

DANGER IN THE WESTERMARCK!

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We know you are all crying out to get involved in Conan games, so here's a little scenario to get you inspired. Set within the Pictish Wilderness, west of Aquilonia, you will have to deal with savage tribes and forest beasts. Characters should be 1st level, (4-8 players) ideally including a Borderer or Barbarian type character.

BACKGROUND

Until recently, the wild regions of Pictland had been left untouched by the hands of civilisation. Only a few, wooden forts were stretched along the Westermarck, the land that stands between the golden kingdom of Aquilonia and the trackless forests of Pictland. Desperate settlers from Aquilonia and the savage Pictish tribes that inhabit the wild forest have fought over this dark and dangerous land for generations. For the last few years, an uneasy peace has reigned along the frontier, with only a few, random skirmishes to mark the passing of time. Recently, the king of Aquilonia, King Numedides, has given land grants to many new barons and lords who have proven themselves in the brief war with Nemedra. One of these barons, Trejanus, has decided to take his land grant and immediately begin settling a small, untouched section of the Westermarck. This area of forest is south of the Aquilonian fort of Schondara, east of the Black River and west of the Thunder River. Baron



Trejanus has only a small retinue of men-at-arms, but does have a large supply of gold, which he uses to purchase the mercenaries he needs to hold his new lands.

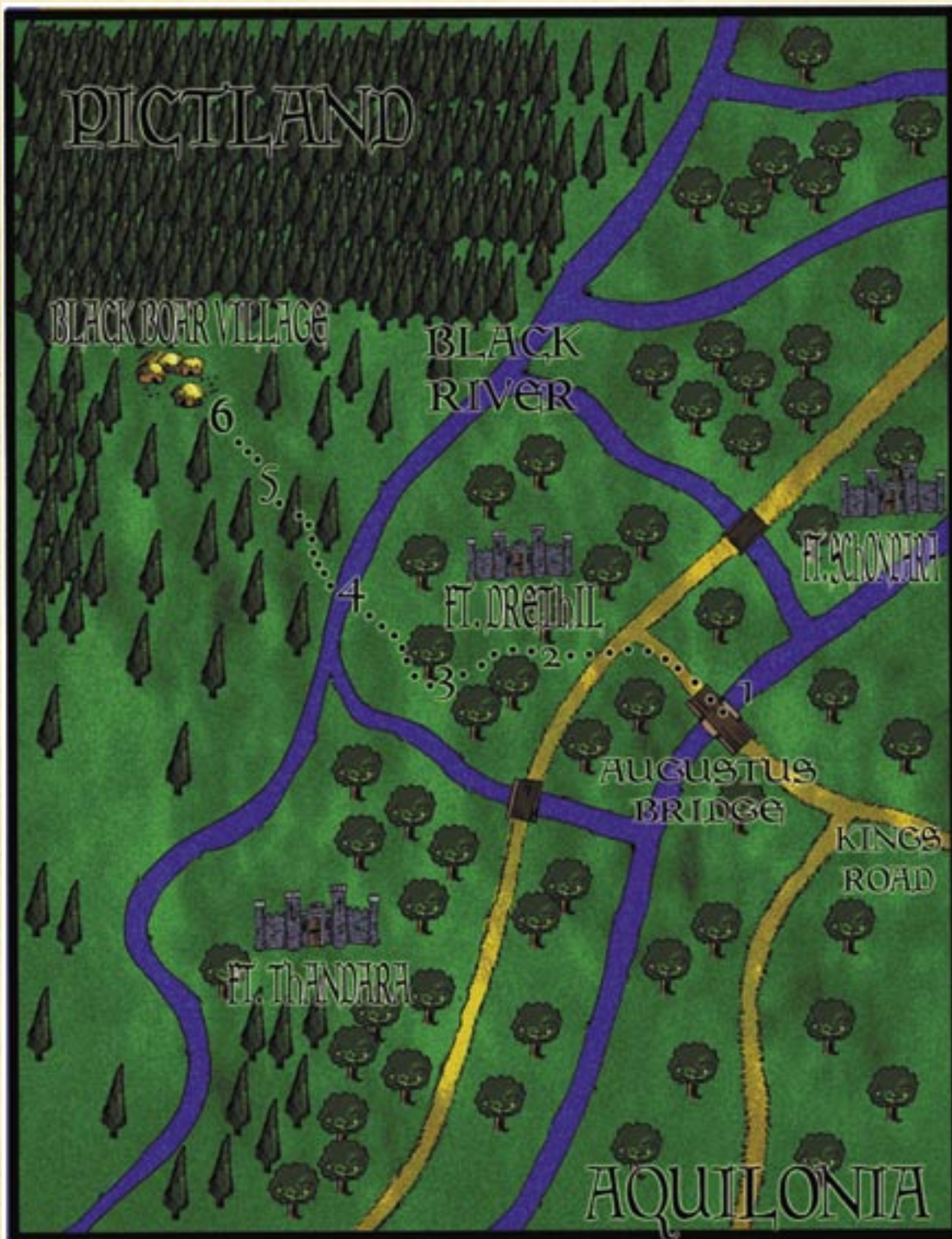
The adventure starts with it being two day's past the first of a new month. The mercenaries and free companions that Baron Trejanus has hired are becoming restless. The supply train, carrying more food and necessities for Fort Drethil, has still not shown up and is now considered overdue. Baron Trejanus and the men at his fort can weather several more weeks without food or new supplies; however the mercenaries will not wait for their wages. Baron Trejanus was running low on supplies and coin and had a strongbox added to the supply caravan that hailed from Aquilonia proper. Over 300 golden lunas had been in the strongbox, and were to be used to pay the mercenaries and

