

MGP
5599

THE BLACK STONES OF KOVAG-RE



A SCENARIO FOR

CONAN

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

CONAN®

THE BLACK STONES OF KOVAG-RE

THE BLACK STONES

CREDITS

AUTHOR

Morgan Nash

DEVELOPMENT & EDITING

Ted Chang

STUDIO MANAGER

Ian Barstow

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Alexander Fennell

ART

John Thompson, Chris Quilliams, Alejandro Villen

PLAYTESTERS

Mark "neo" Howe, Mark Sizer, Daniel Scothorne, Mark Billanie, Michael J Young, Jamie Godfrey, Alan Moore, Daniel Haslam, Vincent Darlage, Bob Probst, Allen Myers, Chris Bradley, Craig Pekar, John Clark

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
A COLD MORNING IN ARENJUN	4
OLESKA THE STOUT	5
INVESTIGATIONS IN THE CITY OF THIEVES	5
A PERILOUS PURSUIT	7
THE CHALLENGE OF IOVINICUS	8
THE PATH THROUGH THE PEAKS	9
TREACHERY IN THE MOUNTAINS	10
THE BLOODED STONES	11
EPILOGUE	11
APPENDIX I	12
APPENDIX 2	13
LICENSE	15

The Black Stones of Kovag-Re is © 2004 Conan Properties International LLC. CONAN®, CONAN THE BARBARIAN® and related logos, character, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Conan Properties International LLC unless otherwise noted. All Rights Reserved. Mongoose Publishing Ltd Authorized User. Conan The Roleplaying Game is released under version 1.0 of the Open Game License. Reproduction of non-Open Game Content of this work by any means without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden. See Page 15 for the text of this license. With the exception of the character creation rules detailing the mechanics of assigning dice roll results to abilities and the advancement of character levels, all game mechanics and statistics (including the game mechanics of all feats, skills, classes, creatures, spells and the combat chapter) are declared open content.

Continuing support for Conan The Roleplaying Game can be found at www.conan.com, www.mongoosepublishing.com and in the pages of Signs and Portents magazine.

INTRODUCTION

'Father, tell me again of the Cult of the Blooded Stones.' The young boy looked up at his aged parent, eyes filled with both eagerness and no small amount of fear. Across the table the old man set his wine-cup down slowly and looked across at his son. He said nothing for a moment and then spoke in a voice resonant with doom-laden meaning, yet with a twinkle in his eye common to all seasoned raconteurs.

'Byrus, my boy, the stories of that thankfully destroyed band are not for the ears of small children. Why, it is but a handful of winters since you were a mewling babe-in-arms.' He shook his head ponderously. 'I could not tell you such a tale – it would rob you of sleep for days and your mother would chase me from the house with a skillet for filling your head with night-terrors.'

'Father!' the boy pouted. 'I have seen nine winters. I am nearly a man!' The old man smiled slightly and nodded his head in agreement.

'Come then, let us draw closer to the fire. To talk of the Cult of the Blooded Stones chills my old bones. But we should thank the civilised gods that cold bones are all that remain of those blasphemous priests. Kovag-Re was their god and few deities have ever matched his need for sacrifice. It is said that at the height of his power, more than six centuries ago now, a constant train of slave caravans rolled into the hills above Arenjun carrying unfortunate souls whose only fate was to feed the near-limitless hunger of Kovag-Re.

Few tales remain of those times and the ceremonies of the Cult have been, perhaps fortunately, forgotten. But stories remain of the sacrificial temple – an ancient and dismal cavern beneath the cold rock where many entered but none left; where the Black Stones of Kovag-Re robbed the shrieking victims of their lives and where, perhaps still, the temple waits for the sacrifices to begin anew...'

The Black Stones of Kovag-Re is set in ancient Zamora, home of thieves, treachery and, occasionally, some small measure of heroism. Many young men and women have started their careers in this land and many of those have ended them shortly thereafter. However, this adventure has been written in such a way as to make it relatively simple to transplant it to almost any other location in Hyboria – suggestions on renaming some of the Non-Player Characters and place names will be given in an appendix at the back.

It is also written for a low-level party of adventurers from 1st to 3rd level. Experienced Games Masters will know that the life expectancy

of such characters can be very low and that a difference of a couple of points here and there means more at this early stage of a character's career than at any other time. Thus, statistics will be given for all Non-Player Characters but it is anticipated that the Games Master may need to adjust these to suit his group's particular abilities. The major Non-Player Characters will be written up in detail in the appendix.

Since it is better, perhaps, to give the hard-working Games Master too much information than too little, sections of descriptive prose and roleplaying notes for major Non-Player Characters have been included. The Games Master is at liberty to make use of them. Naturally, anything and everything that is in this adventure can be changed or discarded.

But, for now, let us have a look at what is in store for our bold rogues...

THE ADVENTURE IN SUMMARY

It is dawn and the adventurers are sleeping off a night of heavy carousing on the floor of one of Arenjun's less salubrious wine shops when they are awoken and taken, forcibly if necessary, before the city's governor, one Oleksa the Stout. A corpulent individual, Oleksa had married the youthful Juliana only the day before and was about to consummate the marriage when he was struck from behind and rendered unconscious by an unknown assailant. When he awoke only an hour ago, the window of his apartment stood open and Juliana was gone.

He tells them that it is obvious that she has been kidnapped by some brigand or other who will no doubt wish to ransom her back to him or to use her to put pressure on him in some fashion. He will pay them well if they return her to him and wipe out the bandits. He does not wish to simply raise the alarm and set the guards to the task as it would be catastrophic for his reputation and continued successful rule if word got out to the thieves that the governor was unable to protect his most precious possession.

Assuming that the adventurers accept the commission, they have a number of options open to them. If they investigate the governor's apartment for clues they may discover that a few of Juliana's belongings have gone missing, some of them not particularly valuable, suggesting that she had time to gather some things. This may further suggest that she left willingly. Asking subtle questions of the servants will reveal that Juliana was a far-from-willing bride. Questioning the guards on this sort of thing is a less wise course – they are loyal to Oleksa and will reveal nothing of use but may report on the adventurers' activities to the governor.

If Oleksa himself is confronted with any of this information, he will deny that she left willingly and will inform the adventurers that she has very likely been taken by a band of clever outlaws who have lately been raiding caravans and pilgrims travelling through the Pass of the Goat and have, thus far, evaded capture. Astute observers will see Oleksa twitch over this and they may guess that he knows more than he is telling.

