied to specific locations. We present them in no particular order, as the heroes are basically free to go wherever they wish. Note that certain events might still occur even if the heroes are absent. Each event includes an escalation level, to help gauge when the event occurs. Some events are marked with  plus a Roman numeral for the associated **escalation level**, indicating how the event changes depending on when the heroes arrive. Feel free to make things more difficult for the heroes by ignoring the stated escalation level and re-arranging the events to suit the course of the adventure.

Note: the rules for terms set off in italics (such as *collapse*, *jump*, *climb*, and so on) appear in the box called *Environmental Hazards*, on page 41.

Escalation Level 1 (Aftershocks)

 Aftershocks create additional hazards, and the heroes find themselves accompanied by an increasing number of survivors. One **place of shelter** (see page 57) for heroes and their wards is the Temple of Travia. At the last second, the heroes save the lives of many refugees when the temple collapses.

Ideal Course of Events

- After playing through the opening of your choice, the heroes end up in the Theater of Arivor during the catastrophe.
- The heroes, *Dottora Meissini*, *Nepolemo ya Torese*, *Gaspere ya Stellona*, and a host of other survivors get dragged into the deep. Nepolemo loses his left arm during the trek back to the surface and almost dies. He is saved with great effort, and his presence gives the people hope. From the theater, he coordinates rescue missions and assigns quests to the heroes. He is soon no longer able to hide the fact that nothing can prevent his death, as his wounds are too severe. Some Ardarites set out from Arivor bearing his sword, *Fulgur*, to deliver the blade to safety.
- From the theater, the heroes head over to the Temple of Hesinde, where the priests beg them to “**Save our scrolls!**” (see page 49)
- After having saved many ancient and important scrolls, among them the notes of the “Commander of Poets,” *Comto Morguno of Ascream*, the heroes return to the theater, where the Arch-Ruler asks them to save as many holy relics of Rondra as possible. The heroes visit the **holy sites of the Golden Helmet** (see page 52). They witness the death of *Elvena d'Abbanza*, the tournament marshal, and join the effort to save the statues of heroes. They meet *Harlo Berlinghan* in the old castle.
- On their way through the city, the group deals with various environmental hazards and helps **salvage the Casa Rovina** (see page 51).

- Depending on where the heroes choose to go next, they encounter the **split brothel** (see page 59), the **twisted hotel** (see page 58), or **treasures of steel** (see page 59)

Escalation Level 2 (Panic and Looting)

- After the heroes deal with a few groups of looters, they stumble across **the Bosparaniard King** (see page 60) and the mercenary leader *Travian di Faffarallo*, who are taking advantage of the panic to make some money from the disaster

Escalation Level 3 (Lava)

- Increasing numbers of dead and dying victims are delivered to the Temple of Boron, where the heroes witness *Dottora Meissini* recognizing her living yet now totally insane colleague, *Yagomil Montazzo*. The heroes learn more about rummaging bugbears and stone lice from an **eccentric hospital patient** (see *Theories From the Fringe*, on page 56)

Escalation Level 4 (Thunderstorm)

- When the thunder begins and the rain comes pouring down, the heroes rescue some survivors from the **flooded row of houses** (see page 57)

Escalation Level 5 (Terrors of the Night)

- The heroes come across a **haunted house** (see page 61) and, for the first time in this adventure, have a run-in with real ghosts
- Afterwards, they must escape the dangers of **the Gate to Nowhere** (see page 61)
- Attacks from the deep** (see page 62) become more frequent
- In a finale of sorts, the heroes stumble across a **nest** of these subderanian creatures (see page 44)
- Now that many survivors are safely out of Arivor, the heroes leave the city and reach **terra firma** (see page 63).

• If the heroes try to save the Arch-Ruler by arcane or divine means, Nepolemo insists that they save their powers for “someone in more desperate need, instead of wasting them on an old man.” If they insist, do not feel that you must overturn any successful healing attempts. There are plenty of opportunities for Nepolemo to die, and if he survives after all, the Arch-Ruler shows his gratitude to the heroes for their efforts in your campaign. In the official Aventura, however, he dies from his mortal wounds.

Save Our Scrolls! (Temple of Hesinde, 16)

Background and Entry

Arivor's Temple of Hesinde sits very close to the theater. It is one of the first buildings the heroes see when they make their way out of the theater. They notice immediately that the temple still stands, but it is perched on edge of an abyss. The ground is giving way slowly, with rocks and dirt crumbling off and falling into the deep. In fact, the temple is already leaning dangerously. The temple's Blessed Ones, easily recognizable due to their green-and-gold robes, coordinate the lay servants and temple guards, who run frantically in and out of the building in their attempts to rescue scrolls, tablets, and codices from the temple's library.

Inside the Temple

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

A young priest stumbles clumsily out of the temple, overloaded with large, heavy scrolls. He takes a few faltering steps and then falls to the ground. His scrolls end up scattered in the dirt. The head of the temple rushes out of the building, saying “No time to rest, Padriago! Hurry, by the will of the All-wise!” He yanks the young man to his feet and together they run back into the temple.

Heroes who decide to help can witness the chaos first-hand. All eight surviving priests try to salvage as much of the temple's collection as possible. Outside, hundreds of books, scrolls, and even some clay tablets and inscribed stone plates lie in piles next to pieces of art. The priests soon bring out more.

The Temple's Collection

This temple of the arts holds a vast and irreplaceable collection of theatrical plays and other manuscripts, and the Blessed Ones of Hesinde are determined to save them all. Unknown to them, the temple will collapse sometime within the next half hour. A more accurate prediction is possible with a successful check on *Earthencraft (Masonry)*.

-  **I-III:** Reduce the remaining time by 5 to 10 minutes per escalation level.
-  **IV:** The temple collapses during Escalation Level 4 at the latest, due to *landslides* triggered by the thunderstorm's heavy rain.

The Blessed Ones

-  The praetor is *Reverend Bibractus Brigonetti* (late 60s; big, bushy, white beard; stout; near-sighted, with broken glasses; senile, stubborn, and confused; recites continuously from the scripts he carries out of the temple). He organizes the salvage actions but, due to his love for books, he has lost all sense of the danger in which he places himself and his priests.
-  *Scholar Padriago* (17; shy; clumsy) is aware of the danger but dares not protest. He is panicked but helps all the same.
-  *Her Worship Divia Santeria* (late 20s; suffering from many small wounds but seems not to notice them; solution-oriented; keeps a cool head) is the voice of reason (though unheard by the praetor).
-  The others (two scholars and three priests) are just as eager as the praetor to save these precious manuscripts. They are full of doubt and fear but they obey the praetor's orders.

Possible Solutions

There are two possible ways for the heroes to best solve the problem. They can try to persuade the praetor that everyone has saved what they could, but from this moment on, the survival of the Blessed Ones takes priority. Or, the heroes could join the effort and help carry items a little bit faster, possibly saving everything before the temple collapses. A combination of both is also possible. However, the heroes have only half an hour to save what they can!

Persuasion

It is very challenging to persuade Brigonetti to leave the manuscripts behind and save himself and his priests. Doing so requires a competitive check on *Persuasion (Conversation)* vs. *Willpower (Resist Persuasion)* (SR 12, 15/16/14) at -1, because the scripts are very dear to the praetor ("No! Those are irreplaceable! I would rather fall into the abyss with them!"). Even if the skill check succeeds, the attempt takes up several minutes of precious time.

Legwork

Saving all the manuscripts would take many more people than are available. Make a *Body Control (Running)* check for each helper, each time they enter the temple. QL measures



how successful the helpers are at saving at least the most important and most valuable texts.

Temple Layout

Entrance Hall: roofed, with columns on three sides. The columns are crumbling, and *collapses* may occur without warning.

Sanctuary: The temple's large hall is crumbling, too. Of six huge statues of the goddess, two have already collapsed. The other four may collapse, too. A gate leads to the vestry, a stone spiral staircase to the cellar, two wooden stairs up to a gallery, and two doors to the library.

Vestry: visitors entering through the gate from the temple do not believe their eyes. A few yards past the door, a hole gapes wide like a giant mouth in the floor. The floor is canted at a strange angle, and some pillars still support the roof which has partly collapsed into the hole. The vestry now more closely resembles a dangerously tilted terrace. Some church artifacts, which Brigonetti says are irreplaceable, are sliding slowly towards the hole. A successful check on *Body Control (Balance)* may save them.

