

GURPS[®]

CONAN[®]

MOON OF BLOOD

Solo Adventure in Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age



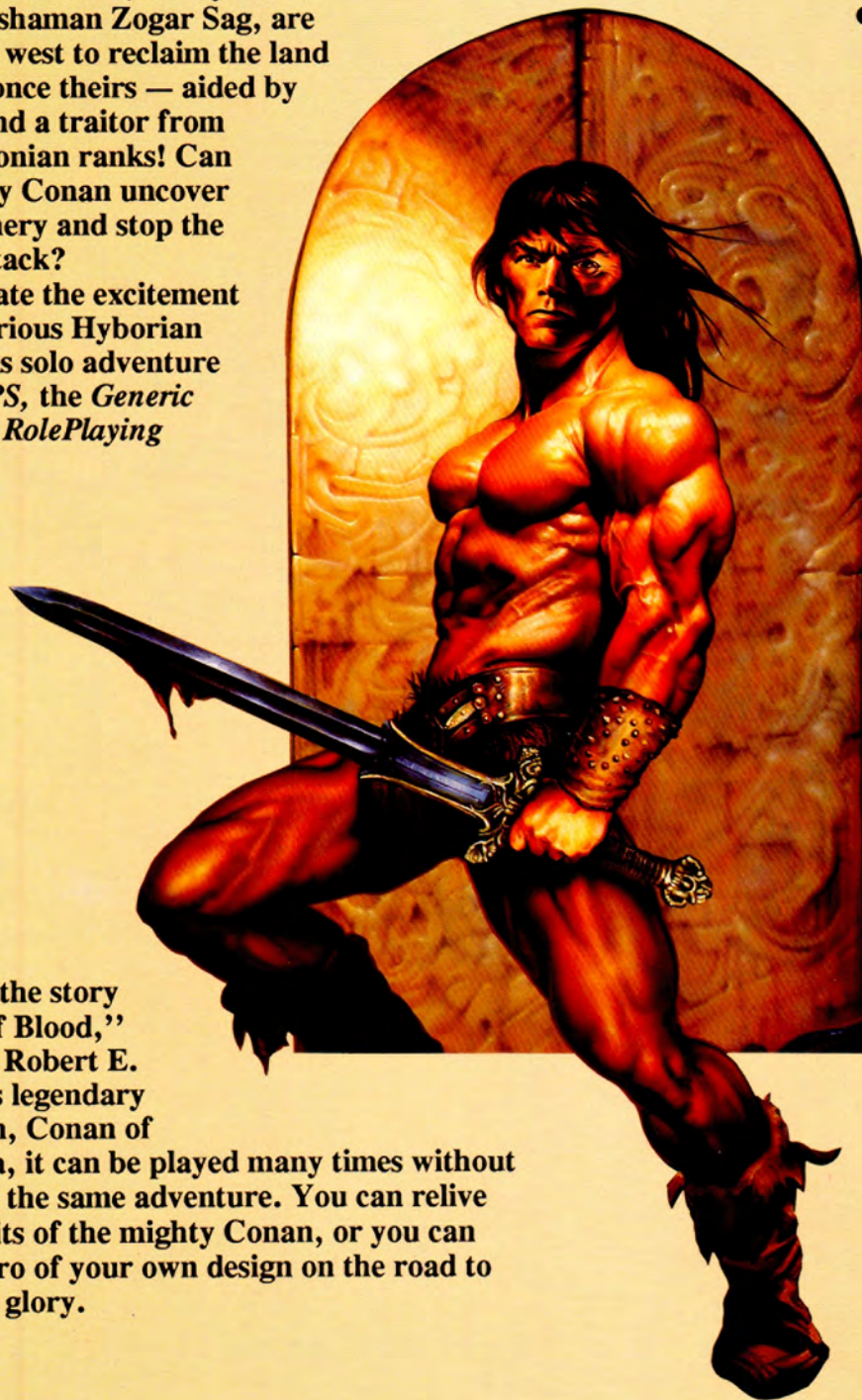
By W. G. Armintrout

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Can you stop the Pictish hordes?