The truth is that Juliana has run away from Oleksa, who she was forced to marry. Her true love, a young man from Arenjun's soldiery, called Bogdan, helped her to escape with some loyal men at his command. Bogdan and his men were too honest for the corrupt bureaucracy of Arenjun and fled the city two months previously, turning to banditry to survive. They have raided a couple of caravans belonging to Oleksa in the meantime (it is a lie that they have robbed pilgrims). Juliana told Oleksa that she would never give herself to him and would be reunited with her lover and Oleksa is certain that this is what has happened. Naturally, he will not tell the adventurers this; in fact, he has no intention of letting anyone who knows about this abduction live, let alone pay them a reward.

The adventurers should attempt to track the 'kidnappers'. Asking questions of the palace guard and the watchmen, it will be relatively simple to discover that a lone rider, carrying a woman, raced out of one of the gates last night. The road from that gate does indeed lead up into the mountains and towards the lofty Pass of the Goat.

A skilled tracker would be useful at this point. The adventure diverges here, dependant upon the characters' success at tracking. If the party have a capable scout, he may be able to find the trail of a single horseman leaving the road some miles outside of Arenjun and heading up into the hills. If the tracks are followed, the adventurer will have to cross dangerous terrain, encountering some of the local wildlife and a couple of surprises that Bogdan has left for any who follow him.

If the adventurers are unable to follow Bogdan's tracks, they will need to travel on up the road and look for further clues. They will come to a small village at the entrance of the Pass of the Goat where they may ask questions. The locals will be more-than-usually nervous around strangers and will suggest, at best, that they may be able to assist the adventurers but that they are somewhat troubled by problems of their own. It is at this point that Iovinicus, the village's newly acquired bully, swaggers out of a nearby hut and begins to make trouble. He will demand to know what the adventurers are doing in his village and will, eventually, challenge one of them to a wrestling match.

Should a brave adventurer defeat Iovinicus in this brawl he will slink away, allowing the villagers to assist the

adventurers. They can always dispose of him in another fashion, of course, but he is a dangerous man and will not hesitate to draw his sword if threatened seriously. The villagers know that the bandits have made their camp up in the hills and can give suitable directions on how to approach the place by little-known paths. Following this route, the adventurers will avoid the traps set by Bogdan but may encounter similar problems with local beasts.

The adventure will come back onto the same route at this point. Having survived Bogdan's traps or negotiated a successful outcome in the village, the adventurers will find themselves travelling through the peaks along an old path that leads up along the spine of the mountains into desolate and broken land away from the Pass of the Goat. At some point they will spot something at the foot of a dangerous slope below the path. An agile climber can find his way down to find some wooden timbers, an old and rusted iron cage containing many bones and a couple of other skeletons, each wrapped in fragments of black and red robes. This is all that remains of a slave caravan that tumbled from the path on the way to the temple of Kovag-Re; a scholar or historian may be able to identify some of the items in the wreckage.

When the adventurers reach the bandit lair, they again have a number of options: negotiation, scouting, all-out attack, etc. Their own agenda will also come into play at this point – do they want to return Juliana for the reward? Allow her and her lover to escape? Kidnap her and ransom her for even more money? In an ideal world they will, perhaps, recognise that the bandits are not bad men and will at least talk to them.

Regardless of the decisions of the players, some short time into the proceedings, Oleksa and his guard (who have been following the players) will arrive to deal with the problem in a terminal fashion. Oleksa has no intention of paying for the return of his wife and will be aiming to kill the adventurers after they have taken the bandits out and are weakened.

In all likelihood the adventurers and bandits will join forces. The battle will go against them, however, as the campsite is surrounded by archers. Fortunately, nearby, there are some cave entrances that the bandits know lead into tunnels that will be very defensible. Bogdan, Juliana and any surviving men will retreat to the nearby caves and the adventurers would be wise to join them. The ensuing combat should be entertaining as the adventurers and surviving bandits get pushed down deeper into the caves.

Eventually, the players will arrive in the ancient temple to the forgotten

god, Kovag-Re. This is a dark chamber with a circle of black monoliths and a thick carpet of fine white dust – the powdered remains of the sacrifice victims. The monoliths are magical and feed upon blood. When blood is spilled on one of them, all will animate and attempt to destroy anyone within the caves. Naturally, a wounded bandit will stumble into one if a player is not stupid enough to do so.

This should ensure a suitably vigorous finale in which the adventurers should try to escape from the caves alive. Juliana will, of course, fall into danger if the adventurers are heroic sorts who would appreciate a chance to rescue her. A typically Conan-esque result would be for all of the soldiers and bandits to be stabbed, shot or crushed while Juliana and Bogdan escape and Oleksa is killed in a bloody and appropriate manner. Naturally, the players may well influence things otherwise!

A COLD MORNING IN ARENJUN

Read or paraphrase:

By the gods, what a night! True, you had little enough coin left after your most recent exploits but a man cannot take his wealth with him and who knows what tomorrow might bring? Better then to spend the last of it in fine style in a wine-shop and what finer place exists in Arenjun, the renowned City of Thieves, than Malvolio's tavern? There had been good food, lusty dancers, wagering, brawling and many, many flagons until each of you had stumbled into a corner to sleep or just sank to the ground where you stood.

Sadly, the cold light of dawn brings with it more than just a pounding in your skull. A soaking from a bucket of cold water brings you to your senses, eyes struggling open to see the unwelcome sight of a watch sergeant leaning easily on a bill.

'Get up, scum! You've got an appointment with the Governor!' the sergeant sneers.

The adventurers have been picked for a singular honour; Oleksa the Stout, Governor of Arenjun, has selected them to assist with the location and recovery of his wife. The adventurers have little choice in, at least, being taken to hear what he has to say. If they are wise, they will not pick a fight against a watch patrol in their current tender state but there is no guarantee that a hot-blooded barbarian or argumentative pirate might not take offence at the manner in which they are summoned.

The watch are hardly professionals, being thugs and part-time thieves themselves for the most part. However, they have been instructed not to be overly vicious in their dealings with the adventurers. Each is armed with a bill and a short sword and is wearing a mail shirt. If necessary they will attack with the butts of their bills using them like staffs. Only if the fight becomes truly dangerous, will they use their weapons in earnest.

