

CONAN

by
Thomas Dean Donnelly & Joshua Oppenheimer

Based on the writings of
Robert E. Howard

REWRITE
October 7, 2009

Millennium Films
Lion's Gate Entertainment

OVER BLACK:

In the darkness, we hear the solitary sound of a HEARTBEAT, resounding like a drum.

NARRATOR (V.O)

In between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the rise of the Sons of Aryas, there was an age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles under the stars. Hither came Conan, the Cimmerian: a thief, a slayer, a king born of battle.

Muffled sounds, as if underwater, echo: CLANGING swords, the guttural CRIES of combat.

UNBORN BABY

Eyes closed, floating at peace within red glow of the womb.

Suddenly, a flash of steel, as a sword pierces the womb, its tip not an inch from the baby's head.

As the sword is ripped out, light streams in from outside, we travel with it, into the DIN of BATTLE.

EXT. CIMMERIA - MUDDY FIELD - DAY

A blonde-haired, armored AESIR RAIDER withdraws the bloody sword from the stomach of ISLENE, a wild-maned Cimmerian beauty, many months pregnant, now clutching her bloody stomach.

Across a muddy battlefield, the air a maelstrom of falling snowflakes and embers from trees aflame, the powerfully built CORIN rallies his fellow CIMMERIANS, until he spots Islene.

CORIN

Islene!!!

Wielding a broadsword, runes etched into its surface, Corin cuts a bloody path through his enemies, his eyes never leaving Islene.

The Aesir standing over Islene LAUGHS as she claws at the earth behind her, trying to pull herself away.

AESIR

Now, now little whore. Did I get you or your little one?

Islene's hand reaches back once again -- and it finds a fallen warrior's SWORD. In one fluid motion she swings the sword around her body and drives it into the gap in the Aesir's armor -- at his groin.

ISLENE

I'd ask you the same.

The Aesir HOWLS in agony, raising his sword to deliver the killing blow -- when another sword pierces his chest. The Aesir falls, revealing Corin standing behind him.

Corin throws aside his horned helmet, and falls to his knees beside Islene, checking her wound. When he pulls his hands back they are coated in blood.

Their eyes meet. Torment. Loss. They both know. She pulls a knife from the folds of her pelts, puts it in his hand.

ISLENE (CONT'D)

Take your child.

CORIN

I cannot.

Islene looks to her naked belly. The baby inside presses against its womb, a visible impression on her flesh.

ISLENE

There is no time, husband. I would see my child's face.

Islene's eyes flutter as she struggles. Corin lowers the knife. Islene's eyes lock with Corin's as he puts the knife to use. Never once does she scream.

A moment later, Corin lifts the crying, blood-covered BOY up through the falling snowflakes to Islene's lap.

ISLENE (CONT'D)

A boy. He will be strong. A warrior with no equal.

CORIN

Do not speak, love.

ISLENE

You have never been able to still my tongue, and you will not this day. He will be wild, Corin. You must temper him.

She shares one kiss with her child, its first taste not of mother's milk, but of her blood.

ISLENE (CONT'D)
 (fading)
Conan. His--name--is--Conan.

CONAN

The boy's eyes are as deep and blue as the Eastern Sea.

TITLE CARD: **CONAN**

CUT TO:

EXT. CIMMERIAN VILLAGE - DAY

A small Cimmerian village lies in a heavily forested valley, a redoubt from the icy mountains surrounding it.

Round wooden huts surround a stone-lined pit, where young CIMMERIAN BOYS, ages 12-15 stand. Pollen drifts through the air, giving it an ethereal haze.

At the center of the pit URAN, an elder Cimmerian warrior speaks.

URAN

A Cimmerian warrior is like any other man. A Cimmerian warrior feels hunger. He feels cold. Like other men he may lie and cheat.

(stares the boys down)

But when a Cimmerian warrior hungers, he hungers only for the blood of his enemy. When he feels cold, it is the cold steel of his sword. When he lies, he lies in wait for his enemy. And when he cheats, he cheats death itself!

Uran stops at the end of the line, where a boy stands a good two heads smaller than the rest. He is no more than eight, but his face is as stoic, driven.

URAN (CONT'D)

Conan! You are too young to be here. Withdraw.

CONAN, determined, doesn't move an inch. The LARGEST TEEN menacingly steps up to the smaller boy.

LARGEST TEEN

He said leave, motherless whelp.

The hulking teen goes to shove Conan, but Conan pulls his arm towards him, lashing out with his other hand, punching the teen in the throat.

The large boy goes down hard, hands and knees, gasping for air.

A smattering of LAUGHS erupt from the boys, quickly silenced by Uran's stare. Uran hands out RIVER STONES to each boy, ending with Conan. The boys know what to do: they put the large stones in their mouths.

URAN

In the black crag in the high pass stands a wooden training sword. The one who claims it, with stone still in his mouth, will have earned the right to train with the warriors.

The boys look at each other, sizing up the competition.

URAN (CONT'D)

Well? What are you waiting for?!

And off they run. They knock each other down, punching the other's stomachs, each trying to force the other to expel their stones. One or two succeed.

Most of the remaining boys run for the trail that winds high into the mountains. But a few head right for the sheer cliff face.

Conan follows the ones headed to the cliff.

CLIFF FACE

And when the Cimmerian boys climb, it is a sight to behold. They find cracks we can barely see and scale the smooth rock face as though it were a ladder.

The hulking teen reaches for the same handhold as Conan, trying to knock him off. Conan swings with one hand and finds another path. In moments he is ahead.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Conan is in the lead as he crests the cliff top, the bigger boys right behind him.

They race through the forest, heading uphill --

When Conan spots movement ahead. He pauses --

And the largest teen elbows past Conan, into the lead. The boy runs two paces more and suddenly flies off his feet, an AXE lodged squarely in his forehead.

All the boys stop. Out of the dense forest come

FOUR PICTISH SAVAGES

Covered with fearsome war paint and armed with dual hand axes, the rotting heads of their enemies are slung at their waist.

The boys spit out the rocks in their mouths and YELL. They turn and run in the opposite direction.

Only Conan doesn't move, even as another boy pulls at him.

CIMMERIAN BOY

Conan! Run!

But Conan simply pulls the axe from his large boy's skull. He turns to face the Picts, his eyes burning.

The Picts LAUGH and CHARGE CONAN.

CUT TO:

LATER

Corin arrives with Uran and other armed CIMMERIAN WARRIORS. They get a brief glimpse of a single PICT, escaping in the other direction. One of the Cimmerians takes off in pursuit. Corin desperately searches for his son.

CORIN

Conan? Conan?!

Conan steps forward from out of a thicket, his body covered in Pict blood. Three PICTS lie massacred, the bodies hacked to pieces.

CORIN (CONT'D)

What have you done, boy?

Conan walks past the other stunned Cimmerians, up to his father. Conan SPITS OUT the bloody stone from his mouth.

CONAN

They killed one. I killed three. I am a warrior now.

Uran and the other Cimmerian men exchange worried glances. Looking at the carved up bodies of the Picts, they are aghast. Conan looks confused. Why aren't they happy?

CORIN

A warrior? What you have done a jackal would do. Never a warrior.

CONAN

They would have done the same --

CORIN

As I said, jackals.

(to Uran)

He is not ready. I will forge him myself.

CUT TO:

TRAINING MONTAGE:

Conan is tested under Corin's watchful eye:

- Forced to sleep in the snow, while his father keeps warm inside.
- A heavy boulder on his shoulder blades while he balances on wet river rocks.
- Climbing a cliff face, his bare hands leaving blood behind on the jagged rocks.

INT. CIMMERIAN FORGE - DAY

Flames reflect in the blue eyes of Conan as he works the bellows of the forge. Sparks buzz like angry fireflies as he stokes the blaze.

Corin sharpens a sword, perfecting it. Conan cannot take his eyes off it, stepping away from the bellows.

CORIN

Stoke your fire, boy.

Conan slams the bellows closed, anger rising.

CONAN

"Stoke your fire, chop your wood."
I have slept where wolves dare not.
I have balanced a thousand river stones.
When will you teach me the sword?

Corin stares his son in the eyes. Judging.

CORIN

Think you're ready? Then tell me:
what is a sword's purpose?

CONAN

To slay ones enemies.

CORIN

No. That is what it does. Its
purpose is why you use it.

He tosses Conan two lumps of ore.

CORIN (CONT'D)

Tell me, which makes the best
sword?

Conan takes the two lumps, testing them. He hands his father
back one.

CORIN (CONT'D)

The stronger ore, eh? Then we shall
make a sword of it, and tomorrow
you will show me what brute
strength yields.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DUSK

With a setting sun silhouetting the two, Conan attacks Corin.
Conan attacks with fury. Corin defends with grace. Until the
boy overextends and Corin slashes down a counterattack that
SHATTERS CONAN'S SWORD.

