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THE COMING OF HANUMAN



A SCENARIO FOR
CONAN[®]
THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

CONAN®

THE COMING OF HANUMAN

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The Coming of Hanuman

The Coming of Hanuman is a short adventure scenario for the Conan Roleplaying Game. It is meant to be played by any number of characters of 1st to 3rd level. Higher-level characters could find it easier to simply solve everything by hacking their way through instead of making the diplomatic efforts suggested by the adventure.

THIS SCENARIO ASSUMES

the player characters are currently in Eastern Shem, but can be relocated to anywhere near the Kezankian mountains, substituting the Shemite and Zuagir characters with members of any local warrior tribe or clan. All other elements of the adventure remain the same, except the Ape Master's plan to take over Zamboula has to be delayed for a few miles and many weeks, which means the adventure's sense of urgency would be somewhat reduced.

The rugged terrain hurt the girl's delicate feet as she ran naked through the Shemite desert. The vast expanse lay before her as a desolate, featureless grave — there was no way she could escape from her pursuer, no place to hide except the ruins; and she could not return to that. She could not. Instead, she ran faster, heedless of the sharp pain on her unclad feet. Unexpectedly, her very momentum made her stumble and fall, her perfect face filling with desert dust and her heavenly lips tasting the grey sand. Panic overcame her as she struggled to get back up, but it was too late. The thing was upon her. She tried not to think of it, not to smell the beast's musk as it came closer, not to lift her head as she could guess the creature's shadow over the rocks, not to scream although her heart was pounding in her chest with all the strength of her panic. But it was too late and, as the man-ape lifted up its knife to deal the deathblow, a shrill female scream filled the mountain pass...

This adventure has the Player Characters fighting side-by-side with Turanian soldiers enforcing their control of Shemite territory against a gang of Zuagir rebels. In the midst of this campaign, the Zuagirs are distracted by some supernatural happenings near their lands and offer the Turanian general a truce to better investigate matters. The Turanians obviously decline, thinking the Zuagirs are making the story up to save their sorry hides. After the ensuing battle, the barely victorious Turanian company stumbles

upon some mysterious ruins in the desert. They decide to camp there, resting up and tending their wounds before giving chase to the scattered Zuagirs and finishing their uprising once and for all. However, the ruins hold something more than old stone, as Hyborean ruins often



will; soon, both parties find themselves fighting for their lives against a very real and deadly threat...

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

All of the following events have already taken place at the start of the adventure. They are detailed here to give the Games Master a full understanding of the situation behind this scenario.

THE AWAKENING

Three years ago, the Zamoran scholar Ravu of Yezud travelled outside his home city, endeavouring to capture and tame one of the local man-apes; a task attempted by many scholars before him. Aware of the hazards of giving animal training to such an intelligent beast, Ravu researched a secret ritual designed to further awaken a man-ape's wits, instead of reducing them. The ritual was intended to make the man-ape sensitive enough to receive orders and follow them or, as Ravu himself said, 'to give them a will so it can be subjugated'. Sure of his success, the scholar took to the Kezankian Mountains with a retinue of Kothian and Hyperborean borderers, who tracked a particularly large man-ape and captured him. Then Ravu took his captive man-ape to a secret arcane site near Dagoth Hill, where he summoned terrible sorcery and enchantments by the light of the moon. Needless to say, something went awfully wrong; although no one knows exactly what. When the few surviving Kothian mercenaries were encountered three weeks later, their minds had been rendered from the dreadful event they had witnessed and they were all irredeemably insane. Their garbled reports coincided in one fact only: more than half of their brethren had perished in some unspeakable surge of hellish power, after which the Yezudian sage and his man-ape had vanished without a trace.

TURANIANS AND ZUAGIRS

During the past few months, an ever-increasing number of King Yezdigerd's outposts and troops along northeastern Shem have been attacked by a small force of Zuagir malcontents. The rebels strike wherever Turan's power is weakest or most dubious, and thus many small Turanian detachments have fallen victim to these bandits' attacks. By all accounts, their leader would be one Bahim Baal, a young and foolhardy Zuagir prince, who trusts partisan tactics and the mountainous terrain of northeastern Shem to protect his feeble band from the mighty forces of Turan. However, Baal's guerrilla war is doomed to fail against the mighty Turanian company

sent to quell his rebellion. This company is commanded by the experienced and ruthless Turanian general Mahath Agha, also called the Hawk of Aghrapur for his deadly aim and penetrating gaze. Mahath Agha is a feared warlord among his countrymen, and there is little doubt he will stamp out these rebels.

However, the imminent Turanian attack is neither the only nor the worst of the Zuagirs' current concerns; a mysterious force, something unnatural and unseen, has been attacking and razing their smallest and most isolated settlements. The Zuagirs' brothers and fathers are slaughtered, their wives and sisters disappear. Most of the clues and trails left by the attackers suggest the raids are indeed the work of a raiding party, but something in their savagery and thoroughness makes the Zuagirs increasingly uneasy. So far only three of their camps have been destroyed in this manner, but the last one was a very important settlement holding more than 100 Zuagir nomads, including nearly two score able warriors who were butchered to the last man. Most importantly, this last raid collected a painfully valuable prize – the beloved sister of Bahim Baal himself; the beautiful Nameela of the Zuagirs, whose golden eyes glitter as the sands of Shem. The chieftain's sister was taken away without leaving any trace. This news would be troubling enough had they arrived at any other moment; now, barely a week before a major battle against the Kingdom of Turan, they are nothing short of disastrous. If Bahim Baal is to save his people, he must make a very important decision, and make it fast.