Gallery: Several scrolls are scattered across the desks and shelves of the gallery on the upper floor. The stairs are already destroyed, requiring heroes to *climb* up and down. Each way takes 5 minutes.

Library: the two rooms of the library seem to hold most of the manuscripts, which include rare works such as the notes of the *Commander of Poets*, *Comto Morguno of Ascream*, as well as records from ancient times, such as the 3,000 year old play, *Balan Cantara in Gyldenland*. Some of the cabinets are locked.

The heroes can obtain the keys from the absentminded Brigonetti, or else try to *force open* the cupboards.

Cellar: Just when the heroes think they might have rescued all the most important scrolls from the library, they discover the cellar and realize how very wrong they are. There are as many books down here as there were up in the library, and a huge gap has just opened in one wall, threatening to swallow everything.



Inside the temple, the heroes might find a witch artifact that was seized and studied by the Blessed Ones. It holds 3 uses of the *Spider Walk* spell (see *Core Rules*, page 297), each with QL 2 and a duration of 20 minutes. In gratitude for the heroes' assistance, the Blessed Ones might give them the artifact, which could come in handy with other rescue attempts.

Salvaging the Casa Rovina (anywhere in Arivor)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You dig through debris and clamber over rubble. In front of you, a cliff towers high up above you. Right next to it, tilted like a witch's hut in Weiden, stands a patrician's house (or what is left of it, at any rate). The ground opened up next to it and the entire building fell into the crevice. You have almost walked by when you hear a muffled gasp. "Help!" someone seems to cry with obvious effort. By the Twelvegods, someone is buried alive inside that house!

This scene typifies the kinds of rescue missions that await the heroes in Old Arivor.

Outside

The patrician's home is crafted of stone with rondranian architectural touches. The front resembles a small castle. If the house was not tilted at a crazy angle, it might almost resemble a structure found in a park in some Horasian noble's maison de plaisance, like a quaint, romantic ruin that is overgrown with ivy and has small battlements around the roof. In the midst of all this debris, rubble, and ashes, however, the ruin looks threatening. Now and then, one or two stone blocks fall from the walls.

Check on Perception (Spot)

QL 1: The cries of several people issue from somewhere within the building.

QL 2: Three people are in the back of the house, maybe on one of the upper floors.

QL 3+: One voice is that of a child, one a woman, and one is the ragged voice of a man. Two of them seem to be at the back of the house on the second floor, near the cliff. The voice of the woman seems to come from closer, more toward the center of the building.

Check on Perception (Search)

QL 1 – The front door is wedged shut due to a collapse, but it might be possible to *force it open*. There are no other entrances in the ground floor. The second floor has windows.

QL 2 – It is possible to *climb* to the windows on the upper floors. It is also possible to go to the top of the cliff and lower oneself down onto the roof with a rope.

QL 3+: Ivy and debris piled around the house make climbing easier. The cliff above the house is a possibility, but the pathway up is quite steep. Nonetheless, this is a good way to get into the house. Another crevice has opened up a few yards away. It might be possible to climb down into it and enter the house through a cellar.

Ways to Get In

Climbing

Climbing to the second floor requires a check on *Climbing (Walls)* at +1. Climbing to the third floor is an unmodified check, as is reaching the roof. The windows are more like narrow balustrariae (small arrow-slits), and some of them are filled with debris. Squeezing through one of these requires a check on *Body Control (Squirm)* at +1.

Rappelling

Rappelling from the cliff onto the roof is possible but risky, and requires a check on *Climbing (Mountains)*. A botch leads to a long fall (up to 18 feet, at your discretion). The roof is littered with debris as well, and a careless hero might start a *landslide*. A staircase from the roof leads down to the third floor.

Door

Forcing the door *open* is quite easy, and needs only a check on *Feat of Strength (Breaking & Smashing)* at -1. However, this destabilizes the walls and causes a collapse of parts of the upper floors. The person breaking down the door takes 3DP as a result.

Crevice

The nearby crevice does indeed lead to a cellar door. However, the gap is narrow. Getting through it requires individual checks on *Body Control (Squirm)*. Opening the cellar door requires a check on *Feat of Strength (Breaking & Smashing)*. Success at both checks grants access to the house's cellar.

Dangers Inside the House

Cellar

This is the den of the former owner's now-terrified dog. The animal attacks all who approach unless calmed by a successful check on *Animal Lore (Domestic Animals)* or some other means (like bribing it with food or using magic).

Ground Floor

Now and then, parts of the ceiling *collapse*. The stairs to the upper floors are clear. Searching this floor reveals the bodies of the lady of the house and several servants.

Upper Floors

The main danger here is a sudden *collapse* of the floor itself. If this happens, victims fall one or two stories into the deep (see *Plunge*; a floor is 9 feet high, the ground is hard (+1 point of damage)). In the middle of the house, the heroes must jump over a gap of 9 feet which is also 9 feet deep. The stairs from the 2nd floor to the third are destroyed. The heroes can reach the third floor by checking on *Climbing (Wall Climbing)*. Also, much of the floor itself is destroyed on the third floor, so the heroes must use *balance* to search around.

Victims Buried Alive!

The Servant Girl

A servant girl is trapped under debris on the second floor, near the center of the house. She is wounded, having lost about 20 life points, and needs *healing*. Removing the debris requires either a check on *Feat of Strength (Lifting)*, a suitable lever, or magical means.

The Lord of the House and His Child

A terribly frightened child cowers in a corner at the far end of the third floor of the house (for stats, see *The Child* on page 47). The father is trapped in a hollow space and is about to *suffocate*, unless someone rescues him. He already suffers 3 levels of *stupor*, and his life points are about to reach 0 due to suffocation damage. Saving him requires a cumulative check on *Feat of Strength (Lifting)* with a time interval of 1 CR and 4 tries, max.



If you like, announce aftershocks (as with Escalation Level 2) and describe more *collapses*.



The entire rescue becomes much easier if you do dispense with the dangers described above. Try placing all of the survivors on the ground floor, and maybe do without debris, collapses, and other environmental dangers.

Holy Sites of the Golden Helmet

The hill known as the Golden Helmet, and especially its western slope (the Field of Swords), stands in the midst of all the destruction like a rocky island in the middle of the Pearl Sea. No temple or fortification has come through without at least some damage, and fissures weave through the underlying bedrock, but the buildings and the hill are far from being destroyed. Since most Arivoran sanctuaries of Rondra are located here, countless relics and artifacts face imminent loss or destruction. The heroes may search for valuable relics, whether by their own initiative or at the request of Nepolemo or the Ardarites.

Relics

The heroes may try to salvage any of the following relics that mention a repository.

Check on *Religions (Rondra)* or *History (Horasian Empire)*

QL 1: These relics are very important to the Ardarite Order and the Church of Rondra. Finding them will bring the heroes honor and perhaps a nice reward as well.

• The sword *Fulgur*, a powerful holy weapon, accompanies Nepolemo ya Torese at all times

• The *Grand Hall of Glory*, which maintains a list of all known Rondra-pleasing warriors, is located in the **Temple of Saint Geron and Saint Ardare (10)**. Being added to that list, and perhaps also being immortalized on an inscribed pillar, is considered the ultimate honor for a follower of Rondra. The temple also possesses a vial of the last drop of blood shed from Saint Ardare. With a little luck, the heroes might also be able to save the *Aching Chalice* which contains the blood of Saint Lutisana and Saint Bogumil.

QL 2: Some relics were stolen 10 years ago during the Succession War. This heinous theft sparked the Battle of Westfar, which resulted in the tragic death of Salkya Firdayon at the hands of Travian di Faffarallos.

• The city's most famous grave, the *Queen's Chamber* of Salkya Firdayon, is located in a **charnel house** behind the temple, within the hill

• The **High Castle of the Ardarites (9)** houses many name-bearing swords of the Ardarites and many important chronicles, including the *Armorium Ardariticum*, a compendium of weapons and the arts of war and combat

QL 3:

• The *death mask of Saint Ardare*, along with her *broken sword*, is kept in the **charnel house**, near the Queen's Chamber

• The notes of poet-commander *Comto Morguno of Ascream* are kept in Hesinde's **Temple of Arts (16)**

QL 4+:

• The *horse tack of Saint Geron*, fashioned by Saint Sylvette, has been sealed in crystal and now hangs above the door of the **Palazzo Acano (11)**

• The **Temple of Saint Geron and Saint Ardare (10)** also houses a *tusk of the chimeric ogre* and some *spearheads from the Chabab*. Novadi warriors cast these spearheads at the Rondranian Saint Thalionmel as she defended her home town of Neetha.