Corin simply turns and walks away, leaving Conan to puzzle
what happened.

Conan lowers his sword and walks away, leaving Conan to
puzzle what happened.

INT. CORIN'S FORGE - NIGHT

Conan works the bellows, putting his back into it. Corin
places both ores in the furnace where they begin to melt.

CONAN

Why did it break?

CORIN
Because it had no life.

CUT TO:

Sparks fly as Corin pounds on the glowing edge of the sword with hammer. Corin nods at Conan, who sprinkles the glowing blade with ash.

CORIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The strongest blade isn't made of the hardest steel, boy. The hardest ore is what a man will die for. It is strong and unyielding. It neither cowers nor concedes. But without the softer ore, it can be shattered like glass.

CUT TO:

Steam rises as Corin lowers the blade into a freezing slack tub, only to place it right back into the flames.

CORIN (CONT'D)
The softer ore is what a man lives for. It is flexible and lasting. It survives, even against the greatest of foes. But too much of the soft ore, the blade will not cut deep enough when it must.

CUT TO:

Corin fashions the blade's hilt, engraving the guard and pommel. It is a work of art.

CORIN (CONT'D)
A sword must be tempered, the two ores united through fire and ice. Through its suffering the sword comes to hold both life and death.

Corin hands Conan the sword.

CORIN (CONT'D)
Now tell me, what is this sword's purpose?

Conan furrows his brow, trying to puzzle the answer. He can't. Corin's disappointment shows. He takes the sword from Conan's hands.

CORIN (CONT'D)
This one is not ready yet.

Blood rushes to Conan's face but he says nothing. He rushes out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

Frustrated, Conan slashes through a field of reeds, cutting everything within reach of him, expending his rage.

Behind him something moves in the forest. We catch just a glimpse of the PICT, the same one that escaped Conan in the earlier scene.

Conan's instincts cause him to spin around -- but then there's nothing there.

INT. CIMMERIAN SCOUT POST - DAY

Built into the side of a huge tree, fifty feet up, this wooden structure houses two CIMMERIAN SENTRIES. A BIRD CRIES in the woods, causing one of the sentries to investigate.

THWICK! He suddenly stands up straight, unmoving. The one still sitting in the structure notices.

CIMMERIAN SENTRY

See something?

The standing sentry falls backwards, revealing an ARROW piercing his right eye. Shocked, the remaining sentry reaches for the WARNING HORN mounted on the wall.

But as he reaches for it, his shadow becomes three dimensional, MORPHING into

A SHADOW SCOUT

A thin, feral humanoid, bodies covered in tattoos, from the deepest jungles of Zingara. The scout lashes out with his black sword and cuts straight across the sentry's throat.

This Shadow Scout's name is REMO.

EXT. SCOUT POST - DAY

Remo exits and stares down at CHEREN, a BLIND ARCHER clad in lamellar armor and a conical sedge hat. Cheren has an arrow notched and ready, but somehow he knows not to fire.

Cheren lowers his bow and lets out a BIRD WHISTLE --

And the forest comes alive. The forces are an odd combination; massive KUSHITE TRIBESMEN, dark-skinned savages from the savannahs of Kush, and a LEGION OF AQUILONIAN MERCENARIES, heavily armored knights drawn from the cities of Aquilonia.

Their leaders, respectively, are the six foot-five Kushite chief UKAFA, gold-toothed, his body painted for battle, and the handsome, silver-armored Aquilonian LUCIUS.

UKAFA

That's the last of their guard towers.

LUCIUS

All this sneaking around for a lowly tribe of barbarians.

KHALAR SINGH (O.S.)

This lowly tribe of barbarians have buried every warrior ever to set foot on this land, Lucius.

KHALAR SINGH, a warlord atop a black horse, rides through the fog-shrouded trees.

He bears a nomadic visage, with tanned skin and almond-shaped eyes. While his voice is calm, his eyes burn with malice.

LUCIUS

That is only because they have never faced my legion.

Khalar regards Lucius with amusement.

KHALAR SINGH

Then show us. But should you fail, remember the plan.

Lucius scowls as he delivers a bow to Khalar Singh.

EXT. CIMMERIAN VILLAGE - DAY

Corin walks out of the forge, looking around for Conan. Various other Cimmerians go about the daily routine, but Conan is nowhere to be seen.

CORIN

Conan?

Corin looks to the ridge above the village, noticing a thick fog creeping in. The fog curls and eddies, something is out there.

Suddenly, Lucius and his legion of silver-armored warriors burst out of the fog, attacking with speed and strength.

But the Cimmerians are hardly caught flat footed. In seconds they are armed, and they counter the charge with a furious charge of their own.

SLAM! Sword and bone collide as the two enemy fronts smash into each other. And the battle devolves into one-on-ones --

Where the barbarians have the upper hand. Uran and Corin lead the main push of battle-frenzied barbarians as they swing their huge broadswords, extending their reach advantage over the Aquilonian's shorter weapons.

And quickly, the Aquilonian's numbers are cut in half. Corin squares off against Lucius himself. Lucius is sweating. Worried. It wasn't supposed to be this hard.

LUCIUS

Retreat!

As a unit, the Aquilonians race back into the woods. In seconds, the Cimmerians give chase in wild pursuit.

CORIN

Wait! Hold your ground!

But it's too late, nearly half the Cimmerian warriors are gone on the chase.

EXT. CLIFF FACE - DAY

Lucius and the Aquilonians race up to a sheer cliff face. Nowhere left to run. They turn to see the Cimmerians gathering in front of them.

URAN

Death is in the air, invaders. Can you taste it?

LUCIUS

(smiles)

Indeed. I savor it.

Uran notices something is wrong. His eyes go skyward. Atop the cliff stand Cheren and a dozen more of his blind archers, bows at the ready with FLAMING ARROWS.

They let the arrows fly, streaking balls of flame heading right for the Cimmerians. But they do not hit them. They hit the tree trunks beside them.

And for a moment, the Cimmerians look relieved, until they notice small bags of a black substance tied to the arrows. The flames lick at the substance --

KABOOM! The forest erupts into flames as the Cimmerian warriors are burned alive.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

Conan spins, started by the sound of the explosion. He sees flames rising above the treetops beyond.

He races back home.

EXT. CIMMERIAN VILLAGE - DAY

Corin sees the flames in the distance as well. Suddenly, Ukafa and his Kushite warriors erupt out of the forest. Armed with fearsome barbed spears they charge the remaining Cimmerians, savage against savage.

But the Kushites are not alone. From behind the Cimmerians comes, AKHUN, a massive four hundred pounds of flesh, wearing loops of chains like armor, leads his turbaned TURANIAN HORSEMEN into the village.

The Cimmerian WOMEN arm themselves, but the Horsemen attack with NINE TAILED WHIPS pulling their swords from their hands and dragging them to the ground.

The Horsemen quickly gather up the women while Ukafa and his men keep the Cimmerian warriors all too occupied.

CONAN

Conan rushes through a river, now tinged red with blood, and reaches the far end of the village.

Huts burn, women are chained, only a handful of Cimmerians still stand. Lucius and his Aquilonian mercenaries are helping the Spearmen slay the wounded.

Conan grabs a fallen sword and rushes for the nearest Aquilonian and RUNS HIM THROUGH. A ZINGARAN spots him and rushes him with his spear. Conan readies himself for the charge --

When the Zingaran loses his head, lopped off by Corin's blade.

CONAN

Father!

CORIN

Come.

Corin, sporting a deep gash to his abdomen, pulls a reluctant Conan from the battle, back toward the forge.

INT. FORGE - DAY

The flames of the forge still burn as Corin pushes Conan into the room. He bolts the door behind him.

CONAN

Do we need more weapons?

Corin drops his sword, then struggles to lift a heavy grating in the dirt floor. Beneath it a trough of cooling water leads under the hut and away from the village.

CORIN

Go. There is a hunting lodge in the North Pass with provisions.

CONAN

No! I will fight!

Corin grabs Conan by his tunic, pulling him up to his face. Corin's eyes are half-crazed.

CORIN

This fight is over, but yours has just begun. You wanted to be a warrior of the tribe, Conan--now you must be its last.

CONAN

Father, I am not afraid to die.

CORIN

Good. Make your death have purpose.

BOOM. Something slams at the door. It does not budge. Again, BOOM.

A shadow appears under the door, sliding into the forge, and MATERIALIZING into the form of Remo. Remo quickly slides away the bolt.

In rush enter Lucius and Ukafa. Corin and Conan face their attackers, fighting in close quarters. Lucius rushes at Conan, only for Conan to duck under his attack and --

THROW HIM IN THE FIERY FORGE. Lucius SCREAMS in agony, rising up to reveal half of his formerly handsome face burned to a crisp.

Corin fights Ukafa to a standstill, until Remo emerges from the shadows behind him and drives a short sword into his back.

Corin falls to his knees.

CONAN

No!