THE APE ARMY

Unknown to both Mahath Agha and his Zuagir foes, the site of their upcoming battle houses a strange, third party of rapidly increasing power. The ruins of a deserted city stand in the middle of Zuagir territory, a few miles northwest of Zamboula. Much smaller and less known than such great ancient sites as Kuthchemes or the Haunted Pyramids, these ruins have served as an inconspicuous travel post for many a desert wanderer over the centuries. Now, however, they have become inhabited again. A large pack of Kezankian man-apes, numbering in the dozens, have taken residence in the ruins. No such gathering of these beasts had been seen in Hyborian lands since the sinking of Atlantis; in fact, there seems to be a supernatural force behind their assembly.

These man-apes are, of course, the force behind the recent raids upon Zuagir settlements; and their

leader is, of course, none other than the man-ape Ravu of Yezud awakened three years ago. The scholar's rituals did much more than awakening the beast's intelligence, in fact giving it unearthly insight and even supernatural abilities of its own. The man-ape fled, taking the terrified Ravu with him, even as the magical ritual of its rebirth wracked the minds and bodies of the wizard's hapless bodyguards. During the last couple of years, the creature held Ravu prisoner, torturing him and forcing him to teach it the secrets of magic. Now the man-ape is a powerful wizard itself, and has even developed a lust for conquest. Using his supernatural talents and new leadership abilities, the man-ape enthralled enough of its kin to form a small war party, which he trained to use weapons and follow his orders. Under their unholy leader's command, the man-apes have killed dozens of Shemites, stealing their women and children to build a new tribe, tainted with the blood of their degenerate race. Furthermore, the man-ape leader has learned all relevant facts about human civilisation in general, and the Shemite people in particular, from Ravu, who is still the creature's prisoner at the ruins, and from forceful, dreadful interrogation of its human captives. Soon, the next stage of the man-ape's scheme will begin: it plans to contact the priesthood and people of Zamboula, presenting himself as an avatar of the god Hanuman to take advantage of the Zamboulans' unchecked worship of the ape-god. The city's Turanian leaders would have no choice but to accept the will of the mighty cult of Hanuman, and man-apes would control the city through religious fear. Thus the creature plans to use Zamboula as the first city of its new empire, ruled by its new race.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Player Characters are assumed by default to be mercenaries or enlisted soldiers in the service of Mahath Agha. If they have no other reason to follow the Turanian army, coin is always a good incentive. If the Player Characters have absolutely no cause to enlist in a Turanian mercenary regiment, or are otherwise unable to use this adventure hook, consider using one of the following alternatives:

- The Player Characters are travelling through northeastern Shem for any reason (or for no specific reason) and stumble upon Mahath Agha's military encampment by accident. The Turanian company's guards bring the Player Characters before Mahath Agha, who gives them a choice of either serving Turan as mercenaries or dying for suspected allegiance with the Zuagir rebels.

- The Player Characters are hired not by Turan but by Shem, or by a neighbouring nation such as Khauran, Khoraja or Koth, with the specific purpose of scouting the northeastern Shemite deserts and spying on the Turanian mercenary force. The Player Characters join the Turanian army as a way to investigate its activities from within.
- The Player Characters have been sent by a Shemite or Turanian employer to investigate the activities of Bahim Baal's Zuagirs. During their investigation, they found the Turanian company's tracks and, after a few journeys, caught up with them. They were escorted to the presence of Mahath Agha and, whether by intimidation or mutual convenience, accepted to join the Turanian lines, if only during this campaign against their common target.

Once the stage is set and the Player Characters are in place, the action begins...

SCENE I: THE HAWK OF AGHRAPUR

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

For days now you have travelled through the harsh deserts and steppes of the Turanian-Shemite border. Nobody ever said that serving as scouts for the Turanian army was going to be a nice ride, nor did you have any illusions about finding the hidden Zuagir rebels quickly, much less in their own territory. However, it has indeed been a difficult journey, wearily trudging these barren lands where no shade falls, no food grows and none of you are welcome. Oh yes, Turan may hold the rule here, but it does not hold the people's loyalty. Then again, that is precisely the reason why you are here, is it not? That is the job that brought you to the deserts of Shem, two silver pieces a week plus meals – to help the Turanian army find the Zuagir insurgents and stamp out their rebellion. No indeed, nobody said this was going to be a nice ride.

Your ponderings are interrupted by the sudden blare of war horns and the yells of mercenary officers.

-The Zuagirs! The Zuagirs!

-Alarum! Alarum!

-Battle stations, dogs!! Time to earn your daily meals!

-There they are! Onward!! For King Yezdigerd!!

-Come on, march ahead!! Faster, curse you!! Faster!!

-In formation, sons of camels!

-Charge!! Tarim smite you, chaaaaaarge!!!

As you scramble to obey at least some of the orders, you see the Turanian company commander, Mahath Agha, fiercely charging the desert nomads with his personal guard. You do not know what awes you most in this man – his courage or his arrogance. You have no time to decide, however, as everyone in the company must immediately follow the Agha to battle with the Zuagirs.