traders that Baron Trejanus was dealing with. With the loss of the money, Baron Trejanus now finds himself in a dangerous predicament, with very few options.

The baron has no choice but to trust a few mercenaries or men of his retinue to go and find out what has happened to the supply caravan. Hopefully the adventurers will return with the strongbox intact, so that the mercenaries will be paid and continue to protect Baron Trejanus' interest. After being given their mission, the party should depart immediately for the road east, toward Aquilonia.

THE PICTS

Two Pictish tribes have formed a temporary alliance for the sole purpose of slaughtering the frontier settlers. The Black Boar tribe and the Red Hawk tribe crossed the Black River six days ago and ambushed the



supply caravan just as it crossed over the Thunder River, from the border of Aquilonia. After looting the caravan, the surviving members of the war party travelled swiftly back across the Black River and into Pictish territory. While arguing over the splitting of the plundered goods, a fight broke out, which turned deadly. After the

bloody melee was over, the victorious Black Boar tribesmen left with a majority of the goods and went south toward their territory. The Chief of the Black Boar tribesmen is Gorla, a larger than average Pict, standing almost six feet tall. The real brains behind the chief is a shaman named Yagga, who worships the ancient god

of the wood and animals, Jhebbal Sag. Yagga has convinced chief Gorla that there is value in striking at the settlers' caravans, denying them food and water, so that sooner or later they will be forced to leave. Yagga was also able to convince chief Gorla that the metal strongbox, which Yagga has not been able to

open yet, is a valuable bargaining tool and that it must be of great value to the Aquilonians. When the full moon of Jhebbal Sag rises in 10 days, sacrifices will be made and Yagga's magic will be at its strongest. Then the strongbox will be opened and it's 'magic' used against the frontier settlers.

detected up to 300 yards away. Carrion birds take flight as the group enters the ambush area. Bodies, both men and beasts of burden, are spread across the caravan trail in a haphazard manner. Careful examination reveals that most of the bodies have crude arrows stuck in them, or show signs of cuts or gashes

by the savages; however a leg can be seen protruding from underneath a wagon, in what must have been the rear of the caravan. Characters with a combined Strength of 25 can lift the wagon upright and reveal what was underneath. The group finds the crushed body of a Pict, underneath the wagon, who bears many tattoos and body piercings. A character with the

Knowledge (local) skill can make a check (DC 15) to determine what tribe the Pict hails from, and a general idea of its territory. If successful, the group determines that the Pict is from the Red Hawk. If a member of the group tries to follow the Picts, a Track (DC 20) check will reveal a faint trail heading west, back toward the Black River.



THE ADVENTURE

CARAVAN AMBUSH

When the group arrives at the site the smell of rotting bodies can be

all about their bodies. An easy Spot check (DC 10) reveals that all the men's bodies are missing a tuft of hair from their heads. A character with Knowledge (local) skill (DC 10) can determine that many of the local tribes of Picts take a slain enemy's scalp as a trophy to hang on his mud and thatch hut. A Search check (DC 15) shows that little was left behind

per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. No treasure.

BURNT SETTLERS' CABIN

Upon arriving, the first thing the group notices is that the cabin is still smouldering. The barn that is

ANIMAL ATTACK

While trudging through the trackless forest, the group comes upon a pack of wild wolves feasting on the carcass of a large deer. These wolves are not normal wolves, and do not flee at yells from the group or simple gestures. If any of the group moves within 30 yards of the creatures, they attack.