Lucius delivers a massive backhand, sending Conan flying backwards -- and demolishing one of the Forge's main support beams.

Half of the forge comes crashing down on top of Conan, pinning his bleeding form to the ground, just a few feet from his fallen father.

Enraged, Lucius turns his anger to Corin, raising his sword to deliver the killing blow.

KHALAR SINGH (O.S.)

I said I wanted a word with him.

Lucius stays his hand as Khalar Singh steps into the forge. Beside him stands the PICT who escaped from Conan earlier, grinning from ear to ear.

Khalar Singh hands him a bag of gold.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

As promised.

PICT

(strange dialect -
subtitled)

*Their heads. You promised me their
heads.*

KHALAR SINGH

All you wish, once we are gone.

The Pict nods and heads off, drawing his knife. Khalar Singh stares down at Corin, sizing him up.

Corin lifts up into a sitting position, back to the forge.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

I take no pleasure in this day, barbarian. Your people are fierce warriors, deserving of every story told of them. But now you must choose the story for yourself. I am Khalar Singh. My army is handpicked from the best Hyboria. My second, Ukafa, and his Kushite horde. Remo and his Shadow Scouts from the jungles of Zingara. And countless others. They all had a day like this one. They all chose a way forward.

Into the forge walks Cherin and Akhun. The lieutenants stand behind Corin, eyeing Corin with malice.

Corin catches a glimpse of Conan, buried but staring back at him, unable to move. Corin quickly turns away, careful not to give his son away.

CORIN

What is it you want?

KHALAR SINGH

I seek neither gold nor steel, but flesh and blood. The last of a royal line that goes back three thousand years.

Corin LAUGHS.

CORIN

Royalty in Cimmeria? Never. Each man is free here.

KHALAR SINGH

But I seek a woman.

Khalar looks outside the door of the forge. The Cimmerians women are being herded by the slavers.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

A queen in hiding. Point her out and you'll spare the lives of your own. Perhaps even your wife?

CORIN

My wife was killed, long ago, by swine such as you.

Khalar nods, understanding.

KHALAR SINGH

Then our stories began in the same place, Cimmerian. I too lost my wife to marauders. How many men, in how many lands have suffered so? The only answer is power, strength unfettered, the kind of which can unite all Hyboria under a single crown. That is the legacy I seek. Will you join me?

It's a powerful, convincing speech. But Corin holds his tongue, unmoved.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Very well. Then death will be your story. Your men will die. And your women too, when I am done with them. None will survive to carry your name forth, and over time, even your enemies will forget you ever were. You will be wiped from the pages of history.

(to his men)

Take your blood, but leave the kill.

One by one, the lieutenants beat and stab Corin, taking pleasure in his pain.

Conan struggles, trying to move, to yell, to do anything other than lie there. But a huge timber lies upon his back, pinning him to the ground.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Fariq! Come!

Entering the wrecked forge is FARIQ, the six year old son to Khalar Singh. He stares at Corin's bleeding form with the dispassion of a sociopath.

Khalar picks up THE SWORD Corin and Conan had forged together, the one Corin took away. He admires it, then hands it to his son. He keeps a hand on it as it is too heavy for his son to lift alone. He instructs his son as if teaching him multiplication.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Before you lies our enemy. His tribe waits for him in the beyond. What would you do?

FARIQ

I would cut out his eyes, father,
so that he will not find them. So
he will wander the afterlife
forever.

Khalar smiles.

KHALAR SINGH

Show me your strength, Fariq.
Without it, you will never rule.
With it, you will never be
forgotten.

Fariq DRIVES THE SWORD INTO CORIN'S EYE. Corin doesn't make a sound. Once Fariq has ripped out Corin's eyes, Khalar runs Corin through.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

You have your desire. Death has
found you.

Corin spits out his last words, also meant for Conan.

CORIN

Soon -- it comes for you.

CONAN'S POV

Conan glimpses around the faces of Khalar and his men, each image seared into his memory as if ablaze.

KHALAR SINGH

Burn this place. It no longer
exists.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIMMERIAN VILLAGE - DAY

The forge is lit afire from a half dozen torches, thrown onto its roof and inside its windows. Khalar and the other watch as the building roars into flame.

INT. FORGE - DAY

Smoke fills the air. Conan struggles, still unable to move. He COUGHS, dying.

But then the fire collapses more of the forge, and the falling beams shatter the one that pins Conan to the ground.

Slowly, painfully, Conan drags himself into the cooling trough that runs beneath the hut.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CIMMERIAN VILLAGE - DAY

Conan exits the forge only to see the entire village burning. The bodies of everyone he has ever known litter the landscape. Nothing stirs. Until he hears a strange CHOPPING SOUND.

THE PICT

Conan spots the Pict, who is decapitating a dead Cimmerian warrior, adding to the collection of heads at his tattooed waist.

The Pict doesn't notice as Conan slips up behind him, then RUNS HIM THROUGH.

As the wide-eyed Pict dies, Conan takes the sword and CUTS A NOTCH into his arm.

DISSOLVE TO:

NOTCHED ARM

Where there was once a single notch, there are now FIVE such notches, on a much broader arm that struggles to pin another powerful looking arm.

INT. BAR - MESSANTIA - NIGHT

A raucous bar on the Argossean waterfront. Out the window we see a port lined with Shemish galleys and junks from Kush.

The bar is filled with the hearty sailors and merchants of those ships, and those who desire to part them from their hard-earned money; Zamoran thieves, Hyborean mercenaries and Brythunian whores. Most of them watch the arm wrestling match taking place at the back of the bar.

A pair of CITY GUARDS, short swords sheathed at their sides, enter the bar and are immediately summoned over by the harried BARKEEP.

BARKEEP
He's back there.

The barkeep motion to the arm wrestlers.

CITY GUARD #1
What's this one done?

BARKEEP
What's he done?! What hasn't he done? He's bedded six of my whores and finished off three casks of mead--and he hasn't paid so much as a silver piece for it.

CITY GUARD #1
So have your men deal with him.

BARKEEP
I did.

Behind the bar, six men each hold down two HULKING MEN YELLING in agony as their horribly broken arms are snapped back into place.

CITY GUARD #2
Sounds like a real problem. Too bad we have other places to be right now.

The Barkeep shakes his head, knowing the routine. He slips a pair of silver pieces into the soldier's hand.

BARKEEP
Just get that behemoth out of here.

The two City Guards make their way to the back of the bar. His back to them, the DRUNKEN MAN they're after struggles to pin his opponent, cobras beneath each of their wrists, ready to strike at the loser. A pair of voluptuous WHORES watch, caressing the Drunken Man's sinewy back.

The Drunken Man YELLS in fury as he SLAMS the other man's hand down upon the cobra, which immediately bites its prey.

As the soldiers arrive, the drunken victor throws his tankard of ale at the Barkeep, who's now back behind the bar.

DRUNKEN MAN
Piss-water! You'll serve my friends and I your best, barman, or you'll taste steel!

CITY GUARD #1
Time to leave, northerner.

The Drunken Man turns as the City Guard puts a hand on his shoulder.

CONAN

The gangly fifteen year old boy has grown into a powerfully built man, broad-shouldered with sun browned skin lined with battle scars. Only the piercing blue eyes and square cut black mane remain from the boy we last saw.

Conan stands to his full height, looming over the smaller City Guards, who instinctively take a step back.

CONAN

No, my small friends. It's time to die. Now--

Conan sways. The room spins. He falls on his face.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Who's first --

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Conan, unconscious, is dragged down the street by the two City Guards.

CITY GUARD #1

(struggling)

By the gods, he's as heavy as a horse.

CITY GUARD #2

Even a dead horse smells better than this.

EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT

The City Guards drag Conan into a broad prison yard. Many of the INMATES are shackled together, hacking with picks at the rock walls on their work detail. Those in no condition to break rock are left in their own filth to rot. Some are even dead already, the rats gnawing at the remains.

INT. PRISON GUARDHOUSE - NIGHT

The two City Guards drag Conan into the guardhouse, where a LIEUTENANT sits eating his dinner.

The Lieutenant doesn't even bother to look up from his meal.

LIEUTENANT

What's the charge?

CITY GUARD #2

Public drunkenness. Another damn
hill ape who can't handle his
liquor.

LIEUTENANT

Is that so, boy? How do you plead?

Conan yawns in response. One of the City Guards slaps Conan,
hard, across the face. Conan slowly opens his eyes.

CONAN

Where's the Captain of the Guard?

SCREAMS OF PAIN come from down the hall, past a locked door.

LIEUTENANT

In the cells, interrogating a
prisoner. And you'll get the same
if you don't answer. You're accused
of public drunkenness. How do you
plead?

CONAN

In truth, I've been guilty of much.
Jewels stolen from the crowns of
kings, men's heads split in battle
for the price of a night's drink.
But through that I've searched and
waited and hunted my prey.

Suddenly Conan shifts upright, looking more sober than he did
a moment ago.

