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BEYOND THUNDER RIVER

Solo Adventure in Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age™



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A SAVAGE HORDE IS OUT FOR BLOOD...

AND ONLY THE MIGHTY CONAN STANDS IN THEIR PATH!

When the army of Aquilonia marched across Thunder River and into savage Pictland, the tribes of the Picts were driven away. To secure his rich new territory, King Numedides built Fort Tuscelan. This powerful outpost, Numedides thought, would keep the barbarian Picts from striking back.

But Numedides' lone fort is not enough to stop the Pict raiders. In recent days, the ruthless natives have burned Aquilonian homesteads, raided merchant caravans, and brutally murdered several soldiers from the fort.

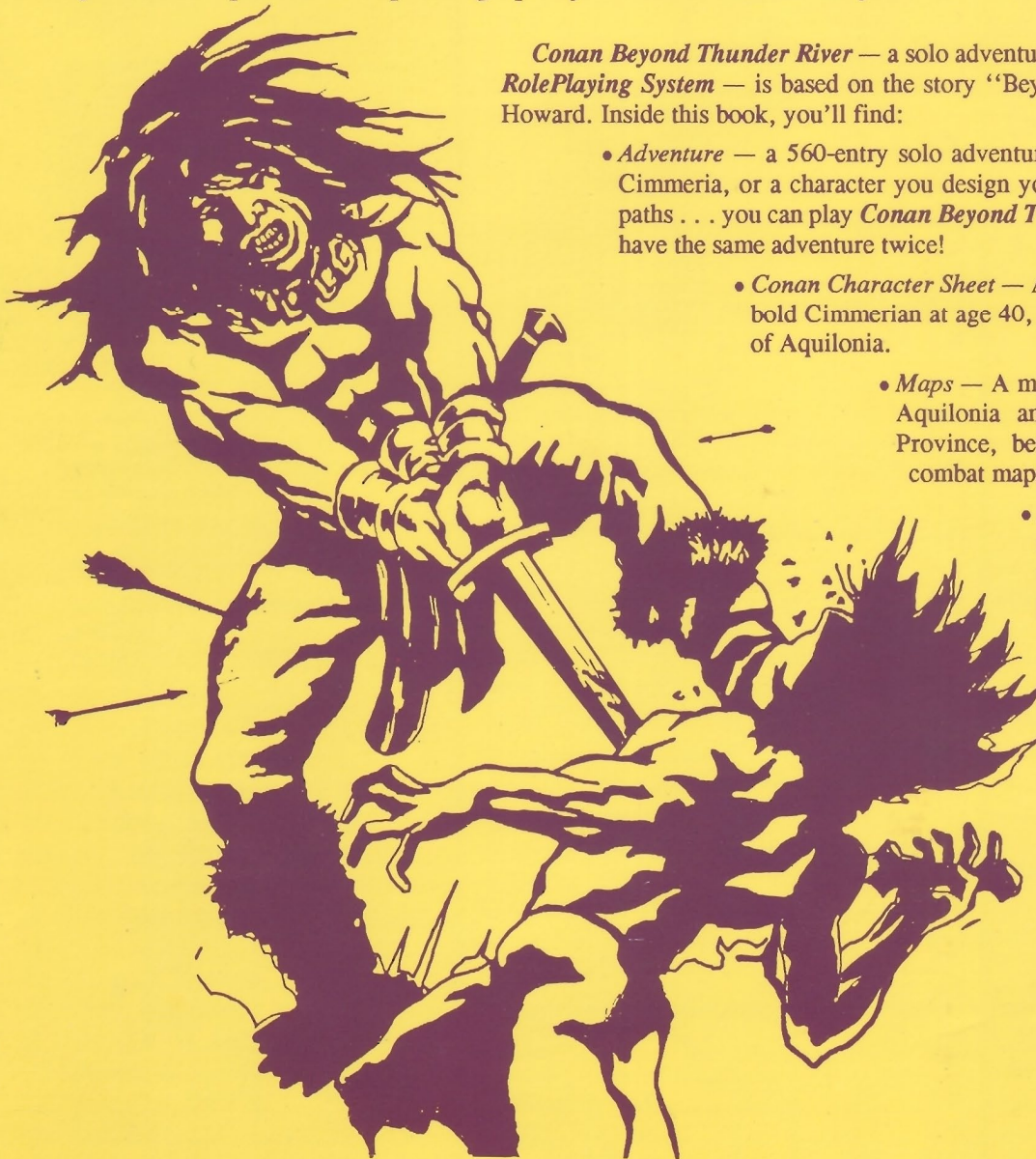
For the Picts have united behind a sorcerous leader. The great witch-doctor, Zogar Sag, has sworn a sinister vengeance upon the Aquilonian invaders. Even now, he is raising a vast Pict horde to crush Fort Tuscelan.

