

THE SONG OF BELIT

written by  
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Based on the works of  
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REVISION 2933

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March 11, 2010  
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FADE IN:

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

A green shoot forms a black bud.

BELIT (V.O.)

Believe that green buds open in  
the spring,  
That autumn paints the leaves with  
sober fire.  
Believe that I held my love  
inviolate,  
To lavish on that one man my hot  
desire.

A crimson cloak flaps in a strong wind.

N'YAGA (V.O.)

She was born a slave. She slew her  
masters and fled south. She carved  
a realm for herself. She craved  
wealth. She found it. She craved a  
man who could tame her. She found  
none... until fate brought my queen  
her king.

EXT. MESSANTIA - STREET - DAY

A rider gallops down a cobbled street. His crimson cloak  
flaps in the wind. Sunlight glints on his horned helm.  
Bystanders scatter, shout curses.

In the distance, the docks; ships of many shapes and sizes.

SERGEANT MILO (O.S.)

Stop that man!

Citizens turn to look up the street.

A group of five mounted soldiers, led by SERGEANT MILO,  
early 30's, stern-faced, gallop in pursuit. Behind them are  
six foot soldiers, crossbow armed, struggle to keep pace.

SERGEANT MILO

Halt - in the name of the King!

The lone rider gallops on. Bystanders move further to the  
sides of the street.

A vegetable cart rolls into the path of the riders. The  
Sergeant's horse stops dead and the sergeant falls off.

Bystanders laugh.

The other riders pause. CORPORAL ARRIC, 20's, fresh-faced,

dismounts, reaches to help the Sergeant. The Sergeant knocks the mans hand away,

SERGEANT MILO

Don't worry about me, you idiot,  
get after him.

CORPORAL ARRIC

Yes Sir, right away sir. Follow  
me, men!

The Riders resume the chase. The Sergeant climbs back onto his horse, looks down at the cart owner.

SERGEANT MILO

I will deal with you later... Yah!

The Sergeant rides off down the street. The crossbowmen run after him. The cart owner begins to collect his spilled vegetables.

EXT. MESSANTIA - DOCKS - DAY

A wooden jetty juts out into the bay. At its end, a low, wide galley, green and white sails - the "ARGUS" - moves away.

Captain TITO, Mid 40's, short, fat, stands on its deck. Other sailors push-off with long poles.

The single rider, CONAN, late 20's, gallops to the end of the jetty, reins to a halt within inches of the edge, leaps from the saddle, lands on deck.

EXT. ARGUS - MAIN DECK - DAY

CONAN

(Bellows)

Get her under way!

Conan draws his sword, waves it around his head, droplets of blood splatter on the deck.

TITO

We... are... under way - bound for  
the coasts of Kush. By what--

CONAN

Then I am for Kush! Push off.  
Quickly!

Conan looks up the street. The soldiers draw near.

TITO

Can you pay for your passage?

CONAN

I pay my way with steel!

Conan brandishes his sword. Tito stares at it.

CONAN

By Crom man, if you don't get moving, I'll drench the decks in the blood of its crew!

Their eyes lock. Tito turns away.

TITO

Push lads, push... Lower the main sail... Stow those ropes.

The sail flutters loose, is tied tight. A gust of wind catches in the material. With loud creaks of timber and rope, the ship pulls out into the bay.

EXT. MESSANTIA - DOCKS - DAY

The soldiers stand and wave their swords in frustration. The Sergeant turns to the crossbowmen as they shuffle along.

SERGEANT MILO

Hurry up you laggards, before they move out of range.

The men load their weapons. The ship reaches clear water. The crossbowmen shoot, bolts fall short of the target. The Sergeant stands in silent rage, hands on hips.

EXT. ARGUS - MAIN DECK - DAY

CONAN

Let them rave. Keep her on course master steersman. Well done captain.

Tito approaches Conan.

TITO

If we are to travel together, we may as well be at peace with each other. My name is Tito, licensed master of the port of Messenia. I am bound for Kush to trade with the black tribes there. This is my ship, the Argus.

Conan nods, glances back at the docks where the soldiers still gesture.

CONAN

I am Conan, a freebooter from  
Cimmeria.

The two shake hands.

CONAN

I came to this land seeking  
employment but with no wars in the  
kingdom, there was nothing to  
which I might turn my hand.

TITO

If its wars you desire, there are  
many brewing to the east - Turan  
and Hyrkania especially. But why  
do those guardsmen pursue you? Did  
you start your own war? Not that  
it is any of my business, but I  
thought perhaps...

CONAN

Nay, I've nothing to be secretive  
about. The thing is, although I  
have spent considerable time among  
you civilized people, many of your  
ways are still beyond my  
comprehension...

TITO

Aye, to me also on occasion.

CONAN

Well, last night I was in a  
tavern. A captain in the king's  
guard offered violence to the  
sweetheart of a young soldier, who  
naturally took offence and ran the  
man through. But it seems there is  
some cursed law against killing  
officers, so the boy and his girl  
fled. It was put about that I was  
seen carousing with them earlier  
in the evening and so I was taken  
to the cells to sleep off my  
drunken state. Today I was brought  
before the court, and a pompous  
fat-faced judge asked me where the  
lad had gone--

TITO

Judge Prospero.

CONAN

Aye, that was he.

TITO

I have had my own costly dealings with him.

CONAN

Of course, I could not betray the lad, so I remained silent. Then the court waxed wrath upon me and the judge talked a great deal about my duty to the state and society and other things I did not understand, nor care about. Again, he bade me tell where my friend had flown. By this time I was becoming wrathful myself, but I was patient and explained my position again. However, this did not satisfy him.

TITO

I can guess what happened next. Prospero held you in contempt of court and made to throw you in prison. You cut your way free and are now my problem. Prospero will throw me in a dungeon for aiding you.

CONAN

Fear not captain, he was the first one to die.

TITO

Oh. Well, that is some compensation I suppose. I have been fleeced in enough bad business ventures with rich and influential merchants for me to owe them any love. I will no doubt have questions to answer to when next I anchor in that port. But I can prove I acted under compulsion.

CONAN

You can.

TITO

You might as well put up your sword. We're peaceable sailors and have nothing against you. Besides, it's as well to have a fighting

(MORE)

TITO (CONT'D)  
 man such as you aboard. Come up to  
 the poop deck, Conan, and we'll  
 share a tankard of ale.

CONAN  
 Good enough.

Conan sheathes his sword, walks beside Tito. The sailors  
 watch him with a mixture of admiration and caution.

EXT. ARGUS - POOPDECK - DAY

Tito pours a full tankard for Conan, half for himself.

CONAN  
 Are you ill?

Tito laughs.

TITO  
 Nay, rations. Even the captain is  
 subject to the rules. My second of  
 the day. Your health.

They touch tankards, gulp down the ale.

CONAN  
 Fine ale... and a fine ship you  
 have.

Tito taps a foot on the deck.

TITO  
 The Argus is my one true love; we  
 were made for each other.

CONAN  
 Love is for poets and mothers.

TITO  
 You say that now, but you'll  
 change your tune when you get  
 smitten. But as I was saying, my  
 Argus is a sturdy lass, typical of  
 the trading craft of this region.  
 She is shallow-drafted so we  
 seldom venture into the open  
 ocean, hugging the coast mostly.  
 We use the oars for manoeuvring up  
 coastal rivers and into - and out  
 of - harbours.

CONAN

I see.

TITO

I have a capable crew of thirty-five men; most have been with me for many years. Trade has been very good of late. So, all in all, I have a profitable business.

Tito gestures towards various crates and bundles lashed to the deck

TITO

We have a small hold below the decks for more precious cargo. The men sleep on deck. So will you.

CONAN

That's fair, I would ask for nothing more - under the circumstances. Where can I stow my chain coat and helm?

Conan opens his tunic a little, reveals chainmail.

CONAN

I don't really want to be wearing this while aboard ship. It can quickly be donned when I need it.

TITO

Find a space on the main deck, there's room near Ramon, and then we'll see about putting you to work...

MONTAGE

A stylized map of the Western Coast of Hyboria. A dotted line marks the ship's progress. As the line passes each Nation, the name on the map highlights and a different scene is shown.

A) ARGOS: Conan helps tie down cargo in a storm. A rope snaps, crates fall. Conan lifts a heavy crate by himself while a man is dragged clear. Conan is praised.

B) SHEM: Conan, bare-chested, rows with the crew in calm weather. They approach a port with tall white towers. Tito gestures them to row on past. Conan wipes his brow, continues to row.

C) KOTH: Conan and Tito deal with black-bearded merchants in a bustling market. They eye Conan warily and hand over a heavy pouch to Tito. He hefts it in his hand, grins, slaps

Conan on the shoulder.

D) STYGIA: Conan holds the tiller as the ship passes the entrance to a broad river. A massive black castle perched on either bank. Pyramids in the background.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. ARGUS - POOPDECK - DAY

Tito and Conan bend over a map. Tito points at the map, then at the coast. Conan nods.

TITO

The Black Coast starts here. We'll get scant profit from trade with Stygia - may Mitra curse Set and his snake-worshipers.

CONAN

I have heard of your Mitra and this serpent god Set many times. Civilized religions confound me. There is no worshiping in temples for us.

TITO

Well, from here onwards, my men will be praying to their gods.

CONAN

Why so?

TITO

We have passed the southern border of Stygia. Pirate ships roam these waters. We will see few trading ships along this coast. Fortunately we are close to the villages I seek. There is a river entrance not more than--

RAMON (O.S.)

Smoke to the south captain!

They glance up at RAMON, early 30's, perched near the top of the main mast, look in the direction he points.

A haze of smoke far to the south.

TITO

Ramon has keen eyes indeed.

Soon they sail alongside the remains of a high-walled village. Smoke drifts from charred thatched houses. Bodies of dead villagers lie strewn about.

CONAN

You knew then?

TITO

Aye, I had good trade here, a foretimes. This is the work of pirates.

CONAN

The fires still burn - they will not be far from here. You fear these pirates?

TITO

The Argus is no warship, its crew are not soldiers. If we encounter pirates, we run, not fight. Yet if it came to a pinch, we have beaten off sea-reavers before, and might do it again... unless it was Belit's Tigress.

CONAN

Belit?

TITO

The wildest she-devil unchanged. Unless I read the signs wrong, it was her butchers who destroyed that village. May I some day see her dangling from the yard-arm! She is called the Queen of the Black Coast. She is a pale-skinned Shemite woman, who leads black-skinned raiders. They harry the shipping and have sent many a good tradesman to the bottom. We must prepare for the worst.

Quilted jerkins and steel helms are removed from storage, handed out to the sailors. All get swords, some get bows and arrows. Conan dons his chainmail.

TITO

Little use to resist if we're run down. But it rasps the soul to give up life without a struggle.

Conan nods in grim agreement.

CONAN

I will sell my life for a heavy cost.

TITO

Hopefully it will not come to that.

CONAN

The day draws to an end; you have a safe haven in mind?

TITO

We will reach my main goal before sunset, sleep in their compound, and continue to the other village tomorrow.

The ship enters the next inlet.

TITO

The reefs here are shallow and offer perfect defence against attack from the sea. We will be at the village within the hour.

The sail is drawn up, oars lifted into place, the ship is rowed up the river.

EXT. KAGISA VILLAGE - JETTY - DAY

A sturdy wooden jetty reaches out into the sluggish river. Excited villagers flock to the riverbank to see the traders.

TAU, late 40's, wrapped in a gaily colored robe, greets Tito as he steps ashore. Conan follows.

TAU

Welcome Captain Tito. May the winds blow you good fortune.

TITO

Greetings Tau Kagisa. May your sons be as strong and fearless as the lion.

TAU

You have plenty to trade?

TITO

Yes. Including a new batch of iron ingots from Aquilonia, and your usual barrel of Zingaran wine.

Tau beams a smile. He sees Conan, his smile fades.

TAU

Who is this man? He has the shadow  
of death upon him.

TITO

He is--

CONAN

I am Conan of Cimmeria. The shadow  
of death you say? Well, I have  
slain many foes...

Villagers nearby fall silent. Tau and Conan look each other  
over.

CONAN

Greetings, king Tau. May your  
Daughters be as beautiful as  
flowers in the rays of the morning  
sun.

The villagers mutter. Tau nods approval.

TAU

Greetings Conan of the Cimmerians.  
May your thews remain strong and  
your soul be true forever.

The villagers cheer, whoop and press close. Tito winks at  
Conan and breathes a sigh of relief. Tau leads the two men  
into the village. Sailors begin offloading cargo.

EXT. KAGISA VILLAGE - TAU'S HUT - NIGHT

A large wooden and thatch hut. Central fire. Conan and Tito  
share a meal of meats, fruits and berries, with Tau and his  
immediate family.

Children sit close to Tito. He makes them laugh by the faces  
he pulls.

Conan accepts more wine.

CONAN

This is good wine, Tau. I  
appreciate you sharing it with us.

TAU

Hospitality is very important to  
us. Visitors to our hut must be  
made to feel as if at their own  
home.

TITO

I know many people who could do with following that philosophy. By the way, have you heard about the village up the coast?

TAU

Yes. But though we are safe from pirate attack most of the year, we have our own problems these past weeks.

TITO

How so?

TAU

Beasts of unknown breed have killed two of my herders and stolen away with many cattle.

Conan drops a chunk of meat back onto a platter.

CONAN

Hospitality is one thing, but feeding guests a banquet when food is scarce cannot be justified. I will have another of those pale fruits instead.

TITO

This part of the coast boasts many exotic beasts. I have lost men to the jungle creatures; snatched from the beach and eaten--

TAU

Nay, that is the strange thing - neither of the men had been gnawed upon; only mauled. And no sign of the blood of cattle either. As if the beasts had herded the cattle away for feasting upon later. I am sending two scouts out to find them tomorrow.

CONAN

May we see the bodies?