CONAN (CONT'D)

But drink? Haven't had a drop all
night.

The guards holding Conan up by his arms, suddenly find those
arms wrapped around their heads. Twist, twist. SNAP. SNAP. He
breaks both their necks in an instant.

The Lieutenant is horrified. He goes for his sword. Conan
bats it out of his hand, slamming his head against the back
wall.

CONAN (CONT'D)

The key to the cells.

LIEUTENANT

I don't have it. There's a guard
inside the door. Only he can open
it.

Conan picks up the Lieutenant's sword.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

You can't kill me! He'll only open
the door for me!

A FLASH OF STEEL as Conan delivers a blow.

CUT TO:

INT. CELLS - NIGHT

A GUARD sits on a stool next to a heavy metal door. Behind
him, the CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD beats a chained ONE-EYED
PRISONER to a pulpy mess.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

GUARD #1

What is it?

MUFFLED VOICE (O.S.)

Need to see the Captain.

The Guard exhales, frustrated. He stands up, getting his keys
out. He stops. Opens the small EYEHOLE to see into the other
room.

The Lieutenant stares back at him.

GUARD #1

Fine, fine.

He opens the door--

Only to see Conan standing there, holding the decapitated
head of the Lieutenant.

The shocked Guard goes for his sword. Conan swings the
Lieutenant's head, smashing it into the Guard's jaw and
putting him down for the count.

That's when the Captain of the Guard turns around. And WE
RECOGNIZE HIM! He's LUCIUS, the disfigured Aquilionian who
was one of Khalar Singh's lieutenants.

LUCIUS

Men!

From around a corner come five more Guards, drawing their weapons. Lucius draws his as well.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

You've made a huge mistake, ape.
You'll never make it out of this
place.

CONAN

I came for you, Lucius.

Lucius nods to the guards, who advance on Conan.

LUCIUS

You talk as though you know me,
ape.

CONAN

I do. And I am no ape. I am
Cimmerian.

As recognition crosses Lucius' face, Conan springs into action. He KICKS the table at the men, sending the knives and other torture implements flying right into the first guard.

The second guard tries leaping over the falling table. Conan just grabs him in midair and throws him even faster into the iron bands of the prisoner cells.

Lucius lunges at Conan, Conan steps in on him, grabbing his sword hand. In a show of strength, he twists Lucius' own sword until points down at the floor, then THRUSTS IT THROUGH LUCIUS' FOOT AND DEEP INTO THE WOOD FLOOR BELOW.

Lucius BELLOWS in pain, pinned to the spot.

The next three Guards rush forward, forcing Conan to deal with three weapons attacks at once.

The first to strike swings a mace and chain that wraps around Conan's sword and he tries to yank it free from Conan's grip. Instead, Conan pulls him in a wide circle, sending him flying into a wall-mounted torch. The guard burns like dry kindling.

The second to strike hits Conan on his sword hand, carving a deep gash and causing him to drop his sword.

Conan turns to face him, eyes filled with rage. The guard's face goes pale. Conan head butts him with all his might and the guard goes down, bleeding from mouth, nose and ears.

However, the last Guard is upon Conan before he can react. The powerful soldier uses the shaft of his poleax to lift Conan off his feet and back against the far wall, pinned by the neck.

Conan struggles to breathe, the polearm shaft driving his throat into the wall. The thickness of the Cimmerian's neck gives him time to reach into his bracer, pulling out a hidden knife which he buries into the Guardsman's eye.

CUT TO:

Lucius SCREAMS in pain as Conan pours water on the burning guard, and lifts the table back onto its legs. Then he pulls the sword out of the floor, a thick plume of blood rising out of Lucius' now liberated foot.

Conan takes Lucius' face and smashes it against the table. Lucius looks, aghast, as Conan takes his injured hand and places it over the torch flame, searing the wound closed. The Cimmerian never even bats an eye.

LUCIUS

What do you want? Who are you?

Conan turns his face to the burnt side.

CONAN

I'm the one who made you pretty.

LUCIUS

Impossible! You're dead!

Conan shows Lucius the FIVE SCARS running down his forearm.

CONAN

No. I am death. And I came a long way for you.

Conan lifts the sword.

LUCIUS

Wait!! Wait!!

(Conan pauses)

I can tell you where the rest are.

CONAN

Where?

LUCIUS

The end of the earth. You kill me, and you'll never find them.

CONAN

Who are you offering?

LUCIUS

Who do you think? All of them.
Ukafa, Remo, Cheren, Akhun -- and
Khalar Singh himself. But you have
to swear you won't kill me.

Conan thinks about it.

CONAN

You have my word. You tell me where
I will find Khalar Singh, and I
will not kill you.

Conan lets Lucius go. Lucius hobbles to his chair.

LUCIUS

He is in a city called on the edge
of the Eastern Sea. On the edge of
Hyboria. Khor Khalba.

Conan looks him in his eyes, sizing him up. He likes what he
sees. In a flash, Conan grabs Lucius' head again, yanking it
back, exposing his throat.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

You gave your word!

Conan rips a SMALL KEY from a large keyring. He drops it in
Lucius' throat. The big man chokes instantly. A second later,
Conan pours ale from a flagon down his throat as well.

Lucius swallows the key, gasping for breath as Conan releases
him.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

CONAN

Toasting, to our deal.

Conan swings his sword and cuts the One Eyed Prisoner from
the wall.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Go. You are free.

One-Eye looks at his wrists and ankles, still hobbled by
shackles.

ONE-EYED PRISONER

I won't get far like this.

Conan hands him a fallen Guardsmen's sword.

CONAN

The key to your shackles sits in
the Captain's gut. Happy hunting.

The One-Eyed Prisoner grins with malice. As he closes in on
the terrified Lucius, Conan heads for the door.

LUCIUS

Barbarian! I had your word! You
said you would spare my life!

CONAN

No. I said I wouldn't kill you.

We hear Lucius SCREAMS OF PAIN as Conan walks out into the
night, cutting another notch into his arm.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT SANDSTORM - DAY

KHALAR SINGH looks older. Worn. He squints as he stares into
a howling sandstorm.

UKAFA trudges through the deep sand to reach him. The
sandstorm is so blinding we don't see him until he is less
than five feet away.

UKAFA

Khalar Singh, we've lost half our
cavalry legion, and still Fariq
presses on! We must turn back!

KHALAR SINGH

He says the Queen is here.

UKAFA

He leads us in circles. He knows
nothing of leading an army --

KHALAR SINGH

Take care, Ukafa. You hold a
special place in my kingdom, but
blood you are not.

UKAFA

My apologies, Khalar Singh. I am
simply concerned for your army.

KHALAR SINGH

And I would gladly sacrifice every last man to get my hands on the Queen. And in that respect, Fariq has my confidence. He knows more of the legends of Acheron than anyone.

Suddenly, two forms race at them from the blinding sand. REMO and FARIQ. No longer a child, Fariq is now a man in his twenties, but he is hardly the strong warrior his father is. His frame is slight, his eyes beady.

FARIQ

Father, they are here! The hidden oasis, just as it was written.

Khalar Singh looks to Remo for confirmation. The misshapen and shadowy Remo nods.

EXT. CAVE TUNNEL - DAY

Remo and Fariq lead Khalar and Ukafa into a natural tunnel carved out of rock. Inside, the sandstorm no longer rages.

And on the other side of the tunnel --

EXT. OASIS - CONTINUOUS

A protected rock oasis, heavy vegetation crawling up the encircling cliff walls, herds of sheep grazing on fields of grass. At its far end, beyond a deep blue pond, lies a Greek-influenced monastery and several tiled-roof, mud-brick houses.

And moving between the pools are MEN and WOMEN going about their simple chores. They wear long flowing white linen robes and turbans.

The air and sand are perfectly still within the perimeter of the oasis. But beyond it, the sandstorm rages all around, sand hurled violently hundreds of feet into the air, swirling around the oasis as though it were the eye of some mystical hurricane, protected by an unseen force.

A row of robed YOUNG WOMEN kneel in front of one of the reflecting pools, quietly reading from prayer books and softly striking their right breast with a left hands wrapped in thorns.

One girl, ILIRA, mischievously taps the shoulder of the girl next to her with her thorn. The girl, TAMARA, squeals in pain, angry her prayer was interrupted.

Ilira is the fun-loving dilettante of the relationship.
 Tamara the studious good girl.

TAMARA
 Stop it! I'm trying to pray!

ILIRA
 I'm bored.

TAMARA
 Then hit yourself.

Tamara hits Ilira back with her thorn. Ilira SQUEALS, then hits a grinning Tamara back. Tamara grabs her, but as they tussle--

FASSIR (O.S.)
 Is that how one shows penitence?

Both girls instantly stop as FASSIR appears behind them. Fassir is an elder monk and leader of the monastery. He shakes his head, both out of fondness and disappointment.