I-III: The heroes face numerous environmental dangers as they try to reach these repositories. Even though the Golden Helmet did not suffer much damage from the disaster, it is still scarred with cracks and a few craters. Aftershocks could cause these crevices to widen, and fiery lava fountains might spring up anywhere without warning....



The surviving Ardarites are also trying to save relics. The heroes can easily summon help and need not attempt to salvage relics all by themselves.

The Temple Of Saint Geron and Saint Ardare (10)

Rondra's temple is located between the High Castle of the Ardarite Order and the Palace of the Arch-Ruler. It is connected to both by a (collapsed) gallery. The rectangular building stands defiantly, as if the temple itself was also a castle. A wide staircase leads visitors to a row of columns with a roof. One then enters the Grand Hall of Glory through an open gate. On either side of the entrance stand a number of chapels that display holy Rondranian relics. A small door at the far end of the hall leads to the vestry. Both galleries have collapsed (or the tilt of their walls indicates that they are about to). They can only be crossed with a successful check on *Climbing (Walls)*.

The Grand Hall of Glory

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The roof of the temple's huge main hall is carried by 100 pillars, spaced evenly in five rows of 20 pillars each. The altar sits at the hall's far end. The beauty and geometric proportion of the architecture evoke a deep sense of infinity.

Many of the pillars bear images of famous heroes, each posed as if supporting the roof with their arms or shoulders. Some pillars are blank, awaiting heroes of future days. The first few statues in line have collapsed, and already the roof is cracking and crumbling ominously above the heads of others.

The Altar

In the place of honor on the altar, one sees the Register, the famous book of Rondra-pleasing warriors who performed extraordinary feats in her name and whose deeds came to be well known in Arivor through the testimony of honorable witnesses. This is where the heroes find *Elvena d'Abbastanza* (see page 17), the Ardarite's chronicler, dutifully continuing her work recording new heroic deeds or trying to save scrolls. She is seriously wounded. If the heroes offer to carry the Register to safety, she adds their names to the list (as *Saviors of the Register*) and signs her name in witness.

Stabilizing the Temple

The heroes can attempt to restore the structural integrity of the Grand Hall, or at least try to shore up some pillars and prevent further damage to others. Doing so requires suitable tools and a cumulative check on *Earthcraft (Stone Carving)*, with a time interval of 30 minutes and four tries, max. Partial success (6 QL) saves a large number of pillars from destruction, even if the roof does later collapse. Full success (10 QL) saves all the statues and also prevents the roof from collapsing.



I: Reducing the maximum number of tries increases the risk of dangerous *collapses*.



Rondra is very pleased with everyone who shows courage and strength while trying to protect the

statues. She grants anyone contributing to the effort a +2 bonus to *Feat of Strength* through a miracle. Furthermore, those heroes have a chance of restoring fallen pillars with a check on *Feat of Strength (Lifting)*, even though the statues weigh thousands of pounds. Any who succeed become witness and part of a true wonder of Rondra as they work to preserve the Grand Hall of Glory.

Chapels

Chapel of Saint Ardare: The first chapel to the left on the far end of the Grand Hall is dedicated to Ardare, the patroness of loyalty who despises treachery in all its forms. Frescos depict the Saint's death defending Rondra's Temple in Gareth against the troops of the mad Priest-Emperors. A vial of Ardare's last drop of blood is sealed within an elaborate but very fragile vial. Keeping it intact while transporting it requires a successful check on *Body Control (Balance)*. Each QL negates one environmental danger or botch that affects the vial while making checks on physical skills for as long as the vial is carried.



For the rest of the adventure, a Rondra-pleasing hero who carries this vial suffers no more than 3 levels of *Fear*. All additional levels of *fear* are ignored. Showing the relic to the citizens of Arivor reduces their *fear* by one level (this only works once), and restores their courage and hope. This is mainly a role playing benefit, but in game terms, it works like the liturgical chant *Encourage* with a QL of 4 (+2 to COU and AT).

Chapel of Saint Lutisana: Across from Ardare's chapel is the Chapel of Saint Lutisana. It is already completely destroyed when the heroes arrive. This former resting place of a relic known as the Aching Chalice is now just a pile of debris. The Aching Chalice, which caught the blood of Saint Lutisana and Saint Bogumil when they were being martyred, is nowhere to be found and remains lost.

Chapel of Saint Geron:

Frescos show the Saint's seven main deeds and several minor deeds as well. Even though he is not buried in Arivor, a gorgeously decorated box displays the tusk of the chimeric ogre, the beast that Geron slew with two blows of Sevenstroke, his divine sword. The creature's curved and monstrously ugly tooth was shorn from its jaw with the first stroke. This victory became known as Saint Geron's second deed.



If used as improvised weapons, the tusk and the spearheads deal 1D6+1 damage and modify AT by -1 and PA by -3. However, once during the adventure, at the GM's discretion, the spearheads may inflict double damage when employed to protect the innocent. Similarly, once during the adventure, the tusk inflicts double damage when used against monsters.

Chapel of Saint Thalionmel: One chapel is dedicated to the patroness of Neetha and the concept of defending against superior numbers. A few rusty spearheads from the Chabab are said to have belonged to the Novadis who drowned in the river when Thalionmel defended the city single handedly. Their deaths were attributed to a miracle of Rondra.

Other chapels: Six more chapels, which venerate local saints, line the hall of the temple. Plaques reveal that some were sponsored by noble families to honor their ancestors.

Attentive heroes (check on *Perception (Spot)*) notice that one of the frescos depicts Saint Geron fighting against various insect-like creatures as well as against stone lice and rummaging bugbears. In the picture, he holds them off with a torch, a subtle hint regarding the creatures' light sensitivity.

Vestry and Rooms of the Priests

Past the Grand Hall of Glory are several rooms reserved for priests, who use them to store more sacred objects, robes, and other religious paraphernalia. A corridor leads to an exit into the temple's back yard. Across this open space lies the path to the charnel house in the Golden Helmet.

The Charnel House in the Golden Helmet

Entrance

Behind the temple of Rondra lies the Golden Helmet's only charnel house. This sacred place holds the remains of many fallen members of the Ardarite Order. Since Queen Salkya Firdayon was a member of the Order, too, her very own Queen's Chamber was added to the tomb. The charnel house's entrance is fortified with a gate made from the swords of everyone buried here. The heroes realize immediately upon seeing it that the gate is heavily warped. And not only that, but the gate is also locked. It can be opened either by *force* or by use of *Pick Locks (Combination Locks)*. Failure means that the hero is injured on the sharp edges of the blades used to forge the gate (1D6+1 DP).

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You enter a small prayer room obviously dedicated to Rondra. The walls are decorated with ancient heraldic shields decorate the walls, and a statue depicting the goddess of war with her lightning bolt and shield stands on the altar at the far end of the room. Next to the altar, stone stairs lead into the deep.

Chapel

The building's two floors are typical for charnel houses. It has an ossuary on the first level and a prayer room on the upper floor.

The heroes are about to enter a sacred place to steal relics. Admittedly, they do so only to save irreplaceable objects, but taking a minute to pray for understanding and forgiveness, and traversing the vaults with respect, is always useful. If the heroes do neither and behave like tomb raiders of the lowest kind, deduct a fate point from each of them for desecrating graves. These fate points are not lost permanently. Rather, consider them already spent for this adventure.

Ossuary

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

As you descend the stairs, you realize that the walls of the corridor are made almost entirely of piles of tightly packed bones and skulls. In the flickering light of your torches, they stare at you from empty eye sockets, seemingly asking, "Who dares desecrate our graves?"

Exploring the Ossuary

The ossuary consists of a few small rooms and corridors that can be explored quickly. Everywhere, skulls and bones are piled from floor to ceiling. They belong to Blessed Ones of Rondra, members of the Ardarite Order, and honored knights from the past several hundred years.

Ardare's Death Mask

The death mask of Saint Ardare faces the heroes from its alcove above a small shrine at the end of a corridor, but finding it takes 5 minutes and a successful check on *Perception (Search)*. Made with a gesso mold, the mask reproduces the facial features of the saint in every detail. It is a simple matter to take the relic.



II: The heroes might not be alone in the ossuary. Perhaps a group of three tomb raiders (for stats, see *Looter* on page 44) is stealing relics from graves to sell to wealthy collectors. They might already have taken the death mask.