TAU

Yes. They were father and son, the last of their family, so no one has started the funeral rites as yet. You want to see them now?

CONAN

If it would be agreeable. Tito?

TITO

Ah, no. I care not to gaze upon  
mangled corpses afore I lay down  
to sleep, but you go if you must.

Tau stands and walks to the doorway. Conan follows. Tau lifts the leather flap for Conan and both leave the hut.

EXT. KAGISA VILLAGE - COMPOUND - NIGHT

Tau leads Conan across the village. Sounds of the jungle night are loud. The moon hangs high above. Stars shine.

Conan takes a deep breath, releases it, stares into the sky.

CONAN

On nights like this I sometimes  
wonder if there is more to life  
than battle, wine and women.

TAU

This is a good place to live.

They arrive at a small hut. Conan darts forward and lifts the flap for Tau. Tau grins, ducks and enters.

INT. KAGISA VILLAGE - DEAD MAN'S HUT - NIGHT

Veils of thin material hang from the roof beams.

TAU

Protection from flies - one thing  
I do not like about living on the  
edge of river and jungle.

They pass through the screens to where two bodies lie on reed mats. Their flesh shows long lacerations.

Conan bends to examine their wounds.

CONAN

These wounds were made by no beast  
I know of. See here. The cuts are  
parallel and of a similar depth.  
When a cat strikes, it draws its  
claws in together like this...

Conan holds a hand up fingers stretched, draws them into a partial fist.

CONAN

Those are too regular - like a weapon. Men did this.

TAU

That is the conclusion I had reached. Captain Tito will be glad to spend another day here. I would be honoured if you would accompany the scouts in the morning.

CONAN

I accept. These men need to be avenged.

EXT. KAGISA VILLAGE - JETTY - DAY

A bleary-eyed Tito supervises the stowage of animal skins, ivory and crafted goods. Conan strides over, wears just a loin cloth and boots, sword belt diagonal across his chest.

CONAN

How long will you be?

TITO

Um, another hour at least. Why?

CONAN

I was thinking of going out with the scouting party to see the tracks where the cattle were stolen. I would be back no sooner than mid-day. Will you wait?

TITO

Yes. There is work we could do on the ship this morning. You go. I will wait until two hours after mid-day. Fair enough?

CONAN

Aye, that should do me well enough. See you then. If not, you can keep my mail shirt and helm.

Conan walks to where MASINMBA and MAKALO, rangy men in their 20's, talk with Tau. They turn as Conan approaches.

TAU

This is Masimba and Makalo - they are brothers...

Masimba grins, Makalo nods. Conan nods in return.

TAU

They will show you the place.

CONAN

Good. Let us be away.

EXT. JUNGLE - CATTLE TRAIL - DAY

A well-used trail among scattered patches of jungle.

Masimba, Makalo and Conan run along with an easy long stride that eats up the ground. The two scouts carry wide-bladed spears and a long-trapped satchel.

Local wildlife pauses to watch the three men run by.

EXT. JUNGLE - WATER HOLE - DAY

Antelope drink from a muddy water hole.

One lifts its head, ears rotate. Others look up too. Then they all flee away into the open grassland. Birds scatter from their path.

Moments later, the three men jog out of the jungle, slow to a walk, draw near to the water.

Makalo stays back, rests on his spear, he keeps watch.

Masimba indicates an area of muddy ground and Conan stoops to look at the tracks.

CONAN

Hah, here we are. These are the tracks of a dog - but only the hind paws - and heavy too. Dogs that do tricks and use weapons!

MASIMBA

Kabyl - the Jackal god - was here.

MAKALO

Don't be foolish Masimba, Kabyl is a tale told to scare little children. What we see here are tracks of men pretending to be jackals. They want you to think it was Kabyl. Idiot.

CONAN

I agree with your brother - about the tracks.

MASIMBA

They go off in that direction -  
towards the mountains.

CONAN

We can spare an hour's run, shall  
we follow them?

The brothers look at each, both nod, turn back to Conan.

MASIMBA

Yes, we will run with you for an  
hour.

They circle the water hole and disappear into the jungle  
again. Birds return to the waterside.

EXT. CRAAL - DAY

Foothills of the purple-hued, snow-topped mountains.

An open area of grass nestled between a jumble of huge  
boulders. A rough palisade pens in a dozen cattle. Three  
tents nearby. Three rustlers sit by a fire, roasting a small  
deer.

O.S. A bird calls. One rustler looks up, yawns, turns back  
to the fire.

EXT. LOOKOUT POST - DAY

Another rustler sits atop a flat rock. He stares out over  
the vicinity.

Conan walks out from a group of trees and marches down the  
trail.

The rustler sees Conan, leaps to his feet, turns to the  
camp. He falls flat on his face as Makalo pulls his legs  
away. Masimba stabs the man with his spear and Makalo pulls  
the body off the rock.

The brothers move around the rock, towards the craal.

EXT. CRAAL - DAY

Conan walks into view.

The men by the fire stand and grab their spears.

DUMA, 40's, scarred face, turns to the tents.

DUMA

Uzuma!

UZUMA (O.S.)

What? I said I was not to be disturbed.

DUMA

A white-skinned foreigner approaches.

O.S. A growl of annoyance. The flap of the middle hut shifts and UZUMA, 30's, bone through nose, climbs out and walks towards the fire. He sees Conan, shakes his head.

A woman's head and naked shoulder appear at the tent flap. She scowls at them.

UZUMA

You call me out for one man? There are four of you.

He looks towards the flat rock.

UZUMA

Where is--

He sees Masimba and Makalo.

UZUMA

Fools, we are flanked!

Conan charges in. The brothers throw their spears - their aim is true - two rustlers are killed.

Duma runs away. The brothers give chase.

Conan fights Uzuma. Conan disarms him. Uzuma falls back onto the ground.

The woman steps between them and runs a knife across Uzuma's throat.

Standing, she faces Conan, puts the knife to her nose and cuts the flesh of one nostril. She winces, gives Conan a venomous look, trots away down the trail.

Conan scratches his head, watches her leave.

The brothers return. Makalo goes to the tents. Masimba stands beside Conan.

MASIMBA

The other one is dead. You let the woman go?

CONAN

Somehow, I don't think I had a choice.

He sheathes his sword.

CONAN

She killed this one and then cut her own nose...

MASIMBA

She is impure. This man Uzuma must have forced himself on her. The mark is a sign of that. She is now in self-exile from her tribe.

CONAN

The customs of this land are a mystery to me...

Makalo exits a tent, arms loaded with items. He throws them to the ground near the fire.

MAKALO

There is your walking jackal, brother.

They stare down upon the items; carved wooden jackals feet attached to sandals; a metal headed club with four spikes that jut out from one side.

Conan picks up the club, claws the air. They all nod.

CONAN

That just proves the theory. These men killed your friends and stole the cattle. I would have liked to have spoken to one of them, but since you identified the cattle from our vantage point in the rocks, I suppose no confession is needed.

Masimba puts the items in his satchel.

CONAN

The bodies?

MASIMBA

Let the jackals have them.

MAKALO

It has been a good day. Were it not for you, we may not have followed the tracks and found the thieves. Someone else may have died. It is good to run with you Conan.

CONAN

Well, I must confess my heart was not in this fight. You men - and the woman - did all the killing. Do you object to me running on ahead while you herd the cattle? I have a ship to catch.

MAKALO

You go. Farewell.

MASIMBA

Farewell Conan.

CONAN

Farewell. May your... erm... farewell.

The brothers grin and Conan sets off at a jog out of the camp.

EXT. KAGISA VILLAGE - JETTY - DAY

The Argus is pushed away from the jetty, the oars are lowered.

Tito waves at Tau and the villagers. Children run along the river bank.

CONAN (O.S.)

Tito! Clar a space.

Conan sprints along the jetty, leaps high into the air. He lands on deck, rolls, rises to his feet. He grins broadly.

CONAN

(Shouts to Tau)

Makalo and Masimba will be back before dusk with the stolen cattle. They will tell the tale.

The villagers cheer, Tau waves. Tito stands beside Conan.

TITO

You are making a habit of that.

CONAN

Yes, so far I have been lucky.  
Perhaps next time I will take a  
dip.

The village children come to a stop, wave one last time,  
return to the village. Soon the ship is lost in the trees.

EXT. DESERTED VILLAGE - BEACH - DAY

The Argus rests at anchor in a coastal bay.

A longboat drawn up on the beach.

Conan, Tito and six sailors look upon an abandoned village.

CONAN

No more than two days ago by my  
reckoning.

TITO

At least she did not raze this  
one.

CONAN

How can you be sure it was this  
Belit woman?

TITO

I have a churning deep in my guts.

CONAN

Well, if this is the last port of  
call on our journey...

TITO

Almost. Tomorrow we shall sail as  
far as the iron isles then turn  
for home. I have lost my appetite  
for trade.

They walk to the boat, row back to the ship.

EXT. ARGUS - POOPDECK - NIGHT

Ramon stares out to sea.

Conan appears by his side. Ramon turns. Both nod at each  
other.

CONAN

The men are subdued tonight. This  
Belit has cast a spell on them and  
we have not even seen her.

RAMON

I saw her once. Her ruthlessness is matched only by her beauty.

CONAN

If you've fought her off, why can we not do it again? Tito worries too much.

RAMON

Nay, I was on another ship - part of a convoy. She singled out her prey and there was nothing the rest of us could do but make a run for it.

CONAN

I would like to meet this Belit.

Ramon looks at Conan, shakes his head, looks out to sea.

RAMON

If you are lucky, you may live to regret those words.

Conan laughs, slaps Ramon on the shoulder, walks away.

EXT. ARGUS - DAY

The ship moves along the coast. There is no wind, the men row.

EXT. ARGUS - MAIN DECK - DAY

Ramon climbs up the mast, another sailor climbs down, settles into position. He instantly calls out.

RAMON

Ship off the starboard bow!

A sleek ship appears from behind a small rocky island. Forty oars down each side. Its raised deck swarms with semi-naked black warriors, grass skirts, white feathered headbands, broad-bladed spears, oval hide-wrapped shields.

From the mast flutters a long crimson pennant.

TITO

Belit! Turn us about! Back to that last inlet. If we can beach them before they run us down, we have a chance to escape with our lives!

The Argus turns in a sharp arc and runs for a line of surf along the palm-fringed shore.

Tito strides back and forth.

TITO

Come on lads; put your backs into it. Row for your lives!

CONAN

Give me a bow. It's not my idea of a manly weapon, but I learned archery among the Hyrkanians. It would be easy enough for me to feather a man or so on yonder deck.

Tito grabs up a bow and case of arrows, passes them to Conan. Conan runs to the poopdeck, closely followed by Tito.

EXT. ARGUS - POOPDECK - DAY

Conan stands legs braced, strings the bow.

He watches the serpent-like ship skim over the water.

CONAN

I am no student of sea-craft, but it seems to me the Argus will be outrun 'ere we reach the safety of the inlet.

Sporadic shots from the Tigress. Arrows arch and fall into the sea. Twenty paces, ten paces, five paces...

An arrow lands in the deck at Conan's feet.

CONAN

You'd best get ready, else you'll die with arrows in your backs and not a blow dealt.

TITO

There is still a chance. Bend to it, my sturdy sea dogs!

The rowers grunt, heave at the oars, muscles knot, sweat streams down their backs. The timbers creak.

CONAN

Ready your men for the fight master Tito. The time for flight is over.

The Tigress creeps nearer. A steersman on the Argos falls to the deck - an arrow in his throat. Tito rushes to take his place.

Conan lifts his bow, nocks an arrow, looks for a target.

The rowers are protected by a line of raised mantlets along the sides, but warriors dance on the narrow deck in full view. Then he sees her.

On a raised platform in the bow stands BELIT, mid 20's. A slim figure, in similar attire to her men. Her white skin glistens in stark contrast to the glossy ebony around her.

EXT. TIGRESS - BOW - DAY

Belit sees Conan. She gasps, nudges UMBUTU, early 30's.

BELIT

Yonder fellow is no sailor.

UMBUTU

He is a warrior, unafraid of our arrows. His armour will protect him from most blows.

BELIT

He is magnificent. Shoot their tiller-men, and then prepare to ram them.

EXT. ARGUS - POOPDECK - DAY

A sailor holds up a small shield to protect Tito as he holds the tiller steady.

TITO

Belit is the one you need to kill.  
She is the head of the serpent.

CONAN

Aye, they'll soon lose heart  
without their leader.

Conan draws the feathered shaft to his ear...

Their eyes meet. The sounds around them dim until all they hear is the beat of their hearts in unison.

Conan shoots.

The arrow flies through the air and strikes Umbutu in the chest. Umbutu falls.

Belit shouts an inaudible command and Conan dives for cover, a hail of arrows clatter around him.

He peers over the rail. Belit is no longer on deck.

More arrows are exchanged. Men fall on both ships.

Tito stands alone by the tiller - the men around him dead.

He has an arrow in his leg. More arrows hit the captain, he sags to the deck, tiller swings loose.

Conan sees him fall.

CONAN

Tito!

Conan rushes over to Tito, cradles his head. Blood dribbles from Tito's mouth.

TITO

Make them pay Conan... dearly...

Tito dies. Conan lays him back upon the deck.

The Argus loses headway, veers away from the shore.

Conan stands steady on the poopdeck.

CONAN

Gat up on deck Lads! Grab your steel and give these dogs a few knocks before they cut our throats!

Sailors abandon their oars, snatch up their weapons. They have time for one flight of arrows.

The Tigress catches up with them. Its metal-clad prow crashes into the Argus amidships, planks splinter, men fall. Grappling-irons bite into the Argus.

Conan, on the high poopdeck, is on a level with the pirate's deck. As the prow smashes into the Argus, he braces himself, keeps his balance.

Conan casts away the bow and draws his sword. Grim determination on his face.