Watchman of Arenjun

Medium Humanoid (1st level Zamorian soldier)

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (6 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 12 (+2 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+2 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 11 (+1 Str)

DR: 7 (brigandine coat 6, steel cap +1)

Attack: Bill +2 melee (2d8+1, Crit. 20 x3, AP 7); or Short sword +3 melee finesse (1d8+1, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 1); or Unarmed strike +3 melee finesse (1d6+1, Crit. 20 x2, AP 0)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Intimidate +4, Listen +2, Search +4, Spot +2

Feats: Alertness, Brawl

Watch Sergeant of Arenjun

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Zamorian soldier)

Hit Dice: 2d10+4 (15 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 12 (+1 level, +1 Str)

DR: 7 (brigandine coat 6, steel cap +1)

Attack: Bill +3 melee (2d8+1, Crit. 20 x3, AP 7); or Short sword +4 melee finesse (1d8+1, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 1); or Unarmed strike +4 melee finesse (1d6+1, Crit. 20 x2, AP 0)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills: Intimidate +6, Listen +2, Search +5, Spot +2

Feats: Alertness, Brawl, Quick Draw

OLEKSA THE STOUT

Read or paraphrase:

The Governor's Palace in Arenjun stands as a squat reminder that the greatest thief in Arenjun is perhaps not a deft pickpocket nor an agile burglar nor a daring bandit. The punishing taxes levied by the notorious Oleksa the Stout have kept him in luxury for many years and have built him a palace that is more akin to a fortress to protect his precious treasures.

The watchmen guide you to the gates and then hand you over to Oleksa's personal guards, stern-looking men with quick eyes and sharp blades, men bought by Oleksa in the knowledge that few could match their wage with any bribe.

The palace itself is dripping with ostentatious decoration and the loot pillaged from years of taxing treasure hunters, pilgrims and honest working folk. You are led through corridors, the walls covered with gaudy friezes, past alcoves containing statues from a dozen cultures and a thousand years.

Eventually, you are brought into the audience chamber of Oleksa the Stout to be confronted by the man himself. His epithet is well earned, for Oleksa is a huge, sweating man, grown fat through inactivity and affluent living. Large rings adorn his podgy fingers and a rich ermine robe is draped around his shoulders as he slumps, toad-like, in his chair – more like a throne – at the far end of the room.

As you are brought closer, it becomes apparent that the Governor is nursing an injury, his head swathed in bandages, his eyes appearing more than a trifle glazed. He stirs at your approach.

'Ah, the tavern dogs,' he slobbers. 'I have a small offer of employment for you...'

The adventurers will be treated to some plot exposition at this point. Oleksa informs them that only yesterday, as they were no doubt aware, he was married to the lovely young Juliana. He waxes lyrical, in a somewhat lecherous style, on her numerous virtues, most of which seem to be related to her appearance. He then grows serious as he tells them that, upon retiring to his apartment with his blushing bride, he was struck from behind and rendered insensate for many hours. When he came to, Juliana was gone and he was nursing a considerable lump on the back of his head.

He states that he believes that Juliana has been kidnapped, perhaps by someone who wishes to hold her for ransom. He complains about the thieves and ne'er-do-wells that infest Arenjun, especially The Maul, seemingly unconcerned that he is in the presence of a handful of rogues of just that sort.

Oleksa then leans in quietly and informs the adventurers that he cannot afford it to be known that the Governor of Arenjun is unable to protect his most prized possession (and, yes, he probably does put it exactly that way). Thus, he is unable to tear the city apart looking for his beloved wife and must turn to such anonymous individuals as he now sees before him. He promises a sizeable purse of silver for each of them if they will do him the favour of finding his wife and returning her to him. Oh, and if they would be so kind as to slaughter those responsible, he would be most grateful. The alternative of some suitably trumped up charges awaits the hesitant.

Oleksa will have no problem bargaining with the adventurers over a price – as it happens, he has no intention of paying them a single coin anyway ...

Statistics for Oleksa can be found in the Appendix.

INVESTIGATIONS IN THE CITY OF THIEVES

Read or paraphrase:

Dismissed by a wave of the hand from the Governor's presence, you find yourselves at liberty to explore the palace and city in search of any information that might be relevant to Juliana's disappearance. A servant steps forwards and bows unctuously to you all.

'Greetings. I am Lubomyr. May I be of assistance in your endeavours?' He is an oily little man, no doubt as slippery in word and deed as he is in appearance but perhaps it might be useful to have someone who knows his way around the palace and city...

The adventurers now have the opportunity, should they choose to take it, to attempt to find out more regarding Juliana's 'kidnap'. Lubomyr and two of the Governor's guards will accompany them, most likely, but it may well be possible for a stealthy adventurer to give them the slip should more covert activities be

desirable. A good starting place might be the scene of the crime...

Lubomyr the Servant

Medium Humanoid (1st level Zamorian thief)

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (6 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Ref)

Speed: 40 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 12 (+1 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+1 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 8 (-2 Str)

DR: 0

Attack: Stiletto +1 melee finesse (1d4-2, Crit. 20 x4, AP 1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack (stiletto) +1d8 damage

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Appraise +5, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4,

Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +7, Search +5,

Spot +7

Feats: Alertness, Fleet-Footed

The Governor's Apartments: The apartments are in something of a shambles. Whilst the luxurious bed is undisturbed and has obviously not been slept in, the windows stand open and the light silk curtains flutter in a gentle breeze cooling the room. A few pieces of male and female clothing lie scattered upon the floor, some near the doorway and some near a large chest, which is against a wall. The chest stands open.

Sharp-eyed and sharp-witted adventurers will be able to piece together the night's events. A rich robe and a fine-but-torn silken dress lie near the doorway. The first belongs to the Governor; the second is Juliana's wedding gown which was ripped off by Oleksa upon entering the room. Seconds later, he was struck from behind – a small stain of blood on the floor a couple of feet away (*Search roll DC: 10*) marks the spot where his head lay for most of the night.

Juliana then ran to her chest and swiftly searched through it, discarding her unwanted clothing nearby, to select some more suitable travelling attire. She also took such small pieces of jewellery and personal items as she could easily carry. It is notable that there are a number of obvious works of art around the room – two solid silver candlesticks, an elephant statuette from Vendhya and a tasteless golden bedpan – that could have been easily stolen by the kidnappers but were not. (Lubomyr and the guards will be keeping an eye on the characters to make sure nothing is stolen.)

Bogdan then lowered Juliana out of the window to his horse below and then jumped out after her. The windowsill shows a boot-print (*Search roll DC: 10*) to mark the intruder's passage and hoof-prints in

the flowerbed below (*Search roll DC: 10*) show where a horse stood.

One of the guards can confirm that there was a man in the corridor outside all night and that nobody left through the door until Oleksa came bursting out a couple of hours ago. He voices his opinion that the kidnapper either struck Juliana unconscious or gagged her to prevent any noise. This is, of course, wrong. An alert adventurer (*Sense Motive roll DC: 20*) might spot that one of the servants, a rotund, middle-aged woman, is smiling slightly to herself. Questioning will reveal that she is Vesna, maidservant to Juliana. More careful interrogation of the woman herself will make it obvious that she is pleased that Juliana has escaped from Oleksa.