V: If the heroes wait until the last few hours to fulfill this quest, one or more stone lice (see page 46) have found their way through narrow crevices to the ossuary.

The Queen's Chamber of Salkya Firdayon

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Your lights shine into a lavishly decorated tomb with a low ceiling. Every relief, every pillar, and every burial object reflects a deep adoration for this saintly queen. The sarcophagus of Salkya rests in the middle of the chamber, surrounded by four small pillars.

This tomb was constructed about 10 years ago. Unlike the rest of the ossuary, these walls are not covered with bones. This chamber is made for the veneration of Salkya alone.

- The chamber is filled with valuable burial objects. A successful check on *Religions (Rondra)* shows most of them to be rather unrondranian, such as precious jewelry, golden chalices, and other items. Treasures worthy of a queen, though not religious enough for an Ardarite...
- On the walls hang many named swords that once belonged to the brave Ardarites who died at Salkya's side in her last battle. A *Perception (Spot)* check reveals that Salkya's sword is not present. With QL 2, the heroes notice that some of the swords hang at an unusual angle, but this might be due to the catastrophe. With QL 3+, it becomes obvious that the swords' tips point towards various representations of Salkya's coat of arms (two swords) in the relief.
- The sarcophagus is decorated with a statue depicting the queen. It can be *forced open*, but it is empty.
- All four walls are covered with a massive relief of Salkya's last battle. Studying it thoroughly and checking on *Perception (Search)* reveals various representations of Salkya's coat of arms (two swords) that can be pushed into the relief.

Pushing all of the crests into the wall opens a secret compartment, a safe that holds the remains of the saint and her broken sword. The heroes may collect up the relics or simply close the hidden safe again, since the relics are secure inside it.

Items of great material wealth (yet of no importance to an Ardarite) are displayed openly in the crypt as an additional protection against tomb raiders.



- Recovering the relics gives the heroes a huge advantage when interacting with honest Arivorans, since their devotion towards the saintly queen is deep. Checks on social skills involving citizens gain a modifier of +2 (GM's discretion). Furthermore, people are far more willing to risk their lives for the heroes if they know they honor the queen's memory by doing so.

Other Sites on the Golden Helmet

High Castle of the Ardarites (9)

When the heroes approach the High Castle, they find several Ardarites preparing to move the castle's most valuable and important items to safety. Among those treasures is the *Armorium Ardariticum*. The Ardarites do not give the heroes permission to enter the castle, but singularly determined heroes may sneak in under cover of the chaos outside.



The Ardarites are evacuating the High Castle, which is why so few of them are able to help survivors in the city. The castle is off-limits to honest heroes in this adventure, but if they sneak into the castle anyway, they can find old chronicles and valuable holy weapons. Remember, however, that the karmic properties of weapons and other items work only in the hands of righteous heroes who believe in Rondra. This usually does not include thieves. In fact, thieves might even come to suffer from a divine curse....



Palazzo Acano (11)

The crystal-encased horse tack of Saint Geron hangs on display above the gate of this palazzo. The tremors have loosened the relic so much, however, that it is on the brink of falling and shattering into pieces.

Saving the Horse Tack of Saint Geron

The heroes must be very careful if they wish to prevent the relic's destruction. Whether they *climb* up to take the harness or try to grab it using some kind of pole or hook, one mistake or failed roll causes the relic to fall and the crystal to shatter. The revered treasure ends up in the street, and its ancient leather crumbles into dust.

Old Castle

Heroes approaching the Old Castle on top of the Golden Helmet need to *climb* part of the way due to heavy damage in the area. The castle's walls are separating and pulling apart, opening holes in the ground and resulting in various height differences.

Theories from the Fringe (Temple Of Boron and Marbo, 8)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Cave-ins left the Temple of Boron perched alarmingly on the edge of the abyss that was formerly southern Saladania. Winds gust and whisper through the canyon before the temple gates, and now and then some rocks break loose and roll down into the deep. One thing is certain. The heroes won't find it easy to reach the temple.

Despite their exhaustion, several Blessed Ones continue to do their duty by carrying countless dead through the gates into the crypts under the Golden Helmet.

The Temple of Boron and Marbo is an important location, albeit as a destination for the dead and dying. The priests gratefully welcome any assistance, as there is much work for volunteers. The heroes might come here to pay their last respects to someone or to honor peoples' dying wishes by delivering their bodies to the gods.

The Temple

The building takes the usual form of a broken wheel. After the disaster, it sits on the edge of an abyss. An extremely narrow path leads away from it and winds around the Golden Helmet towards the entrance to the crypts before continuing onwards.

From the heroes' location, it is necessary to *climb* and *balance* along the edge of the abyss to reach the temple. Falling means certain death. People on the hill above the temple lower the dead to the priests by using ropes. The priests then take the bodies into the hill.

The Eccentric Scholar

If the heroes offer their help, an overworked priest gladly accepts and asks them to care for a man who gambols wildly around the temple, jumping from window to window, looking down into the abyss, and crying things like, "They will come, sure they will!" or "The creatures from the deep will take us all! Why does nobody believe me? We must leave!"

If Dottora Meissini still accompanies the heroes, she recognizes the wild man as Yagomil Montazzo (late 40s; unkempt hair; dirty; ranting; mumbles wild talk), a widely despised researcher who, according to the dottora, only pretends to be a scholar. She thinks ill of him because he twisted some of her theories into ridiculous pseudo-science and linked them to fairy tales.

The Crypts in the Hill

Horrified priests and assistants suddenly rush from the tombs, shouting something about monsters and demons.

Determined questioning reveals that they encountered a truly monstrous being that they believe is a demon from the Netherhells. What they describe, however, sounds more like a rummaging bugbear (see page 45), not a demon. It soon becomes apparent that they did not see much and are exaggerating the details.

Heroes entering the crypts and searching the tunnels soon find the place where the terrified priests dropped the dead body they were carrying. Traces of blood (check on *Tracking (Animal Tracks)*) lead to the body of a young female assistant who obviously died from blunt force trauma. She seems to have dragged herself into a small niche to take shelter. Her body is still warm. Searching further in the dark corridors, the heroes encounter an angry rummaging bugbear (see page 45).



III: Lava pours into the tunnels through a fissure.

Yagomil may be mad, but in this instance his theories actually are partially true. Creatures *do* live in the deep (rummaging bugbears and stone lice are just a few examples), and they *are* venturing out onto the surface. The heroes might have already met some of these creatures. If the heroes try to catch Yagomil, his panic increases and he insists that people heed his warning about "the terrors from the deep that wait to devour all of mankind."

Let the heroes decide how they wish to deal with Yagomil. Suggestions include gagging and binding him, or using magic, liturgical chants, or gentler methods, such as *Persuasion (Conversation)* or *Treat Soul (Quell Fears)*. *Fast-Talk (Manipulation)* or *Intimidate (Threaten)* also work, but only for a brief period of time. The heroes should not underestimate Yagomil's *Willower* (skill level 9, 14/16/12). All checks to calm him are competitive checks vs. his *Willpower*, even if the heroes only want what is best for him.



If the heroes need help, an exhausted Blessed One of Boron casts *Banish Fear* on Yagomil, calming him down for at least a little while.

Once the heroes calm the crazy man, they may try to talk to him. He willingly describes his theories after recognizing Dottora Meissini, his "exceedingly esteemed colleague," and he give hints as to the nature of the creatures that might be lurking in the deep. The conversation gradually turns into a heated scientific discussion, the scholars fighting with theories instead of weapons or fists. After the discussion has gone on long enough, and surely before the dottora loses her temper and begins strangling her opponent, trouble occurs at the entrance to the crypts.





V: After dark, more rummaging bugbears and stone lice emerge from below and trap the heroes in the temple. 1D3 rummaging bugbears climb up out of the tunnels, while 1D6 stone lice rush out of the crypts. The heroes must defend many innocent people, including the panicky Yagomil, or the creatures will devour them.

A Place of Shelter (Temple of Travia, 4)

After the disaster, many survivors wasted no time heading for the Temple of Travia, and it is now crowded with refugees. Everyone hopes that the protection of the goddess will save them from further harm, even though the temple sits right next to a precipice. The following scenes involving Travia's Temple include the dangers from aftershocks and landslides.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Everyone praying inside the Temple of Travia seems to have overlooked one important fact. The building sits perilously close to a crevasse, and every few minutes, stones of all sizes break loose and tumble into the deep. The temple's occupants won't be safe for very much longer....