You are Conan of Cimmeria, commander of the scouts at Fort Tuscelan. Can you stop Zogar Sag and his army? All of Aquilonia is depending upon you to save the land *Beyond Thunder River!*

Conan Beyond Thunder River — a solo adventure for *GURPS*, the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System* — is based on the story "Beyond the Black River," by Robert E. Howard. Inside this book, you'll find:

- *Adventure* — a 560-entry solo adventure for Robert E. Howard's Conan of Cimmeria, or a character you design yourself. There are dozens of alternate paths . . . you can play *Conan Beyond Thunder River* over and over and never have the same adventure twice!
- *Conan Character Sheet* — A ready-to-play character sheet for the bold Cimmerian at age 40, when he was an officer in the service of Aquilonia.
- *Maps* — A map of northwestern Hyboria, showing Aquilonia and Pictland; a map of Conajohara Province, between the two nations; and several combat maps, for the battles in this adventure.
- *Monsters* — Complete information on nine Hyborian monsters that you can use in your own face-to-face campaigns.

Written by W.G. Armintrout
Cover art by Denis Loubet
Illustrated by Dan Carroll



Note: You need only the *GURPS Basic Set* to play this adventure.



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BEYOND THUNDER RIVER

Solo Adventure in Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age

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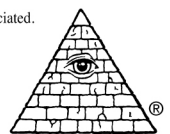
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INSTRUCTIONS

Conan Beyond Thunder River is a solo *GURPS* adventure. You'll control a Player Character — Conan or a hero of your own design — and this book will serve as the Game Master.

As you move through the adventure, you'll be called upon to make various choices. Each choice will send you to a different numbered paragraph, which will give you more information, more instructions and possibly call for more decisions.

Sometimes you will have to fight the savage Picts, or other, stranger foes. Run these combats according to the normal *GURPS* rules, moving and rolling for your opponents as well as for your own character.

The object is, of course, to survive and complete the adventure. If you don't make it the first time . . . try again.

Good luck, and may Crom defend you!

Getting Started

You will need a pencil, scratch paper, three six-sided dice and the *GURPS Basic Set*. You will also need hex paper and markers to fight out the combats — we recommend *GURPS Battle Maps* and *Cardboard Heroes*. (Figure 2 in *Cardboard Heroes Set I* and Figure 10 in *Set II* make good Conans!)

You will also need a character. A character sheet for Conan the Cimmerian can be found on p. 64. If you would rather use one of your own characters, or design a new one, go ahead. Just follow the guidelines in the next section.

Designing Your Own Character

Obviously, an adventure that is challenging for a great hero like Conan will be instant death for the typical 100-point character. Therefore, we recommend a more heroic base of 400 points for PCs in *Thunder River*. Do hold to the normal limit of -40 points in disadvantages and -5 points in quirks, though.

Regardless of *who* your PC is, he must be the commander of the scouts at Fort Tuscelan, in the Aquilonian province of Conajohara. Thus, he must meet the following requirements:

Military rank. Though the scouts at Fort Tuscelan are not part of the formal organization of the Aquilonian army, their commander holds the rank of "officer in charge of scouts." This position is equivalent to a regular army captain, and requires the advantage Military Rank 4 (cost: 20 points). Because of your rank, subordinate soldiers are generally obligated to do as you command. This advantage also includes one free level of Social Status, as well as a +1 reaction from those of lower rank and from residents of the frontier. (A complete discussion of Military Rank can be found on p. 62 of *GURPS Horseclans*.)

Scout skills. The character must have Tracking and Stealth at 12 or better, and Area Knowledge (Black River environs)-10 or better. (Area Knowledge is a Mental/Easy skill affording a character familiarity with a specific geographic region.)

Combat skills. He must have two weapon skills at 12 or higher, one of which must be with a ranged weapon. He must also have Tactics-12 or better.