Should any guard detect this line of enquiry, he will attempt to intervene to prevent Vesna from speaking, sending her from the room on some false errand. Whether or not this is successful, he will slip away to inform Oleksa of the confirmation that it was Bogdan.

Further Questioning of Oleksa: The adventurers may choose to confront the Governor with what they have discovered so far. If this happens, he will grow angry at any suggestion that Juliana would have left willingly. He will seek to muddy the waters by saying that the kidnapper was likely one of the cunning bandits who have been preying on poor pilgrims up near the Pass of the Goat. He says that none who have seen them have lived and will further suggest, in hushed tones, that the bandit may have used sorcery or been in league with some devil to have been able to enter and leave the palace without being seen. The adventurers may be able to determine that he is spinning a tale (*Sense Motive roll DC: Oleksa's Bluff total*) and that he has some great hatred for these bandits that he mentions (*if the Sense Motive roll beat Oleksa's bluff by more than 5*).

The Kidnapper Leaves the City: Some questioning at the city gates will easily reveal that a horseman galloped through Arenjun's northern gate just before it closed for the night. The man was obviously in a considerable hurry but was also being careful not to lose the large bundle that lay across the horse's neck in front of him. Naturally, this was Juliana being taken out of the city, hidden in a large blanket. The road from this gate leads towards the mountains and the Pass of the Goat.

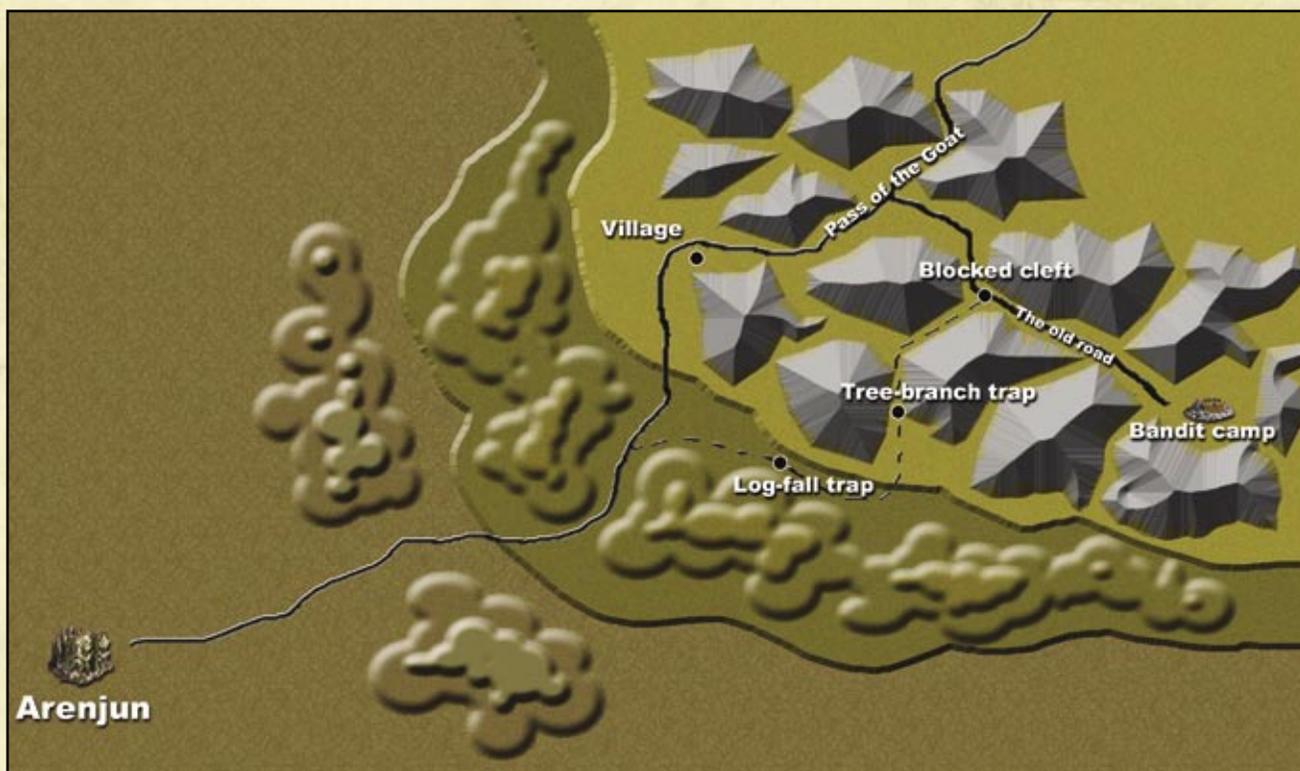
The Trail Beyond Arenjun: It will be important at this point to note whether the adventurers have the skills of a tracker at their disposal. Wise players may well wish to hire such a person in Arenjun but, given their lack of coin, this will be difficult and Oleksa will not advance them any money. If the players hesitate at following a man on horseback without any way to determine his route, it can be pointed out that the road and the Pass of the Goat are the only ways into the mountains for many leagues. Anyone travelling on the road

will very likely have been seen by fellow travellers or farmers working their meagre crops nearby.

The road leads away from Arenjun and soon the city is lost from view behind increasingly steep hills. A successful Tracking check at this point (*Survival check DC: 19 (Firm ground, Large creature, hiding trail)*) will reveal the trail of a horseman leaving the road just after a small copse of stunted trees and heading straight up a steep slope into the heart of the mountains. At this point, Bogdan left the road so as not to be seen by the villagers living at the mouth of the Pass. If the adventurers find and follow these tracks, their next encounters will be details in **A Perilous Pursuit**. Should they miss the tracks or not wish to follow them, they will carry on along the road to **The Challenge of Iovinicus**.

Following the tracks should not be overly difficult. The ground here is often muddy and only a couple of rolls need be made to keep on Bogdan's trail (*Survival check DC: 9*). However, the bandit is no fool. He has passed this way many times now and knows that others could easily follow this route to his encampment. For that reason he and his men have set a number of traps for any that are bold enough to intrude upon the bandits' territory.

The Log-Fall Trap: As the trail dips through a narrow, deep ravine, Bogdan has set a rope across the floor. Unless it is seen (*Search check DC: 20*) the first person through will trigger the trap. The rope tugs, pulling out a peg which allows a number of logs to roll down off of the top of the ravine onto the people below. A Reflex save (*DC: 15*) will allow each adventurer in the danger area to avoid the logs. Failure means suffering 2d6 points of damage.