Thus are the characters thrust in the thick of it from the very start. The Zuagirs spotted by the Turanian watchmen are nothing but an advance party, and so attempt to retreat instead of standing their ground. Allow the Player Characters to enter combat if they wish; despite their retreat, the Zuagirs will fight back if forced to. Otherwise, handle the encounter as a descriptive battle, which ends with most of the Zuagirs successfully escaping. If the Player Characters insist and succeed in engaging some of the Shemite rebels in melee, use the Zuagir rider statistics given below. The Zuagirs use Turanian desert warhorses, the statistics of which can be found on page 306 of the *Conan Roleplaying Game*.

ZUAGIR RIDER

Medium Humanoid (1st level Shemite nomad)

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (6 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft. (70 ft. on horseback)

DV: (Dodge vs. Ranged): 13 (+2 Dex, +1 favoured terrain) (Dodge vs. Melee): 13 (+2 Dex, +1 favoured terrain) (Parry vs. Melee): 11 (+1 Str)

DR: 0

Attack: Scimitar +2 melee (1d8+1/ 18-20, AP 3); or Ghanata knife +3 melee finesse (1d8/ 20, AP 2); or Shemite bow +4 ranged (1d10+1/ x3, AP 4)

Full Attack: Scimitar +2 melee (1d8+1/ 18-20, AP 3) and Ghanata knife +3 melee finesse (1d8/ 20, AP 2)

Special Attacks: Shemite racial traits

Special Qualities: Shemite racial traits, favoured terrain (desert)

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

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

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 9

Skills: Appraise +2, Bluff +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Ride +6, Search +1, Spot +8, Survival +8

Feats: Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Track

PRISONERS

If the Player Characters managed to bring at least one or two Zuagirs alive, these are taken to Mahath Agha for interrogation. Otherwise, assume Mahath Agha managed to catch a prisoner and is currently interrogating him. Should the Player Characters witness the interrogation, feel free to use any of the following samples as excerpts from the captured Zuagirs' dialogue:

-The Zuagirs are not afraid of the Turanian despots. Whatever should happen to us, it shall be the will of Ishtar over which you have no power.

-Our tribe is not numerous, but this is our home, and we know it better than you. You will not leave our Realm alive.

-We will tell you the hiding place of our leader, for he wishes to talk to you. Do not think we do it out of fear or pain.

-There are stronger forces than you threatening the Shemite people now. We do not fear you.

-What is the might of the spoiled King of Turan when compared with the power of evil spirits?

-The Zuagirs are besieged by mysterious demons from the desert... we are lost anyway. As you will be if you come to our lands now...

-You foolish Turanian captain. Men who think themselves immortal are always the first to die.

Let the Player Characters make what they will of this information; General Mahath will obviously not suffer such an exchange to continue for long, specially after the Zuagirs have disclosed the location of their tribe so easily. Once he has a map leading the way to Bahim Baal's campsite, the Agha loses patience and orders the impertinent prisoners executed.

It is possible the Player Characters will want to take actual part in the interrogation or even stop the prisoners' execution.

However, Turanian military law gives them no right to attempt either, not even if they were the ones who brought the prisoners. To stop them from making a scene, you could subtly remind the Player Characters of their low rank and little power over the decisions of a Turanian noble they are only serving as mercenaries. If they insist, have them make a Diplomacy check (DC 25). Success means they convince the Agha of letting them interrogate or even free the prisoners. If they do not convince Mahath, however, they are well advised to stop right there and retreat quietly. Angering Mahath Agha could result in the Player Characters' punishment, potentially ranging from a few days' arrest to an official death sentence. One does not trifle with the orders of the Hawk of Aghrapur.

THE GENERAL

After the Shemite prisoners have been dealt with, the Player Characters are called to the presence of the Agha, regardless of whether they were present at the interrogation or not. They do not have a choice in the matter; they must go or risk the wrath of the Agha (see the paragraph above). The Player Characters are taken to Mahath Agha's tent and motioned to sit before him while his slaves bring and serve dinner. Use any or all of the following excerpts as part of Mahath's dialogue with the Player Characters:

-I have called you because I want you to volunteer for a mission.

-The desert rabble has revealed the location of their secret hideout. It is no more than a day's march from here. We will go there and wipe out the rebels. However, we need an advance party to scout the area and warn us of any danger.

-I have chosen you as volunteers for this job. You will march ahead and make sure the road to the rebels' lair is free of danger.

-Here... this is a map my scouts drew from the information given by those sand dogs. Use it to guide yourselves. We will follow you closely, using another copy of the map.

-I am not sending you on a suicide mission, understood? If you find danger, I want you to double back immediately and report it to me. We will be marching only a few hours behind.

-Remember: if you find the Zuagirs, just return and report. Do not engage them in battle under any circumstance.

-You do not need to know any further details. You have your orders; you may retire. That is all.

-The Hawk of Aghrapur will not discuss his strategy with you. Obey me now! Go!