Wolves: Normal, (6), hit die and statistics

adjacent to the cabin is still standing, and contains a few surviving livestock animals, although they look like they have not been tended to in days. A Search check (DC 10) reveals that no bodies are to be found. A search of the burnt out cabin reveals some salvageable items. Hidden under a floor board in the cabin, the group finds a pouch with 10 slightly melted silver coins and a gold chain and locket that holds the likeness of a pretty young woman. If a search of the barn is made, the group finds several farming tools, two 50-foot lengths of rope, and four sacks of edible grain. The barn also contains several domestic animals, which hold no value, unless the group wished to slaughter an animal for food. A Tracking skill check (DC 15) reveals that the war party did hit the farm and continued to the west.

CONSTRUCTOR SNAKE ATTACK

After finding a ford to cross at the Black River, the group comes under attack from a giant constrictor snake. The snake should attack the group when they are at a point in the crossing where the water is at least hip deep. Randomly roll a dice to determine which character the snake falls upon.

Snake, Constrictor: (1), hit die and statistics below. No treasure.

Skills: Snakes have a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus to Balance and Climb checks. A snake can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. Snakes use either their Strength modifier or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. A snake has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Constrictor Snake

Medium Animal

Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (19 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

DV: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+5

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d3+4)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d3+4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d3+4, improved grab

Special Qualities: Scent

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +14, Hide +10, Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +11

Feats: Alertness, Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Warm forests

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium); 6–10 HD (Large)

Constrictor snakes are not usually aggressive and flee when confronted. They hunt for food but do not attempt to make a meal out of any creature that is too large to constrict.

Combat

Constrictor snakes hunt by seizing prey with their jaws and then crushing it with their powerful bodies.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a constrictor snake deals 1d3+4 points of damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a constrictor snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

TRIBAL BATTLE

Now deep into Pictish territory, the group comes upon a disturbing and confusing scene. Splayed out in front of them is another scene of carnage, except the dead bodies that cover the meadow are Picts. A Spot check (DC 10) reveals that the bodies

are those of the Red Hawk tribe of Picts. A Spot check (DC 15) shows that one body bears the markings of the Black Boar tribe. A character with a reasonable Intelligence (DC 18 check) can determine that the two war parties must have had a falling out and fell upon each other to the death, with the Black Boar tribesmen coming away victorious. A Search check (DC 15) reveals several simple, barbaric weapons scattered across the meadows in different stages of wear and quality. Approximately five minutes after the group arrives at the meadow, a scouting party of Red Hawk Picts also arrives at the meadow and attacks the group, thinking them responsible for the massacre. None of the Picts speak Aquilonian, let alone any other language, so only a character who speaks Pictish will have a chance of convincing the Red Hawks that the group did not have anything to do with the massacre. The Picts are not friends with the white men, but if a character speaks the language and makes a successful Diplomacy check (DC 20), then the Picts will stop fighting, temporarily, to at least listen to what the characters have to say. If the group is successful, then they will convince the Red Hawk tribe to go to war against the Black Boars. Although this may not have an immediate affect in the adventure, this will affect the happenings in a continuing campaign. If the group fails to convince the Red Hawks to listen, then they fight to the death.

Pict Warriors: (5), 1st level Pictish barbarians, hit die and statistics per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Treasure: assorted animal jewellery that can be traded for equivalent of 5 silver pieces. 1 Aquilonian crafted dagger: Average quality. 1 set of leather bracers, studded with turquoise, valued at 30 silver pieces.

VILLAGE OF THE BLACK BOAR

Hopefully the group arrives undetected and is hiding behind a rock bluff that overlooks the Black

Boar village. As the day progresses the characters can see that the village is filled with activity. Five large wooden poles have been driven into the ground and are covered in strange markings and carvings. A larger, more ancient-looking totem, covered in demonic and bestial visages, looms over the five smaller poles. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals the hut of the village shaman and the chief of the tribe.

him. Attached to the five sacrificial poles are what appear to be five Aquilonian settlers; one male, one female and three children. The group notices that although most of the warriors in the village are passed out or extremely intoxicated, a group of four warriors stand next to the chief; his ever-watchful bodyguards.