A PERILOUS PURSUIT

Read or paraphrase:

The tracks lead up a steep slope, your feet sliding out from under you occasionally on the loose flints that cover the hill. Your breath comes quicker and shorter until you are gasping for air but, mercifully, the crest of the hill is eventually reached. Looking at what lies ahead, the country becomes increasingly inhospitable - jagged peaks and impassable ravines interlace the entirety of the landscape. Surely nothing but a goat could pass through here? But, then, that is the very name of the Pass ahead, is it not?

The Local Wildlife: Moving through some rocky terrain, a starving mountain lion will attempt to pick off the rear-most member of the group. The lion has been driven to attacking men by the hard winter and the lack of food in the area but it will not fight to the death and will attempt to flee if reduced to a half of its Hit Points.

Mountain Lion

Use statistics for **Panther** in *Conan the RPG* rulebook (p. 307).

The Scything Tree-Branch Trap: Some time later, the trail scrambles along a natural shelf clinging to the side of a slope. The entire mountainside here is covered with conifer trees, some of which grow across the path, causing the adventurers to duck under branches and around tree trunks as they struggle to stay on the shelf and not plummet down the sheer slope below. The wily Bogdan has set another rope here (*Search check DC: 20* to



spot it) so that the first person to knock it will release a tree branch pulled back with considerable strength. This branch will straighten rapidly, threatening to knock the unfortunate adventurer off the slope unless he gets out of the way swiftly (*Reflex check DC: 15*). If the roll is failed, the branch will deal the adventurer 1d4 points of damage and knock him from the path. A last possibility to avoid a horrible death is provided by the trees below the slope, should the adventurer be fast enough to grab onto them (*Climb check DC: 10*). A Climb check (*DC: 5*) would be necessary to rescue a fellow or for him to make his own way back up to the path – if time is taken it is worrying but not actually difficult.

A View of the Pass: Finally, the route runs around the side of the mountain, offering the adventurers a spectacular view of the landscape and the Pass of the Goat below. At the mouth of the Pass they will be able to see a small village but their path then ducks back into the jagged rocks and, passing a vertical crack in the rock filled with rubble from a rock-fall, the path widens as if it had been hacked out

of the mountainside by the hands of men ... which, indeed, it has as **The Path Through the Peaks** will show.

THE CHALLENGE OF IOVINICUS

Read or paraphrase:

The road winds onwards and upwards, slowly climbing through the foothills towards the Pass of the Goat and the only navigable route through the mountains. Somewhere up there your quarry has fled, but where? Your hope lies in finding some sign as to his passage. Many hours pass as you tramp your weary way up the hard-packed dirt road. You are fortunate that the rains have passed else this road would be a mud-covered way that would be twice as hard to travel.

As the sun climbs to its height, you round a bend to see the startling sight that is the Pass. Like an axe-blow carved into the mountains by some cold god of the northmen, the ravine slices through the spine of the mountains towards the lands of the Turanians.

And there, nestled against the rock wall at the mouth of the Pass is a small hamlet, smoke curling up lazily from a scattering of cooking fires...

This nameless village is a small place, barely remarked upon by those that travel through the Pass unless they stop to trade trinkets and small tools with the local people. When the adventurers enter, it will become obvious fairly quickly (*Sense Motive check DC: 10*) that these villagers are more nervous and uncooperative than is normal even for the usual cringing folk that live in such places.

Enquiries after people passing through will be met with shrugs and muttered comments that they have seen nothing and cannot help. The villagers seek to avoid the adventurers if at all possible but will be trying not to antagonise them. A particularly persuasive adventurer (*Diplomacy check DC: 15*) may be able to convince one of the villagers to tell them what the problem is. Otherwise, the locals may try to quietly talk to any adventurer that looks like a Noble or a Soldier.

The problem is that the village has been recently 'conquered' by a huge Brythunian scoundrel by the name of Iovinicus. An ex-soldier, he has decided it is easier for others to feed him and work for him than it is to make his own way in the world. He came upon this village and has decided to settle down here for a while, convincing the people to put food in his belly with his enormous fists.

It will not be long before Iovinicus will notice that there are people in 'his village' causing trouble and he will swagger out to deal with them. In many ways, he is a hearty rogue and

will greet the adventurers with a certain amount of bluff good humour, but the large sword across his back should suggest that he is not to be completely trusted. One of the villagers will beg the adventurers to help rid them of Iovinicus and will very likely be cuffed away with a lazy swing of the Brythunian's hand. He will then smile at his visitors and explain that his people sadly have no time to help them ... unless one of them thinks that he is stronger than Iovinicus, of course.

Ideally, one of the adventurers will agree to fight the bully in an unarmed bout of grappling. Naturally, they could gang up on him and attack but Iovinicus will not be slow to draw his sword and fight to kill if he thinks it is necessary.

Statistics for Iovinicus can be found in the Appendix.

Assuming that the adventurers defeat him in one manner or another, the villagers will be only too happy to help. They suggest that the man they are looking for may be one of the bandits that lives up in the mountains and one of them, a young goat herder, offers to show them a way towards the area where he believes them to be camped. 'An old road, closed by a rock-fall hundreds of years ago, by all accounts,' says one of the villagers.

If questioned on the matter, the villagers will state that only three trading caravans have been attacked since the bandits took up residence in the region. All of them belonged to the Governor of Arenjun and there were no survivors; that said, no pilgrims have been molested, to their knowledge.

The young boy will then lead the adventurers up into the Pass of the Goat and will point out their route – a track that leads up from the Pass and into a vertical crack in the rock, just wide enough to drive a cart through. He tells them that the crack is filled with rock at the far end but it might be possible to clear it enough to scramble through. He does not know how the bandits come and go, however.

If the adventurers had an easy time with Iovinicus, it may be exciting to menace them with a mountain lion

Mountain Lion

Use statistics for **Panther** in *Conan the RPG* rulebook (p. 307).

Otherwise, they will be able to head through the cleft in the rock and to clear a passage with a couple of hours of backbreaking labour to bring them onto the old road.



THE PATH THROUGH THE PEAKS

Read or paraphrase:

The old road is easier going than some of the paths you have taken already. Carved out by unknown hands centuries past, it is flat and the slope is gradual but it is not a wide road and the precipice on one side drops down worryingly deep. Occasionally, you come to places where the rock has crumbled away, narrowing it still further and forcing you to cling to the wall like spiders or bravely leap across the gap. If the man you follow came this way on horseback, he must be a superlative rider.

As you come to a place where the road narrows again to half of its width, you spot an interesting sight at the foot of the cliff. It is the stark whiteness of bone that catches your eye and, looking closer, there appear to be many, many bones amongst the rocks. But it is the unmistakable glint of gold that holds your eye!