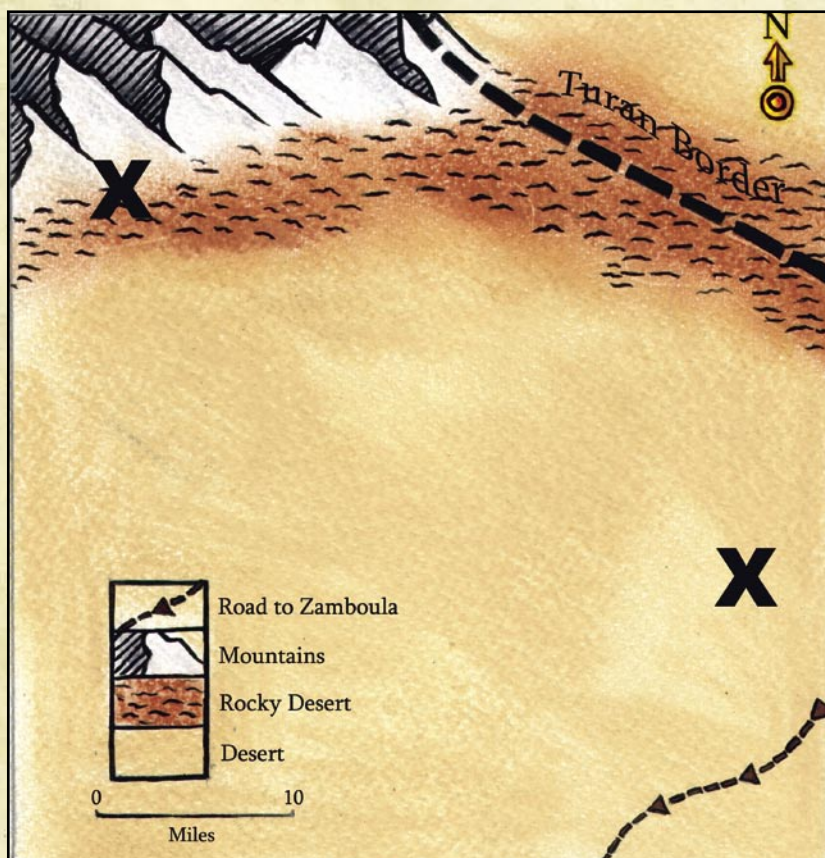
Also, if the Player Characters did not witness the interrogation, the Agha gives them a very abridged version of what happened, sprinkled with gruff anti-Shemite comments (even if one or more of the Player Characters are Shemites themselves – Turanians are not known for their respect of other nations). He shares no information beyond this, and accepts no advice or input unless it is really an amazingly convincing, sound plan – and then he only agrees grudgingly. What he wants is the Player Characters to immediately follow his orders and start towards the Zuagir hideout. Consult the *Map Handout* to trace the Player Character's route. See the *Appendix* for Mahath Agha's full statistics.

A successful Sense Motive check against a DC equal to the Agha's opposed Bluff check reveals he is indeed using the Player Characters, albeit no more than any other leader would use any other soldier. Although he plans to position them as cannon fodder, Mahath honestly intends to follow and catch up with them to battle the Zuagirs together.

SCENE II: THE LOST RUINS

The one-day trip to the 'rebel base' will pass uneventfully. If the Player Characters are 3rd level or higher, you may want to spice it up by adding an encounter with some animal native to the Shemite desert, such as a desert viper (see the *Conan Roleplaying Game*, page 310). Otherwise, it is best if the Player Characters reach their destination relatively fresh and unhurt; that is, having had no previous encounters.

After some twelve hours of travelling, the party reaches the spot indicated in the Agha's map (see the *Map Handout*). Obviously the map does not actually lead to Bahim Baal's lair, but to the Man-apes' ruins; the Zuagir chieftain found and followed the tracks of his sister's attackers and he decided the solution to his apparently hopeless situation was to turn both his enemies upon each other.



To this effect, he gave instructions to all his scouts to give the apes' ruins as the 'secret location' of the Zuagirs' forces, which seems to have had exactly the desired results with Mahath Agha and the Player Characters. As soon as the Turanians meet the man-apes in battle, Bahim Baal intends to enter the ruins and rescue his people, hopefully escaping with them before the battle is decided in favour of either of his foes. Otherwise, he is ready to fight the winner to the death. He did not count on the Player Characters arriving to the site earlier, though, or on his sister escaping on her own and being attacked by one of the apes.

SHE OF THE GOLDEN EYES

As soon as the Player Characters come within sight of the ruins, read or paraphrase the following:

It is many hours since you separated from the main Turanian company, but you finally see the near cliffs and rocky foothills of the Kezankian Mountains - the landmark of the end of your journey. You found no trap and faced no ambush during the trip, although an eerie feeling of disquiet has been growing on you as you came closer to this area. As you continue nearer to the place indicated in your

map, you make out the outline of some apparently ruined stone buildings in the distance, almost hidden on the base of a short cliff wall. These stones must mark the site of the rebel camp, as indicated by the map Shah Mahath gave you. You hope the Turanian and his men are not too long in catching up with you, for there is something about this area that makes your very soul tingle... suddenly, you hear the shrill scream of a woman. A scream of terror. Despite the craggy cliff walls magnifying its strength and echoing its resonance everywhere around you, there is no doubt about it - the scream came from the ruins.