FASSIR (CONT'D)
 I expect more from a queen.

ILIRA
 I'm sorry, Fassir. I just tire of saying the same prayer every day.

FASSIR
 Then you should be able to translate it from its original Acheronian.

Ilira's face scrunches, unsure. Tamara steps in to help Ilira save face.

TAMARA
 Of course she can. She even taught it to me. "Never again."

FASSIR
 Go on.

TAMARA
 Never again will we stand by as darkness consumes the world. Never again will innocents suffer for others' power. Never again will the Queen suffer so Acheron may rise.

FASSIR

Very good, Tamara. You must have
taught her very well indeed, Ilira.

A smile on Fassir's face confirms he knows the truth.

Suddenly, the monastery's BELL RINGS OUT. A moment later, a
temple EXPLODES in flames.

Pouring out from the swirling sands come Khalar Singh's army.
Cheren and his archers stand atop Khalar's

MAN OF WAR

A massive siege engine atop which CHEREN and his archers fire
FLAMING ARROWS. The arrows arc down and explode as they
impact the tiled roofs.

Sitting at the highest point of the Man Of War, Khalar Singh
likes what he sees.

CHAOS

The monks scatter in every direction, but wherever they turn,
more troops burst out of the swirling sand.

A small handful of armed MONKS display acrobatic martial arts
prowess as they battle with Khalar's heavily armed forces,
but they are vastly outnumbered.

Fassir grabs Tamara.

FASSIR (CONT'D)

The Queen must not be captured.
Take her out the North Gate.
Quickly!

Tamara grabs Ilira and pulls her through the flaming
battleground. Zingaran warriors cut down the monks while
Turanian horsemen concentrate on the women.

ILIRA

We can't leave them.

TAMARA

If you are caught, everything we
live for is lost!

WHIP! A whip encircles Ilira's waist. A massive TURANIAN
pulls her to him. Tamara grabs the whip, pulling Ilira the
other way. But she is no match for the huge slaver. He yanks
on the whip pulling both of them to him --

Only then does he notice Tamara's unsheathed knife which she plunges into his throat.

She frees Ilira and they run.

INT. NORTH PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

A thin alleyway at the rear of the monastery, leading away from the din of battle, towards a rear gate of the oasis.

Tamara and Ilira run for the gate, only for the shadows of the alleyway to move and shift -- REMO and three of his shadow scouts.

They advance on the women, drawing dark shortswords.

REMO

No swords. Khalar needs them alive.

TAMARA

Good to know.

Tamara lunges for the nearest shadow scout with her knife, but when she strikes, she hits nothing but shadow. It reforms behind her and grabs her.

Another grabs Ilira. Tamara launches her body into the air, executing a backflip that puts her behind the shadow scout. A quick knife strike and he goes down.

And with one continuous motion, she vaults over the shadow scout holding Tamara, cutting his throat as well.

Remo and the remaining scout give chase, blending in and out of shadows. But each time they strike, Tamara defends Ilira. They near the far end of the alleyway, the North gate looming ahead with the desert beyond.

Remo blends into another shadow --

EXT. MAN OF WAR - CONTINUOUS

Remo materializes out of a shadow atop the Man Of War, next to Cheren, the archer.

REMO

The north gate. Destroy it.

Cheren and the other archers turn their fire to the gate at the end of the passage. They fire a volley of fiery arrows.

INT. NORTH GATE - CONTINUOUS

Tamara and Ilira run for the whirling sands just ahead -- when the flaming arrows land before them.

Ilira hesitates.

TAMARA

Run!

ILIRA

We'll die!

TAMARA

We'll die if we stay!

She locks eyes with Ilira, who nods. Together they run right for the arrows.

But at the last minute, Ilira falters. She falls to the ground.

Tamara turns to see Ilira lying in the gateway a moment too late.

THE ARROWS EXPLODE causing a cave in that closes the gateway.

EXT. SANDSTORM - CONTINUOUS

Tamara falls to the sand as the gate collapses behind her. She looks back, only to see that Ilira didn't make it.

TAMARA

NO!!!

EXT. MAN OF WAR - CONTINUOUS

Khalar Singh stares at the cloud of destruction at the north tunnel.

There, one form hurries into the swirling sandstorm.

KHALAR SINGH

Who was guarding that gate?

REMO

It was I, Lord.

KHALAR SINGH

Take four legions. Hunt her. Before
I hunt you.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Tamara stumbles through a stretch of barren wasteland, the plumes of the oasis' sandstorm now off in the distance behind her.

The sun mercilessly beats down upon her face, her lips are already chapped. She falls to her knees, unable to go on.

She looks up, as the heat streams off the desert floor, creating a swirling mirage. Through which the silhouette of a rider appears, followed by others.

SLAVER CARAVAN

The horse-drawn carts of the caravan are lined with iron bars, and behind the bars are a bevy of young women, mostly looking worse for wear.

The HEAD SLAVER rides ahead, and walks up to the heap of white cloth that is Tamara.

TAMARA

Water -- please --

He lifts her barely conscious head, eyeing her features, a greasy paw examining her body. He smiles.

HEAD SLAVER

The gods are good.
(to the other slavers)
Chain this one in my cage. She'll
be the prize of the auction in Khor
Kalba.

CUT TO:

EXT. OASIS - NIGHT

The Man of War dominates the center of the oasis, its torches illuminating the scene before it. Akhun and the Turanians hold chains connected to the twenty women monks, kneeling, with their wrists chained to their neck collars.

In front of them kneels Fassir, beaten and bloodied.

Khalar Singh, Fariq, and Ukafa step down from the Man of War. Fariq carries with him a large iron box with ornate carvings on it.

KHALAR SINGH

All these years searching the ends of the earth. And here you are. Just a two day ride from Khor Kalba. I can scarcely believe it.

FASSIR

(in Acheronian, to monks)
Say nothing.

KHALAR SINGH

(in Acheronian)
Yes. Say nothing. Maybe he doesn't know who we are. Maybe he's not looking for the Queen.

Several of the women look up at him, shocked.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

That's right, my brethren, you have been lied to all your lives. Told you must hide yourselves, told you were alone. I want you to look at me, and see me for what I am. A brother. A friend. I have come not to hurt you, but liberate you.

FASSIR

You come for your own dark purposes, to raise Acheron.

KHALAR SINGH

Yes. I come to resurrect the greatest empire Hyboria has ever known.

FASSIR

An empire of evil, soaked in blood sacrifice and the blackest of magic.

Khalar Singh becomes infuriated, eyes blazing.

KHALAR SINGH

Have you hidden from the world so long that you cannot to see? Blood, magic, death: it is everywhere. Acheron is no different than any other kingdom, but for its glory.

(MORE)

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

And in place of that glory, you offer shame? I knew shame, but that was before I was shown my true lineage.

Khalar draws closer to the women, looking them each in the eye.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

When I was but a child, raiders destroyed my village, cut our fathers to ribbons, and burned our women as sacrifice to foreign gods. Those few who survived, we ran for our lives, chased into caves at the edge of the Eastern Sea, left with nothing to live for. But then we discovered it. Acheron. The temple that spawned an empire. We learned that we were not broken goat-herders on a desolate coastline. We were the sons and daughters of kings.

(stares in Ilira's eyes)

And queens.

He motions to Fariq, who brings the iron box forward.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

For thirty years I have searched for you. In that time I built both an army and empire, but they are nothing compared to what we can create together. We can raise Acheron again. Never again will we hide like rats. Never again will we watch as our loved ones are slaughtered. I call forth the Queen. Stand and join me, and this day will have a joyous end.

No one moves.

FASSIR

You would have all the world suffer, as you have suffered. We will die before we help you.

KHALAR SINGH

Yes. You will.

He nods to his son. He paces in front of the female monks, the box in front of them.

FARIQ

The caves beneath Khor Khalba contain all manner of creature, many -- altered -- by centuries of blood magic. But one, in particular, has developed a special connection to the blood. A thirst. It is said that only the Queen of Acheron itself can resist its embrace.

He stops, one woman away from Ilira.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

So what say you? Will you be the lucky one, or will you tell me who is?

A tear falls down her face, but she stays silent. There's the sound of SLITHERING as Fariq opens the box. She stares down inside the box --

AND SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

TAMARA

She awakens to the SCREAMING of a whipped SLAVE GIRL.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Tamara's eyes are met by a dozen others, SLAVES of every color, chained together with her in a CAGED WAGON. The SLAVE TRADER swings his whip twice more, hitting the cowering women in the cage.

SLAVE TRADER

Wake up, slags! Smile! A new owner approaches!

Tamara makes eye contact with the Slave Trader.

TAMARA

Let me go. I promise you'll be rewarded.

The Trader just laughs, leering at her.

SLAVE TRADER

And I would sample that reward, fair one, but you wear white.

(MORE)

SLAVE TRADER (CONT'D)
 Tell me, have the stars aligned and
 delivered a virgin slave into my
 care?