Character Background

Possible backgrounds for your Hyborian PC include:

Aquilonian noble. Most nobles in the Aquilonian army disdain command of irregular troops as scouts. Thus, a PC who is an Aquilonian nobleman would be unusual for his breed. Aquilonians have strict notions of honor and right, according to a code of chivalry. Recommended skills and advantages: Social Status; Wealth; Savoir-Faire; Area Knowledge (Aquilonia).

Aquilonian warrior. Typical troops of Aquilonia include Gundermen, a race of tough, blond soldiers who favor sword, pike and chainmail; and Bossonians, a short, swarthy people legendary for archery. Recommended skills and advantages: Area Knowledge (Aquilonia); Streetwise; Leadership; Tactics.

Barbarian mercenary. Just like Conan, your character could be a moneyfighter from a less-civilized nation. Good candidates for a homeland include Cimmeria, Vanaheim and Asgard. Most barbarians often suffer from Social Stigma (see p. B19), though well-traveled barbarians — such as Conan — may have their rough edges smoothed over. Recommended skills and advantages: Toughness; Alertness; Survival; Naturalist.

Civilized mercenary. The countries of Ophir, Argos and Zingara are all good homelands for mercenaries. Recommended skills and advantages: Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold; Area Knowledge (Hyboria); several languages.

Frontiersman. There are two types of woodsmen in Conajohara province: veteran settlers, who come from almost any background and have developed fighting and survival skills from harsh experience against the Picts; and the Tauran, an Aquilonian people who have a tradition of woodlore but not of practical combat. Recommended skills and advantages: Animal Empathy; Danger Sense; Naturalist; Tracking.

Half-breed Pict. A half-Pict certainly has survival and combat skills. Being a half-breed, however, is a -15 point Social Stigma (Barbarian) in Aquilonia. Recommended advantages and skills: Alertness; Combat Reflexes; Survival; Pict language.

Female Characters: Due to the strict chivalrous notions of Aquilonia, being a female warrior will be a struggle — probably the only military command possible for a woman is one over scouts and irregulars. A woman warrior carries a Social Stigma (Second-Class Citizen) among Aquilonians, suffering a -1 on reaction rolls. Recommended advantages and skills: as appropriate to character's background as described above.

How to Play

The adventure is divided into numbered paragraphs. *Do not read them in order* — they will make no sense at all. Rather, read the "Introduction" first, then turn to the paragraph to which it directs you. Read that paragraph, decide your course of action from that point, and then turn to the paragraph that your current paragraph directs you to. And so on.

Most paragraphs offer you at least two choices, and sometimes several. Sometimes you may choose freely; sometimes a roll against one of your skills or attributes will send you to other paragraphs. Sometimes you will fight a battle, the outcome of which will determine which paragraph you will turn to next.

Current Time

Certain events in the adventure occur at predetermined times, so you'll need to keep track of the time as you play. To do this, make a "Current Time" heading on a piece of scratch paper. At various points throughout the adventure, you will be instructed to add a certain number of hours to your Current Time. When this occurs, simply update your Current Time as needed.

The adventure begins at 6 a.m. on Thursday morning.

PlotWords

Conan Beyond Thunder River can be different every time you play it. To stay on the same storyline for an entire run through the adventure, you will be asked to write down various

120 When you reach the compound, the warrior woman waits for you. "The word is that something's on for tonight," says Glorious hungrily.

"So?" you grunt.

She holds her dagger glinting in the torchlight. "I've a hungering for Pictish blood on my blade. Let this steel find a place in some savage heart."

If you accept her as part of your team, turn to 379.

If you turn her down, turn to 159.

121 You find yourself with your back to the stone altar, surrounded by braves no longer stunned by the shaman's conjuring and your own swift action. It's a desperate situation.

If you have the PlotWord *HEROIC*, turn to 230. If you don't have this PlotWord, turn to 335.

122 You dash across the lighted pathway and enter the shadowy recesses of the large building. You glimpse a grim stone altar faintly lit by the fire outside. Behind the altar is an idol, bestial, yet vaguely manlike in outline.

If you have the PlotWord *TRIUMPHANT*, turn to 172. Otherwise, turn to 384.

123 The officer walks rapidly back to the fort, while you resume your survey of the fort's defense. The conversation leaves you mystified.

Fort Tuscelan stands in the remote woodlands like an isolated intruder, constructed from the timbers of the savage land which the kings of Aquilonia have chosen to conquer.