About 300 feet from the Player Characters' location, Nameela, the beautiful sister of the rebel Bahim Baal, is being chased by a large man-ape guard after having escaped the ruins where her people were being held captive. If the Player Characters run for it, they may find her in time to intervene. Read or paraphrase the following as soon as any

of the Player Characters come within sight of the girl and her pursuer:

As you hurry towards the ruins, you come upon a vision of both staggering horror and unearthly beauty, such as only the gods are able to paint. A naked woman lies in the sandy ground, desperately scrambling to get up and run as her stunning, angelic countenance distorts in a mask of sheer panic. The most striking feature of this girl is her golden eyes, which glitter as the sun on the Shemite sands and have almost the same colour as her desert-tanned skin. A few steps behind this desert beauty, a hulking humanoid - for the thing that stands before your eyes is not a man, even though it walks on two legs - ambles towards the frantic beauty. You would think the thing an ape from the jungles near the Vilayet, except that it is dressed on a crude imitation of a desert nomad's kaffia and cloak, and the blade of a curved knife shines wickedly, clutched in its hairy right hand.

If the Player Characters intercede for the girl (and well they should, being heroes of the Hyborian age), the man-ape chasing her retreats into the ruins, as all local man-apes have been taught

by their master not to enter a battle they are not entirely sure of winning. If the Player Characters stop the thing's retreat, it stands and fights; use the man-ape statistics given on page 324 of the *Conan Roleplaying Game*, except as follows:

Attack: Zhaibar knife +11 melee (1d12+6/20, AP 7); or slam +11 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: Zhaibar knife +11 melee (1d12+6/20, AP 7), slam +11 melee (1d8+6) and bite +9 melee (1d10+3)

As soon as the threat of the man-ape is dealt with, the Player Characters may turn their attention to the fleeing girl, who has appropriately swooned with all the excitement. If they tend to the girl, she awakes with a start, and begins babbling incoherently about the ruins and her people. After a few moments she calms down, but the tint of desperation can still be seen in her painfully beautiful, golden eyes. Use any of the following excerpts as part of the girls' dialogue with the Player Characters:

-Is... is that thing...? Who are you?

-I am Nameela of the Zuagirs. Please... I don't know who you are, but please help me... my people are still trapped by those things...

-Those cursed ruins are not my tribe's haven. I don't know why you thought they could be!

-You have to follow that... that monster's tracks... you have to save my people!

-They are not human... I, I do not know what they are! They are beasts! Spirits of the underworld come to torment us!

-I don't know how many of them they are... they are like a tribe... a tribe of filthy, beastly... things...! Oh...!

They have a master... One who is smarter and wiser than the others, but also much more evil and cruel... he... I don't want to talk about him, I don't...



-The leader of those beasts, he... he wanted me as his, as his mate, he did... w-what he did to me... Ishtar take me! What that monster did to me!

Now would be a good moment for the Player Characters to investigate the ruins alone if they wished. If the Player Characters are significantly loyal to the Agha or simply afraid of going inside the ruins alone, they may choose to wait for the Turanians while watching the girl outside the ruins. However, the girl pleads them to go inside and rescue her people before the 'apes arrive'. Make sure this is said in such a tone as to give the Player Characters an idea of the importance of *not* being there when that happens. If the Player Characters decide to wait until the arrival of their employer, proceed directly to *Scene III: Hanuman Himself*.

THE TEMPLE OF THE MAN-APE

If the Player Characters decide to enter the ruins, read or paraphrase the following:

You slowly enter the stone ruins, the feeling of anxiety still growing inside you. There are no tents, no hearths, no banners – this is not a Zuagir camp, not even an inhabited

settlement. There is utter silence in the place, although there undoubtedly is a presence here, something watching and probing you. After a few instants you realise who it is: the city is full of crude, debased depictions of the ape-god Hanuman. Bas-reliefs, small statuettes, large white stone idols – Hanuman is all around you, looking upon your intrusion with the aloof disapproval of a carved deity. These ruins must have belonged to some base ancient cult, probably established by Vendhyan ancestors or some such people. However, your concern is not with the city's former inhabitants, but with whoever is currently occupying it.

The Player Characters have come to the ruins during a raid, so most of the man-apes, including their sorcerous master, are currently away looking for captives among the near Shemite tribes. While the Player Characters explore the ruins, you may want to have them encounter one or two wandering man-apes, just to make it clear the things *do* wander the city. Man-apes found in the ruins all have the statistics of a typical man-ape (see the *Conan Roleplaying Game*, page 324) except that they carry and use Zhaibar knives (see above for a man-ape's combat statistics with a Zhaibar knife).

THE CAPTIVES

After a few minutes of exploring the ruins, have the Player Characters encounter a large white building near the southeastern perimeter of the ruins. At this moment, read or paraphrase the following:

Presently you come before a large white stone building, which is in better shape than the others. The Ape-God's monstrous visage sneers at you from the four roof corners. The windows have been closed with rocks, but you could have sworn you saw faint traces of movement within. Suddenly, a Shemitic-speaking voice calls to you in a whisper...

The Player Characters have found the building housing most of the apes' Zuagir prisoners. These are mostly women and children, but there are also a few young men among them (not all the man-apes are males, after all). As soon as the Player Characters pass by one of the windows, one of the prisoners calls out to them, asking for their help. The Player Characters may ask a few questions but you should remind them there is little time for that; besides, the Zuagir captives do not know much more about the man-apes than anything Nameela may have already told the Player Characters.

