

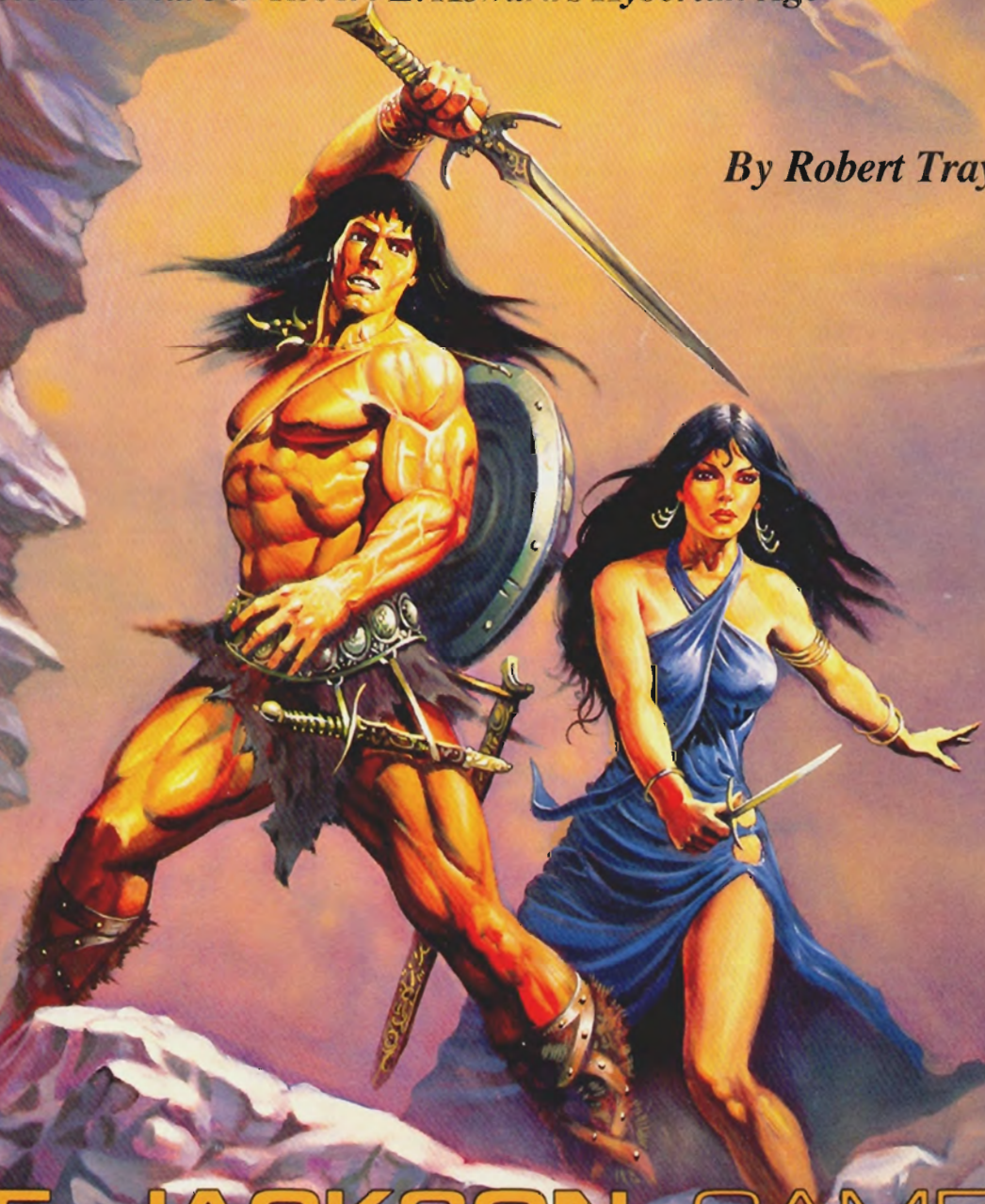
GURPS[®]

CONAN[®]

AND THE QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST

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

By Robert Traynor



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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Conan and Bêlit Together on Their Greatest Adventure!

Allies, swordmates, lovers . . . there were no two deadlier pirates in the Hyborian Age than Conan of Cimmeria, destined to be the greatest hero of his time, and Bêlit, savage ruler of the southern buccaneers! Together, they were *Conan and the Queen of the Black Coast*.

Now they face the supernatural horrors of haunted ruins on the Zarkheba River. Live the adventure of the glorious Hyborian Age in this solo adventure for *GURPS*, the *Generic Universal Role Playing System*.