The soldiers within, many of them veterans from other frontiers of their kingdom, attend their duties with vigilance. In the watchtowers, ballista crews keep an alert eye on the cleared grounds beyond the outer walls. They also watch the nearby Black River, from which could erupt squadrons of canoes filled with savage warriors. Guards on patrol duty take care not to present a tempting target to savages who might be hiding in the forest canopy, ready to loose a feathered shaft.

Picts are not masters of strategy. Any assault will follow the pattern of the last: a two-pronged attack, combining a wing of canoe-borne warriors with a wing of braves hidden in the woods on the Aquilonian shore. When the fort is surrounded, the savages will charge in waves until either their strength is broken or Tuscelan has fallen.

Even with the weakened state of the garrison, many tribes would have to unite to breach the walls of Tuscelan.

Roll one die and add the result to your Current Time. Then, turn to 85.

124 As you point out, the face of the merchant is oddly twisted, and the skin distended as if pressed from within by an abundance of pus or gas. There is an orangish pallor about the dead man and a distinct bitter scent.

"But what killed him?" asks your partner, examining the corpse without touching it. "There are no marks of violence."

You explain about Zogar Sag and the murders at Fort Tuscelan. "This is the work of the forest devils, like all the others."

"Such sorcery!" exclaims your companion. "And the creature leaves no tracks."

Turn to 355.

125 You think you hear something . . . Try a Hearing roll. If you succeed, turn to 69. If you fail, you hear nothing more — turn to 326.

126 Out-stalking savages in their own wilderness is a dangerous game. The trick is to use the mind. Savages rely on simple skills and traditions. To win, you must maneuver intelligently, putting them at the disadvantage.

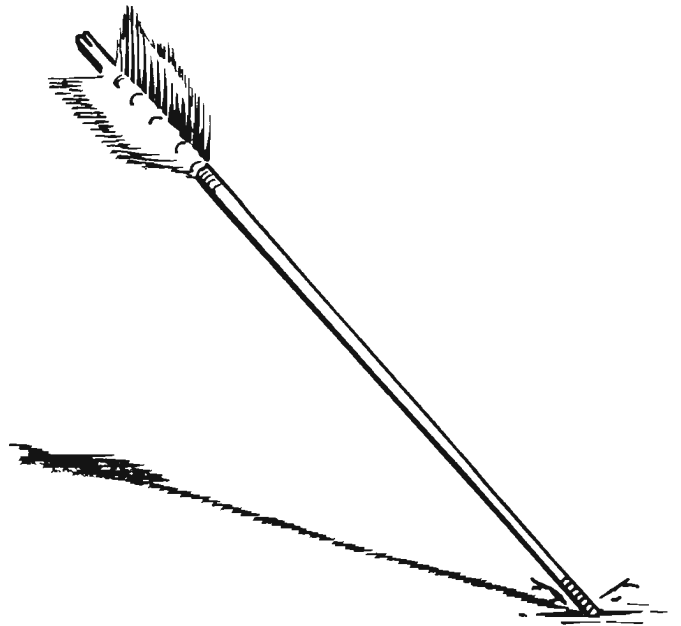
You circle behind the Pict warriors, crawling from one vine-infested thicket to another . . . only to discover that the aborigines have won this round.

Turn to 238.

127 As you slay a mighty Pict war leader, the savages draw back. "Oneobas is dead," cries one. The cry is taken up by the mob. "Oneobas the jaguar-slayer! Oneobas the bringer-of-meat!" Overcome with terror, the Picts flee from the courtyard.

For the time being, you are free. However, these savages never stay scared for long.

Turn to 429.



128 You slay the raider with a single, well-aimed blow. As he dies, his now-limp hands release an arrow which flies randomly into the woods.

Turn to 63.

129 Short and swarthy, with unintelligent faces except for their small, sharp eyes, the Bossonians are the finest archers in the kingdom. You find several of them in one of the fort's towers.

"Gather round. I've something to ask of you." The Bossonians are curious to hear what you say. They haven't the rowdy boisterousness you expect in combat troops.

You explain your raid to Gwawela, Zogar Sag's home village, and the need to preserve the border against further magics from that shaman. The men listen avidly, concentrating on your message. At last, you ask for volunteers.

Make a reaction roll for the Bossonians. If you have previously been told to use a reaction roll modifier for the archers, use it now. Also use any personal modifiers that might apply.

If the reaction is "Very Good" or better, turn to 509.

If the reaction is "Good" or worse, turn to 431.

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