Inside the Temple

At least several hundred refugees gather inside the temple located on the edge of Pilgrim's Town, in the direction of the tournament field. They sing uplifting hymns and pray under the supervision of a priestess wearing the orange garb of a Blessed One of Travia. Aftershocks rattle the temple time and again. Each time, children cry and refugees look around for guidance, but the priestess and her two aides only offer reassuring gestures and urge the people to continue singing and praying.

The Flooded Row of Houses (Aqueduct, 18)

On the northeast side of Arivor, an entire row of houses slid into a natural hollow with 30 foot high rock walls on all sides. The heroes notice the situation from a raised position, and easily recognize the large aqueduct that runs from north to south right through this part of the city. To make things worse, the aqueduct is cracked, and the leaking water is filling up the basin. Cries of help can be heard coming from below. Some survivors are trapped beneath debris or pinned inside houses, and the water level is rising....

The Rising Water

It takes a while, but the basin eventually fills completely with water. Of course, anyone trapped on the ground will have long since drowned by then. From the time the heroes first reach the basin, they have 25–30 minutes to save as many survivors as they can from drowning.

Rescue Actions in the Basin

It is possible to *climb* down into the basin. If a hero *falls*, the maximum falling distance is 30 feet. Ropes and other

The Conflict

The main problem is this: the priestess Melissolia Cordovi (early 30s; orange garb of Travia; sings or prays constantly; glorious smile) lost her husband Antaris during the disaster. The divine couple led the temple together, but Antaris was the more experienced Blessed One. Hence, Melissolia is twice as unfit to lead the Temple under current conditions. She is close to suffering a mental breakdown and has formed the delusion that Travia will save everyone in the temple if they sing and pray with all their strength. Unless the heroes intervene, her error results in the deaths of the refugees when the temple collapses into the deep (this is due to occur in 20–30 minutes). If the heroes do not waste time, they can save at least some people. Use the following suggestions as guidelines.

- ❖ **Persuade Melissolia:** Perhaps the most difficult option. It is possible to convince the priestess that she is clinging to a delusion. The people trust and believe her, for she is the highest ranking Blessed One of Travia in the city. The refugees will stay inside the temple, no matter how strong the aftershocks. Melissolia assures the people that nothing can harm them as long as they stay here under the protection of Travia. However, she is persuaded otherwise by a successful competitive check on *Persuasion (Discussion)* or *Treat Soul* vs. Melissolia's *Willpower* (SR 7, 14/13/14; -2 modifier due to Melissolia's stubbornness and belief that Travia will save her).
- ❖ **Persuade the people:** try to persuade the refugees in the temple to leave. This does not save every refugee, but it does save a large number of them. Each QL from checks on *Persuasion (Oration)* convinces 5% of the people to trust the heroes and exit the temple. Each appeal takes 5 minutes, and the final 20% of the people are swayed only on a critical success.
- ❖ **Threats and violence:** Scaring the refugees into leaving the temple requires successful checks on *Intimidation (Threats)*. Again, each QL convinces 5% of the refugees to flee the temple, but Melissolia is far from amused at such methods to persuade her flock.
- ❖ **Magic and divine workings:** The heroes may have access to an entire battery of arcane and karmic means to save these people. Spells such as *Bannbaladin*, *Gaze into the Mind*, *Powerful Greed*, and *Somnigravis*, or liturgical chants such as *Banish Fear* or *Divine Sign*, are all useful in this situation.



I: Initially, the temple is a safe shelter. The heroes may even deliver some survivors here themselves. However, this all changes when the aftershocks begin rattling Arivor again and again. Also, a successful check on *Empathy (Discern Motivation)* reveals the dangerously fanatical turn in Melissolia's preaching and advice.



I: Aftershocks shorten the time remaining until the temple collapses (from 20–30 minutes to 10–20 minutes), giving the heroes much less time to save refugees.



climbing tools come in very handy. Climbing down takes about 10 minutes (faster, depending on the QL of the skill check). 2D6+4 people need to be rescued. Half of them are hidden behind debris (check on *Perception (Search)* to find them). Each search attempt takes 3 minutes. A victim may be saved using *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* or *Swimming (Diving)*. Victims trapped underwater can only be saved with *Swimming (Diving)* checks at +2 (note that these victims are already *suffocating*). Failed rolls mean a loss of 2 minutes.



I: Additional aftershocks and falling rocks make rescue attempts more difficult. You can also increase the number of Arivorans who are in danger.



III: A subterranean magma chamber shifts and starts to heat up the water in the basin. It boils in about 10 minutes, dealing 1D6 DP per CR to anyone touching the water.



IV: The rescue attempts become more dramatic when the thunderstorm begins filling the basin even faster. The total time available to rescue victims in the basin decreases to 15 minutes at most.



I: Aftershocks open some new cracks that drain off some water, giving the heroes a total of 45 minutes to conduct rescue operations.

Destroying the Aqueduct

An obvious but temporary solution involves diverting water from the basin. A short distance to the north, the aqueduct appears to be leaking slightly from damage, and the ground beneath one of the supporting arches is crumbling. With suitable tools, the heroes might be able to widen the hole in the supply pipe or even cause the aqueduct to collapse. To *force open* the leak, make a cumulative check on *Feat of Strength (Breaking & Smashing)*, with time intervals of 5 minutes and six attempts, maximum. Partial success means that the heroes damage the aqueduct enough to reduce the amount of water running into the basin (thus doubling the time available to conduct rescues). Full success severs the aqueduct completely, and the water flows harmlessly somewhere else. Of course, the heroes might also use magical means to bring the aqueduct down, or perhaps try a combination of methods.

The Twisted Hotel (Hotel Sevenstroke, 14)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You approach a large building, but something is very wrong. It is completely upside down! You can see where it fell from the cliff above, and it is a miracle that so much of it survives. The building's top floor, now technically the ground floor, is completely crushed, and the former entrance is six floors above your heads. The pillars that line the former entranceway positively identify this building as the once noble Hotel Sevenstroke.

Why Enter The Hotel?

There are many reasons. Here are just a few.

- 1) Several people are trapped inside the building, all of them wounded and crying out for help.
- 2) If you used the optional opening "Lounge Lizards," some of the heroes' possessions might still be here in the hotel, and they deserve at least a chance to retrieve their belongings.
- 3) If the heroes are acquainted with the dell'Accorda family, they may now want to save them.
- 4) The owner's daughter, Lessandra dell'Accorda (see page 17) might be inside the building, especially if the heroes did not see her at the theater. If needed, Lessandra's two little dogs run around the heroes' legs, yelping heartbreakingly, until the group decides to help. The dogs know the way back to their mistress and can lead the heroes through the house.
- 5) Doing so would help young Jucco of Tomrath earn his father's respect. Also, rescuing Lessandra from the ruins of her home might go a long way towards earning her never-ending love.

The heroes may enter the hotel through any window they can reach. The building was once seven floors high. Each floor was named after one of the deeds Saint Geron achieved with his holy sword Sevenstroke. Certain rooms are decorated accordingly, as follows.

The "Dragon of Phecadia" Suite

The "Dragon of Phecadia" Suite, which was decorated in the mercantile-influenced Grangorian style, now lays crushed at the bottom of the hotel along with several other rooms. Rubble, dust, and debris are all that remain. This is the new ground floor, so reaching it is easy, but the heroes must crouch or crawl as they explore its length.

In "Lounge Lizards," the heroes received this suite. Whether any useful pieces of equipment remain is up to you. Allow the heroes to search for their belongings, if they wish. Particularly valuable or personal items are salvageable, but there might be some collapses or landslides to overcome. Checks on *Body Control (Squirm)* might also be in order. A noble might be buried alive somewhere on this floor, waiting desperately to be rescued.

Suites and Single Rooms on Other Floors

- *Simyala* (the former 6th floor) can be reached through a window. It was named after the legendary (and now destroyed) city of the high elves in which Geron defeated the Basilisk King, a dreadful beast. All rooms on this floor were suites that were richly decorated in the elven style.
- Next is *Chababbiata* (the former 5th floor), which was decorated in the style of the wild south with subtle, evil accents reminiscent of the Worm of Chababia. The heroes can reach this floor from the outside without climbing.
- The floors above *Chababbiata* can be reached only by *climbing* (whether inside or out) or by flying. *Loch*

Harodról (the 4th floor) was decorated with achaz motifs and named for a beast known as Harodia. *Yaquir* (the 3rd floor) was named for the site where Geron killed the three snake-bodied sisters. It was decorated with river scenery. The plant-filled *Bosparan's Wood* (the 2nd floor) recalled the place where Geron bested the chimeric ogre. Various rooms' plants, pots, and soil lie scattered on the floor (the former ceiling).