Shortly before the annihilation of the Cult of the Blooded Stones many centuries ago, the road collapsed as one of the slave wagons was heading towards the temple. At the bottom of the cliff, should someone wish to hazard the dangerous descent, (*Climb check DC: 15*) can be found a twisted and rusted iron cage and the remains of some dozen poor victims that were stuck inside as the wooden cart carrying it tumbled off of the road. Some searching will also reveal the skeleton of an ox which drew the cart and two bodies in rags, mostly bleached white and rotted long ago, but scraps of red and black material exist where they have been protected from the elements. These were two of the priests that drove the wagon. On each of their bodies can be found a golden medallion with ancient symbols, forgotten now by civilised men.

A Scholar with appropriate skills may be able to recognise these as belonging to the Cult of Kovag-Re. It is suggested that any Scholar in the party with academic skills be given a good chance of recognising the symbols but be left with little else other than the name and a vague sense of unease. Little is remembered of the Cult in the present day but rumours of massive blood sacrifices are still recalled by some that know the name Kovag-Re. It is strongly suggested that the name 'The Cult of the Blooded Stones' not be mentioned at this point as it may give the players a little too much of a clue.

In purely monetary terms, the medallions are worth 50 silver each. To a collector of antiquities, they may be worth ten times that amount.



There is nothing else to be seen here and the adventurers would be wise to press on before night falls across the mountains.

Skills: Climb +3, Listen +1, Ride +4, Spot +1
Feats: Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat

TREACHERY IN THE MOUNTAINS

Read or paraphrase:

The road winds ever further and higher, the twists and turns becoming sharper, the drops ever more frightening. But then, rounding one final bend, the path begins to slope downwards, straight as an Aquilonian blade, towards a bowl surrounded by the mountains. It is not large, perhaps no more than the flight of an arrow from one side to the other and a third of the bowl is taken up by a pool of fresh, mountain water, presumably fed by a spring bubbling out of the rock. Along the edge of this pool you can see eight or nine simple dwellings, somewhere between a hut and a tent, and the figures of people moving amongst them. From this height, they are still small but you would reckon their number to be around fifteen. It is hard to distinguish any more from this distance but it would seem that the road ends here, perhaps in more ways than one...

Here, again, the adventurers have a choice. They may decide to approach the bandits and parley go straight to the attack or perhaps attempt a scouting mission. Their success in any of these endeavours depends upon the wits of the adventurers and the attitude of the bandits.

These are not common brigands who will attack on sight purely for the chance of blood and plunder. Bogdan in particular is an honourable man and, given the opportunity, will attempt to talk to the adventurers to determine their purpose. The bandits are, however, overly confident that their hidden lair has remained just that ... hidden. Consequently, the guard on the road is not being as watchful as he should.

Bogdan's Bandits (12)

Medium Humanoid (1st level Zamorian soldier)

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (6 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 12 (+2 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+2 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 11 (+1 Str)

DR: 4 (leather jerkin 4)

Attack: Arming sword +3 melee finesse (1d10+1, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 2); or Hunting bow +3 ranged (1d8, Crit. 20 x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

When any adventurers get closer, they will also spot a cave entrance in the rock wall. The bandits know there are tunnels here but have not thought it necessary to explore them. Instead, this is where they tether their handful of horses so as to give them some protection from the cold mountain air.

There are a dozen common bandits in addition to Bogdan and Juliana. The lady herself is no threat and will attempt to flee and hide should any violence occur in her presence. Bogdan will not accept any outcome that separates him from Juliana but he is prepared to bargain with the adventurers, offering them loot from the caravans they have plundered and pointing out, if necessary, that his men outnumber the adventurers and are far from amateurs with their weapons.

The Betrayal of Oleksa: At an appropriate and critical juncture, perhaps when the adventurers have just reached an agreement with Bogdan or when the two groups are locked in combat, a familiar voice will hail them from the road. It is Oleksa, accompanied by twenty of his guards, who has followed the adventurers with the intention of slaughtering everyone apart from Juliana. He happily points out how clever he has been and explains that he doesn't seem to have brought his money-pouch and, sadly, cannot pay the adventurers what he promised.

A couple of the bandits may well charge at the soldiers and will be instantly cut down by arrows. It should be immediately apparent (and it certainly is to Bogdan) that the bowl has become a very dangerous place to be. The soldiers have the advantage of numbers and position and all of them are armed with bows. He will grab Juliana and race towards the cave-mouth, shouting for his men to follow him and, if they are on good terms, for the adventurers to join them. The bandits grab flaming brands from the campfires and race past their horses and into the darkness.

What should follow is a battle in the tunnels with plenty of bloodletting and perilous adventure. An individual bandit or soldier should be no match for one of the adventurers but weight of numbers should continue to push them deeper into the tunnels. Bandits and the occasional soldier should die around them, indicating the dangerous nature of this combat. Bogdan will fight like a man possessed, rescuing adventurers if necessary. Oleksa will stay safely at the rear of his troops.

Oleksa's Guards (20)

Medium Humanoid (1st level Zamorian soldier)

Hit Dice: 1d10+2 (7 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 15 (+1 Dex, +4 large shield)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 11 (+1 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 16 (+2 Str, +4 large shield)

DR: 6 (scale corselet 5, steel cap +1)

Attack: Broadsword +3 melee (1d10+2, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 5); or Hunting bow +2 ranged (1d8, Crit. 20 x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1(+2)
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 9
Skills: Intimidate +1, Listen -1, Search +1, Spot -1
Feats: No Honour, Power Attack

THE BLOODED STONES

Read or paraphrase:

The echoing shouts of struggling men, the metallic scent of blood in your nostrils, the screams of the dying, the flickering of the torches. Ishtar's bones, what nightmare of war is this? Once again the soldiers of the treacherous Oleksa push forwards and once again you are forced to fall back down the tunnels. How far beneath the earth are you now? Is this where you will die? Like rats in a trap? By the gods, no! They have come looking for rats and have found wolves! If this is to be your death, then let it be a glorious one.

You ready your weapons and wipe the sweat from your eyes, preparing for one final, mad assault. And then there is a cry of fear and wonder from behind you. It is Juliana!

'Come quick! What is this place? A shrine or a temple?'

You turn and race down the tunnel, bursting out into a wide cavern, by far the largest chamber in these Mitra-accursed tunnels that you have seen. Around the walls, your torches illuminate writings in some ancient language and your feet appear to be ankle-deep in a carpet of fine white dust. But what is most arresting is the circle of five black monoliths that stand, ominous in their ebon mystery, in the centre of the room.

You may have perhaps a few moments to investigate further but soon Oleksa's soldiers will be upon you and you have found no better place to defend than this. They can enter but singly and each man may face the swords of three. Perhaps the day is not lost, after all!