War has come to the Westermarck. The primitive Picts, led by the powerful shaman Zogar Sag, are marching west to reclaim the land that was once theirs — aided by sorcery and a traitor from the Aquilonian ranks! Can the mighty Conan uncover the treachery and stop the savage attack?

Recreate the excitement of the glorious Hyborian Age in this solo adventure for *GURPS*, the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System*.



Based on the story "Moon of Blood," featuring Robert E. Howard's legendary barbarian, Conan of Cimmeria, it can be played many times without repeating the same adventure. You can relive the exploits of the mighty Conan, or you can send a hero of your own design on the road to fame and glory.

Written by W. G. Armintrout
Edited by Creede Lambard
Cover art by Kirk Reinhart
Illustrated by Charlie Wiedman

Inside this book, you'll find:

- *GURPS* statistics for Conan at age 40.
- Rules for designing your own hero for this adventure.
- All the necessary maps and tables.
- Game statistics of the people and animals your character will meet.

Note: While this game is a sequel to *Conan Beyond Thunder River* and you can use the character from that adventure here, it is not necessary. You need only the *GURPS Basic Set* to play this adventure.

Become part of the Conan legend with *Conan — Moon of Blood!*

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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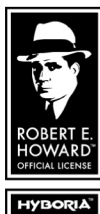
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Dedicated to Jovy, who has always had faith in me

Playtesters: Robert N. Gilson, David Guenther, Dana Holm, Palmer Huff, Bill Seurer, and the SJG-BBS Illuminati

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INSTRUCTIONS

The Original Story

This adventure is based on “Moon of Blood,” a Conan story written by L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter. It appears in the book *Conan the Swordsman*. If you haven’t read the story, play this adventure first — that will preserve the surprises. Elements of this adventure have also been taken from other published Pictland adventures of Conan.

The continuing adventures of Conan are detailed in several other Steve Jackson Games solo adventures, including *Conan Beyond Thunder River*, *Conan and the Queen of the Black Coast*, and *Conan the Wyrmslayer*. Complete rules for adventuring in the Hyborian Age are provided in the *GURPS Conan* worldbook.

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, but most of his education came through 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, creating heroes such as Kull of Atlantis and Puritan adventurer Solomon Kane. But his greatest success came through *Weird Tales* magazine, which published his stories chronicling the Hyborian Age adventures of Conan of Cimmeria.

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

About the Author

W.G. Armintrout is a native Californian who has been working professionally in the game industry for over a decade. He now lives in Austin, Texas, where he divides his time between freelance writing and Jovialis, his editing company.

His previous work for Steve Jackson Games includes a *Car Wars* adventure (*Mean Streets*), a *GURPS Space/Horror* adventure (*Flight 13*), and four *GURPS* solo adventures: *Beyond Thunder River* and *Wyrmslayer* for *Conan*, *Up Harz-burk!* for *Horseclans*, and *For Love of Mother-Not*, a Pip-and-Flinx *Humanx* adventure.

CONAN: Moon of Blood is a *GURPS* solo 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 this adventure, you will 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 make attribute or skill rolls, to determine whether or not your character performs as you would like him to. Make these rolls according to normal *GURPS* rules, applying any modifiers called for.

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

Good luck, and may Crom strike down your enemies!

Getting Started

You will need a pencil, scratch paper, three six-sided dice, and the *GURPS Basic Set*. You will also need a character. A record sheet for Conan, the hero of the story this adventure is based on, can be found on p. 32. If you would rather play someone else, you may design your own character; guidelines for this are given on p. 25 of the appendix.

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.

Plot Words

Moon of Blood can be different every time you play. To make sure that you stay on the same storyline for an entire run through the adventure, you may be asked to write down one or more *Plot Words*. From time to time, there will be instructions for characters who have certain of these special words — if you have a *Plot Word*, be sure to follow the special instructions which apply to it.