From their high position, the black pirates shoot a volley of arrows into the shaken sailors. Other warriors leap down, spears in hand.

Ramon grabs a rope, swings up onto the poopdeck, knocks aside a number of pirates and lands beside Conan.

RAMON

We are lost.

CONAN

Never! As long as I have the strength to stand and wield a sword, I will fight.

The two men fight well against pirates that charge the

poopdeck. They are soon surrounded by dead and injured pirates.

The fight on the Argus's main deck is short and bloody. The sailors are slaughtered.

CONAN

Come on, we'll take the fight to them!

With a bellow of fury, Conan vaults over the rail onto the deck of the Tigress. Ramon follows.

The pirates finish off the last of the Argus crew, climb back onto their ship.

EXT. TIGRESS - MAIN DECK - DAY

Conan and Ramon fight back-to-back near the mast. Conan is near invulnerable in his armour, but Ramon succumbs to the spear thrusts.

Conan fights with berserk fury; a red mist over his vision.

Belit watches him in awe.

BELIT

(Whispers)

Such a man have I never seen before... You are beautiful... can you be the one my heart aches for?

The pirates back away. A group of archers get ready to shoot. Conan stands drenched in sweat and blood. He snarls defiance.

CONAN

Come on dogs, put aside those twigs and fight me with steel - man to man!

The archers draw their bows...

O.S. a shrill whistle freezes them before they release.

They all stand like statues.

Belit springs before her men, pushes down their bows and spears. She turns to Conan, her bosom heaves, her eyes wide with passion.

Conan and Belit lock eyes again. Belit's dark brown eyes stare into Conan's ice blue.

Their hearts pound.

Belit is slender, lithe, voluptuous as she prowls closer to Conan, heedless of his sword; her thigh brushes against it. Her red lips part as she stares up into his eyes. She whispers.

BELIT

Who are you? By Ishtar, I have never seen your like, though I have ranged the sea from the coasts of Zingara to the fire mountains of the ultimate south. Whence come you?

Conan swallows hard.

CONAN

From... Argos.

BELIT

You are not some soft Hybhorian. You are fierce and hard as a gray wolf. Those eyes were never dimmed by city lights; those thews were never softened by life amid marble walls. I say again, who are you?

CONAN

I am Conan, a Cimmerian.

BELIT

And I am Belit, Queen of the Black Coast.

Her hands rest on his chest.

BELIT

Look at me, wolf of the north. You eyes are yet as cold as the snowy mountains which bred you. But I can feel your heart, I can see into your soul. We both feel it and we both know. Go with me to the ends of the earth and the ends of the sea! I am a queen by fire and steel and slaughter - be thou my king. Take me and crush me with your fierce love!

She puts her head on his chest.

Conan's eyes sweep the blood-stained pirates. They are calm, emotionless.

He glances at the ruined Argus as it wallows in the crimson-stained sea, the decks awash, held up by the grapnels.

He glances at the green-fringed shore, at the far blue haze of the ocean, at the vibrant figure which now stood before him at arms length.

TITO (V.O.)

(from afar)

You'll change your tune when you  
get smitten.

A smile forms on Conan's lips, his head nods gently.

CONAN

I will sail with you, Belit - my  
queen - for all eternity.

Conan jams his sword in the deck. Belit comes forward and they embrace. A moment later he lowers her to the deck. She turns her head.

BELIT

Ho, N'Yaga. Fetch herbs and dress  
your master's wounds! The rest of  
you bring aboard the plunder and  
cast off. Return to the anchorage.

CONAN

I owe those men more than to rob  
their corpses. Let their goods  
follow them to the bottom of the  
sea.

BELIT

If that is your desire, then we  
shall place all the dead upon  
their deck and cast off. I defer  
to your savage honor.

Bodies of the crew and pirates are laid upon the Argus's decks. Wounded blacks are laid out amidships on the Tigress, waiting to be bandaged.

Conan sits with his back against the mast, the old shaman, N'YAGA, 50's, attended to the cuts on his limbs.

The grapnels are cast off. As the Argus sinks, the Tigress moves off southward to the rhythmic clack of oars.

EXT. TIGRESS - POOPDECK - DAY

Belit climbs up to the poop. She waves at Conan.

BELIT

Conan, come up here.

Conan climbs up to the poop, stands beside Belit. She clutches his arm, leads him to the rail.

BELIT

We return to the island where you first spied us. It has good shelter and anchorage. A perfect place to discuss our plans.

She snuggles closer. He places an arm around her waist.

EXT. ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

A slim crescent beach. Mud huts and tents line the rocks above the tide-line. The Tigress anchored in the bay.

Conan and Belit walk along the beach to where the men sit around fires.

Belit runs a little way to the shoreline, stops, turns. She stretches her arms high, head back. Her eyes shine bright.

BELIT

Wolves of the blue sea, behold you now the dance... the mating-dance of Belit, whose fore-fathers were kings of Askalon!

Everyone turns to watch her.

Belit dances while the sun drops over the ocean and the moon rises above the island.

EXT. ISLAND - BEACH - NIGHT

Belit ends the dance with a wild howl, drops to the ground at Conan's feet.

Conan scoops her up. They embrace. He carries her up the beach and into a hut...

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

The bud opens into a black flower.

BELIT (V.O.)

In that dead citadel of crumbling stone.  
Her eyes were snared by that unholy sheen,  
And curious madness took her by the throat,  
As of a rival lover thrust between.

MONTAGE:

A) The Tigress sails away from a razed village, Conan and Belit watch from the poopdeck.

N'YAGA (V.O.)

The Tigress ranged the sea, and  
villages shudder. Tom-toms beat in  
the night; Told a tale of the she-  
devil and her mate; an iron man  
whose wrath was as that of a lion  
at bay.

B) Conan holds a sword at the throat of a robed man while he  
clutches a gold necklace. Behind them, Belit wraps herself  
in silks.

N'YAGA (V.O.))

Survivors of butchered ships curse  
her name, and a white warrior with  
fierce blue eyes; so the Stygians  
remembered this man and their  
memory was a bitter tree which  
bore crimson fruit in the years to  
come.

C) Conan and Belit lie in each others arms upon plush furs,  
carpets and cushions. They feed each other grapes.

N'YAGA (V.O.))

But heedless as a vagrant wind,  
the Tigress cruised the southern  
coasts, until the queen called a  
halt to ocean-reaving for a spell.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. ISLAND - BELIT'S TENT - NIGHT

Conan and Belit lie in each other's arms on a bed of furs. A  
golden candelabrum lights the room. Belit toys absently with  
a tiger's tail.

CONAN

What is on your mind?

Belit shrugs.

BELIT

A man.

Conan rolls onto an elbow, looks down at Belit.

CONAN

Oh? Are you tiring of me so soon?

Belit punches him on the chest.

BELIT

Don't be foolish. There is no man for me other than you.

CONAN

Well who is this insignificant fellow who invades your thoughts?

BELIT

A Stygian thief by the name of Tutamek. We were once... partners in a venture. We had a small disagreement and went our separate ways.

Conan lies back down again.

BELIT

But the goal of our venture is still a possibility. It involves the Teeth of Gwelhur and the dead city of Zarkheba.

CONAN

Huh, I have heard of neither.

BELIT

Hardly surprising, you are an uncultured northern barbarian.

Conan grins.

CONAN

Hah. 'Tis true enogh. Well enlighten me; tell me of the teeth and city then.

BELIT

The city of Zarkheba lies on the banks of a river of the same name. It was abandoned long ago, because the river runs poisonous with sulphurous fumes and ichors. Legend has it that there is a tremendous treasure hidden there, ready for the taking...

CONAN

Well what are we waiting for? Let us go and ransack their treasury.

BELIT

But it is secreted in a chamber that cannot be accessed without a key - or keys.

CONAN

The fangs... teeth?

BELIT

Yes, the Teeth of Gwelhur.

CONAN

And where are the Teeth of Gwelhur? In the jaws of Gwelhur?

BELIT

Nay. Though they might as well be. They are hidden somewhere in Darfar, guarded by an army. The teeth are sacred items to the Darfar priests at the temple of Zog.

CONAN

So how did you and this - Stygian...

BELIT

Tutamek.

CONAN

How did you expect to gain the teeth?

BELIT

He and his assistant, a Kothite giant, Pteor, proposed to train the army of neighbouring Zembabwei and invade the country.

CONAN

Invade? A rather drastic - if impressive - measure. Is the wealth of Zarkheba so vast?

Belit nods, lost in thought. Conan purses his lips. Whistles.

CONAN

Well, why not offer our services to train the soldiers of Darfar to counter the threat? I have military experience and a number of tricks to teach.

BELIT

I... No. My plan is much more simple. I have placed a number of men in a camp at the mouth of the poisonous river, to watch for ships rowing upstream. If any do, my men will send word via a message tied to the legs of birds trained to return to the Tigress. When word reaches us, we simply wait at the river mouth for him to return with the treasure and then we take it by force.

CONAN

From an army. Or a navy.

BELIT

No, once they have the teeth, they will abandon their scheme and take a ship with a select band of soldiers.

CONAN

What if they approach from inland?

BELIT

The jungles and swamps are almost impassable; they would not risk that arduous trek over a voyage by ship. Besides, they can carry more loot aboard a ship.

CONAN

You have thought all this through. Except for one thing - if their plan fails, so does yours. No-one gets the treasure.

BELIT

I have thought of that. It seems more and more likely that he has failed. It has been nearly a year since our partnership broke, and there has been no word from Darfar, Zembabwei, or my lookouts. Perhaps the treasure is destined to remain in the city.

CONAN

Not if I have any say in the matter. At the very least, we could ask our own questions in Darfar. Are you known there?

BELIT

Only by name, I have never raided their shores for sake of attracting the attention of the high priest Gorulga. He is not to be crossed.

CONAN

Then he is the one we must question.

BELIT

But did you not hear what I said, he is a powerful man, not to be crossed--

CONAN

You brought this venture to my notice. We can swim ashore, take six men and sneak into the city, locate Gorulga, persuade him to tell us where the teeth are, steal them and rendezvous with the ship. It should take us less than a day. Then a simple river trip, recover the treasure and return here.

Belit shakes her head in wonder.

BELIT

If only it were that simple.

CONAN

It would break the monotony of seeking out prey on the ocean - and much more rewarding in effort and gain - if what your legends say is true.

Belit climbs onto Conan. Kisses him.

BELIT

Yes! We will do it...

She kisses him again.

BELIT

Tomorrow...

She blows out the candles.

EXT. DARFAR CITY - BACK STREETS - DAY.

Conan, Belit and six of her warriors walk through the narrow streets of a high-walled city. Opulent multi-storey buildings mixed with rickety shacks.

Many nationalities are represented in the citizens they see.

They stop to ask for directions, are pointed along the street.

They arrive at a market square.

EXT. DARFAR CITY - MARKET SQUARE - DAY.

A busy market square. Multicoloured awnings. Many and varied wares for sale.

On the other side is a large ornate building. Huge gate towers topped with statues of strange human and animal hybrids.

BELIT

The temple of Zog, and the many lesser gods of his pantheon. That is where we will find Gorulga.

A group of robed priests and acolytes approach. They step back into the shadows. The priests passes by.

CONAN

The walls are high and set well back from the market. I see one or two guards in the outer towers. A frontal entry is out of the question. We could look round the back or try the sewers...

BELIT

Oh No, that is not for me! There must be another way in. We could bribe some-- Wait, look here...

Two acolytes hurry along the edge of the market.

Conan and Belit turn to each other, grin.

EXT. TEMPLE OF ZOG - GATES - DAY

The gates are opened and a long line of priests and acolytes file through. The guards begin to close the gate, two more rush up to tag on the end of a line.

The gates are closed and barred.

The column files across the courtyard and up a flight of

wide steps into a vaulted hallway.

INT. TEMPLE OF ZOG - HALLWAY - DAY

A sparsely decorated hallway. The line of priests and acolytes walk by in silence.

The last two acolytes step behind a stand of pillars. The rest of the line walk away out of sight.

One acolyte lowers his good. It is Conan.

CONAN

Ha, this is an amusing ruse. I must remember to use it again someday.

BELIT

Shush, replace your cowl. We have work to do. A guide would be helpful. Come on.

Conan replaces his cowl. They walk down the corridor side by side. At the end, Belit turns one way, Conan turns the other.

A second later Conan hurries after Belit.

INT. TEMPLE OF ZOG - CORRIDOR - DAY

Conan and Belit walk along the corridor. Before them walks another acolyte. He stops, looks fearfully at Conan, points to a door.

Belit picks up a statuette of an ape, turns it over in her hand a few times, tests the weight, hits the acolyte over the head with it. Conan catches the man as he falls and hides him behind a heavy bench. Belit replaces the statuette, dusts her hands, smiles.

They approach the door.

O.S. A crash of metal and pottery from the room behind the door.

GORULGA (O.S.)

Incompetent fool, look at this mess! Clean it up immediately.

O.S. A loud whack, a cry of pain.

SERINA (O.S.)

(Sobs)

I am sorry Lord Gorulga.

Conan draws his sword, steps up to the door.

INT. TEMPLE OF ZOG. - GARULGA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

A very fine decorated room; rich coloured tapestries depict religious scenes, sacrifices. Gold and silver ornaments.

SERINA, mid teens, plain dress, gathers broken crockery onto a silver tray. GORULGA, 40's, black goatee, embroidered robes, looms over her.

A knock at the door. Gorulga stomps over.

GORULGA

This had better be of the utmost importance, I specifically gave orders that--

He opens the door. The point of a sword touches his throat. He backs away. Conan and Belit enter. Belit closes the door after a quick glance up and down the corridor.

GORULGA

What is the meaning of this intrusion?

CONAN

Silence! Else I give you something to whine about. And you, girl, sit against that wall.

Gorulga closes his mouth, folds his arms. Serina shuffles to the wall. Belit looks over the room appraises the wealth.