Based on the short story by fantasy legend Robert E. Howard, it can be played many times without playing the same adventure twice. Play the mighty Conan, or design your own character to face the evil of the ruined city. The book also includes:

- Complete character descriptions for Conan and Bêlit.
- Game statistics on new animals and monsters which you can use for your *GURPS* campaigns.
- A map of the *Tigress*, Bêlit's private vessel, and other combat maps for this adventure.

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

If you enjoy this adventure, look for *GURPS Conan*, the complete guide to Conan and the Hyborian Age!



Written by Robert Traynor
Edited by Creede and Sharleen Lambard
Cover Art by Ken Kelly
Interior Art by Butch Burcham

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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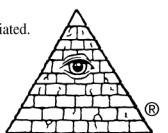
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INSTRUCTIONS

Conan and the Queen of the Black Coast is the latest in a series of *GURPS* solo adventures. The character you run will adventure in the fabulous Hyborian Age, a time of flashing swords, horrific monsters, and riches beyond measure. You may play the legendary Conan, the greatest hero of his time, or a character of your own choosing.

You do not need a GM for the adventure — this book takes care of that chore. As you move through the scenario, you will be asked to make various choices. Each decision will send you to a different numbered paragraph, which will provide information and instructions. The object of the game is the same as in a multi-player roleplaying game — to gain wealth and glory, and to stay alive to enjoy them!

“Queen Of The Black Coast”

This adventure is based on the story “Queen of the Black Coast,” by Robert E. Howard, found in the book *Conan of Cimmeria*, from Ace Books.

About Robert E. Howard

Robert Ervin Howard was born in Peaster, Texas in 1906 and died in Cross Plains, Texas 30 years later. He completed high school and had a few hours of non-credit, business college courses; for the rest he was self-educated by omnivorous reading.

From his late teens he supported himself principally as a freelance writer. In his brief life, he wrote stories for almost all the pulp-magazine genres: horror, detective, sports, western and adventure. His greatest success was for *Weird Tales*, the stories that chronicled the Hyborian-Age adventures of Conan of Cimmeria. He created at least two other enduring heroes, Kull of Atlantis and the Puritan adventurer, Solomon Kane.

More than 50 years after his death, his stories not only remain in print, but are continued and elaborated on by a new generation of writers. Adaptions of his work have appeared as novels, short stories, comics and movies.

About The Author

Robert Traynor is a long-standing gaming and hockey fanatic who masquerades during the day as a bank representative. He can be found lurking about SF clubs and hockey rinks, reading books or scoresheets as the situation warrants. A lifelong resident of Massachusetts, he lives in Springfield with his wife, cats, books and too many dice.

His other fields of interest include medieval urban history, education, Baroque and folk music, politics and table-top dice baseball, not necessarily in that order. Already looking forward to the filming of *Citizen Traynor*, he’s trying to decide whether his last words will be “3d6” or “Long live the Warwick Dragons!” This is his first book for Steve Jackson Games.

Getting Started

You will need a pencil or pen, scratch paper and three six-sided dice. You’ll also need hex paper, and markers or figures to fight out any combats. We highly recommend *GURPS Battle Maps* and *Cardboard Heroes* for this purpose. Most importantly, you need to be familiar with the *GURPS Basic Set*.

After you have these things handy, it’s time to create a character. The Conan character is provided on p. 30. If you’d like to use a character of your own or create a new one, go right ahead. Follow the steps below.

Character Creation

Queen of the Black Coast is a challenging adventure, designed for the mighty Conan. Obviously, the standard 100-point beginning character would be out of his depth. Therefore, we recommend that you build your character with 300 points. However, you should stick to the *GURPS* limits of 40 points worth of disadvantages and 5 points of quirks.

Suitable characters include a coastal sailor from Zingara, Argos or Corinthia; a barbaric mercenary; a Black Kingdoms spearman; a civilized soldier; or a pirate, perhaps a member of the Red Brotherhood. In order to sail with Bêlit, your character needs to meet certain requirements:

Skills: You need the following skills at the levels indicated. Of course, you can have them at higher levels: Seamanship-11, Bow-12 and Leadership-11.

Disadvantages: One is required: *Sense of Duty* (To Bêlit) all the time. Your character gets 5 points for this disadvantage.