As soon as the Player Characters agree to help, the Zuagir captives tell them the door is on the other side of the building, but two armed man-apes stand guard. The Player Characters will have to come up with some good strategy to lead them away from their post. In addition, the Zuagir captives suggest the man-apes' master hides an artefact of great power somewhere at the centre of the ruins.

If the Player Characters successfully free the captives, they swiftly flee the ruins, taking cover in the rocks and crevices among the nearby cliffs until their leader, Bahim Baal, comes for them.

RAVU OF YEZUD

If at any time the Player Characters decide to go deeper inside the ruins, it does not take long for them to find the city's central building: a small dilapidated altar, the entrance to which is blocked by a large white stone slab with strange, monstrous carvings. This slab has a hardness of 10 and 150 hit points. A weapon's AP rating does not count against the slab's hardness. To even move this slab requires a successful Strength check (DC 25), but a character can take 20 on such a check.

Once the characters are inside the small altar through any means, they find it has an occupant. Read or paraphrase the following:

Inside the small building you see, dimly outlined by the feeble light coming from outside, the form of a lone human prisoner, chained to the stone floor as if it was a cell. He is an old man, although clearly younger than he seems. It looks as if this man had spent many years under constant torture both of the mind and soul, as his quaking limbs and trembling gaze indicate as he weakly moves his marked, battered body towards you. His words sound as the Zamoran tongue, although his voice is too faint and croaky to be sure of it. He seems to repeat a single word... his name? Ravu... Ravu of Yezud...

This man is Ravu of Yezud, the wizard who summoned the ritual that created the Man-apes' wizard-king. Ravu succeeded in giving intelligence to a man-ape but, somewhere along the process, the roles were reversed and the apprentice became the master, which started three long years of torture and humiliation during which Ravu was a slave to the beast he had planned to enslave himself. It was Ravu who taught sorcery to the beast; that is why he has been kept alive these

three years. His usefulness, however, nears an end, and he will soon be killed and ritually eaten by the man-ape leader unless the Player Characters rescue him.

If the Player Characters interrogate Ravu, he tells him his version of the events related in the Adventure Background section (see above), from the point his research led him to the man-ape realms in the Kezankian mountains, to the awful rite that spawned his creation and tormentor, to his abomination's current plans to impersonate Hanuman and dominate Zamboula before setting out to create a new race of ape-men.

Freeing Ravu should not be too difficult. Opening his chains requires an Open Lock check (DC 18); breaking them requires a Strength check (DC 20). A character can take 20 on any of these checks. Ravu's full statistics can be found in the *Appendix*.

SCENE III:

HANUMAN HIMSELF

A few hours after the Player Characters arrive to the ruins, Bahim Baal, the Zuagir leader, appears in the city outskirts and demands his people be delivered to him. You can have Bahim Baal appear early if the Player Characters become stuck in the adventure, or as a way to interrupt any attempt by the Player Characters to make camp and rest while near the ruins. Whatever the manner of his appearance, read or paraphrase the following when Bahim Baal turns up:

Suddenly, the thundering gallop of a hundred horses calls your attention. As you turn to seek the source of this noise, you see a band of Zuagir riders approaching the ruins. Their leader is a tall Shemite warrior, whose proud features sport the same glinting golden eyes you found in the woman that escaped the man-apes. As he comes near you, the Zuagir leader dismounts with a mighty leap and speaks with a stern, commanding voice that fills the desert thanks to the echo of the mountain face.

-Turanian mercenaries! Release the prisoners unto Bahim Baal of the Shemites or suffer the wrath of the Zuagir clans!

It is clear the adventurers are in a weak position against more than one hundred Zuagir warriors, although the city ruins might give them some cover and allow them to make time until Mahath Agha, who has surely seen the Zuagirs' mobilisation, arrives with his men. If the Player Characters surrender to the Zuagirs, Bahim Baal's decision about them depends on how they treated Nameela and the other Zuagir prisoners.

The Player Characters may also decide to parley with the Zuagir leader. This requires a successful Bluff or Diplomacy check (DC 25, or 15 if they can prove they actually rescued Bahim Baal's people). If the Player Characters manage to talk peacefully to the Zuagir leader, he explains his side of the events, from his decision to wage a partisan war against the Turanian invaders; to the kidnapping of his sister Nameela, which led him and his trackers to follow her kidnappers to these ruins; to his decision to pit the apes and Turanians against each other by giving the Agha false directions taking him to the apes' lair. The Player Characters' reaction to this information is completely up to them.

Bahim Baal's full statistics can be found in the *Appendix*.

SOLDIERS AND APES

Roughly a half hour after Bahim Baal's arrival, regardless of what happened between him and the Player Characters, Mahath Agha's Turanian mercenaries charge into the scene, attacking the Zuagirs immediately and without mercy. Thus starts a battle between Shemite riders (use the stats given above) and Turanian mercenaries (use the stats shown in the *Conan Roleplaying Game*, page 299). The Player Characters are free to take whichever side they wish, or even to take advantage of the situation to flee the scene undetected.

After 10 rounds of combat have passed, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Suddenly, a bloodcurdling howl cuts the night in two. Both Zuagirs and Turanians stop dead on their tracks, looking up to one of the craggy cliff tops where the shadows give way to a vision of brutality and chaos.