BELIT

Look at theses treasures.

CONAN

Why bother with baubles and trinkets when we have a city's ransom to unearth? Where are the Teeth of Gwelhur, priest?

Belit moves to a wall-mounted silver framed mirror, pauses, preens herself.

Gorulga opens his mouth and Conan warns him with a slight inclination of the head and narrowed eyes. Conan glances at Belit.

CONAN

Stay by the door, my love. Listen for guards.

GORULGA

If you came to steal the Teeth of Gwelhur, you will be dissapointed at best. I suggest you leave now while you have the chance.

CONAN

You know where they are?

GORULGA

Of course I do, I placed them in their current location - out of the reach of thieves such as you. They are protected by Gwelhur's magic. I will never divulge their location. Now go you foolish man.

Conan stared deep into the man's eyes. Gorulga stares back without a blink. His gaze is mesmeric. Conan's sword lowers. Gorulga smiles.

GORULGA

Yes, lower your sword.

CLOSE UP. Gorulga grabs the hilts of daggers hidden in his sleeves.

SERINA

I know where the Teeth are kept.

Gorulga whirls and throws a dagger at Serina. He draws another and attacks Conan. Conan cleaves Gorulga's skull.

Belit is at Serina's side. A dagger protrudes from the girl's chest. Blood covers her dress. Her eyelids flutter and she speaks.

SERINA

The mater is dead? ... Good. He beat me... He beat us all...

BELIT

Be calm child, you will live; the dagger has not gone deep.

Belit glances at Conan, shakes her head.

SERINA

No, he has killed me... But I will yet spite him before I die. The Teeth ... are in the palace ... of Alkmee... non...

Serina dies. Belit stands, arms loose at her sides.

CONAN  
The palace of Alkmeenon? Is that  
in this city?

BELIT  
No...

CONAN  
Close by?

BELIT  
No...

CONAN  
Then where in--

O.S. quick footsteps in the corridor.

GUARD #1 (O.S.)  
My Lord. My Lord. There are  
intruders in the Temple! We--

The door opens. GUARD #1 and GUARD #2, both in their 20's,  
uniformed, swords drawn, burst into the room.

GUARD #2  
What goes on here? Who--

Conan and Belit kill them.

Belit goes to the door. Conan runs to the window, throws it  
open.

BELIT  
More guards.

CONAN  
This way.

She rushes over to Conan.

CONAN  
We jump!

BELIT  
Are you mad? These chambers are  
level with the treetops.

Conan scoops her in his arms and leaps out of the window.

BELIT  
No! Cooon...

EXT. DARFAR CITY - SIDE STREET - DAY

An ox-cart loaded with animal skins moves along a paved street away from the market.

BELIT

...naaan!

Conan and Belit land squarely in the cart. The axle breaks and the cart topples over. Conan and Belit spill out along with the pelts, skins and furs.

Conan rolls to his feet, glances up at the temple.

Soldiers gesture out of the window.

He pulls Belit from the furs and they run into the back streets.

The cart owner's curses answered only by laughter.

EXT. JUNGLE - CAMP - NIGHT

Conan, Belit and four warriors sit around a campfire. Conan sits with his back to a tree, Belit in the crook of his arm. Two warriors play a game with small carved animal bones.

CONAN

Now will you tell me of this mysterious city of Alkmeenon? It seems there are more lost cities in these jungles than ones inhabited.

BELIT

Alkmeenon is still occupied, in a fashion; a company of the Royal Guard is stationed there. There are priests of Zog there too on occasion and I have heard that the King returns there sometimes too.

CONAN

What is the terrain like? How do we approach it?

BELIT

The main roadway will be guarded and patrolled, but there is another way in - a back door - a tunnel to be precise - I fled that way when Tutamek and I had our disagreement.

Conan shakes his head.

CONAN

Is there nowhere you have not been? What were you doing there?

BELIT

We used it as a refuge once. There was no military presence while we were there. However, if the Teeth are in the palace, then all entrances may be guarded.

CONAN

Hmm, and us down to six. Still, the fewer of us, the stealthier we will be.

BELIT

You know it made sense to keep N'Yaga abreast of our plans. Jumba and N'Ala are my fastest runners; I expect they will have found the Tigress by now and the Ship making its way to the ocean.

CONAN

Aye, you're right; we managed to give the Darfar garrison the run-around all day, so I agree your plan is sound enough. And what of tomorrow's plan?

BELIT

Just like you said the other day... We sneak in, steal the Teeth, and return to the coast and the Tigress. The rest will be easy.

Conan chuckles.

CONAN

There is one more thing I am unsure of...

BELIT

Yes? And what is that my love?

CONAN

What exactly are the Teeth? What do they look like... teeth?

BELIT

The legends say they are the canine teeth of a great gorilla named Gwelhur who was defeated and enslaved by Derketo. They are carved and embossed with precious metals and gems. They will be obvious - we should not miss them.

CONAN

Good. Then it is settled. Tomorrow we make for Alkmeenon.

EXT. CLIFF - BASE - DAY

Conan, Belit and the four warriors exit the jungle along a rough path. A sheer cliff face rises a hundred feet into the air. It curves round in both directions as far as the eye can see.

The path leads to an iron grille which seals a deep, dark tunnel. Four huge locks seal the entrance. Belit grabs hold of one lock, rattles it.

BELIT

These were not here when I passed through.

Belit raises a sword.

CONAN

Wait. Look up there.

Conan points up the cliff face to a series of ropes tied to metal staples driven into the rock face. The lowest of the ropes is coiled-up well out of reach.

BELIT

I suppose we could give it a try. They look fairly new and sturdy. The question is who placed them there?

CONAN

No reason to worry about that just yet. I'll climb up, lower the first rope, then you and the lads can go ahead of me.

Conan climbs to the rope and lets it down. He helps Belit and the warriors up and they carry on ahead of him.

CONAN

No more than two of us on any one  
length of rope - just in case...

He pulls up the rope and loops it back in place.

EXT. CLIFF - FACE - DAY

They climb the ropes. Belit first, the four warriors next  
and Conan last. Weapons slung over shoulders.

The climb is strenuous.

Belit reaches the top and scrambles over, turns to help the  
next man up. They disappear from sight.

Belit shouts.

BELIT (O.S.)

Conan! Watch out, we are--

There is a scream from above. A warrior falls past Conan and  
the others.

The top rope goes slack and the next two warriors fall,  
buffet Conan and the fourth man. Only Conan manages to hold  
on. He hangs from a crack in the rock by one hand. The  
warriors plunge towards the forest below.

O.S. A raucous laugh from above.

PTEOR, mid 30's, peers over the cliff top. He wears a plain  
steel helm. His neck is bull-like. He calls back over his  
shoulder.

PTEOR

The savages are all dead, but the  
northlander still lives.

TUTAMEK (O.S.)

We'll leave two of the men to watch  
and kill him if he tries to climb  
up. He must go back down else hang  
there until our return.

Pteor throws a rock down. It glances off Conan's shoulder.  
Pteor laughs.

PTEOR

Did you hear that, northlander? Go  
back - waste your time no longer.  
We will keep your Shemite whore  
content over the coming nights.

Pteor laughs again. Conan stares at him. Then Pteor ducks  
out of sight.

TUTAMEK (O.S.)

You two. Stay here. Kill him if he attempts to climb up.

Conan hangs on the cliff face.

A hawk flies past Conan and disappears into the cliff. Conan leans out and looks over, sees a narrow ledge and dark recess.

Conan moves with care along the cliff face towards the ledge.

He arrives. The hawk flies out, screeches at him.

Conan holds his breath, looks up at the cliff-top. It remains a bare rock crest. He moves on.

He reaches the ledge, pulls himself onto it. Squats there.

EXT. CLIFF - LEDGE - DAY

The ledge continues down the cliff face at a steep slope, disappears around the curve of the rock.

At the back of the ledge is a narrow cave. A bush with heavy foliage blocks the other end. Conan squeezes through.

EXT. CLIFF - TOP - DAY

Conan looks out over the other side of the cliff.

The range of cliffs forms an amphitheatre two miles across. In the centre, amidst lush woodland lays a white stone city. A trail slopes down from the cliff top, disappears between the rocks and boulders.

Two black-skinned men crouch near the point where a rope is tied to a series of iron spikes driven into the rock. The rope has been cut.

The soldiers wear helms and leather armour trimmed with leopard skins. They rest on their spears.

Conan sneaks up behind them, cracks their heads together, pushes them off the cliff. One is still conscious, screams as he falls.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - EAST TRAIL - DAY

TUTAMEK, early 30's, tall, lean, Pteor, a near giant, Belit and a dozen soldiers in the same uniform as the two at the cliff top, walk down a narrow trail.

Belit's hands are tied in front of her, a loose rope around her neck is held by Pteor.

O.S. A long drawn-out scream echoes. They all pause.

Pteor laughs, jerks the rope. Leers at Belit.

PTEOR

They got your northern lover, but  
you still have me.

Belit snarls and leaps at Pteor, teeth bared, fingernails claw at his face. Pteor punches Belit; she falls to the ground, dazed.

BELIT

Dog! You will get nothing from me  
save a blade in your guts!

PTEOR

Ha. The tigress is tethered, yet  
she still growls her threats.

TUTAMEK

Pteor. Cease your taunts. Be  
silent.

PTEOR

There will be no resistance at  
this side of the city - your  
Zimbabwean curs will keep the  
garrison occupied.

TUTAMEK

Even so, the palace will be on  
alert and the quieter we are, the  
easier will be our task.

Pteor shrugs.

They walk on in silence.

The trail winds downwards. Through breaks in the rocks they glimpse the city. Huge white stone buildings laid out geometrically among huge trees.

Tutamek draws level with Belit. He touches her arm. She pulls away violently. Pteor grins.

TUTAMEK

It was not in my plans for the northlander to die. Conan you called him. Who was he?

BELIT

Oh, are you jealous?

TUTAMEK

No, just a mild professional interest. He must have been quite a man to have tamed you.

She looks at the ground. A single tear rolls down her cheek.

Tutamek points through a gap in the rocks.

TUTAMEK

There is the dome of the royal palace. Remember the last time we were there? Much different circumstances - for both of us.

BELIT

Yes, you would have stabbed me between my shoulder blades had I not sensed the situation. And you replaced me with ... that?

TUTAMEK

Pteor is a very capable warrior, though not the best of thieves. No-one could ever replace you. I admit I made a mistake back then; greed got the better of me. I apologise--

BELIT

Do not waste your honeyed words upon me Tutamek. The old days are gone; good while they lasted, but gone nonetheless.

They exit the trail, jog across an open grassed area and disappear into the city.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - BACK STREETS - DAY

Old white stoned buildings. The main streets are kept clear of undergrowth, the backstreets are full of vines, creepers and shrubs. Most of the larger buildings are in good condition; tidy but unused.

Tutamek, Pteor, Belit and the soldiers pass an open square within which is a dried-up marble fountain. Broken statues of previous rulers and deities.

They press on.

EXT. PALACE - OUTER WALL - DAY

Pteor, Belit and the other men crouch low behind a wall. Tutamek hops over the wall and joins them. Furious.

TUTAMEK

Damn them. The Garrison has returned! The Zembabweans routed, scattered into the forests. I don't believe it. Spineless...

He turns to DAKARI, early 30's, wears a leopard skin headband.

TUTAMEK

You picked those men Dakari, and they ran like sheep. We will now have to wait until dark to break into the Palace. They will have doubled the guards - at least. Take three men, skirt the city, find as many of those cowards you called warriors and rally them. Resume the attack on the west gate when the moon is fullest. Now go!

DAKARI

Yes sir.

Four warriors sneak away, low to the ground.

TUTAMEK

Derketo's breasts! Can I rely upon anyone?

Belit smiles a grim smile.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - BACK STREETS - DAY

The four warriors pass by the marble fountain.

O.S. A soft hiss.

The warriors stop and turn. Conan, sword in hand, steps from behind the fountain.

CONAN

Ho there.

DAKARI

Ah, so it was my men we heard fall to their deaths. They failed, but we shall not.

The warriors fan out, move to attack.

CONAN

You have three men, I have an army.

Conan gestures behind them. They all look back. Conan attacks.

He saves Dakari until last, disarms him, knocks him to the ground, sword point to throat.

CONAN

How is Belit... the woman?

DAKARI

She lives. General Tutamek will not see her harmed.

CONAN

General?

DAKARI

In name only. His leadership is flawed - he is too selfish - he throws lives away for no gain.

They stare at each other. Conan lowers his sword a little. Dakari nods.

DAKARI

He sent me just now to rally my men for another assault. I tire of this contrived war. I am ready to go home.

CONAN

If I let you live, you will take your warriors and return to your homeland?

DAKARI

Yes. I swear it.

Conan sheaths his sword. Dakari stands.

CONAN

Then go, son of Zembabwei. And good fortune to you.

DAKARI

I am named Dakari. I salute you  
northlander.

CONAN

Conan... of Cimmeria.

Dakari nods, turns and walks away. Conan watches him leave.

Conan retrieves a quiver from one of the bodies. He empties out the arrows as he jogs away in the direction the warriors approached from.

EXT. PALACE - OUTER WALL - DAY

Pteor toys with a dagger. He looks at Belit and grins. She looks at him, past him, her mouth drops open, eyes widen.

Pteor looks over his shoulder and gasps.

PTEOR

By the gods!

Conan climbs up the outside of the palace.

TUTAMEK

What-- Conan! How... Damn him!

Belit laughs with glee.

BELIT

Now what will you do, eh? He is an  
army unto himself. Ha, he can--

Tutamek slaps Belit hard across the face with sudden anger. Just as suddenly the anger dies.

TUTAMEK

(To Pteor)

Time is of the essence now. A  
different diversion is called for.  
Take half of the men and set fire  
to buildings in the south. These  
uneven winds will soon have the  
city under a blanket of smoke. I  
will meet you on the far side of  
the palace in one hour. Go.