Equipment: While you are comparatively wealthy, sailors are not in the habit of loading themselves down with much besides loot. Therefore, you may equip yourself with one melee weapon of your choice (fine quality) and armor as heavy as scale mail. The *Tigress* also has an ample store of knives, spears, bows, arrows, rope and waterskins. You may have as many of these as you can carry, and can replenish your supply freely whenever you are at the ship.

How To Play

The book is divided into numbered paragraphs. *Do not read them in order.* First, read the introduction, then turn to paragraph number one. The text will instruct you where to turn from there.

Most paragraphs involve various choices — usually two, sometimes several. You will often choose freely among the options. At other times, a die roll against your skills or attributes, the result of a combat or a random roll may determine

the paragraph. At various points in the story, you may be asked to write down certain Plot Words. If you have a Plot Word, you may be given special instructions during play. Be sure to follow these instructions. Plot Words remain for the entire adventure, unless you are specifically instructed to erase them.

Current Time

You will be asked during the adventure to keep track of the Current Time. Time is divided into four watches — Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night. The adventure begins in the Afternoon.

Companions

During much of the adventure, you will have several partners. They will usually be at your command and fight on your side. The adventure will mention any exceptions. Keep track of any losses. The *Tigress* has 80 crew members, but small losses add up. Even though you have many sailors at your beck and call, you're better off not thinking of them as cannon fodder. To help in keeping track of the large crew, a record sheet has been provided on p. 32.

Under certain circumstances, you may freely select your companions. There are some restrictions: you may not have Bêlit or N'Yaga as a companion unless specifically mentioned, and you must have at least one sub-chief — if possible — with any group.

Healing

At certain points in the adventure, you may stop for healing. N'Yaga is the only crewmember with the Physician skill (his skill level is 14). If he is unavailable or dead, you will have to settle for simple bandaging! You may, if you have the skill, perform First Aid on yourself or on any companions. More complete information on First Aid and Healing can be found on pp. B127-128.

Opponents

For the most part, your opponents in combat are aggressive and not human. Foes will attack whenever encountered, closing at maximum possible speed and fighting to the death. Exceptions will be noted in the text.

Morale Rating

The adventure involves a rather superstitious crew — after all, what band of sailors anywhere in the world *isn't* superstitious — sailing through an area that they believe to be haunted. Many incidents can occur that will unsettle them. Throughout the adventure, you will be asked to modify the crew's *Morale Rating*. Keep track of the number; it is a cumulative score. The text may give you special instructions if the Morale Rating reaches a certain level. Be sure to follow these instructions. At the beginning of the adventure, the Morale Rating is 0. If, for any reason, you lead a separate band of sailors from the main crew, the new group will maintain the old rating. Any changes in this rating will apply to the entire crew when the groups rejoin — your followers will certainly tell stories of their adventures!

Default Skill Usage in Play

At several points, you will be asked to roll against various skills your character may not possess. If you wish (or need!) to make such rolls, use the Default levels listed on the insert sheet in the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. In most cases, the IQ or DX default will be noted in the text.

Playing With A Party

Once you've played through this adventure, you might want to run the adventure for a party of several players. They can take the parts of the various characters, or create an entirely new crew for the *Tigress*. You might want to read through the adventure, playing the foes. Or you can use the plot for a full-scale game-mastered adventure!

Obviously, if you're the GM you can change things to suit your own style. If you think the foes are too weak or the treasure too great, change them!

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly newsletter includes new rules, variants, races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have home computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours per day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *GURPS Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition.

1 The morning is still young when the *Tigress* anchors. Nearby is the mouth of a broad, slow-moving river. “Odd,” you think, “a river this large will usually have a settlement at the mouth, but there is no sign of man. Only white beaches and the emerald jungle exist, as far as the eye can see.”

Bêlit points to the sluggish, murky waters. “That is the river Zarkheba. Once I was chasing a Stygian vessel down this coast, and it fled into the river mouth. Here I anchored, and waited. Some days later, the ship drifted out of the river. When we boarded, we found her deserted. The decks were bloodstained, as if a great battle had been fought. One survivor we found, but he was raving something about winged demons and he died a day later.” She laughed. “What did it matter what destroyed her crew? The cargo was intact, and none of my bold followers need die to take it! But it set me to thinking . . . what was up that river?”

She has aroused your curiosity. “And?” you ask.

“I have listened to the tales that sailors tell. Some, despite the deadliness of the river and the legends, have dared to sail some length upriver. They have glimpsed, far off, purpled towers and ramparts. My love, there is a great city or a ruin on that river. We fear nothing — let us go and sack that city!”

If you agree, turn to 148.

If you point out the depletion of your crew, turn to 75.