Defaults

For your convenience, when a default skill roll is given in the adventure, the penalties for the original roll are already calculated in. If the regular roll is at a -2 penalty, for instance, and the default is given as DX-4, the -4 already includes the -2 penalty on the original roll.

Healing

After any battle or encounter, the character may attempt to recover hit points lost in that action. Any conscious character, or one with a conscious partner, regains 1 HT due to bandaging. In addition, success at a First Aid roll (defaults to Physician, IQ-5, Veterinary-5, or Physiology-5) heals 1d-3 hit points (one

point minimum). On a critical success, the victim regains 3 HT (no roll required); on a critical failure, the victim loses 2 additional hit points *and* bandaging has no effect on this wound.

The Mass Combat System

All the rules which you need to recreate the battles of the frontier are provided on p. 25 of the appendix. If you would like to learn more about the Mass Combat System in *GURPS*, complete rules are provided in the *GURPS Conan*, *GURPS Horseclans*, and *GURPS Japan* worldbooks.

Death and Non-Player Characters

During the adventure, you will meet other soldiers — those under your command, as well as officers presiding over you — and they will be identified by their name (Arno or Flavius, for instance) throughout the book. However, there is a small chance that these characters may fall in battle early in the book, so that when you meet them again later in the adventure, they shouldn't be there (because they're dead). If this happens, mentally substitute the correct name — the character promoted to replace the slain comrade — for the individual who has passed on or otherwise been put out of action.

Repeat Games

After you've played *Moon of Blood* several times, feel free to select your *Plot Words* or to choose your path, rather than always following the dictates of the dice. Explore all of the possibilities.

Eventually, you'll know the plot well enough to run this adventure for your friends. You can let them read the adventure (or read it to them), helping them with the game mechanics, or you can run this as a game-mastered adventure (for any number of player characters).

Character Points

If you finish the adventure and your character is alive, turn to the *Character Points* section on p. 25. These character points will be useful if you continue to use your character in a campaign — and are an indicator of how well you did.



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, new 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. Everyone makes mistakes, including us — but we do our best to fix our errors. 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!

Computer bulletin board system (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 a day at 512-447-4449, at 300 or 1200 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 the *GURPS Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means page 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition.

INTRODUCTION

War has come to Aquilonia.

On the western banks of Thunder River, the savage Picts have destroyed a fort, plundered farmland, and reclaimed the wilderness that was once theirs. The tribes have united under the leadership of Zogar Sag, a wizard priest who was once thrown into the stockade by a provincial governor. That governor is now dead, buried in the smoldering ashes of Fort Tuscelan.

West of the river is the Westermarck, the frontier country of the kingdom of Aquilonia. The settlers in these provinces — Conawaga, Oriskonie, Schohira, and what is left of the overrun Conajohara — are citizens of the most powerful nation of Hyboria, but they are also frontiersmen. They know how to fight, and they are at home in the wilderness.

Unfortunately, Aquilonia does not stand united against its foe. King Numedides neglected to properly man Fort Tuscelan before the war, and continues to withhold troops from the threatened frontier. Meanwhile, the Westermarck provinces are squabbling among themselves — Baron Brocas of Conawaga has

already recalled the soldiers he sent to aid Conajohara, and he and Lord Thasperas of Schohira have both gone to the capital to press their claims to the remains of the lost province.