Pteor signals a number of warriors and they run into the city at a crouch.

Tutamek turns to the other half-dozen warriors. Gestures at Belit.

TUTAMEK

Take her back along the trail. Not to the top, but far enough out of the city to avoid being seen. Do not harm her - unless she tries to raise the alarm or escape.

One of the warriors nods and takes the rope from Tutamek. He is a muscular man and Belit struggles in vain. Tutamek leans close to her.

TUTAMEK

Make this easier on yourself. You may live through it.

BELIT

You will not. If Conan does not slay you, I will.

The warriors lead her away.

Tutamek shakes his head after them, turns, looks at the palace. Conan is almost at the highest parapet.

Tutamek skirts the perimeter wall to the north.

The warriors disappear into the city. Dakari peers over a wall. He watches Tutamek go out of sight and then follows after the warriors and Belit.

EXT. PALACE - ROOF - DAY

A low balustrade runs around the perimeter of a domed roof.

Conan climbs up over the side. He rests a moment, looks around and heads towards a set of stone steps that lead down into the palace.

He draws his sword and descends the stairs.

INT. PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Four Darfar guards march along the corridor they pass by a door, continue around a corner.

The door opens a crack, then wider. Conan creeps out.

He sets off at a brisk walk the way the guards came. Two more guards walk around the corner in front of him.

He kills one and knocks the other out.

He drags the bodies towards the room.

INT. PALACE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Conan drags the two men inside, dashes out, returns with their weapons.

He rolls the dead man under a bed, props the other against it. Conan pours water from the man's own water skin over the man's head.

The guardsman splutters awake to see Conan's face before him. He starts, tries to back away. Conan clamps a hand over his mouth.

CONAN

Do not call out. Answer me with a nod or a shake of your head. Understand?

The man nods. Eyes wide in fear.

CONAN

Good. Now, do you know where the Teeth of Gwelhur are kept hidden?

The man shakes his head. Conan sighs. The man shakes with more vigor. Conan knocks him out again.

Conan ties and gags the man, moves towards the door. He sniffs the air, glances at the window, pauses. He walks over to the window, peers outside.

Through the window, smoke drifts over the city.

A small group of Darfar soldiers run to a nearby building. A sergeant orders them into a long chain. Water buckets are passed along from the courtyard well.

Tutamek, Pteor and half a dozen warriors rush them. A fight ensues. . Tutamek and Pteor run on towards the palace.

Conan turns away.

CONAN

(Whispers)

Belit, my love, if he has harmed one hair of your raven locks, by Crom I'll rip out his...

Conan rushes out of the room.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - SOUTH GATE - DAY

Dakari leads a number of warriors through thick smoke towards a high, wide gate. Belit, tied and gagged, slung over his shoulder.

The smoke clears for a moment. SERGEANT GORA, 30's, grizzled veteran, notices them, gives a warning shout. Other guards run forwards. Arrows fly.

The Zembabwean warriors are defeated. Some run into the woods outside the gate, most are killed.

Dakari holds Belit as a shield, the archers cease. Dakari is cornered and killed. Belit is captured.

The Darfar CAPTAIN BOMA, late 30's, copper breastplate, plumed helm, removes the gag from Belit's mouth.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Who are you? What are you doing here with these men?

BELIT

My name is Amrala, please do not kill me, I beg you!

CAPTAIN BOMA

What are you doing here?

BELIT

I was captured when the foreign warriors raided the village I was staying in - Tombalku - to the north of here. These men took me to sell as a slave. Zog bless you for rescuing me. Please cut my bonds, they are tight, they hurt so...

She holds up her hands.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Nay, these are times of war and we are wary of spies. Your hands will remain tied until we return to Darfar and you are brought before the royal court.

BELIT

But I am no threat, I am just a--

O.S. horses hooves thunder closer.

SERGEANT GORA (O.S.)

Captain Boma. The scouts have returned, sir.

Four riders enter the city gates. They rein in beside the Captain. UTAKA, later 30's, dismounts and salutes.

UTAKA

Sir. The main enemy force is retreating back to the border. There are still a few scattered units wandering the area.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Yes, we just encountered one. Go to the palace and wait for me there.

Utaka salutes again, re-mounts. The four riders gallop up the street.

CAPTAIN BOMA

(To Gora)

Assign one squad to remain here. If any of the Zembabweans come back, send a runner to find me at the palace. Bring her.

Belit fumes silently as she is led after the soldiers.

INT. PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

A great round hall. Huge white stone pillars support a high domed ceiling. Many statues of past rulers and their gods fill alcoves on all sides. Two great thrones perch at the top of a many-stepped black marble dais.

Tutamek and Pteor sneak into the room. Tutamek points Pteor to the right, he goes left. They circle the chamber, examine the statues, alcoves, wall panels.

Tutamek reaches a statue of a queen. He stops short. A previously hidden door before him - ajar by a crack.

He looks over at Pteor. The big man taps a statue with a dagger hilt, listens, shakes his head, moves on to another.

Tutamek returns to the door, pushes it open with his sword point and peers inside.

INT. PALACE - SECRET ROOM - DAY

A bare room, ten feet square. At the far end another door is also ajar.

Tutamek steps into the room.

Conan grabs Tutamek by sword arm and shirt, swings him face-first into a wall. Tutamek falls to the floor, stunned. His sword skims over the stone floor.

PTEOR (O.S.)

Tutamek? What has happened - are you all right?

Conan slams the door closed, wedges his dagger under the door.

Conan turns. Tutamek faces him, rearmed, dabs at his bloody nose.

TUTAMEK

Ah Conan, a pleasure to meet you at last. I am Tutamek. I know you can climb, but can you fight?

CONAN

You will soon find out.

They fight, well-matched. Conan swings and bashes with a brutal fierceness. Tutamek ducks and dives, parries and reposts.

A huge thump on the retrained door. Conan and Tutamek pause in their fight.

PTEOR (O.S.)

Tutamek, open the door. Soldiers are coming!

CONAN

Where is Belit, Stygian cur? If she is dead...

TUTAMEK

She is safe. What is through there?

Conan glances sideways.

CONAN

It is the--

Tutamek attacks and they fight again.

The fight moves out of the secret room and through the other

door.

PTEOR (O.S.)

Tutamek!

A tremendous crash; the jammed door is smashed open. Pteor tumbles into the secret room, stands. He batters spear points aside as soldiers queue up in the throne room. He runs across the room and through the other door. Darfar Soldiers creep after him.

INT. PALACE - ALTAR ROOM - DAY

A rectangular room decorated with carvings and wall hangings that depict religious scenes similar to the Temple in Darfar.

An ornate wooden balcony runs around three sides of the room about eight feet above floor level. Mottled light shines through stained glass windows behind the balcony.

Dark timber benches are arrayed before a stone altar at the far end of the room. Behind the altar squats a huge black stone statue of a gorilla; two open holes in its jaw.

Conan and Tutamek fight among the benches.

TUTAMEK

I see you identified the Teeth.  
Not very well disguised were they?

CONAN

You knew?

TUTAMEK

I did not, for certain, until now.  
They are in the quiver I presume?

Pteor pushes a heavy wooden cabinet over the doorway with a crash. In that instant, Tutamek darts in, cuts the quiver strap. It falls between the benches.

Tutamek laughs, Conan curses, batters Tutamek's sword aside, lays him low with a punch. Conan raises his sword for the death stroke.

Pteor throws himself upon Conan. The two men fall amid the benches with a crash of splintered wood.

Pteor and Conan fight unarmed, wrestle, muscles ripple. Both get strangle-holds on each other.

PTEOR

You are a... strong one... for  
such a ... little man.

CONAN

I have not yet... met my... match.

O.S. A heavy weight shoved aside. Hasty footsteps.

Conan's eyes grow fierce, Pteor's widen in fear.

PTEOR

No...

Pteor's thick neck snaps. Conan lets him fall to the floor. Soldiers fan out from the doorway to the secret room. Conan is unarmed, soaked in sweat. He pants, reaches down for a length of broken bench.

O.S. The smash of breaking glass.

They all look up to see Tutamek on the balcony.

TUTAMEK

Ha-ha, you lose northlander - the  
teeth... the girl... and your  
life. Farewell.

He waves the quiver, darts away through the broken window. Spears clatter harmlessly after him.

The main double doors spring open. Captain Boma charges inside with more soldiers, spear points level at Conan.

The captain looks at Conan, Pteor, the toothless statue, at the balcony. His expression is dark.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Bind him - securely. This is a  
blasphemy against the Oracle!  
Sergeant, with me...

Boma spins on his heels and storms out of the Room. Gora hurries after him.

Conan drops the length of wood with a clatter, shrugs and holds out his hands to the wary soldiers.

EXT. PALACE - COURTYARD - DAY

Soldiers relax around the courtyard. Belit sits at the foot of the entrance steps, flanked by two soldiers. Boma talks to Gora a little way off.

Conan is led out of the entranceway. He sees Belit.

CONAN

Belit, my love!

He starts to move to her. The points of spears stop him.

Belit ignores him, stares ahead. But the Captain heard. His head turns, a grim smile upon his face.

CAPTAIN BOMA

What did you call her? Belit?  
Belit the Tigress by chance?  
Derketo's eyes so she is, I should  
have guessed. Ha. Bring them both  
over here.

Belit and Conan are brought over to Captain Boma.

BELIT

Nay my lord, he mistakes me for  
some other girl. It is plain to me  
he has the looks of a lack-wit.

Conan grins.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Save your breath. I am no fool.  
You are Belit, Queen of the Black  
Coast and this here is your king,  
Conan the Cimmerian. Drop your  
pretence.

Belit lifts her chin with defiance.

BELIT

Yes, Captain, I am Belit.  
Congratulations, you have  
succeeded on land where many have  
failed at sea. However, I have  
never harried Darfar vessels or  
your coastal settlements. I demand  
you release us.

CAPTAIN BOMA

You are the lack-wit if you would  
expect anything less than a  
hangman's rope for stealing the  
Teeth of Gwelhur.

Belit opens her mouth to speak. Captain Boma raises a hand.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Do not deny you came here to steal the Teeth. The evidence suggests a falling out among thieves. That will have no bearing on the fact the Teeth have been stolen and you two are implicated in the treasonous crime.

BELIT

My ship is but one day's ride from here. Aboard I have enough wealth to make a man of your station very comfortable for the rest of his days.

CAPTAIN BOMA

What a shame you will never get to spend it, or see it again. Take them away. Lock them in separate rooms. Four... no, Six guards each.

CONAN

Wait. I have a proposal. You will never catch the other thief. Let me go after him, Belit will remain in your custody. I will find him and bring him back - and the Teeth - in exchange for our lives.

CAPTAIN BOMA

That will not be necessary, I have men in the surrounding districts. This other thief will soon be apprehended.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - BACK STREETS - DAY

Tutamek runs past the marble fountain, pauses a moment, sees the bodies of the warriors, resumes his speed.

He reaches the edge of the paved area and steps into the shadows.

A ripple of energy pulses out from the Teeth in the quiver. Tutamek stops again and looks around.

O.S. A single answering thump vibrates the buildings and resonates between them. Dust and small stones shower down on Tutamek.

Another thump.

TUTAMEK

Gwelhur!

In sheer panic, Tutamek races into the streets.

EXT. PALACE - COURTYARD - DAY

Everyone stares up at the palace. The slow rhythmic thumps draw near.

Then a giant black ape breaks out of the entrance, stands in the sunlight. It bellows, thumps its chest.

Soldiers back away in terror. Many flee. The horses bolt.

CONAN

Crom!

CAPTAIN BOMA

No! It is Gwelhur himself come to retrieve the Teeth.

Captain Boma strides towards Gwelhur, arms aloft.

Belit stoops and picks up a discarded spear.

CAPTAIN BOMA

Oh great Gwelhur, Lord of the moonlit jungles, we are your servants, we await your commands!

Gwelhur snatches up Captain Boma and dashes him against the palace walls, tosses the body aside, roars again. It clears the steps in one bound.

The other soldiers throw away their spears and flee in all directions. Belit watches them flee.

Conan and Belit cut each other free, snatch up more spears, face the great ape.

BELIT

Cowards!

CONAN

Perhaps. But how do we kill a god?

BELIT

Any creature that walks upon the earth that is made of flesh and blood can be killed. See it's jaws bleed where the teeth have been removed. It may take a little time.

CONAN

The eyes! The eyes will be vulnerable - and that fleshy toothless maw. We need to find an advantage. Follow me.

Conan hurls his spear. It buries deep into Gwelhur's shoulder. The ape bellows in pain, turns towards Conan. Conan runs. Belit runs.

Utaka rides past, too close to the ape. Gwelhur plucks the scout from the horses back, rips him apart.

Conan steadies the horse, leaps upon its back. He helps Belit up behind him, urges the horse ahead. It gallops into the city.

Gwelhur roars, lurches after them.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - BACK STREETS - DAY

Conan and Belit ride past the marble fountain and dead bodies, into the alley.

Moments later, Gwelhur runs into the area. He stops to sniff the air, looks at the alley.

The alley is too narrow for the giant ape to pass through. It climbs up the side of a building and leaps from roof to roof.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - EAST TRAIL - DAY

Tutamek pauses to catch his breath.

Conan and Belit thunder up the trail.

Tutamek sees them, starts to run. Conan's boot catches him in the back and Tutamek falls into the rocks. His head strikes a rock and he falls limp.

CONAN

Quick, pass me the quiver - I have an idea.

Belit leaps down, snatches up the quiver, throws it to Conan.

BELIT

Take care, my love. I will keep this serpentps[awn company. He and I have old and new scores to settle.

Conan digs his heels into the horse's flanks. It hurtles up the trail again.

Belit drags Tutamek behind a rock.

Gwelhur scrambles over the rocks after Conan.