He eyes her lasciviously. Tamara turns away and does not
 answer.

SLAVE TRADER (CONT'D)
 No matter. I'll know soon enough.
 (turns away)
 Good day, sir! A lone rider in a
 desolate land. The perfect customer
 for what I sell.

CONAN

Rides out of the sun, his massive form silhouetted by the
 bright desert sky. He stares at the slave wagons.

SHEMISH WOMAN
 Please, master! Your gold can free
 me from this hole! I can bring you
 pleasure--

The Slave Trader immediately WHIPS her, incensed.

SLAVE TRADER
 Silence whore!

The Slaver goes to whip her again, but before the blow can
 fall, Conan grabs his arm. The Slave Trader looks furious,
 but Conan's size holds him back.

CONAN
 Khor Kalba. Which way?

SLAVE TRADER
 This is the road to Khor Kalba.
 Ahead. Past the Great Wall.

The Slaver nods to the east and Conan releases his arm.

The Slaver continues whipping the slave. Conan just rides on -
 - not his problem.

But as Conan passes Tamara, for a brief moment their eyes
 meet. Something about her. Conan stares a moment, then spurs
 his horse on.

Just then, the ground around them RUMBLES. Horses rear, the
 women SCREAM. Conan turns and looks up. His eyes go wide.

ENORMOUS BOULDERS

Coming thundering down the hills on all sides. The SLAVERS see them a moment too late.

SLAM. Several of the horses and carts are smashed by the rolling boulders.

Conan kicks his horse, trying to outrace the boulders. But when the wagon next to him is hit, its axle spears his horse in its side, and Conan goes down.

Pissed, he draws his sword. The Slavers scramble around the broken wagons, in chaos.

Only a pair of wagons still stands. One of them holds Tamara.

CONAN

Use your whips on the horses' legs!

The Slavers are confused. Then they notice

TURANIAN HORSEMEN

racing down the hill, behind the boulders.

As the riders bear down upon the slavers, the Slavers do as they're told, entangling the legs of the first wave of horses, throwing their riders.

More than a few riders SNAP their necks as they're driven into the desert floor. The remainder fight hand to hand, and are cut down by either Conan's blade or the slavers' tulwars. But their victory is short lived --

As a SECOND WAVE OF RIDERS comes thundering towards them, before the Slavers can re-establish their perimeter. The riders start cutting the slavers down where they stand.

CONAN

Conan lodges his sword in a still-rolling boulder. As it rolls, it pulls him up on top of it. From this height, Conan launches himself down at the horsemen below.

WHAM! He knocks a rider off his horse, Conan landing square in the saddle. He kicks the horse straight at the other riders. They don't see him coming until it's too late. He cuts them down where they sit.

The last remaining CARAVAN DRIVER whips his horse team, trying to pull his wagon out of the fight. Conan spins to see a FLASH of steel and the rider's neck plumes in blood as he's decapitated.

Which is strange since the cavalry are nowhere near the wagon.

REMO

The explanation comes as the shadow behind the driver MORPHS into Remo, the spindly Shadow Scout. He takes the reins, stopping the wagon.

Conan spots him, recognition in his eyes.

CONAN (CONT'D)

You!

There's a SCREAM. Conan turns to see the other two SHADOW SCOUTS already hacking their way through the slaves on one of the caged wagons. A Shadow Scout gets to Tamara, only to have her FIGHT BACK.

Tamara kicks the first Scout in the face, slamming his head into the bars. However, the second one clubs her unconscious from behind.

CONAN

Leaps from his horse, launching his body at Remo. Remo dives and rolls away. Small and misshapen, he is nonetheless very fast.

Conan strikes again. Again Remo dodges out of the way.

The Shadow Scouts draw swords, but Remo waves them off, speaking in the broken language of a savage.

REMO

The girl! Bring her to Khalar!

Conan launches an all out attack. Remo leaps over his sword and vaults Conan, landing on his back. He draws his sword, preparing to cut Conan's throat --

When Conan hurls his body backwards, into one of the huge rolling boulders. The impact crushes Remo and he loses his grip.

Conan spins to strike again, only to see Remo MELT INTO THE SHADOW OF THE BOULDER.

Conan turns his attention towards the other two Shadow Scouts as they drag the unconscious Tamara away.

Conan mounts one of the cavalry horses and gallops towards the Scouts. They see him coming and let go of Tamara. THEY MELT AWAY INTO HER SHADOW AND DISAPPEAR.

CUT TO:

TAMARA

Dazed, she struggles to her feet. Conan appears beside her, his dagger out. Tamara gasps in fear but Conan only reaches out and breaks the lock on her chains.

CONAN

Who are you?

TAMARA

I am nobody.

He cuts the bonds on her feet. Tamara rises up, the battle scene revealed to her.

Dead bodies of the Slavers and Turanian horsemen lie sprawled in every direction. Tamara takes in the gruesome sight, shocked.

CONAN

Many died to capture nobody.
(motions to his horse)
Get up.

TAMARA

And if I don't wish to ride with you?

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Conan rides his horse, Tamara trailing on foot, wrists tethered to Conan's saddle by a long rope. Tamara looks exhausted.

They reach a gallery of broken columns, spires of fossilized coral that juts out of the desert.

TAMARA

Stop! I want water.

Conan just keeps riding.

CONAN

Perhaps the slavers took your orders. I don't.

TAMARA

I never knew men could be so cruel.
Now I wonder if the world is filled
with animals such as you.

CONAN

You speak of animals as if they
were less than men. But animals
don't stab their brothers in the
back or steal their mother's only
possession. And they never lie.

TAMARA

I haven't lied.

Conan get off his horse, unties Tamara and gives her a water
sack. Tamara greedily drinks down the water.

CONAN

Very well. Give me your name.

TAMARA

I am Tamara Amelia Karushan. And
you?

CONAN

I am Conan.

TAMARA

Conan? That's it?

CONAN

What more names do I need?

Conan then grabs Tamara around her waist, putting her atop
his horse. He then mounts behind her, their bodies close.
Conan's mouth is only inches from her ear as he speaks.

CONAN (CONT'D)

There is only one truth I need from
you, Tamara Amelia Karushan. Why
does Khalar Singh want you?

Tamara looks away, but doesn't respond.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Then let's hope it's for your
cooking.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

A campfire amidst several large boulders, a line of windmills
on the horizon.

Tamara struggles to manage a cooking pot over a blaze. Conan comes over and smells the pot; his face scrunches from the odor.

CONAN
Trying to poison me?

Tamara steps back and gets down on her knees, her hands clasped.

CONAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

TAMARA
Before we eat, I must pray.

CONAN
Crom! What would you pray for? That a bone may not get stuck in your throat? No words nor gods will give you one more moment than fate allows you.

TAMARA
Then you have no faith. And I am sorry for you.

CONAN
I need no pity.

TAMARA
But you do. You live in a world that is harsh and short. Where fate is unyielding and hope is a cruel joke. I live in a world with a purpose that guides me, where faith sustains me.

Suddenly, Conan KICKS DIRT PAST TAMARA, ONTO THE FIRE. The fire goes out, plunging everything into darkness.

TAMARA (CONT'D)
Why did you--

Suddenly, there's the sound of FIGHTING. Grunting, blows being interchanged, then a LOUD SNAP AS BONES ARE BROKEN.

A moment later, the flames of the fire are stoked up again, revealing Conan standing over the groaning REMO. The other two SHADOW SCOUTS are dead.

Tamara instinctively jumps back.

CONAN

Don't worry. His back is broken. He won't be slinking away this time.

As Tamara gapes at Remo, Conan simply pulls the cooking pot off the fire.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Now, let's eat.

TAMARA

But -- what about him?!

Remo GROANS in pain.

CONAN

I enjoy a little music with my meal.

DISSOLVE TO:

AERIAL SHOT - POV - SOARING

Across steep valleys and up jagged peaks we race into steep and unforgiving mountains. Far off, we hear a pair of thunderous booms, almost like the sound of a heartbeat. THUMP, THUMP.

Cresting over a set of peaks, a gorge is revealed below, and beneath it--

EXT. ACHERON - NIGHT - MOVING

A city carved out of the purple granite of a mountainous gorge. Hundred-foot towers rise up, their pinnacles crafted to depict ANGRY, GOD-LIKE FACES.

As we pass one of the faces, again we hear the sound of a thunderous heartbeat, now closer. THUMP, THUMP.

We GLIDE DOWN past hundred foot high pillars of flames, towards the growing sounds of SCREAMING and WAILING.

The streets of Acheron are lined with thousands of SLAVES, young and old, chained together, toiling under the lash of their cruel masters, the

ACHERONIAN WARRIORS

Towering over the slaves, the warriors are a fearsome sight. Their armor, crafted from the bones of their defeated enemies, rises to a mask which covers much of their features.