Up there on the cliffs, there is a gang of beasts, of barely humanoid monsters who, albeit clothed and armed as true humans, are clearly the abominations of another, more degenerate race. They furiously roar and leap as they charge down the mountainside towards the battling humans below, their bestial faces full of a primal, instinctive hate, which is

much deeper than any conscious understanding of enmity. These are man-apes from the eastern mountains, gathered in a military force for the first time since Atlantis sank.

In a few moments, the battle has turned completely: human soldiers, both Zuagir and Turanian, instinctively join forces against the monstrous aberrations, which have clearly become the common enemy. However, even their combined might is no match for the apes' sheer hate and ferocity. Then, to make matters worse, an unnatural dust storm rises in the area and a dark wind begins blowing among the warriors... the devilish Master of the ruins has arrived at last...

Warned by their city sentries of the humans' arrival, the Ape Master and his militia have returned from their raids upon desert settlements. The man-apes are greatly outnumbered, but their physical superiority and their masters' sorcery could yet win them the battle, especially when some of the Turanians are Hanuman worshippers, which gives the man-apes the additional advantage of religious awe.

The Ape Master in particular is a very tough opponent, keeping to one side of the battle from its lofty seat 30 feet above ground and smiting anyone who comes near with its magical power. If the Player Characters attempt to approach the creature, they do not need a Climb check but require at least two full-round actions to reach its position.

The Ape Master's full statistics can be found in the *Appendix*.

ENDING THE BATTLE

Unless the Player Characters change the course of events in some way, the battle will end as follows:

- The Zuagirs leave the battle a few rounds after the apes' onslaught, more worried about rescuing their captive kin than anything else. Once they have safely led the prisoners away from the ruins, they leave the scene, allowing their enemies to kill each other as they see fit.
- The Turanians lose the battle, but realise it with enough anticipation to flee and scatter to the four winds. The man-apes let most of them escape. Mahath Agha dies horribly at the hands of two particularly vicious man-apes. Perhaps, in the end, he gives a bit more weight to the warnings of his Shemite prisoners.

- The apes manage to rout the Turanians and keep control of the ruins, although with heavy casualties of their own and having lost all of their Zuagir prisoners.

KILLING THE APE MASTER

Unless the Player Characters intervene, the Ape Master will survive this battle and return once more to continue with its plans of conquest. However, killing it is not an easy task by any means, even to high-level characters. This scenario has a few built-in options to defeat the monster in a relatively unproblematic way:

These cliff walls are ideal for an avalanche, and the Ape Master is standing over one such cliff, 30 feet above the battle scene. A series of successful Climb checks (DC 15) would allow a character to reach a higher point among the cliffs, 50 feet above the ground, from which it would be possible to cause a rockslide directly over the Ape Master. Reaching this position without the Ape Master noticing also requires a successful Hide check opposed by the Man-Ape's Spot skill, followed by a successful Move Silently check against the creature's Listen skill. Failure means the Ape Master notices the hiding character and casts *greater telekinesis* to throw him off the cliff. If the Ape Master fails his attack roll by a substantial amount (at the Games Master's discretion), he might just cause the rockslide on himself anyway!

Once a character reaches the cliff directly above the Ape Master, causing a rockslide requires a full 10 rounds and a successful Survival check (DC 20). If the character has not been spotted by the Ape Master, he may take 10 in this check. Failing this check by 5 or more means the character causes the rockslide, but is himself affected (and probably killed) by it. A successful rockslide deals 3d8 damage to the man-ape lord, plus 1d8 per 5 points the Survival check exceeded the DC, plus 3d6 from the fall, plus the creature becomes buried under tons of rock. If the Ape Master was aware of the rockslide, it is allowed a Reflex save (DC 15). Success means the Ape Master suffers only half damage from the rockslide and does not fall or become buried.

If the Player Characters rescued Ravu of Yezud from the ruined city, he quickly goes to the heroes, revealing it is his own soul that gives power to the monster, and beseeching the Player Characters to kill him. What he says is true:

the ritual that gave intelligence to the Ape Master was fuelled with Ravu's own Power Points, and the wizard's fall should end the beast's power. If the Player Characters agree to slay Ravu then and there, he delivers himself unto death with a blessing on his lips and his passing causes an immediate reaction on the Ape Master: as the creature loses its intelligence and ability to control its sorcerous power, the magical energies inside its body cause a runaway magic effect centred on it. Roll on the Runaway Magic table (page 195 in the *Conan Roleplaying Game*) with a bonus equal to the Ape Master's Corruption score (+6) to the d20 roll.

Nameela clearly stated that the man-ape leader wanted her as her mate; a clever Player Character might want to attempt baiting the Ape Master with the girl, using her to goad the monster into a trap of the Players' own devising. As curiosity killed the cat, it is a well-known fact that lust killed the ape...

EPILOGUE

The Coming of Hanuman can have a number of different epilogues, according to the Player Characters' actions. Each of these epilogues has an associated experience point award. It is possible for more than one of these epilogues to occur together, depending on the heroes' specific actions.

If the Player Characters successfully rescue the Zuagir captives (not only Nameela), grant a 500 XP bonus to each of them. If they do not rescue the Zuagirs, Bahim Baal saves the prisoners anyway. In any event, the Zuagirs retreat back to their lands to continue their battle against the Turanian invaders. The ruins also hold roughly 1,000 silver pieces in jewellery and coin taken from the man-apes' raids; the Player Characters may have the time to take some of these while they rescue the captives.