EXT. CLIFF - TOP - DAY

Conan leaps from the horse and runs to the cliff edge, turns. He waves the quiver overhead.

Gwelhur appears over the rocks. The horse shies away.

CONAN

Hey, ugly brute! Come get your teeth!

Conan steps back over the cliff, the apes hand snatches at empty air.

EXT. CLIFF - LEDGE - DAY

Conan lands on the ledge, wavers a moment, scrambles on all fours to the passage at the back.

EXT. CLIFF - TOP - DAY

Gwelhur leans over the side, reaches down, fumbles about on the ledge. Bellows, pounds the rock with a fist.

Conan rushes up behind the ape, grabs hold of a squat leg, heaves.

Gwelhur topples over the edge. Rocks break, the ape tries to gain purchase. Conan falls after it.

Hand over hand, Conan clambers up and over the side, quiver strap in his teeth.

He heads towards the horse. It shies away from him.

O.S. A deep growl.

Conan wheels. Gwelhur's head rises above the cliff edge.

Conan runs forward, grabs one of the spears from Tutamek's warriors, plunges it deep into Gwelhur's eye.

The giant ape screams and topples backwards, its arms flail, it drops out of sight.

Conan crawls to the edge, watches Gwelhur fall to the ground far below. It lands with a tremendous crash in the trees. The giant ape lies still.

Conan stands, collects the quiver. Gathers the horse's reins, leads it down the trail.

EXT. ALKMEENON CITY - EAST TRAIL - DAY

Belit runs to Conan as he walks over to her. They embrace.

CONAN

Tutamek? Is he alive or dead?

BELIT

Alive of course! Sleeping like a babe. The beast?

CONAN

It lies broken at the base of the cliffs with a spear in its brain. You were right, it was no god... though whence it came I hazard no guess. I am growing to despise magic.

BELIT

Well, it is gone now. The priests won't be happy.

They kiss again. Conan gestures towards Tutamek.

CONAN

Now, what to do with this one? Sell him for bounty in Darfar? He was a general of Zembabwei. N'Gora can make the trade.

BELIT

I have been thinking about this, and I think we should take him with us to Zarkheba. I know, he has been working against us, but he is good at what he does - thievery - it would be a waste to see him dead.

Conan laughs.

CONAN

You never cease to amaze me. You can trust him, after what he has done?

BELIT

There are only two people that I trust; you and me. But once Tutamek hears my offer, I am certain he will play fair.

CONAN

I shall abide by your wishes, but  
I will kill him at the slightest  
provocation - useful or not.

Belit shrugs.

BELIT

Back to the Tigress then.

CONAN

I suggest we ignore the cliff now.  
We will skirt the city, pick up  
any loose horses, and ride for the  
coast. There should be little if  
any resistance from the soldiers  
of either army.

Conan ties the limp form of Tutamek onto the horse and they  
walk down the trail.

EXT. JUNGLE - CAMP - NIGHT

Conan, Belit and Tutamek sit beside a camp fire. Three  
horses tethered in the background. A bandage adorns  
Tutamek's head.

TUTAMEK

So I get to keep my life - and one  
share in the loot - in exchange  
for my thievery and swordsmanship  
skills, which I unashamedly admit  
are second to none... present  
company excepted of course.

BELIT

That is the gist of it.

TUTAMEK

Then we have a bargain.

CONAN

You talk very confidently for a  
man in your position.

TUTAMEK

I know people Conan, if I may call  
you Conan?

Conan nods.

TUTAMEK

I can tell you are a man of honor; stern but fair. If you give your word, I have nothing to fear so long as I am respectful. Belit is still somewhat of an enigma to me however though a confident air seems to work with her.

Tutamek grins, Belit scowls, and Conan snorts.

BELIT

Ah yes, that reminds me.

She leans over, slaps Tutamek hard on the face. Anger flares briefly, but subsides. He smiles, rubs his cheek.

TUTAMEK

I am sorry for that earlier misdemeanour my queen. I do tend to lose my temper rather too often of late.

Conan raises an eyebrow at Belit. She waves his expression away.

BELIT

All in the past now. We have a new partnership; one far stronger than the last - for whatever reasons.

Tutamek raises his waters kin.

TUTAMEK

A toast to our new partnership.

They all drink.

TUTAMEK

And to absent... friends.

Tutamek drinks. Conan and Belit drink after a pause.

CONAN

Who was Pteor? Never have I met one as strong as he.

TUTAMEK

Hmm, I did not press him on his past. I found Pteor working as a bodyguard for a merchant in Arenjun. The lure of gold was too much for him apparently. He followed me to Zembabwei and we formed a partnership. It was

(MORE)

TUTAMEK (CONT'D)  
profitable while it lasted. He was indeed a powerful man, yet it was you who broke his neck.

CONAN  
His strength was born of the city, I am a Cimmerian.

TUTAMEK  
A Cimmerian? Ah, of course, that explains it...

Conan growls a warning.

CONAN  
Your sarcasm will earn you a broken skill, Stygian - be warned.

TUTAMEK  
Oh don't be so dour man.

They sit in silence a moment, stare at the fire.

TUTAMEK  
You have sufficient crew? There are plenty of warriors hereabouts to replenish our losses.

CONAN  
Ha, our losses he says. Already he is taking over.

BELIT  
We have enough.

TUTAMEK  
Well, if you have it all in hand, I bid you good evening. We have a long ride ahead of us through hostile territory.

Tutamek yawns, wraps himself in a cloak, rolls over.

Conan snorts again, stands, throws his scarlet cloak over one shoulder.

CONAN  
I will take first watch.

He stomps away.

Tutamek smiles to himself.

EXT. DARFAR BAY - BEACH - DAY

The Tigress lies at anchor in a bay. A single canoe pulled up on the beach. Two warriors stand nearby.

A group of warriors emerge from the tree line. They carry bulging water skins, buckets and a variety of snared animals. N'Gora leads them.

O.S. A horse Whineys. All the warriors turn, weapons readied.

Conan, Belit and Tutamek ride up the beach.

N'GORA

My Queen!

The warriors rush forward to greet Belit. Conan reins back. Tutamek grins sidelong at him. Conan scowls.

TUTAMEK

You will have to get used to the adoration of your subjects Conan. I suspect you're destined for greater things than a mere first mate.

CONAN

I am their king.

TUTAMEK

You are king by virtue of being their queens lover - there is a slight difference--

BELIT

He is king by virtue of his nobility and prowess, Tutamek, something you will never achieve.

TUTAMEK

I am not a ruler of men, nor do I wish to be. Though I agree to being a manipulator of men. N'Gora my old friend, how fare you? I thought you were dead.

N'GORA

I still live master Tutamek, against your efforts.

Tutamek laughs.

TUTAMEK

Well, I hope the old days are behind us now and you hold no ill feelings towards me?

N'GORA

If my queen has accepted your return, then I am content.

CONAN

Time will tell.

TUTAMEK

Indeed it will. What do you propose to do with the mounts? Take them aboard ship, set them free, butcher them?

BELIT

Set them loose. Villagers from that last settlement we skirted will find them in a day or so.

TUTAMEK

Your generosity knows no bounds my queen.

They set the horses loose, load the canoe, row to the Tigress.

EXT. TIGRESS - POOPDECK - DAY

Belit and Conan stare up river.

BELIT

This here is the river Zarkheba,

The water is black, reflective; a glossy sheen covers the surface.

CONAN

As much as it pains me to say so, I think Tutamek is tight - we do need more men. We have barely eighty - just enough to man the oars. If we meet and resistance...

BELIT

Nay, we have sufficient for our needs. Besides, the journey south to the island chain where I recruited them from is long and arduous with scarcely a ship to prey upon for weeks on end. The local tribes are poor warriors and in the main untrustworthy.

CONAN

I see there will be no dissuading  
you.

BELIT

No. Raise the anchor, we embark  
immediately.

The Tigress swings into the river mouth, oarsmen pull and strain against the current. Conan and Tutamek take a place on the rowing benches. Belit stands at the prow.

They soon round a bend that shuts out the sight of the sea.

EXT. TIGRESS - FOREDECK - DAY

Sunset.

The ship forges steadily against the tide.

Conan and Tutamek stand in the prow.

CONAN

We have seen no living thing save  
venomous snakes on low branches.  
We should seek anchorage at the  
next suitable spot. Perhaps where  
a clear stream enters the river.

TUTAMEK

That could be a good idea. These  
dark walls of jungle unnerve the  
men. They talk of strange sounds  
and the glare of watching eyes.

Belit joins them.

BELIT

I say we should keep moving while  
we are able. It is not strenuous  
rowing; we have men enough to  
spell each other.

Conan shrugs.

An inhuman cry - like manic laughter - pierces the quiet.  
The men murmur.

BELIT

(To the crew)

Calm yourselves, 'tis only the  
call of an ape

(To Conan)

They say that the souls of evil  
men are imprisoned in these man-

(MORE)

BELIT (CONT'D)

like animals as punishment for  
past crimes.

CONAN

I doubt it. In Shadizar, I once  
saw an abysmal sad-eyed beast in a  
golden cage which men told me was  
an ape. That mocking laughter is  
something different.

TUTAMEK

It reminds me of the hyenas of the  
inner plains - yet there is a hint  
of intelligence...

The moon rises over the trees. The jungle awakens in  
horrific bedlam to greet it. Roars, howls, yells, laughter.

The warriors row on. Fearful glances at the jungle.

Moonlight turns the river into a road of silver. The oars  
are sheathed in frosty silver. Feathered headdresses nod in  
the wind. The gems on sword hilts and harnesses glitter.

EXT. TIGRESS - POOPDECK - NIGHT

Belit lounges on a leopard skin. She Stretches, gazes up at  
Conan who leans on the rail.

BELIT

Mystery and terror are about us,  
and we glide into the realm of  
horror and death. Are you afraid?

CONAN

No - not for my own safety.

BELIT

I am not afraid either, I was  
never afraid. I have looked into  
the naked fangs of death too  
often. Tell me, do you fear the  
gods?

CONAN

No, but I would not tread on their  
shadows; some are strong to harm -  
others to aid... at least so say  
their priests. Mitra of the  
Hyborians must be a strong god,  
because his people have built  
their cities over the world. But  
even the Hyborians fear Set. And  
when I was in Zamora I learned of  
Bel.

BELIT

The god of thieves. What of your own gods? I have never heard you call on them - just curse by... Crom.

CONAN

Crom is their chief. He dwells on a great mountain. What use to call on him? Little he cares if men live or die. Better to be silent than to call his attention to you; he will send you doom, not fortune! He is grim and loveless, but at birth he breathes power to strive and slay into a man's soul. What else shall men ask of the gods?

BELIT

What of the worlds beyond the river of death?

CONAN

There is no hope here - or hereafter - in the cult of my people. In this world men struggle and suffer vainly, finding pleasure only in the bright madness of battle. When they die, their souls enter a gray misty realm of clouds and icy winds, to wander without cheer throughout eternity.

BELIT

Life, bad as it is, is better than such a destiny. But what do you really believe, Conan?

CONAN

He who denies the gods exist is as blind as he who trusts them too deeply. I seek naught beyond death. It may be the blackness as proposed by the Nemedian sceptics, or Crom's realm of ice and cloud, or the snowy plains and vaulted halls of the Nordheimer's Valhalla.

Conan moves away from the rail and kneels beside her.

CONAN

I know not, nor do I care. Let me live deep while I live; let me know the rich juices of red meat and stinging wine on my palate, the hot embrace of your arms, the mad exultation of battle, and I am content. Let teachers and priests and philosophers brood over questions of reality and illusion.

He rolls onto his back.

CONAN

If life is illusion, then I am no less an illusion, and being thus, the illusion is real to me. I live, I love, I slay... I am content.

BELIT

I believe the gods are real. Above all are the gods of the Shemites - Ishtar and Ashtoreth and Derketo and Adonis. Bel, too, is Shemitish, for he was born in ancient Shumir, long, long ago. I also believe there is life beyond death, I know deep inside. And I know this, too, Conan of Cimmeria...

She rolls astride him and catches him in a wild embrace.

BELIT

My love is stronger than any death! I have lain in your arms, panting with the violence of our love; you have held and crushed and conquered me, drawing my soul to your lips with the fierceness of your bruising kisses. My heart is welded to yours; my soul is part of your soul! And were my body lain dead, and you fighting for life, I would come back from the abyss to aid you. Aye, whether my spirit floated with purple sails on the crystal sea of paradise, or writhed in the molten flames of the deepest hell! I am yours, and all the gods and all their eternities shall not sever us!

O.S. A scream rings out. Conan leaps to his feet, sword in

hand. He looks towards the prow. His eyes narrow.

A warrior dangles above the deck, supported by what looks like a dark tree trunk that arches over the rail.

N'YAGA (O.S.)

A serpent! Strike it down!

The creature is coiled around the rail. Warriors stab at it with spears. Tutamek fires an arrow into it. The man dangles from the snake's mouth.

CONAN

Stand aside!

EXT. TIGRESS - FOREDECK - NIGHT

Conan runs forwards, sword in two hands over his head. He slices deep into the snake's body. Its blood drenches the deck.

The snake sways far out over the river - warrior in its jaws - and falls into the water. It thrashes a moment and sinks out of sight.

Those on board watch the ripples. A single white feather swirls in the current.

CONAN

One more warrior gone.

BELIT

He should have been more alert.  
Where were you Tutamek?

TUTAMEK

I was taking my spell at the oars.  
Think not to place the blame on  
me.

BELIT

I do not. I am sorry for my hasty  
words. N'Yaga, double the watch.

CONAN

I will keep watch for the rest of  
the night too.

Belit nods and return to the poopdeck. Tutamek and most of the men return to the oars, a handful stay with Conan.

EXT. TIGRESS - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

N'Yaga walks down to the main deck, looks over the side.

A trickle of clear water runs into the river. He watches it a moment, then picks up his oar.