This is, of course, the temple of Kovag-Re, the Hungry God. As with the medallions found earlier, a Scholar may be able to translate some of the writings on the walls but there is not much time to spend on this. At most, the Scholar will learn that this place is the 'mouth of Kovag-Re, where his never-ending hunger must be temporarily appeased. Here many enter and none leave for the stones are ever-thirsty for blood and doom will come to all if they are ever left to starve...' and so on.

The stones are imbued with an ancient and devilish magic. In times past, the priests would herd the sacrifices into the temple and then slash the flesh of one with a knife, spraying the blood upon the stones. Within moments, just long enough for the priests to leave the chamber, the stones would animate and

kill everybody present, smashing their bodies to powder and absorbing the blood into the polished, black surfaces.

Each one stands ten feet high and is wide enough that three men could just about encircle it, grasping hands. They are composed of some unknown black rock that is superbly reflective, allowing an observer to easily see his own image in their darkness. It is inevitable that blood will spill upon the stones at some point. If nothing else, one of the bandits or soldiers will stumble against one and then the fun will start.

The stones will howl eerily and will then begin to slide around, writhing in a blasphemous manner, before moving to kill everyone in the chamber. Unfortunately, Kovag-Re has hungered now for centuries and the stones will no longer stop at the entrance of the chamber. Statistics for the stones can be found in the Appendix but the adventurers are not in a position to be able to fight them as they could were it something mortal. The best they can hope to do is to escape.

Fortunately, the soldiers and bandits will provide plenty of opportunity to slow the stones down. There is no certain outcome to this fight but a suggestion might be that the adventurers use the pounding of the stones themselves to bring the tunnels down and seal the temple of Kovag-Re forever ... preferably with themselves on the outside!

EPILOGUE

There are any number of possible outcomes to this adventure. Perhaps the most predictable one would be for the adventurers to help Bogdan and Juliana to escape and to take their revenge on the treacherous Oleksa. However, anything is possible.

Monetary reward can be found in the loot from the caravans that Bogdan and his men robbed, in the region of 2,000 silvers per adventurer. The coin and goods should enable the adventurers to make a purchase or two and then to fund yet another glorious week of carousing in the style to which they are becoming accustomed. Remember that, according to the rules and style of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, they are not destined to hoard their money.

Experience rewards can be difficult to pin down. Statistics given for the various Non-Player Characters, traps and challenges may have to be tweaked to pitch them at the correct level for your players. It is suggested that 1st level characters be given a round 1,000 XP for completing the adventure taking them straight to 2nd level. 2nd and 3rd level characters perhaps should receive 1,000 XP (half of a level) and 1,500 XP (half of a level) respectively. This is based purely on a desirable speed of advancement for the characters in the Games Master's campaign.

APPENDIX I - NON-PLAYER CHARACTER DETAILS

Oleksa the Stout

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian 2nd level Noble/1st level Thief)

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (6 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+0 Dex, +3 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 10 (+0 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 10 (+0 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 10 (+1 level, -1 Str)

DR: 0

Attack: Poniard +2 melee finesse (1d6-1, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack (poniard) +1d8 damage

Special Qualities: Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Trapfinding

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2(5)

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 15

Skills: Appraise +11, Bluff +10, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy

+8, Disable Device +7, Gather Information +10, Hide +5,

Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility)

+9, Listen +4, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive -1, Sleight of

Hand +4, Spot +6

Feats: Diligent, No Honour, Persuasive

Languages: Zamorian, Brythunian, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Hyrkanian, Kothic, Nemedian, Ophirean, Shemitish, Stygian

Possessions: Poniard

Oleksa has been the Governor of Arenjun for many years indeed, growing fat on the punitive taxes and occasional outright robbery that his position has made possible. He is rotten to the core, not shrinking from theft, treachery or murder to further his aims. He is, however, a physical coward and will not involve himself in personal combat ... after all, one has minions to do that for one, no?

Oleksa spotted Juliana some months ago when Bogdan, his guard captain of the time, was romancing her. He decided that the woman should belong to him and has manoeuvred such that Bogdan was forced to flee the city and then put pressure on her family to force Juliana to marry him.

His motivations are to recover Juliana and to ensure that no others outside of his personal guards survive. He hates Bogdan with the passion that a corrupt man has for one who is honest and wants Juliana purely for the decoration that she provides his palace. In manner, he is given to moving from the role of the magnanimous princeling to the threatening criminal in the middle of a sentence. For example,

'Come now, my most welcome guests. Surely you would not wish to

refuse me? It would be a pity to have your heads mounted on pikes over the north gate!'

Bogdan of Arenjun

Medium Humanoid (3rd level Zamorian Soldier)

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (24 hp)

Initiative: +13 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +5 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 16 (+1 level, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge feat)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 16 (+1 level, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge feat)

(Parry vs. Melee): 12 (+2 level, +0 Str)

DR: 7 (breastplate 6, steel cap +1)

Attack: Arming sword +7 melee finesse (1d10, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 2); or Hunting bow +7 ranged (1d8, Crit. 20 x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Disable Device +4, Knowledge (geography) +6, Open Lock +8, Ride +13, Sleight-of-Hand +8

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Ride)

Languages: Zamorian, Brythunian, Corinthian, Hyrkanian, Kothic, Nemedian, Ophirean

Possessions: Breastplate, Steel Cap, Arming Sword, Hunting Bow

Bogdan was that most rare thing in Arenjun – an honest man. He was not, however, a stupid one and managed to attain a high position, that of a captain in the Governor's guard through hard work and being in the right place at the right time. Unfortunately, his undoing came from his romance with the lady Juliana. They would meet at times in the palace and it was only inevitable that the covetous Oleksa would see the fair woman and desire her for his own.

Oleksa arranged for evidence of wrongdoing to be planted in Bogdan's quarters and then attempted to arrest him and have him executed. Fortunately for the guard captain, he was popular with some of his men who helped him to escape and fled with him into the mountains. Since then they have survived and had their revenge by preying upon the trade caravans belonging to Oleksa.