If the Player Characters fight Bahim Baal and defeat him, grant them 500 XP for ending the Zuagir rebellion; however, they will probably be treated as enemies next time they encounter a Zuagir nomad.

If the Player Characters remain in good terms with Bahim Baal (which requires the safe delivery of Nameela and the Zuagir prisoners to him), he invites them to ride with him against the Turanians. Give each Player Character 250 XP for befriendng the Zuagir chieftain, plus 250 XP if they accept to join his band.

If the Player Characters decide to steal Nameela again, she resists unless one of the party members is a male with a Charisma higher than 15 and a barbaric honour code. Give each Player Character 250 XP for taking Nameela; if she goes willingly; give another 250 XP to the character she has chosen.

If the Player Characters save Mahath Agha from death, they earn high honours among the Turanian army. If they flee with the Turanian mercenaries, they are given officer's ranks and assigned to Mahath's personal guard. Give 500 XP to each Player Character who contributed to Mahath Agha's rescue, plus 250 XP to each character accepting a rank in the Turanian army.

If the Player Characters kill the Ape Master or his mentor Ravu, the surviving man-apes scatter and retreat back into the Kezankian Mountains. Give 500 XP and 1 Fate Point to each Player Character for stopping the menace of the Ape Master.

If the Player Characters do not defeat the Ape Master, it retreats to the Kezankian mountains with its surviving people, and returns one year later to consummate its plan to conquer Zamboula and begin carving its empire...

APPENDIX

The following are the statistics of some of the most important Non-Player Characters for this adventure.

THE APE MASTER

Large Outsider (native) (3rd level man-ape scholar)

Hit Dice: 6d8+3d6+9 (44 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.

DV: 16 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 6

Base Attack/ Grapple: +8/ +18

Base Magic Attack Bonus: +1

Magic Attack Roll: +3

Attack: Slam +13 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: 2 slams +13 melee (1d8+6) and bite +11 melee (1d10+3)

Space/ Reach: 10 ft. / 10 ft.

Special Attacks: Crush 3d8+9, improved grab, sorcery styles (Hypnotism, Prestidigitation)

Special Qualities: Background (acolyte, lay priest of Hanuman), darkvision 30 ft., immunity to poison, knowledge is power +5, low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +7

Corruption Score: 6

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +12, Listen +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Perform (mimic) +11, Perform (drums) +8 ranks, Search +7, Sleight of Hand +9 ranks, Spot +10

Feats: Alertness, Multiattack, Ritual Sacrifice, Spawn of Dagoth Hill

Known Spells: Hypnotism – *Entrance*; Prestidigitation – *Conjuring*, *telekinesis*, *greater telekinesis*

Base Power Points: 11

The Ape Master's special attacks and qualities are described in the *Conan Roleplaying Game*, pages 62 and 324.

The Ape Master's sorcery styles and spells can be found in the *Conan Roleplaying Game*, pages 209 and 220-221.

BAHIM BAAL

Medium Humanoid (Shemite 3rd level nomad/ 1st level soldier)

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (25 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft. (70 ft. on horseback)

DV (Dodge): 14 (+1 level, +2 Dex, +1 favoured terrain) (Parry): 12 (+1 level, +1 Str)

DR: 0

Attack: Akbitanan scimitar +7 melee (1d8+1/18-20, AP 5); or Ghanata knife +7 melee finesse (1d8/ 20, AP 2); or Shemite bow +9 ranged (1d10+1/ x3, AP 4)

Full Attack: Akbitanan scimitar +7 melee (1d8+1/18-20, AP 5) and Ghanata knife +7 melee finesse (1d8/ 20, AP 2); or Shemite bow +9 ranged (1d10+1/ x3, AP 4)

Special Attacks: Shemite racial traits

Special Qualities: Shemite racial traits, favoured terrain (desert)

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

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +8, Handle Animal +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Ride +10, Search +5, Spot +13, Survival +11

Feats: Combat Expertise, Endurance, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (scimitar, Shemite bow)

MAHATH AGHA

Medium Humanoid (Turanian 1st level noble/ 4th level soldier)

Hit Dice: 1d8+4d10+5 (30 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex)

Speed: 25 ft. (70 ft. on horseback)

DV (Dodge vs. Ranged): 17 (+2 level, +2 Dex, +3 target) (Dodge vs. Melee): 14 (+2 level, +2 Dex) (Parry vs. Melee): 17 (+2 level, +2 Str, +3 target)

DR: 7 (mail hauberk +6, steel cap +1)

Attack/ Full Attack: Light lance +7 melee (1d10+2/ x3, AP 4); or Akbitanan tulwar +9 melee (2d8+3/ 18-20, AP 7); or Hyrkanian bow +7 ranged (1d10/ 19-20, AP 3)

Special Attacks: Turanian racial traits

Special Qualities: Turanian racial traits, rank hath its privileges, title (Agha), wealth

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

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 15

Skills: Bluff +6, Craft (bowyer) +4, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Ride +10, Spot +7, Survival +7

Feats: Far Shot, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Weapon Focus (tulwar), Weapon Specialisation (tulwar)



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