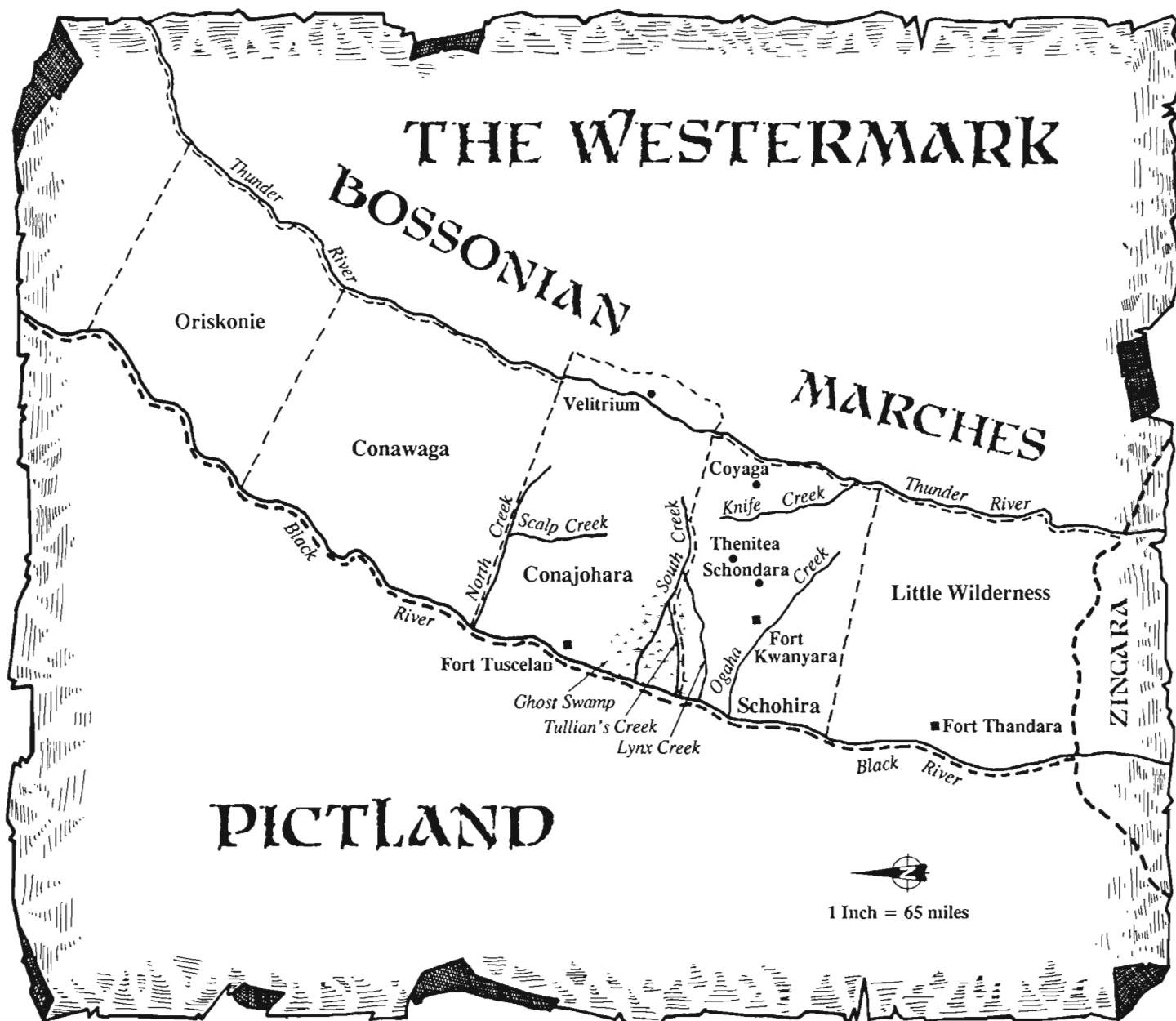
You are a captain of archers in the Frontier Guard of Aquilonia, part of an undermanned army on a most volatile border. Your headquarters is Velitrium, the capital of Conajohara, and likely the next target of the Picts should they renew their assault. Neglected by the king, and undermined by frontier politics, can you hold the frontier?

If you are playing *Moon of Blood* as a continuation of *Beyond Thunder River* (another Conan solo adventure), please read *Continuing Beyond Thunder River* (on p. 26 of the appendix) before proceeding.