Several floors offered bathing rooms and steam baths, in which the heroes might find valuable perfumes and other alchemicae. Furthermore, a large number of coins and valuable pieces of jewelry lie scattered among the wrecked furniture.

 **II:** The hotel's reputation for hosting wealthy guests attracts looters (see page 44) who view the heroes as competitors or possibly even as valuable hostages....

The *Sikram* Entrance Hall

This new top floor of the hotel is the former entrance hall with its high ceiling, which is now partially merged with the former 2nd floor (*Bosparan's Wood*) and very close to collapsing. The stone reception desk, which still hangs from the floor-turned-ceiling, could come crashing down at any moment. Other rooms on this floor included the servants' chambers and the kitchen.

Lessandra and any other members of the dell'Accorda family (if present) are most likely to be found on this floor.

The Split Brothel (the Rose of Belhanka, 19)

When cracks opened around the brothel, half of the building sits on an isolated column of rock in the middle of a 100 foot deep crater. With one side shorn away, the brothel now looks like a doll house. Prostitutes and clients alike are trapped inside and waving and shouting for help. The heroes may help rescue the occupants, of course, but this is no easy task, as *collapses* and other dangers can spring up at any time.

Heroes can rescue stranded victims via *climbing*, but only one at a time. Several victims already tried to fashion a makeshift rope using every bed sheet they could find. With a little help from the heroes, their idea might actually work.

If desired, you may use this scene for comic relief, inserting it between other, more difficult rescues or salvage attempts—a moment of fun to be taken with a wink and a smile.



Treasures of Steel (Saladan Forges, 6)

Slightly more than half of the smith's quarter *Saladania* was destroyed. Some forges remain standing at the edge of the abyss, but the edge continues to crumble, sending rocks tumbling down into the deep. The buildings that remain occupy dangerously precarious positions on a mix of loose ground and solid rock.

Heroes searching the *Saladan* forges can encounter the following hazards.

-  To reach some of the forges, the heroes must *jump* from one rock pillar to the next. They could also try *climbing* up and down. Either way, moving from column to column is pretty dangerous and involves a great deal of *balancing*.
-  One of the larger manufactories is completely torn open. The column on which the forge rests, however, has tilted to the side and most of the building's interior has already fallen away. The rest is about to follow. At least a dozen workers are trapped inside, clinging to fixed anvils and other secured objects, their lives flashing before their eyes. The heroes might rope themselves together and *climb* into the forge to save the workers. Potential dangers include all those heavy objects once thought to be secure....
-  A steel baron, such as Curon Mondayo (50; full, blonde beard; stout; butcher's soul; brocade coat with fur collar; always puffing on a big cigarillo) or Tyndal ya Catrava (39; black mustache; blue eyes; slim; cold as ice; calculating), packs his belongings onto a cart as fast as he can, about to leave town on the shortest path. His bodyguards (*competent* knights) keep a watchful eye on an angry mob of workers that wants to force him to stay. In his manufactory, several workers are buried alive in his manufactory, but the nice boss man does not even want to raise a finger to help them. Instead, he chooses to run like a coward. The heroes could mediate between the two, or take one side or the other.
-  Two rock spires lean against each other over a chasm, supporting one another in a fragile balance. On top of them sit a forge and an apartment block. The buildings' adjoining walls have collapsed, and a gap at least 12 feet wide and oh, so deep waits for the next victim to fall. The forge contains valuable weapons, one of them seemingly a *Rondra's Crest* made of real Arivoran steel. In the apartment block, poor worker families and their children cling to whatever prevents them from falling. They are too afraid to try to jump the gap and escape. What might start out as a mission to salvage valuable weapons could, if the heroes have scruples, turn into a daring rescue mission.
-  Molten metal flows from a furnace, burning its way through every obstacle as it heads towards a worker trapped beneath some debris. The heroes could try to rescue the poor man with a *feat of strength* and perhaps some tools. They could also try searching for some heat-proof obstacles, or attempt to cool off the metal, thus

causing it to set. A check on *Metalworking (Blacksmith)* reveals the metal to be *black steel*, a very valuable alloy that incorporates a tiny portion of extremely rare Gyldenlandic endurium (0.2 pounds of endurium for every 40 pounds of steel). At a rough guess, the mixture is worth about 1,000 ducats.

The Bosparaniard King (Grand Winery ya Stellona; 26; Escalation Level II or Later)

The wine cellars of the ya Stellona family are located in the Morgunora quarter of Arivor. They are the largest wine cellars in the city and contain the most valuable wines. Much of the street heading in the direction of the city wall still exists, but parts further on have obviously been repaired with heavy wooden beams and a strange mix of construction scaffolding and planks where the roadway collapsed. All of these repairs were completed before the heroes arrived at the scene. Although the repairs are well-constructed, they are nevertheless improvised and still dangerous. The repaired section of the road runs from the wineries to the southern edge of the main crater. Bumpy and smooth, steeply inclined and level, wobbly yet resilient, this strange, wooden “street” winds its way through the ruins and debris of Morgunora. Many people work in loosely organized groups to roll huge barrels out of town. Other looters simply escape along the road with whatever they can carry.

What Is Going On?

The man organizing the looters, who are mainly but not exclusively plundering the wineries and taverns, is *Travian di Faffarallo* (see page 15). This cynical mercenary leader turned his men (and anyone else he could muster on short notice) into a gang of looters. He now uses the chaos of the disaster to secure a profit for himself and his men.

This scene might quickly devolve into combat if the heroes try to stop the plundering. Make it clear to your players that this is not a small group of random looters, but rather a band of 20 to 30 trained fighters and rogues who are not afraid of swordplay. The heroes should think about whether it would be wise to pick a fight here.

As an alternative, role playing the encounter would be much more interesting. In this case, the looters are not inclined to die for some barrels of wine and agree to take the heroes to speak with their leader. The same happens if the heroes surprise a smaller group of looters.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

So, this is the man whom everyone knows and condemns, but whose name has not been spoken since the Succession War. Murderer of Saints, they call him. He might have put on a few pounds over the years, but he seems as strong as ever and certainly takes pride in his appearance (he even seems to have shaved recently). He smiles sardonically at you and then snaps his fingers. One of his men brings forth a dusty bottle.

“Bosparaniard?” Faffarallo offers. “A real Stormhale, the best of the best. You can only get it here at ya Stellona’s. This particular bottle is from the best of all vintages, 989 FB, the year the Murderer of Saints earned his name. Help yourselves. It’s not poisoned.”

The Lord of Looters

Faffarallo treats the heroes as guests, no matter which circumstances brought them to him. He has taken up residence in the noble rooms of Gaspare ya Stellona, and from here he directs his band of raiders (although he would never refer to his men as such). Travian does not present himself as a criminal. Instead he sees himself—obviously through cynical eyes—as someone who profits accidentally and who does nothing wrong. After all, the former owners of these items are dead.

How This Encounter Could End

If Gaspare ya Stellona accompanies the heroes, he (legitimately) asserts his claim over his property. How this situation resolves itself is up to you, but we suggest one or more of the following.

- A physical confrontation with Travian and his looters.
- A duel to decide the ownership of the champagne cellars. As a man of honor, Travian cedes control if he loses the duel. However, his men, who have no honor, reject that decision and fight anyway.
- Convincing Travian of the viciousness of his deeds, especially as his raiders are hardly as honorable as he is (when out of his sight, they kill innocent and wounded people, and steal and rape). If the heroes present evidence of this to Travian, he severely punishes the henchmen in question and offers to compensate victims for this injustice.
- Gaspare ya Stellona suggests a rather bold plan to the heroes. Namely, he knows of a secret passage to a hidden treasure room (see *The Cellars*), and wishes to recover its contents. He offers shares of the treasure in exchange for help, but to make his plan work, the raiders must be kept distracted, or perhaps (in exchange for more shares of the treasure), be recruited over to his side. This plan presents an opportunity for a side adventure wherein Gaspare, the raiders, and the heroes try to outmaneuver each other and claim the treasure for themselves.