2 The blows you deal your maddened comrade would fell many a strong man, but in his berserk fury he doesn’t even seem to feel them. Then your sword lodges in N’Gora’s side, and wrenches free from your grasp. In a twinkling, the madman is at you, bared teeth sinking themselves in your throat. Struggle though you may, you cannot escape.

Your adventure is over.

3 In searching an antechamber, you are surprised to find a great deal of broken glass, twisted copper tubing, and the remains of porcelain jars. Scratching your chin, you ponder . . . Aha! This must have been a wizard’s or an alchemist’s laboratory. Who knows what treasures might lie within? Digging carefully but diligently, you find inside a stoneware pot a finely cut crystal vial. It’s chipped, but intact; inside is a violet fluid. You know more about fighting than alchemy, to be sure. But N’Yaga does know much old lore . . . After finding the shaman, you wait impatiently while he sniffs and tastes the fluid. His face lights up with an expression of awe. “Know ye what this is?” he asks.

“If I did, old one, I wouldn’t have brought it to you,” you reply. “Out with it!”

“This is the Elixir of Life,” he says breathlessly. “Dying men can drink of it and be saved. The legends say that there is no wound the Elixir cannot heal — none have the skill to make it since Acheron fell these hundreds of years ago.”

Note this find on your sheet. Drinking the Elixir restores 3d of lost HT points, and takes five full minutes to have any effect. If the drinker is unconscious, a Physician or First Aid/TL3 (defaults to IQ-5) roll is necessary to force the liquid down his throat. There is only one dose. You have the *Plot Word* VIOLET. You may use the Elixir at any time when not actively in combat; doing so causes you to lose the *Plot Word* VIOLET.

Turn to 120.

4 The creature is at a height of 30 hexes, and is traveling at a speed of 14.

If you aim for one or two seconds before shooting, turn to 150.

If you aim for three seconds, turn to 223.

If you shoot without aiming, calculate your modifiers from the table on p. B201, then roll to hit. The creature dodges on a roll of 8 or less.

If you hit it, turn to 77.

If you miss, turn to 196.

5 You plunge deeper into the fetid jungle, but there is still no sign of water.

If you continue the search for water, turn to 170.

If you return to the city, turn to 51 if you have the *Plot Word* DELAYED, and to 197 if you do not.

6 If you have Danger Sense, roll against your IQ. (If you do not have Danger Sense, roll against IQ-4.)

If you succeed, turn to 79.

If you fail, turn to 152.

7 You are on lookout duty — a rather dull, but necessary chore. You stand in the prow, fighting off the omnipresent jungle flies and scanning the sullen waters of the Zarkheba for anything out of the ordinary. Suddenly, you feel the hairs on the back of your neck stand out.

If you have Danger Sense, roll against your IQ. If you succeed critically, turn to 80; on any other successful roll, turn to 153.

If you do not have Danger Sense, or if you fail your IQ roll, turn to 226.

8 If you examine the tower, turn to 119.
If you examine the pillars, turn to 73.

If you examine the slab, turn to 146.

If you argue against disturbing the temple, turn to 154.

You may choose each option once only. When you have done all these things, turn to 81.

9 Ignoring the curses of the sailors, you examine the bodies more closely. You realize that the deck is spotted in several places with dark blood — far darker than that shed by the pirates. Curious, you glance at the spearheads of the victims. Two of them are coated in the same fluid. So it can be hurt by steel, you realize. That should help.

Leaving the five behind with orders to clear the decks and keep a lookout for the creature, you rush back to Bêlit and tell her the news. “Listen, all of you!” you say to the crewmen. “It may be a killer, whatever it is. It may be hardy and clever. But it can be slain! See the proof!” You throw the bloodstained spears to the cobblestones. Their clattering echoes in the silence. “So take heart, men. If it comes again, let’s greet it with steel!”

Add 1 to the crew’s Morale Rating. Note that in any future encounter with the Winged One, it has suffered 6 HT points of damage. When you are done, turn to 120.

10 Bêlit orders the crew to run the galley in and tie up to one of the intact wharves.

Turn to 20.

11 The heat of the day beats on the backs of the crew as they labor amidst the foundations of what once might have been a mansion. Your mood is as sour as the sweat pouring from you. What kind of adventure is this? If you wanted to be a laborer, you didn’t have to come here to do that. Casting your shovel aside in frustration, you wave to the others. “This is a waste of time,” you say. “There must be easier pickings around. Come on.”

Turn to 120.

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