If you are Conan, your character sheet is provided on p. 32.

If you want to design your own character, see *Designing Heroes* on p. 25 of the appendix.

When you are ready, turn to 1.



1 It's been two months since the fall of Fort Tuscelan, and three weeks from the end of the savage fighting which thrust the savages back from the walls of Velitrium. Except for skirmishes, the frontier has been quiet since then. Are the Picts done with their war, or are they massing for further assaults?

You've been given the job of finding the answer. In co-command of a combined company of pikemen and archers, you are leading a reconnaissance in force. Yesterday, the soldiers marched south from Velitrium down Thunder Valley, as if heading for Schondara, the capital of the next province. Once clear of watchful Pict eyes, you swung the column west into the wilderness and camped last night in the uninhabited northeast woods of Schohira province. Since this morning, you've been pushing farther west along a winding Pict trail, angling north and west toward South Creek and Conajohara, the conquered territory.

Along with your lieutenant, a young Aquilonian named Flavius, you now leave the column to scout ahead. As you do so, you and the lad talk — it's your way of seeing to the training of your second-in-command. Flavius is a well-built, blond youth of medium height. Starting at every sound and swatting at myriad flies, he seems clumsy and nervous.

Make a Strategy roll, at +2. (Strategy defaults to IQ-4 or Tactics-4.) If you do not have Area Knowledge (Westermarck), give yourself a further -4 penalty to the roll.

If you succeed, turn to 135.

If you fail, turn to 50.

2 Lashing out with your booted foot, you kick the lid back on its creaking hinges. The sentries blink and Lucian flinches as golden coins glitter in the sunlight.

"The time for lies is past, viscount," you say grimly, your eyes boring into those of your superior. "Your crime is foul treachery — betraying your own soldiers into a death trap, who fought for you valiantly and trusted you blindly!"

Roll a Quick Contest of IQs, yours against Lucian's (15).

If you win, turn to 98.

If not, turn to 136.

3 Naked but for breechclouts, moccasins and the feathers in their tangled manes of knotted hair, the Picts charge your troops, shooting arrows as they come. Several fall before the withering rain of Bossonian arrows.

Consult Force Roster A on p. 30 of the appendix, and compare the *Missile Bonus* totals for each side. Then turn to 137.

4 Resolve this portion of the battle by trying a Battle Contest, pitting your Strategy against that of the Pict war chief.

The Picts have little mastery of the art of war. Their war chief's Strategy score is 1d+3.

Apply any bonuses to this Battle Contest which you have been previously directed to use. In addition, if you have the *Plot Word* AVENGER, give yourself an additional +4 bonus; the *Plot Word* INVINCIBLE is worth an extra +2 bonus.

Note the result, and turn to 23.

5 As you stare up into the foliage above you, the greenery is blocked out by a bulky, misshapen figure. The thing is on the soldier next to you with frightful speed, choking and strangling him. Thrust almost against your face is a frightful visage, with a pair of flaming red eyes and a peaked head. Your nostrils are filled with a bestial reek.

Up and down the line, similar scenes are repeated. "Swords!" you order. "Kill the ape-things! Keep your ranks, but kill them!"

Turn to 72.

6 Fear threatens to engulf you — a fear by which the supernatural often gain the advantage over mortal beings. While you have always believed that any being clothed in material flesh can be slain by material weapons, however grisly its form might be, the deeper, primitive recesses of your soul rebel against the logic and reasoning of your mind.

Make a Will roll.

If you succeed, turn to 102.

If you fail, turn to 140.

7 "'Tis plain enough," you explain. "Someone has betrayed Schohira province to the savages, and I suspect that the ambush today was part of their plans. The only question is the identity of the traitor."

"Surely, none of the officers . . ." begins Flavius.

"It could hardly be anyone else," you growl. "Arno must be innocent, for he would hardly have put himself into that death trap. That only leaves three candidates: Captain Glyco of the other Gunderman company, Captain Laodamas of the horse, or General Viscount Lucian himself."