The Cellars

Cracks and crevices have left the huge cellars of the winery completely exposed. At least a dozen looters roll heavy barrels up ramps onto the street. Bodies are visible in the chasms, showing that many people lost their lives here. The heroes may enter the cellars via the ramps or by using the stairs (which are too small for the barrels) inside the winery. The original ramp from the cellar to the street was ruined when major parts of the building collapsed. Several dozen intact barrels of wine and hundreds of bottles of Sparkling Bosparaniard still remain in the cellars.

The Secret Treasure Room

Looters have not yet found the secret staircase that leads from the wine cellar to an even deeper basement vault. A check on *Perception (Search)* reveals the stairs behind a shelf filled with bottles.

Part of the way down, a crack in the rock leads to a point in the crater wall a few yards above the bottom that can be used as exit.

The stairs, however, continue further down to a treasure chamber. The locked and heavy door may be opened with a cumulative check on *Pick Locks (Warded Locks)* with a time interval of 15 seconds and a maximum of 4 attempts. Alternatively, the heroes might use suitable tools and brute strength to force the door (all checks suffer a modifier of -2), or they could simply ask Gaspare for the key, which he always carries around his obese neck. Inside the chamber, the iron (or, more appropriately, *golden*) reserves of the Bosparaniard Baron are stored. The total value of the gold bars, gems, jewelry, trinkets, and coins found here is about 3,000 ducats!



The Gate to Nowhere (Kuslik Gate, 5, Escalation Level 5)

City planners once intended to extend the southern wall until the city's defenses enclosed all of the neighborhoods along that edge of the Golden Helmet. Construction began and crews even completed the elaborate gate, but all plans for the new lengths of wall were discontinued without explanation. Post-disaster, the gate and a small section of the wall hang suspended in virtual nothingness. A path winds its way along a sheer cliff towards the gate from the south, but beyond the gate this increasingly narrow route leads nowhere, for just beyond the gate the ground drops away suddenly to a depth of more than 100 feet. To anyone looking over the cliff's edge from the gate, the pit appears bottomless.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Darkness quickly engulfs the city, hiding the dreadful view of Arivor in its death throes. But not all is still. A silent procession of people approaches the Kuslik Gate. But why?

The Gate at Night

The first restless spirits begin to appear as night falls. Thousands died in the catastrophe, and many who could not find peace now wander the ruins of their once beautiful city as ghosts. To these pitiable souls, the Kuslik Gate symbolizes a gateway to Boron's realm. Their grim procession makes its way through the gate, whereupon the spirits step off the cliff and seemingly fall to a certain death. However, before they touch the ground, they dissolve and vanish into the evening mist.

A successful check on *Perception (Spot)* reveals that the ghosts soon reappear and rejoin the procession toward the gate. Heroes with *Afraid of... (the Dead)* gain a level of *Fear* from viewing this distressing and sorrowful spectacle.

Hey, What Are You Doing?

This unusual haunting carries a rather nasty side effect. Anyone staring too long feels hypnotically compelled to join the procession and walk through the gate. The effect is negated by leaving the area. Resisting the compulsion to join the dead requires a check on *Willpower (Resist Threats)* every 5 minutes with a cumulative penalty of -1 per check, thus making success less and less likely as time goes on. Failure means the hero joins the procession and jumps to a certain death within ten minutes unless stopped (this requires a successful check on *Fast-Talk (Hard Sell)* vs. *Willpower (Resist Fast-Talk)*). The bodies of those who jump are never found. Instead their weirdly translucent visages soon appear in line in the doomed procession.



The Haunted House (Anywhere; Escalation Level 5)

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You enter an alleyway and climb over a pile of debris for what must be the 200th time today when you perceive a strange scene in the mist—a row of houses that seems undamaged. Pale firelight shines from their windows and sounds of happy music and singing fill the night air. Is this real, or is it just exhaustion playing tricks on your senses?

At first glance, the buildings appear undamaged, as if this street had completely escaped the recent horror. It resembles nothing so much as a typical street scene in Old Arivor or Morgunora before the Starfall. Vague outlines of people move in the dark street. Except for the extraordinary state of repair of the neighborhood, nothing seems out of the ordinary until certain details become apparent.

The Alleyway

When the heroes investigate, they quickly notice some pretty strange details, as follows.

- Walls that appear solid and undamaged suddenly blur and fade, briefly revealing ruined stone and brickwork before quickly shifting back again
- Figures moving through the scene suddenly speed up or slow down for a few seconds
- Parts of the scene suddenly become translucent
- Solid-looking figures step around corners and seemingly disappear into thin air

Use these and similar effects to create suspicion in the minds of the heroes. Employ them sparingly at first, and increase their frequency as needed to heighten suspense and fear.

The collective thoughts and memories of so many restless souls create ghostly analogs of the Arivoran neighborhoods in which they lived and worked before the disaster. In this case, the heroes stand near an entire row of taverns. But what at first appears to be a harmless if chilling illusion is actually a deadly trap, for the ghosts of Arivor crave company and are more than capable of dragging the unwary into their realm.



The Tavern

If the heroes choose to enter a tavern (even though they should know better by now), they witness a scene of surprising normality. The landlord serves them some wine, and the other guests welcome them to the party. Everyone is friendly and peaceful.

If the heroes take a closer look at objects or people, they quickly learn that something is definitely wrong. Choose the description below that best applies to their inquiries, or make up your own using these examples as guidelines.

- Music briefly sounds shrill and discordant
- A guest's light-hearted dancing turns into the wild rage of a madman whose contortions are painful to watch
- A few patrons sing along with a cheerful barmaid, but soon become embroiled in a serious argument with her over a seemingly trivial matter
- In order to make room for more wine, a customer vomits every few minutes, or perhaps his body slowly expands like a balloon until he finishes several gallons
- One patron is served a living, squealing pig from which he greedily bites off big, bloody chunks



Nothing directly harms the heroes until they try to leave the tavern. The ghosts do everything in their power to keep them there, starting with offers of more wine and food. Some ghosts even grab the heroes outright, as ghosts have no trouble touching, dragging, or even body slamming the living. The heroes may use Dodge or checks on applicable skills, such as *Body Control (Squirm)*, as usual. Each hero should face 1D6 such situations before leaving the haunted tavern. When the heroes seem about to escape, the ghosts try to kill them in one of the following ways.

- An energetic dancer moves near and suddenly shoves a hero into a wall made of decorative but sharp stones, causing 1D6+4 DP
- A legless beggar drags a hero into a hidden, 9 foot deep crevice, causing 3D6+2 DP
- A group of musicians drums against the walls, causing a *collapse*
- A strong brute grabs a hero by the hair and tries to drown (*suffocate*) the hero in a rainwater-filled trough

Attacks From the Deep (Anywhere; Escalation Level 5)

Once the sun sets, encounters with rummaging bugbears and stone lice become increasingly likely. Attacks are possible before sunset, too, but only in hollows, cellars, and courtyards with little or no light. For best effect, introduce this new hazard gradually.

First Encounter

The first encounter with creatures from the deep should come as a mysterious surprise when the heroes stumble upon a single creature, or the victim of one, or maybe they see a hint of movement in the dark and wish to investigate further. This should occur only while the group is underground, maybe searching a crypt or trying to rescue someone who has fallen into a crevice. The heroes should not immediately learn which type of creature they face, or whether more creatures lurk nearby, or even whether this one is friend or foe. Perhaps they only find tracks or an armored scale that looks as if it is made from stone. The heroes might also find crushed rock, a frightened witness, or traces of blood from an unlucky victim. The heroes may fight the creature now, if they wish, but there is no need to at this point in the adventure.

Ambush

Many of the creatures are hungry and actively hunting for food. At some point after sundown (or while in a cave or similar place), the heroes find themselves *ambushed* (see *Core Rules*, page 237) as unknown creatures press in from all sides. They can combine their defense against the heroes, but if the heroes manage to defend themselves for several combat rounds, the creatures retreat and regroup later for another attack. Rummaging bugbears and stone lice learn

from their encounters with the heroes and quickly adapt to surface-dweller tactics and defenses. If someone appears particularly dangerous, the creatures attack that individual en masse. Also, the creatures reuse tactics until they begin to fail, at which point they try new tactics. Stone lice are particularly adept at this.

Open Attacks

As darkness settles over the land, more and more stone lice and rummaging bugbears crawl from their caves, whether alone or in groups, to hunt for food. They roam the ruins in small packs, searching in every crevice, cellar, and crack they can find on the hill. It soon becomes plain that these creatures hunt in the dark, and the cry goes up to abandon Arivor. Attempts to rescue people that have been buried alive become even more pressing and dramatic. Anyone left behind would surely end up as fodder for these creatures from the deep.