EXT. TIGRESS - FOREDECK - DAY

The first rays of dawn highlight a number of dark towers visible over the treetops.

Conan stands alone in the prow. He stares up at the towers. Tutamek joins him.

TUTAMEK

By Derketo... the city exists...

CONAN

Aye. Belit! There are your towers!

Belit, wrapped in Conan's cloak, moves up to his side. Men wake and stare in awe. Some mutter private prayers.

The Tigress clears a jungle-clad bend. There before them is a city... a ruined ghost of a city.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) River grass grows between the stones of broken stone piers.

B) Weeds grow through shattered pavements.

c) Spacious plazas strewn with the rubble of collapsed buildings.

D) Buckled towers reel against the pressure of the jungle.

E) A great marble pyramid, spired by a slim column.

F) Atop the column squats a black shape.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS.

TUTAMEK

That is a very big bird. I hope it is recently fed.

CONAN

Looks more like a huge bat to me; see the points of its folded wings.

BELIT

It sits like an ape.

The creature leaps from its perch, opens wide black leathery wings, flaps away over the jungle.

N'YAGA

A winged ape! Better we had cut our throats than come to this place. It is haunted. We will all die here.

BELIT

N'Yaga, you superstitious old fool, be quiet ere you scare the men. Look at this place; it is ripe for the plunder. A winged ape will offer us no resistance. Take us in. That jetty at the far end appears the sturdiest.

The Tigress moves beside the jetty. Men leap upon it, tie off ropes to rusted iron brackets.

Belit springs ashore. Conan follows. Then Tutamek and the warriors behind him. All have weapons drawn, ready.

EXT. JETTY - DAY

Their footsteps echo across the water and through the empty city.

Belit climbs a pile of rubble, poses. Scans the area.

Sunlight floods the towers with dull golden light. Deep shadows cast between them.

Belit points to a half-collapsed round tower close to the pyramid. Grass and vines encroach within. A stone altar, half buried under fallen masonry. A short avenue of cracked, overgrown slabs, flanked by fallen columns, leads up to it.

BELIT

This way.

She trots along the ancient road, quiver bouncing against her hip.

In a moment, she stands before the altar. The others follow. All the men look warily around them as they walk.

EXT. ALTAR - DAY

A large stone altar buried under a ton of rubble.

The warriors clear away the rubble to reveal decorations that depict winged men and women.

BELIT

This must have been a temple of the Old Ones. Look at the altar; you can see channels to drain away the blood of their sacrifices. The rains have not washed the dark stains from them. While other stones have fallen away, this one alone defies time and the elements.

CONAN

Who were the Old Ones? Winged men by the looks of it.

Belit turns to him, spreads her arms.

BELIT

I do not know. Not even in legends of this city are they fully explained.

She spins and dances to the end of the altar.

BELIT

But look - see the handholds at either end of the altar? Priests often conceal their treasures beneath their altars. Four of you lay hold and see if you can shift it.

She steps back to make room.

Conan and three of the strongest warriors grip the handholds.

CONAN

These are curious handholds; not crafted for any human hand--

O.S. Belit utters a sharp cry. The warriors freeze and Conan wheels, sword in hand.

BELIT

A snake! Come slay it Conan,  
quickly. You men, bend your backs  
to the stone.

Conan moves at speed towards her, another warrior takes his place.

TUTAMEK

Try sliding it first. All  
together... push...

Conan scans the grass.

CONAN

Where is it?

The warriors brace their feet, grunt and heave - their huge muscles strain under the weight.

BELIT

In there.

Belit points into a clump of thick grass. She looks sideways past him at the warriors and the altar. She glances at Tutamek. He nods and turns back to the men.

TUTAMEK

Try the other way.

The warriors reposition themselves and push. The altar revolves an arms breadth. A series of loud clicks.

Blades and spikes slash out from all around the altar. The four men lie dead in seconds.

Cries of shock and horror from their comrades.

The blades retract and the altar begins to slide back.

Tutamek dives forward, jams two sturdy metal spikes under it.

Tutamek rolls away, but no blades emerge. He gets to his feet, grins.

TUTAMEK

I think I may have just earned my  
share.

Belit grasps Conan's arm, leans close, whispers.

BELIT

There was no serpent. It was but a ruse to call you away. I feared the old ones protected their treasure well.

Conan nods. They move towards the altar.

BELIT

Clear away the bodies.

The warriors mutter. N'Yaga talks to them in their native tongue. They drag away the dead men.

Tutamek examines the altar.

TUTAMEK

The trap has not reset. See these pegs and grooves? If I can deactivate them, we can slide the altar aside in safety. There is a chamber below here.

Tutamek moves around the base of the altar with care. He removes a number of short and long pegs, wheels and levers.

TUTAMEK

(To himself)

Ingenious... quite ingenious... racks and pinions, very nice.

The others stand around, watch him.

TUTAMEK

Right, that should do it. Conan, if you wish to slide the altar aside... you can trust me, it is quite safe now and should run easily enough with your weight behind it.

Conan bends his back to the altar. He pushes. It slides aside, to reveal steps leading down into blackness.

BELIT

N'Yaga, prepare torches. We will take six warriors with us, the rest remain and protect the ship - I don't want that winged ape ransacking our stores.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

A roughly hewn stone stairway leads down at a sharp angle. Sunlight illuminates part of the way. Shadows are cast as Tutamek descends first, torch in hand. Belit follows, Conan next, the warriors after him.

At the bottom of the stairway, some thirty feet below ground, a short passageway ends in a large stone doorway.

Tutamek examines it. Carvings of a similar design to the altar cover its surface. In the centre is a sun emblem. He feels it, peers closer.

TUTAMEK

This is the handle. I see no other crevices or panels that may conceal blades. But stand back just in case.

The others shuffle back up the steps a way.

Tutamek grips the handle and twists and pushes it.

The emblem retracts smoothly with the gentle grind of stone on stone. Tutamek steps back.

The door slides horizontally into a recess. Tutamek reaches into the doorway and jams two more iron spikes into the base of the door.

TUTAMEK

Better to be cautious than dead.

He steps to one side.

TUTAMEK

After you my queen.

BELIT

Nay, you are doing such a good job of it, carry on.

CONAN

Let me go first.

He squeezes past.

BELIT

Be careful...

Conan takes the torch from Tutamek and steps through the doorway.

CONAN (O.S.)  
 Crom! Another statue of that  
 damned arpe god!

They all file through after him.

INT. TREASURE ROOM - DAY

Another bare room, but for a statue of Ghulla - the twin of the one in Alkmeenon. Its canine teeth are missing.

Belit takes the quiver from her shoulder and reaches into it, draws out one of the Teeth of Gwelhur. She grins.

BELIT  
 What say you, shall I try them?

CONAN  
 I am not so certain. This whole  
 adventure has too much to do with  
 magic and the gods for my liking.

Tutamek clambers onto the statue's lap, peers into its mouth. He reaches out a hand to Belit.

TUTAMEK  
 Allow me.

Belit passes the first tooth to Tutamek. He lowers it into the apes mouth. it clicks into place.

They all hold their breaths.

Tutamek reaches out his hand again. Belit hands him the other tooth. He places it in the mouth. It clicks into place.

Tutamek leaps down and stands beside Belit. Shrugs.

They look around; at the walls, at the statue, at each other.

CONAN  
 Hah, it was all for naught.

BELIT  
 I don't see how. This must be the  
 right--

A deeper rumble. The wall behind the statue descends into the floor. Gold, silver and multi-coloured gems glint in the torchlight.

TUTAMEK

This is too easy.

Belit whoops with glee and races forward.

TUTAMEK

No!

Belit treads on the floor of the room beyond the statue and the slab beneath her feet is depressed. She stands still.

Again everyone looks around.

Another rumble. Two iron spikes fly into the room, spark off the stone wall.

CONAN

The doorway!

TUTAMEK

Damn, my spikes failed.

Conan springs forward and throws himself into the gap of the closing door. He braces his legs and slows it.

CONAN

Quick... fetch stones... from  
outside...

The warriors clamber past him and rush up the stairs.

Tutamek and Belit clamber past too, and then help Conan. Tutamek tries another spike.

BELIT

Hurry up you dogs!

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

Warriors struggle down the stairs. They carry various sized rocks. N'Gora carries a huge stone.

CONAN

N'Gora, that one first. Place it  
here, between my feet.

N'Gora grunts and lowers the stone in the doorway.

Conan relaxes; the door closes a little, binds into the rock and stops. A loud crack from somewhere in the wall and the rumbles cease.

They all breathe a sigh of relief.

CONAN

Pile those other rocks in the doorway.

TUTAMEK

The mechanism is broken, there is no need for the rest of the rocks to--

CONAN

We still do not know what traps are in this place. Do as I say.

The warriors fill the doorway with rocks to a height level with their knees.

BELIT

Satisfied? Can we go back in now?

CONAN

Let Tutamek go first.

Tutamek enters the room again. Belit sighs, follows him.

INT. TREASURE ROOM - DAY

Belit dances from item to item, eyes stare wide, giggles and whoops. The others check out the treasure too.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Conan holds up a golden bladed sword. Swings it, shakes his head and throws it back onto a pile of other swords. Picks up a large double-curved bow. Nods.

B) N'Yaga kneels before a wooden chest. Dips his inside, raises them. Gems and coins spill through his fingers. He grins from ear to ear.

C) Tutamek holds a foot-long statuette of a winged woman. He twists the statue, the base comes free, a jewel-encrusted dagger slides out. He looks around, slips the dagger into his tunic, grins.

D) Belit stops in front of a white stone statue of a winged man. A necklace of gold-linked red gems dangles from the fingers of an outstretched hand. She slides the necklace off his hand and places it around her neck.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS.

Belit spins away from the statue.

BELIT

Enough! N'Gora, go fetch the other men. We will empty this chamber.

EXT. ALTAR - DAY

Two warriors struggle up the stairs with the white statue, stand it to one side. Conan sees it and turns to Belit. He opens his mouth, closes it, shakes his head.

Belit wanders among the treasure on the grass and flags. Her eyes are wide as if in a trance. Her voice dreamy.

BELIT

The wealth of a city, lost for nigh a thousand years. And now it is all mine.

N'YAGA (O.S.)

Look. The devil ape!

All turn to see a black shape flap away from the ship, over the treetops.

BELIT

What matter? Make a litter of spears and shields to bear these jewels--

Conan sprints away.

BELIT

Where are you going?

CONAN

To look to the galley. That bat-thing might have knocked a hole in the bottom, for all we know.

He runs down the cracked wharf, springs aboard.

Tutamek climbs up the steps. A chest in his arms and a circlet of silver upon his head.

TUTAMEK

What is it? Trouble?

BELIT

No, Conan has gone to see what it was doing. Is there much more?

Tutamek stacks the chest alongside others.

TUTAMEK

Possibly half as much again. We  
are rich beyond our dreams.

He leans over and kisses Belit on her cheek. She seems not to notice. He turns and heads back down the stairs.

INT. TIGRESS - MAIN DECK - DAY

Conan peers through a hatch into the hold. He looks around then slams a fist on the deck.

CONAN

Crom!

He leaps off the ship and runs to where Belit stands, hand on hips

EXT. ALTAR - DAY

More warriors haul more treasure up the stairs.

CONAN

That flying devil has staved in  
the water-casks. If we hadn't been  
so dazed by all this we'd have  
heard it. We were fools not to  
have left at least a man or two on  
guard. We can't drink river water.  
I'll take twenty men and search  
for fresh water in the jungle.

Tutamek joins them. Conan lifts the silver crown from Tutamek's head and tosses it onto a pile of other head-gear. Tutamek shrugs.

TUTAMEK

How about we split them into two  
lots of ten and go in separate  
directions?

CONAN

Yes, good idea. You go south.

Belit's eyes are vacant; her fingers play with the necklace.

BELIT

Mm? Very well... I'll get the loot  
aboard...

Conan picks his men - N'Gora among them - enters the jungle. They are soon out of sight.

Tutamek gathers ten men of his own. He heads towards the jungle.

N'Yaga climbs up the stairs, approaches Belit.

N'YAGA  
What happened, my queen?

Belit sighs in irritation.

BELIT  
The winged ape has smashed our  
water casks. Conan and Tutamek are  
going to look for fresh water.

N'YAGA  
Ahh, I saw a place near where the  
snake took Apombe. May I have your  
permission to show master Tutamek?

BELIT  
Yes, yes, you have my permission.

N'Yaga bows, rushes after Tutamek.

N'YAGA  
Master Tutamek... a moment... I  
know of a place...

Tutamek pauses to let N'Yaga catch up.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAY

A dark, close jungle. The warriors in single file behind  
Conan. Creepers dangle, roots snag at their legs.

They plunge deeper into the trees.

Until they reach a tree with a huge thick trunk, covered in  
vines.

Conan halts, his warriors freeze. Conan listens, shakes his  
head, turns to N'Gora, bends close, whispers.

CONAN  
Take the men ahead. March straight  
on until you can no longer see me;  
then stop and wait for me. I  
believe we're being followed. I  
heard something.

N'Gora leads the warriors onwards. He is uneasy, stares  
around with wide eyes. Conan steps behind the thick tree,  
glares back along the way they came.

The sounds of the warriors fade in the distance.

Conan's nose twitches, he sniffs, raises his eyebrows, takes  
a deeper breath. He looks at the ground around him, at his

sleeves, shoulders. He looks up.

Curiously shaped black flowers dangle from the greenery above his head. They rustle though there is no wind and fine pollen flutters down from them.

CONAN  
Black Lotus!

Conan draws his sword, swings it over his head. He staggers as if drunk, takes a few steps, stumbles to his knees.

CONAN  
N'...Go...ra

He falls face down in the undergrowth, rolls onto his back, lies still. His eyes close, his chest rises and falls evenly.