Bogdan is motivated by a need for revenge upon Oleksa but chiefly by his love of Juliana. He will risk everything, including his men, the adventurers and his own life, to free her from Oleksa. However, he is a decent man and will do what he can to keep casualties to a minimum amongst his friends. Bogdan is blunt-speaking and pragmatic and will have no patience with those that attempt to fool or threaten him. For example, *'You want to speak with Juliana alone? I think not. Do you take me for an idiot? And please remove your hand from your sword-hilt...'*

Lady Juliana

Medium Humanoid (1st level Zamorian Noble)

Hit Dice: 1d10-1 (9 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex) +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 12 (+2 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+2 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 9 (-1 Str)

DR: 0

Attack: Stiletto +2 melee finesse (1d4-1, Crit. 20 x4, AP 1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack (poniard) +1d8 damage

Special Qualities: Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +1

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 18

Skills: Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +2, Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (history) +4, Open Lock +6, Perform +8, Sleight of Hand +4

Feats: Run

Languages: Zamorian, Brythunian, Hyrkanian, Shemite

Possessions: Stiletto

Juliana is from a minor noble family of Zamora. Her parents have little money or influence and they saw a good match for her in Captain Bogdan. Unfortunately, they were unable to stand up to the pressures put upon them by Oleksa (cruel taxes, threats of violence and so on) and were forced to agree to his proposal of marriage to their beautiful daughter.

She has no appreciable skills as far as this adventure is concerned – in court life and in matters of trading she has some knowledge but those days are behind her now that she has run away with Bogdan.

Juliana's motivations are to stay free from Oleksa's clutches and to remain with Bogdan. Everything else is unimportant to her. Her personality is sweet-tempered if a trifle weak-willed. She is wont to do something silly (run off alone into the tunnels in the middle of the fight, for example) but will try her best to help out if told to do something by a suitably commanding person. *For example, 'I'm sorry? You want me to carry that? But it's covered with blood and ... well, I will do my best.'*

As an aside, she is a student of history and will be able to step in to identify the temple of the Cult of the Blooded Stones if no player is able to do so.

Iovinicus the Brythunian

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Brythunian Soldier)

Hit Dice: 2d10+2 (18 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 11 (+1 Dex)

(Dodge vs. Melee): 11 (+1 Dex)

(Parry vs. Melee): 15 (+1 level, +4 Str)

DR: 0

Attack: Unarmed strike +6 melee (1d4+4, Crit. 20 x2, AP 0); or Grapple +10 melee (1d4+4, Crit. 20 x2, AP 0); or

Greatsword +6 melee (2d10+4, Crit. 19-20 x2, AP 8)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Swim +6

Feats: Brawl, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack

Languages: Brythunian, Corinthian, Nemedian, Zamorian

Possessions: Greatsword

The mighty Iovinicus is a bully through-and-through. He has served as a soldier and mercenary under a number of leaders but usually makes himself unpopular, forcing him to move on. He is not a murderer, however, preferring a less lethal form of violence to achieve his ends, namely a life of ease. He has only been in the village for a couple of weeks but has already managed to acquire one of the huts for himself and has the villagers jumping at his call.

He is extremely muscular with a shaven head and an enormous moustache curling across his upper lip and is given to swaggering about the village bare-chested, with a large sword strapped across his back. He is most skilled with his fists but is capable enough with the blade as to prove a threat if necessary.

He is motivated purely by his desire for a life of ease and his need to prove himself the stronger in any confrontation. He will not initiate any lethal combat and will attempt to dissuade any from starting it with him.

Iovinicus is a larger-than-life character, loud, boisterous and somewhat menacing. He is also given to referring to himself in the third person. For example, *'You wish to speak with this man? He works for Iovinicus! And Iovinicus has need of his time ... unless you wish to prove yourself the stronger?'*

The Five Blooded Stones

Large Outsider (demon)

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp)

Initiative: +0 (-2 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 20 ft.

DV (Dodge): 6 (-2 Dex, -1 natural, -1 size)

DR: 15 (natural)

Attack: Slam +8 melee (2d8+4, Crit. 20 x2, AP 8)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2)/10 ft. (2)

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +2, Will -

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +0, Spot +0

Feats: None

The Stones were created by the Hungry God, Kovag-Re to act as his 'mouth' in the world of mortals. Composed of a rock-like material, they lie dormant unless activated by contact with human blood. When that happens they animate, sliding and bending in a disturbing manner, so as to crush anyone nearby and to absorb their blood through the sorcerous stone and give it to Kovag-Re. Unfortunately, they have been starved for so long that they will no longer stay within the temple when activated and will want to kill everybody present and then to move out onto the surface to continue their rampage.

Normal weapons and attacks will affect them no more than they might affect a boulder – a

particularly good hit may carve into the rock-like substance but they can take a lot of damage even so. The players will have to be cunning to avoid a very messy death indeed – they can be entombed by collapsing the tunnels or, perhaps, pushed down a crevasse by a couple of strong adventurers. Alternatively, a brave adventurer might stand between two of them and then dodge aside, allowing the Stones to destroy each other. In the players' favour, they are not very fast and are actually lighter than they look and could be pushed aside in extreme need.

Hyboria is filled with places suitable for high adventure. After all, that's what *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is all about! Remember that you are in the world of classic fantasy fiction, and behave accordingly. Now, seize your sword hilt, steel your heart and call upon Crom one last time – not that he will listen...

APPENDIX 2 - HOW TO RELOCATE THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is, as seen, set in Zamora but the motivations of the characters are such that it could take place almost anywhere. Perhaps in the hills of Turan? Or in the mountains of Poitain in southern Aquilonia? It should be fairly easy to relocate the action to a place more suitable for your characters.

As suggestions, here are some name changes for the characters in the adventure:

Turan

Replace Arenjun with Khawarism
 Replace Oleksa with Turhan Shah
 Replace Bogdan with Kasim
 Replace Juliana with Bathshera
 Replace Iovinius with Baybars if he is to be more local
 Replace Lubomyr with Saheed
 Replace Vesna with Jamila

Aquilonia

Replace Arenjun with Navarrium (town invented for the purposes of this adventure)
 Replace Oleksa with Barrabus
 Replace Bogdan with Hadrianus
 Replace Juliana with Livia
 Replace Iovinius with Claudio if he is to be more local
 Replace Lubomyr with Firminus
 Replace Vesna with Portia



The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ('Wizards'). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) 'Contributors' means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) 'Derivative Material' means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) 'Distribute' means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) 'Open Game Content' means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) 'Product Identity' means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) 'Trademark' means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) 'Use', 'Used' or 'Using' means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) 'You' or 'Your' means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this

License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/ or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorised version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Modern System Reference Document Copyright 2002, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, Charles Ryan, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, Peter Adkison, Bruce R. Cordell, John Tynes, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker.

System Reference Document Copyright 2000-2003, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich baker, Andy Collins, David noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Conan the Roleplaying Game is (C) Conan Properties International LLC.
The Black Stones of Kovag-Re is (C) 2004 Conan Properties International LLC. CONAN(R), CONAN THE BARBARIAN(R) and related logos, character, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Conan Properties International LLC unless otherwise noted. All Rights Reserved. Mongoose Publishing Ltd Authorized User.