Only the red irises of their eyes peer through. That and their pitch black skin.

The slaves hobble down the main boulevard, their naked feet splashing in streams of BLOOD which flow from the

ACHERONIAN PYRAMID

Up ahead looms a colossal pyramid, surrounded in a semi-circle by five massive statues. As we grow closer the grotesque surface of the pyramid becomes clearer, one hewn from cracked bone and empty sockets.

The thunderous heartbeat seems all around us now. THUMP, THUMP.

The three hundred foot high edifice is made ENTIRELY OF THOUSANDS OF HUMAN SKULLS. Many of the skulls still drip with blood, pouring down from the pyramid's crest, where stands

A BLACK THRONE

Images of snakes gorging themselves on hapless victims are carved in bas relief into the throne's surface.

Standing before the throne, surrounded by BLACK ROBED PRIESTS are a man and woman, mere shadows in the silhouette of torches.

The HEAD PRIEST and his ACOLYTE approach with TWO CROWNS. One is made of GOLD, the other of IRON.

The Gold crown goes on the head of the man. For the woman, the Iron crown is placed on her head.

And suddenly, THUMP, THUMP. IRON SPIKES SHOOT OUT OF THE IRON CROWN PIERCING THE WOMAN'S FOREHEAD, HER SCREAMS ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

Blood streams down the woman's face as she turns toward the torchlight.

IT IS TAMARA.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Tamara leaps up, startled. Her face is covered in sweat, her eyes as terrified as the victim from her dream.

Nearby we hear screaming of another type. Remo.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

MUFFLED SCREAMS. We pull out of Remo's wide mouth, stuffed with cloth, trying to bellow in uncontrollable agony.

A hand comes in and pulls out the cloth. It's Conan.

REMO

Please! Mercy!

CONAN

You are more fit to inflict torture than to endure it. Your life is not nailed to your spine as my peoples are.

We PULL OUT, revealing that Remo arms are spread-eagle, attached to ropes pulled taught by opposing tree limbs.

Conan nudges him with the point of his sword. Remo SCREAMS in agony, then speaks in his savage, broken dialect.

REMO

Stop! Stop! I know how make you rich! Rich! You hear name Khalar Singh? You have what he want. The girl, yes? Khalar give you anything for her. More!

CONAN

Why would he?

Remo pauses, not wanting to answer. Conan put the blade back to Remo's neck.

REMO

She could be the one.

CONAN

One what?

REMO

The one. The Queen.

Conan's mind races, remembering Khalar's words from long ago.

CONAN

A queen in hiding.

REMO

Yes! Yes! I sent to find her. Bring her. He wait for me now, at Great Wall. He pay you anything. More!

CONAN

So I should ransom her to your
master? Not exactly loyal -- but
still, a good idea.

Conan pulls out a sheet of handwritten paper from Remo's
tunic.

CONAN (CONT'D)

You'll help me deliver it.

EXT. GREAT WALL - NIGHT

Torchlight dots the heights of a fifty-foot high stone wall,
erected between giant rock formations, an impassable barrier
that runs countless miles.

The wreckage of old siege equipment dots the hillside before
the wall.

EXT. CATAPULT - NIGHT

An aging catapult looks down upon the wall below. Slowly, it
begins to turn.

Conan pushes the catapult until it aims towards the Great
Wall.

We hear MUFFLED SCREAMS, and find Remo tied to a boulder
cradled in the catapult. Conan pulls the gag out of Remo's
mouth.

REMO

Please! Please! I help you! I do
anything you wish!

Conan stuffs a parchment in his mouth. He takes out his sword
and cuts another NOTCH into his arm.

CONAN

Good. Die.

He then cuts the rope and WHOOSH! The catapult fires tossing
Remo and the rock he's tied to high into the night sky.

EXT. GREAT WALL - NIGHT

BOOM! Patrolling SOLDIERS are crushed beneath the massive
rock as it reduces a section of wall to rubble.

CUT TO:

KHALAR

Stares down at Remo's broken body. Ukafa and Fariq stand beside him.

KHALAR SINGH
He brought a message?

Ukafa hands him the bloodied parchment. Khalar reads it.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)
Gold, for the girl. A ransom, for me to deliver in person.

UKAFA
I'll find them -- and come back with their heads.

FARIQ
You let the girl escape once, Ukafa. What makes you think you can do better now?

UKAFA
I did what?

FARIQ
I found the monastery. It was my understanding that you were in charge of its capture --

Ukafa's anger grows.

KHALAR SINGH
Enough! We will take no chances. We will pay this thief what he wants, and more.

EXT. BRIDGE TO NOWHERE - NIGHT

Conan returns from the nearby hills, carrying a pair of rabbits he's hunted and skinned.

He looks around, surprised not to find Tamara. He hears a yelp from nearby and walks to a dirt path beyond the clearing.

TAMARA

She's tied up and gagged and she's wormed her way this far, muddying and scraping herself all along the way. She lets out a frustrated grunt as Conan simply picks her back up and carries her back to the outcropping.

He pulls the gag from her mouth and drops a skinned rabbit at her feet.

CONAN

Here. Eat.

Tamara squirms away from the carcass, disgusted.

TAMARA

Couldn't you at least cook it first?

CONAN

Fire draws attention.

Conan tears into his rabbit, chewing on the raw meat.

TAMARA

Does it bother you, blood on your hands?

CONAN

The only blood on these hands I claimed with my own sword.

TAMARA

What does that mean?

CONAN

Clean hands mean nothing. Kings and Queens claim more lives than I will ever meet, and not a drop is spilled in their presence.

TAMARA

What are you talking about? I've done no harm to you. I've done no harm to anyone.

Conan confronts her, enraged.

CONAN

You lie. You are the very reason my people are dead.

TAMARA

Are you mad? I never met your people.

CONAN

But Khalar Singh has. He destroyed my people, looking for you.

Suddenly Tamara understands.

TAMARA

The one who came for us? His name
is Khalar Singh?

CONAN

You know this.

TAMARA

We did not know who sought us, only
that we were sought.

CONAN

You hid from him. And while you
did, others died in your place.

TAMARA

If we did not hide, countless more
would have been killed! You do not
know what purpose he has for our
queen.

CONAN

And I do not care, for he will not
live to see it bear fruit!

Tamara is shocked.

TAMARA

Wait -- you seek to kill this
Khalar? We have the same aim. He
takes my queen to Khor Kalba. I
have sworn an oath to protect her.
I can help you.

CONAN

Enough lies.

Conan puts the gag back in her mouth and binds her hands.

EXT. ROCK RIDGE - NIGHT

Conan watches the Great Wall silently, absently playing with
a DAGGER in his hand as he gauges the many guardposts along
the wall. The archers. The barrels of oil. The cavalry.

He feels eyes upon him and looks down at Tamara, still bound
and gagged, her eyes burning holes in his forehead. Conan
pulls out her gag.

CONAN

You will keep quiet.

TAMARA

What use is talking? You won't believe a word I speak. I only want to know this -- how will you kill Khalar? You are too big to play the assassin.

CONAN

You will be the lure that will draw me close. Then I will scale the wall and cut him down where he stands.

TAMARA

And the archers and cavalry? They will be napping?

CONAN

They will not be a problem.

Tamara thinks about it.

TAMARA

No. Not good enough.

Conan is shocked by her brazen response.

CONAN

Did I ask?

TAMARA

Should you fail, I'll be left without a weapon, helpless in my enemies hands. Let me help, Conan.

Conan responds by putting the gag back in her mouth.

CONAN

I will not fail.

But still Tamara glares at him -- and we can see the hint of Conan's resolve bending.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GREAT WALL - DAY

Khalar Singh stands atop the wall, awaiting Conan. Fariq draws close.

FARIQ

Let me take care of this thief, father. He's beneath your notice.

KHALAR SINGH

He killed Remo, likely his cavalry legion as well. Whatever he is, he is more than a mere thief.

Then, off in the distance, at the far edge of the desert clearing, two figures step out from amongst the boulders.

CONAN AND TAMARA

Conan holds a squirming, but bound Tamara.

CONAN

Be still!

Conan thrusts Tamara in Khalar's direction.

CONAN (CONT'D)

(yelling to Khalar)

I have what you want! Where's my gold?!

KHALAR

Khalar reaches down and lifts a heavy sack of gold coins.

KHALAR SINGH

(yelling back)

Triple your price. Come and claim it.

GATES OF THE WALL - MOMENTS LATER

The gates open and Khalar strides out into the clearing.

CONAN AND TAMARA

stand a hundred feet ahead.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Send her to me.

CONAN

Send the gold.

Khalar Singh throws the gold sack. It lands halfway between them. He sends Tamara ahead, her mouth gagged.

But the moment Tamara reaches the gold --

From out underneath the sand, FOUR HORSEMEN rise up out of the desert floor. They each bear weighted nets and spiked lances, and they surround Conan.