The most successful tactic would be for the adventurers to kill the shaman

the boar attack them. If the boar is slain before it has killed the sacrificial victims, then the demonic totem bursts into flames and topples down upon the shaman, crushing him into the earth. If this happens, whether the chief and his bodyguards are still alive, they flee into the dark forest depths, never to return. If the shaman is killed after the boar is summoned, then the creature goes berserk and kills at random. Chief Gorla and



If the group waits for nightfall, they begin to see a grisly ceremony play itself out. Most of the tribesmen are becoming increasingly intoxicated by some local home brew, and can be seen laying about the village in various stages of inebriation. Many of the women and children of the tribe are gathered in a semi-circle around the five sacrificial poles. The shaman can be heard chanting in a guttural, inhuman tongue, gesturing occasionally to the large totem behind

first, interrupting his ceremony and causing pandemonium amongst the tribesmen. If the group causes some distraction, like setting the huts on fire, then this will successfully send the village into chaos, but the shaman will still complete his ceremony. When he does, a large black boar appears and walks toward the sacrificial victims, intending to eat them. Yagga completely controls the creature and if the characters present themselves, then he will have

his bodyguards will only flee if the boar is slain, otherwise they fight to the death. If the combat goes for over eleven rounds, then eight more tribesmen become sober enough to enter the melee.

If the characters are successful and the Black Boar tribe defeated, then they can search the village and find the following items: *Lord Trejanus' strongbox, 300 golden lunas, 33 silver pieces, miscellaneous jewellery*



valued at 100 golden lunas, and 13 miscellaneous semi-precious stones, valued at 75 golden lunas.

Boar: Normal, (1), hit die and statistics per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. No treasure.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Below you will find all the characters you will need to populate the Pictish village.

Chief Gorla: 3rd level Pictish Barbarian, hit die and statistics per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Treasure: Hide armour made of boar skin (average quality), wooden spear w/stone tip (primitive quality), bone handled dagger (primitive quality), Zingaran mastercraft short bow (Akbitanan quality), and the 'Necklace of the Boar', a magical

stone necklace that allows the wearer to summon the strength of a boar once per week (+4 to Strength) and lasts for 10 rounds.

Chief's bodyguards: (4), 2nd level Pictish Barbarians, hit die and statistics per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Treasure: All four have hide armour made from various animals, weapons include 4 spears, 4 bone handled daggers, 2 crude short bows, 2 weighted twine nets (all weapons primitive quality), one mastercraft Aquilonian short sword (Akbitanan quality), and miscellaneous jewellery valued at 10 golden lunas.

Yagga, Shaman of Jhebbal Sag: 1st level Pictish Barbarian/3rd level Pictish Shaman (Scholar), 12 Power Points, hit die and statistics per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Treasure: Vest made of bones, equal

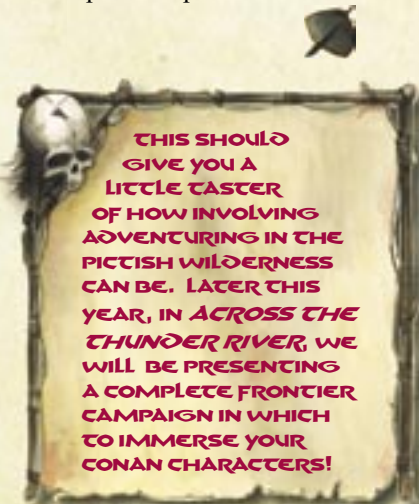
to hide armour (average quality), Steel dagger (average quality), sack containing the rare Purple Lotus and unique herbs and plants (valued at 500 golden lunas), Staff of Jhebbal Sag (staff allows wielder to use *Summon Beast, Greater* once per month with a 10% chance of gaining 1 point of Corruption per use).

Black Boar Tribesmen: (8), 1st level Pictish Barbarian, hit die and statistics per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Treasure: Miscellaneous jewellery and trinkets valued at 20 silver pieces, Stone-tipped spear (primitive quality), stone dagger (primitive quality), Stone Hand Axe (primitive quality).

EPILOGUE

After freeing the captives, the group learns that they are a family of settlers whose farm was attacked and their cabin burned. The family lets the characters know that they will always be grateful and will always have a safe place to rest and recuperate. After the group makes it back to Fort Drethil and returns Baron Trejanus' strongbox, they are rewarded with 10 golden lunas each, and given letters of recommendation from Baron Trejanus himself. If the characters manage to start a tribal war between the Red Hawks and Black Boars, award them 200 experience points each. If they free the captives give them 100 experience points each. If the group manages to destroy the demonic totem, give each character 500 experience points.



THIS SHOULD GIVE YOU A LITTLE TASTER OF HOW INVOLVING ADVENTURING IN THE PICTISH WILDERNESS CAN BE. LATER THIS YEAR, IN ACROSS THE THUNDER RIVER, WE WILL BE PRESENTING A COMPLETE FRONTIER CAMPAIGN IN WHICH TO IMMERSE YOUR CONAN CHARACTERS!