The Nest

If the heroes decide to somehow take the fight to the creatures by following a pack or climbing down into their hollows, they may find a nest—a pitch dark cave that hold dozens of leathery eggs, each the size of a human head. Stone lice protect their nests but do not sacrifice their lives to defend them (food is rare in their underground habitat, but cannibalism is an acceptable way to survive).

The heroes may collect information about the strange creatures and perhaps even collect an egg or two for investigation later. Fire is an effective weapon to use against the nest, as are carefully targeted sword thrusts, which reliably destroy the eggs.

Terra Firma

The following locations border the disaster area. They represent places of safety where the heroes can deposit survivors (and salvaged items) and also restock equipment and supplies before returning to the danger zone. In every case, helpers see to the heroes' needs in an efficient manner.

Fortress of the Horas' Legion (1)

This legionary base, which sits just west of Arivor, has suffered surprisingly little damage. The two regiments of the Horas' Legion stationed here lend aid to survivors and send periodic updates about the disaster (via messengers) to the Emperor.

The Villas of Kingsground

Over the last few years, a new quarter of mansions and palazzi went up on the next hill to the east. Some of the houses on its western slope are now little more than ruins, but most are largely intact. The mercenaries of the Bandiera Bianca,

and especially their leader, Grifone da Cavalcanti (43; black goatee; half-bald head; gaunt face; almost never sleeps), commandeered several of the mansions to coordinate their rescue efforts and treat the wounded. Many members of this famous mercenary unit are of noble birth.



The Emperor's soldiers, the mercenaries of the Bandiera Bianca, and the fighters from the Arivoran Academy return again and again to the ruins to rescue people. They can act as a rescue party in the disaster area, should the heroes need help.

Saladania

To the north lie the damaged houses of the **Saladan forges (6)**, a poor section of town. Many of the quarter's manufactories collapsed into the deep, and some were destroyed by landslides. Even though the entire quarter suddenly sank several yards into the earth due to subsidence, the people do a tremendous job helping their neighbors from other parts of the city. Their leader is a smith, *Horanthe ya Ferragon* (45; dark blonde locks; large; brawny; burn scar on the left shoulder; solicitous).

Later, once word gets through to them, some warriors from the Arivoran Academy set up a base of operations here. The academy is some distance outside of town and it takes the warriors 6 hours to travel here. They are led by female Academy Head *Hlûtharia Tepestarubia Bergenoor of Vinsalt* (34; blonde locks; soft voice; porcelain complexion). Many of her teachers and students were in town to attend the tournament, and most of them are now dead, having made the ultimate sacrifice while trying to rescue citizens.

Another eager and energetic helper is Kureon of Torath (early 50s; brown coil of hair; bushy beard; brawny), a smith at the warrior academy and a relative of Jucco of Tomrath. Kureon can provide (and repair) almost any equipment.

The New Temple Of Tsa (29)

Just outside Arivor to the south, in the village of Sotto Morguno, workers completed the new Temple of Tsa only a few months ago. This fortunate coincidence saved the temple from ruin, and since the temple doubles as a daycare for many Arivoran children, they survived the disaster as well. Nobody, however, thinks of this as a coincidence. It is obviously a miracle of Tsa! The Blessed Ones of the temple naturally welcome refugees from the city, tend to their wounds, and give them food and drink. However, the temple has few priests, which limits their ability to travel to the disaster area and help rescue more survivors. Instead they stay in their temple and receive whoever arrives, whether carried in on a wagon or otherwise.

Conclusion— The Heroes of Arivor

Hopefully the heroes were able to save many people from Arivor's doom. During the night, one of the groups running the various makeshift shelters (see *Terra Firma*) provides for their needs. Over the next two days, the heroes may assist in the search for more survivors, though the chance of finding people alive among the ruins lowers with every passing hour. The heroes could also lend their healing skills or magic for tending to the wounded, and thus might find shelter in another town before the dreadful Days of the Nameless One arrive. Greater Arivor is quite populous and has many good roads (at least by Aventurian standards, anyway), so reaching another town before the end of the month of Rahja should not be a problem. The heroes do not have to say goodbye to new friends they made among the survivors, and there are many ways to stay in contact. In fact, these NPCs might someday contact the heroes with offers of new quests or other adventures....



Reward for the Heroes' Efforts

The heroes have become saviors of many lives, and might even have rescued some relics, as well. The latter certainly pleases Lady Rondra very well. Some of the major NPCs saved by the heroes might present them with appropriate rewards in gratitude. Suggestions include coin, useful items, or something symbolic, such as the last bottle of Sparkling Bosparaniard salvaged from the cellar.

Adventure Point Awards

- ◆ Award each hero 10 AP for playing the opening and surviving the disaster.
- ◆ Award an additional 10 AP to be spent only on abilities the heroes used frequently during the adventure. This may be physical skills (such as *Climbing*, *Body Control*, or *Feat of Strength*), social skills (if the heroes mingled with the right circles), or skills employed to motivate or lead survivors.
- ◆ Award 1–3 AP for any applicable scene from *Town in Ruins*, as follows.

Save Our Scrolls!	2 AP
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Casa Rovina	2 AP
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Holy Sites and Relics of the Golden Helmet:

Temple of Saint Geron and Saint Ardare	2AP
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The Charnel House in the Golden Helmet	2AP
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Other Sites on the Golden Helmet:

Salvaging the Horse Tack of Saint Geron	1 AP
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Theories from the Fringe	2 AP
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A Place of Shelter	2 AP
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The Flooded Row of Houses	2 AP
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The Twisted Hotel	3 AP
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The Bosparaniard King	2 AP
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The Gate to Nowhere	1 AP
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The Haunted House	2 AP
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Attacks from the Deep	3 AP
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- ◆ Award between 1 and 5 AP per hero for rescuing survivors and protecting them until the danger passes (exact amounts depend on the number of survivors). Use your judgment. As a rule of thumb, grant 1 AP per 10 survivors, but you may award more AP if the rescue is quite heroic.

- # ARVOR
1. Fortress of the Horas' Legion
 2. Tournament Field
 3. Devotional object peddlars
 4. Temple of Travaia
 5. Kasilik Gate
 6. Saldan Forges
 7. Saldan Villa
 8. Temple of Boron and Marbo
 9. High Castle of the Ardaries
 10. Temple of Saint Geon and Saint Adare
 11. Palazzo Acano
 12. Old Castle
 13. Theater of Arvor
 14. Hotel Sevenstroke

15. Rockgate
16. Heside's Temple of the Arts
17. Barrodo Trade Office
18. Aqueduct
19. Rose of Bellanka bordello
20. Temple of fingermm
21. Odds and Ends Market
22. Palazzo Teomis
23. Garrison of the Bandiera Blanca
24. Old Temple of Fsa
25. Pig Market
26. Grand Winery ya Stelloia
27. Temple of Sancta Kahljanna
28. Muntipat carders
29. New Temple of Tsa



MARBIDE
MONASTERY

Arivor's Doom

by Dominic Hladek

Arivor, jewel of the Horasian Empire, is the heart of the Rondranian faith, stronghold of the staunch Ardarites, and home to famed weapon smiths, skilled armorers, and vintners of fine wines. Trumpets herald the opening of the mid-summer Tournament as the city fills with pilgrims and excited onlookers. The heroes come to Arivor as eager tournament participants, bold explorers, or enthusiastic friends of the theater. The city veritably bursts at the seams, and visitors marvel at the pageantry and the size of the crowds. Suddenly the unthinkable happens, and the city's joyous and carefree celebration turns into a desperate struggle for survival. Arivor is doomed, and it is up to the heroes to save whomever they can!



This adventure for *The Dark Eye RPG* contains detailed descriptions of the city of Arivor before and after the catastrophe, and includes NPCs, maps, floor plans, a timeline of events, and challenging encounters—everything your players need to participate in an event with major consequences for the future of Aventuria. You need *The Dark Eye Core Rules* to play.

Arivor's Doom is a TDE group adventure for 3–5 heroes

Genre: Disaster Story
Prerequisites: none
Location: City of Arivor, the Horasian Empire
Date: Rahja, 1039 FB
Complexity (Players/GM): medium/medium
Suggested Hero Experience Level: *Competent to Masterly*

Useful Skills

Physical Skills ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
 Social Skills ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
 Combat ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Living History ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



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