If you have the *Plot Word* CHAMPION, turn to 103.

Otherwise, turn to 190.

8 There is no let-up in the rhythmic pounding coming from the shaman's cabin.

Turn to 55.

9 There is nothing more to be done for the Westermarck. Laodamas goes to Lucian with the news of your suspicions.

Turn to 143.



10 "Come on, my friends," you roar. "By squads, advance!"

The trumpeter winds his horn. The Aquilonian horsemen, chafing after the long delay, spur their mounts with a clatter of armor and a creaking of harness. The squads of mailed horsemen plough through the loose knots of Picts like an armored thunderbolt.

Due to this charge, you receive a +3 bonus on all future Battle Contests. Make a note of this.

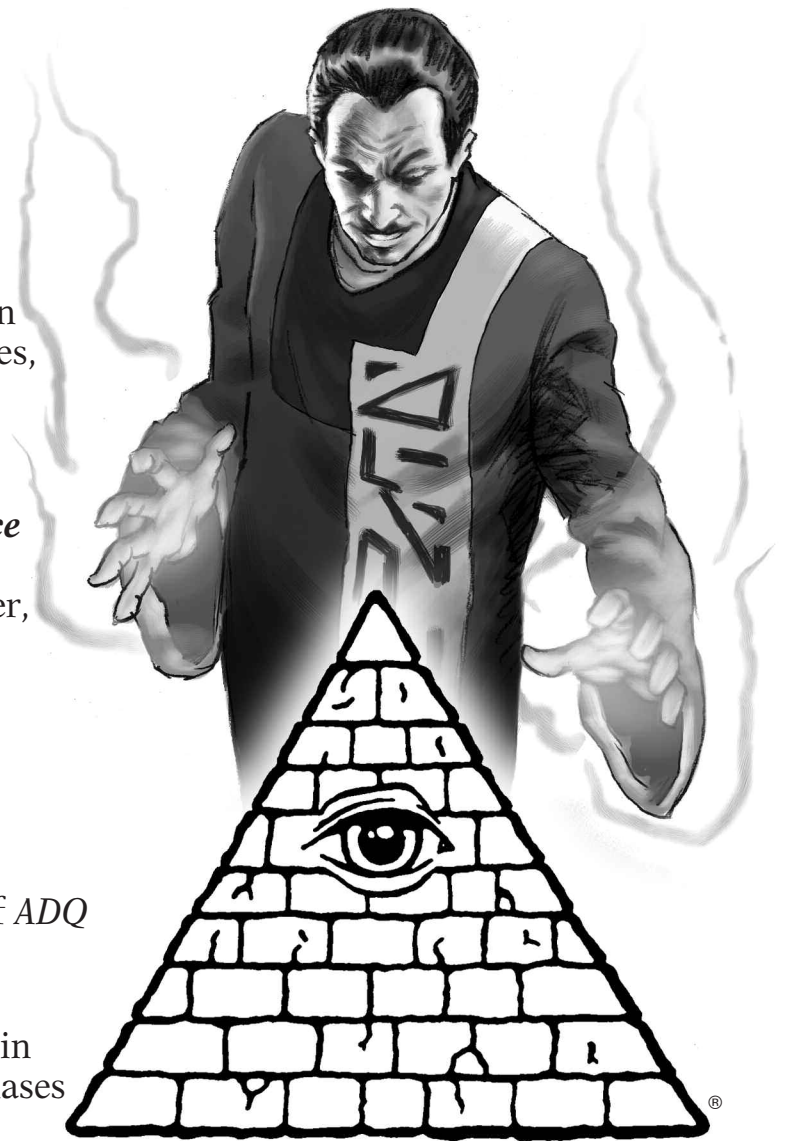
If your *Plot Word* is REBEL, turn to 144.

If not, turn to 57.

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