O.S. Muffled yells, growls, screams from the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

The black flower withers and the petals fall.

BELIT (V.O.)  
Was it a dream the nightish lotus  
brought?  
Then curst the dream that bought  
my sluggish life;  
And curst each laggard hour that  
does not see  
Hot blood drip blackly from the  
crimsoned knife.

INT. CONANS DREAM - DAY

Utter blackness. A strong wind blows loud.

Vague shapes, monstrous, transparent, roll through the expanse of nothingness.

The winds blow, swirl. A vortex forms.

From it the shapes grow clearer. The blackness is blown away to reveal a huge city. A city of dark green stone rises on the bank of a wide river that flows through a cultivated plain.

Through the city move winged men and women of heroic proportions. They are perfect, handsome, beautiful, unblemished.

Great glacial ice-fields appear in the distance, roll forwards towards the city.

The great river rises, falls, floods, changes course. Plains become swamps, home to reptilian life.

Forests rear up, grow into dank jungles.

Terrific convulsions shake the earth. Volcanoes spew flame in the background. The earth bubbles, the river runs black.

An earthquake shakes down the outer walls and highest towers. The city inhabitants - black, hideous shadows of their former selves - flap and soar in the sky.

The creatures fight, feed on each other until only one remains. It takes its perch atop the pyramid.

Humans arrive. Hawk-nosed warriors in bronze and leather armour who carry bows and spears. Wounded and thirsty - stragglers from a defeated army. They drink from the river and fall asleep under red lotus flowers.

The beast circles over them, casts a spell. The men transform into great spotted hyenas.

The Tigress sails into the docks. The occupants disembark. Conan enters the forest. The horror attacks the warriors. They flee. The beast creeps towards Conan as he sleeps.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAY.

Conan's eyes snap open.

With a savage effort, Conan struggles to his feet, shakes his head, grunts. He sees a footprint in the earth nearby. He swallows.

CONAN  
N'Gora... N'Gora!

The sun is below the tree-line.

Conan follows the tracks of the warriors. He finds discarded spears and shields.

CONAN  
N'Gora!

Conan follows the bare-footed tracks. They lead to a clear area wherein is a huge outcrop of stone.

EXT. CRAG - DAY.

A forty foot high crag. Slope on one side, sheer drop on the other. A black figure crouches on the apex.

The figure sees him, rushes down the slope.

It is N'Gora.

Arms outstretched; lips foam with spittle. Eyes roll in madness. He gibbers.

N'GORA

This is all your doing Northman.  
You will die - king or not!

CONAN

No. Wait.

N'Gora charges at Conan.

They fight. Conan runs him through.

With a grim-set jaw, Conan strides up the slope, stops on the edge of the cliff, looks down.

Many of N'Gora's spearmen lay below him among the rocks, all dead. A cloud of huge flies buzzes loudly above the bodies.

Birds of prey peck at the bodies.

A jackal, skulks among the rocks.

Conan stands motionless, the setting sun lights his face in a red glow.

His eyes widen.

CONAN

Belit!

He wheels, runs headlong back down the slope, into the trees.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAY

Conan runs through deep shadows. The sun low over the trees.

He leaps over logs and vines, ducks under branches. His cloak is snagged and ripped.

EXT. ALTAR - DAY

Conan bursts out of the jungle into the twilight.

Here and there among the stones are spots of bright red.

He walks forwards, sees the bodies of warriors. From the jungle edge to the riverbank, among the pillars and along the broken piers they lie, torn and mangled and half eaten.

All about the bodies are many huge paw-prints.

EXT. JETTY - DAY

Conan approaches the ship. His steps slow until he stands still at the edge of the jetty.

He stares at the ship in disbelief.

Belit hangs from the yard arm - hung by the neck with the red-jewelled necklace...

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

A red-gem necklace hangs from the hilt of a sword stuck in a grassy swathe. It swings to and fro in the wind.

BELIT (V.O.)

The shadows were black around him,  
the dripping jaws gaped wide,  
Thicker than rain the red drops  
fell;  
But my love was fiercer than  
Death's black spell,  
Nor all the iron walls of hell  
Could keep me from his side.

A ghostly female hand gathers the necklace, another pulls the sword out of the soil. Belit's ghostly form walks away, out of the glade, onto a beach, down the beach to the misty shore, disappears into the mist.

EXT. PYRAMID - NIGHT

A moonless night. Stars sparkle above...

A tall pyramid constructed from huge stone blocks. A row of steps lead upwards to a balcony.

At the base of the steps sits Conan like an iron statue, chin propped on a massive fist, elbow on knee.

Out of the jungle staggers N'Yaga and Tutamek. They support each other. N'Yaga's arm in a sling. Dried blood covers Tutamek's face. N'Yaga's spear is stained red.

Conan's eyes flicker in their direction. He remains seated.  
N'Yaga sees him, stumbles a little.

N'YAGA  
Conan... my king... you live!

N'Yaga looks around. Tutamek stares ahead, eyes blank.

The dead warriors lay as they had fallen. The treasure has gone.

On the deck of the Tigress, on an unlit pyre of broken benches, spear-shafts and animal-skins, lays Belit, wrapped in Conan's scarlet cloak, her pirate plunder heaped about her.

N'Yaga guides Tutamek over to where Conan sits. They sit down on the ground nearby.

N'YAGA  
My queen is dead and all of her warriors - save us. Now we too shall die here.

CONAN  
Not I.

N'YAGA  
It is many long miles to the coast; we should depart now if we are to have a chance. We found an old road that runs parallel with the river - just before we were attacked by giant hyenas. I slew their leader and they fled, though it was too late for my warriors.

Conan spins to N'Yaga.

CONAN  
Their leader?

N'YAGA  
Yes, he was a great brute with a flash of white fur down--

CONAN  
Oh, another hyena. Not the winged ape-man.

N'YAGA

Nay not he! That is why I say we leave now. Master Tutamek had his head near crushed by one of the creatures. He is half-witted now, but can still move quickly enough if urged. Although... I fear he will not see the night through.

Conan looks at Tutamek. Shakes his head.

N'YAGA

Light the pyre - the ship will take the treasure to the bottom of the Zarkheba. We must save ourselves.

CONAN

That is the untainted treasure of her pirating, I have replaced all the treasure back into the room beneath the altar and re-sealed it. You go. Take Tutamek. I will wait for the winged creature to return, and then I will slay him. I can catch up with you later.

N'Yaga shuffles to rest his back against the rock.

N'YAGA

Then we too shall stay. Two blades are better than one, no matter how weak the one and how strong the other.

Conan nods. They wait.

Midnight. The moon is high. N'Yaga snores lightly. Tutamek mutters to himself. Conan stares at the pyre on the Tigress.

CONAN

Belit, my love, it may not be long ere we are together again. Crom, father, you gave me life. I now choose to spend it in revenge for the death of my beloved queen.

The subtle noises of the night cease abruptly.

Conan stands, reaches behind himself, lifts the double-curved bow. A pile of arrows lies at his feet, feathered ends towards him.

A shadow moves in the blackness under the trees, etched in the rising moon. A dark head and shoulders, gleaming red eyes blink.

From the jungle shadows dark shapes emerge. They charge, heads low. A pack of great spotted hyenas.

Their fangs flash in the moonlight, their eyes blaze.

Conan shoots arrow after arrow. Hyenas howl and fall. N'Yaga awakens, grabs his spear.

The rest still come forwards. More die.

Conan drops the bow and draws his sword.

Conan and N'Yaga fight side by side, backs to the pyramid, Tutamek between them.

N'Yaga is a skilful fighter.

One beast drags Tutamek off the step by an arm. He pulls out the dagger, slices the hyena's throat open. It screams and dies. Another grabs him by the throat, shakes him like a rag doll.

Conan cuts off its head. Tutamek flops down, lies limp.

Another hyena leaps on N'Yaga. He falls back against the stones wedges his spear against the rock. The creature impales itself. N'Yaga disappears under its body.

Conan buries his sword deep into another hyena but the blade is torn from grasp as the beast falls aside.

He fights the last two bare-handed. He smashes their skulls together.

The last hyena tumbles down the steps.

Conan pulls the hyena off N'Yaga. The old man is unconscious.

Tutamek groans.

TUTAMEK

(Weakly)

Conan. Take the dagger...

Conan bends over him.

CONAN

Why?

TUTAMEK

It has magical ... powers...

CONAN

I don't understand. What--

Tutamek lacughs, gurgles, spits blood.

TUTAMEK

It was the object of my quest from the start... The dagger of Saguinis.

CONAN

I knew you were not to be trusted, I should have...

Tutamek laughs again.

TUTAMEK

It is worth more than the other treasure combined! I would have escaped... were it not for N'Yaga... and his damned... stream...

Tutamek dies.

CONAN

We were doomed to die the moment we stepped upon the jetty.

Conan picks up the dagger, turns it over puts it inside his tunic. He retrieves his sword, wipes it clean on the hyena's hide.

O.S. a rumble of stone.

Conan looks up the steps.

The winged ape topples the spire.

Conan grabs up N'Yaga under one arm and leaps from the pyramid.

The spire crashes down onto the pyramid which crumbles, the sky rains shards of marble.

Conan climbs up out of the rubble, his sword and helmet lay half buried. Blood runs down his temple and cheek. A groggy N'Yaga crawls out nearby, his spear broken in half.

O.S. A snarl.

Conan spins.

The winged beast stands upon a broken slab. Its red eyes glow with fire. It rushes at Conan, leaps high in the air, falls towards him with taloned hands and fanged jaws open

wide.

Conan dives and rolls aside. The beast thrashes at the empty space, turns to attack again.

Conan's foot slips between two rocks and he falls, rocks slide, one slips onto his leg, trapped.

His reaches at full extent towards his sword, fingers grasp inches from the hilt.

N'Yaga stabs the beast with his broken spear. It growls and buffets him aside. Moves to loom over Conan. An evil grin creeps over its fanged jaws.

It steps on the stone. Conan grunts in pain.

He reacjes for the sword again, gets a finger hold, a handhold, swings the sword at the beast.

The sword bounces off. He strikes again. The blade bounces off. The creature laughs.

It lifts a guge boulder.

A glimmer of white mist flashes between the beast and Conan. The ghost of an ivory-skinned woman with long black hair. It wears a crimson cloak. It swirls around the beast.

CONAN  
(Screams)

Belit!

The ghostly form of Belit flashes a quick glance at him, she smiles.

The beast snaps its jaws at Bellit in blind fury and fear, the rock held high.

Conan draws out the dagger, throws it. The blade buries deep into the beasts throat. Black blood gushes from the wound.

It gurgles in pain, staggers, toppes over. The stone falls on top of it.

Belit moves to Conan, brushes her lips against his, dissipates.

BELIT (O.S.)  
(Whispers)

Were I still in death and you  
fighting for life I would come  
back from the abyss...

Conan drops to one knee, breathes heavily.

N'YAGA

Look, look at them! See. There,  
and there...

N'Yaga points at the foot of the collapsed pyramid, then around the area. Conan follows his finger.

The bodies of the hyenas are gone, in their place, bodies of hawk-nosed men. They crumble into dust as the two men watch.

The ground shakes. towers topple. The ground cracks, opens up. More buildings fall. A great gout of black ichor washes over the ground before them.

They run to the jutty, clamber aboard the Tigress. Conan pulls the tie-ropes free.

EXT. TIGRESS - NIGHT

They watch the city slip into the ground. River water floods after it. The igress rocks and rolls. Then all subsides.

CONAN

A fitting end to them all.

The Tigress bobs towards the middle of the river.

Conan moves to the poopdeck and steadies the tiller as the current takes them downstream.

Conan's gaze fixed on the cloak-wrapped figure on the pyre.

CONAN

(Whispers)

You rest now my love. You are  
going home...

EXT. JUNGLE GLADE - DAY

Grass sways in the wind. Flames engulf the grassy swathe. Smoke fills the glade.

CONAN (V.O.)

Now you are done with roaming,  
evermore;  
No more the oars, the windy harp's  
refrain;  
Nor crimson pennon frights the  
dusky shore;  
Blue girdle of the world, receive  
again she whom thou gavest me.

EXT. MOUTH OF THE RIVER ZARKHEBA - DAY

The Tigress drifts out of the river and into the ocean.  
Conan and N'Yaga stand on deck.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Conan lights the pyre.

B) Conan and N'Yaga dive into the ocean.

C) Conan and N'Yaga swim towards shore. Behind them the  
Tigress burns.

D) Conan and N'Yaga clamber ashore. Behind them the Tigress  
burns more furiously.

E) Conan and N'Yaga watch as the ship sinks beneath the  
waves.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. BEACH CAMP - DAY

A few huts on the edge of the jungle beside the Zarkheba  
River.

Conan and N'Yaga stand on the beach. Both bear bandages.

CONAN

Her life was the sea; in death we  
return her spirit to it. It all  
seems so... empty, now she is  
gone. I wish no more of it for  
now, but I shall return one day.

N'YAGA

I too have had my fill of the blue  
sea. Besides, none would care for  
an old cripple like me aboard  
their ship.

CONAN

Whence go you now?

N'YAGA

I go north, along the coast, back  
to my village. Find myself a good  
woman and settle down. You are  
welcome to stay there awhile,  
until your wounds heal.

CONAN

Thank you but nay. I will walk with you until we clear this accursed stretch of jungle then I travel east and north, I had heard there were wars brewing between Turan and the Hyrkanians. I will heal well enough as I travel.

They stand and look out over the ocean.

A white bird with a flash of crimson in its wings flies over their heads and out into the ocean.

N'YAGA (V.O.)

And so went the passing of the Queen of the Black Coast. My king, Conan of Cimmeria, shrouded in his grief, travelled inland to fight the wars of men against men. Yet oft times, he met many beautiful and monstrous things that were not born of woman, that did test him on the long road that brought him finally - and inevitably - to his own kingdom...

THE END