The first rider gallops towards Conan who simply LOPS OFF THE HORSES FRONT LEGS. As the beast collapses, Conan crushes the rider's skull with his broadsword.

The next two riders attack together, but Conan dodges their nets and rips away one of their spears, only to lodge it into the other rider's chest. He dives at and tackles the first rider, TOPPLING HIM, ALONG WITH HIS HORSE. He snaps the second rider's neck.

The last rider comes at Conan, who horizontally slashes RIGHT THROUGH THE HORSE'S NECK AND THEN THE RIDER'S NECK. Both human and animal head tumble to the desert floor.

All four riders are dead, in a matter of seconds.

KHALAR

Smiles. He's got Tamara by the neck.

KHALAR SINGH

You're fast. But are you fast
enough?

Conan's eyes go to the top of the wall, where CHEREN and his archer prepare to fire. Conan rushes forward as the flaming arrows stream toward him.

EXPLOSIONS rip through the air where Conan was, throwing up a huge dust cloud.

Conan bursts out of the dust cloud, lunging in an attack.

But Khalar Singh is not there. He has withdrawn inside the gates.

Baring his teeth, Conan runs at the wall itself.

Cheren and the archers let loose another volley at Conan, who evades and strikes away the falling arrows with his sword.

Explosions fill the air, but none of them scorch Conan as he reaches

THE GREAT WALL

Conan hits the base of the wall at full stride, like a mountain lion. Reaching out, he launches himself up, taking half the vertical of the wall in a single leap.

Digging his hand into the seam of the wooden beams, he stops only to vault up again, taking the forty foot wall in two upward bounds.

WALL WALK

Conan leaps upon wall walk, the passageway atop the Great Wall.

FARIQ

Tries to hide his surprise. Even as he draws his sword, Conan takes out the four SOLDIERS in his way.

FARIQ

You should have run, while you could.

Conan looks at the sword. It strikes a chord in him. IT IS THE SWORD HIS FATHER FORGED! Enraged, Conan charges the slight Fariq.

Fariq partially parries the attack. He's obviously well-trained, but he's no match for Conan. The tip of Conan's blade cuts a large gash in Fariq's cheek.

KHALAR SINGH

Fariq!

Khalar Singh arrives, grabbing his son by his collar and flinging him away from the barbarian. Fariq struggles to stand, trying in vain to hide his embarrassment.

Conan and Khalar Singh size each other up on the narrow wall walk.

CONAN

I was wondering what it would take for you to stop cowering.

KHALAR SINGH

I wasn't cowering. I was studying. You're quite gifted with a sword, but it's not from schooling. Your speed and power makes up for a lack of -- finesse. I've seen such fighting before -- Cimmerian.

Enraged, Conan charges Khalar Singh. He swings down on Khalar Singh's head, only when the sword reaches it, it finds nothing but air. Khalar is fast.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Cimmerian it is. Now it makes sense. You came for blood, not gold.

Conan responds by lunging in, swinging his broadsword in a broad arc, with all his might. Even in the small space, Khalar's lateral speed is dizzying. He sidesteps Conan's attack and backhands Conan's face with the flat of his tulwar.

Conan's resolve wavers momentarily, knowing Khalar could have just as easily sliced his throat.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Your people barely afforded me a challenge. You're little more than beasts.

Conan comes at Khalar with twice as much fury, smashing entire posts as he hacks at the warlord, who simply evades the attack.

Down the wall walk they move, Conan attacking while Khalar seems complacent enough just to defend.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

You've come a long way, barbarian, only to fail.

Khalar ducks Conan's last wild swing and gashes Conan twice, both deeply in his midsection. Khalar then KICKS Conan, sending the Cimmerian slamming onto the rock parapet.

CRUNCH. Conan lands directly on his back, his sword clattering away from him. Khalar's men back away into a circle. Conan struggles to get on all fours.

Khalar KICKS Conan in his shattered chest, lifting Conan off the ground with his might. He follows up with a devastating punch to Conan's face, one which lands like a piledriver. CRUNCH.

Conan can only bleed as Khalar looms over him.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

So much for vengeance.
(to his soldiers)
Get me oil -- and a torch.

Soldiers quickly bring over a bucket of oil and a lit torch.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Is that really the best you could do? Is that as far as you could think ahead? Just rush in and kill me?

Behind Khalar Singh, Conan spots Tamara being brought up, her hands bound. Her eyes show an intense fear, but resolve as well.

TAMARA' HANDS

Between the bonds she slips down a blade. It's CONAN'S DAGGER. She quickly cuts her bonds.

With all the attention focused on Conan, no one is quick enough to stop her as GRABS THE TORCH FROM THE SOLDIER, LIGHTING THE ARROWS IN CHEREN'S QUIVER.

Cheren spins around, sees the flames reaching his pitched arrows.

CHEREN

No!!

But it's far too late. Tamara hits the floor, beside Conan. BOOM.

EXPLOSION

The blast sends parts of Cheren flying in every direction. Ukafa, Fariq, and the wall guards are flattened by the concussion.

Khalar Singh, who was standing closer to the explosion, is THROWN AGAINST THE WALL!

KHALAR SINGH

The warlord slowly rises, his head pounding from the explosion. He looks up. The entire parapet is on fire.

He grits his teeth and climbs the wall.

ATOP THE WALL

A thick wall of flame rages before Khalar. Conan and Tamara are gone. He looks over the far side of the wall, where two figures on horseback ride off into the distance, Tamara holding Conan atop the horse.

Ukafa and Fariq rise and see what Khalar Singh sees.

KHALAR SINGH

Ukafa, you will take half our forces North, to the Sea. I will take the rest South.

FARIQ

What of me, father?

KHALAR SINGH

You will return to Khor Kalba. You will feed the women to the beast until you find our Queen.

FARIQ

I will not. I will track the barbarian with you --

Enraged, Khalar Singh grabs him by the back of his head, pulling him in close.

KHALAR SINGH

You think I care what you wish?! You want to play warrior? It is not in you. One day you will be king, but warlord, never.

FARIQ

I can. Let me prove it to you!

KHALAR SINGH

You will not risk your life again. You are my line, my successor. You will not throw away all that I have worked for.

A smile creeps up on Ukafa's face, watching Fariq's embarrassment. He withdraws hastily, all eyes on him.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

(without looking at Ukafa)

If I find you smiling before you bring me the girl, I will take every tooth I see.

Ukafa buries the smile as Khalar turns to the wall of flames left in Conan's wake.

CUT TO:

INT. CORIN'S FORGE - NIGHT

The flames become the blaze of the forge.

CORIN (O.S.)

More wood boy! We must test the steel with our fire.

Conan, a young boy again, kneels beside the woodpile, pulling out logs--

But when he hands them to his father, he notices his father is covered with sword wounds, cut and bleeding.

CORIN (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for? The fire is dying.

Conan turns back to the wood pile. Instead of wood, the pile is full of the bodies of those he recently killed: Lucius, Remo, etc.

The young Conan struggles to push the first body onto the forge. Still the fire diminishes.

Conan turns and there is no more wood. And no more bodies.

CONAN

It's not enough. I've failed you father.

CORIN

It will never be enough, Conan.

CONAN

I don't understand --

He spins. Behind him TAMARA stands, a look of sadness on her face.

CORIN

Through suffering, you will learn your purpose, boy. And you have not begun to suffer yet.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Conan's eyes pop open. He inhales sharply, gripped by the dream.

The room is dark, surrounded by thick draperies. Conan lies on a straw bed with white sheets, soaked through with his sweat. He looks to his wounds, all bandaged.

He rises--a bit too fast because he falls back to his bed.

TAMARA

I wouldn't move so fast. I bound your wounds as best I could, but I'm no healer.

Conan looks over to discover Tamara sitting nearby.

CONAN

Where am I?

TAMARA

On the Wasp. You told me where it
laid, just before you passed out.
Though I can't say as I feel much
safer here.

Conan's response is to rise again, his face contorting in
pain.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Don't embarrass me with thanks, I
only saved your life.

CONAN

You were -- adequate.

Conan pulls aside one of the thick draperies that surround
his bed. Behind it lies a staircase, which he ascends.

EXT. ZINGARAN GALLEY - NIGHT

Conan steps out onto the deck of a sixty-foot djunk,
traveling quickly down a wide and powerful river.

ARTUS

Look what we have here. A hill ape
in over his head.

Conan spins to see the rough, brightly dressed Zamoran pirate
ARTUS leaping down from the quarterdeck, his sword out.

The other ZAMORAN PIRATES draw near as well. Tamara sees the
scene, suddenly uncomfortable.

CONAN

I was just wondering what that
smell was.

(sniffs near Artus)

Now I know.

ARTUS

We take no stowaways. Only paying
passengers. You've best be laden
with gold.

CONAN

If it's metal you seek, perhaps
you'd settle for steel.

In a flash Conan's sword lunges forward. CLANG. It meets Artus's, sparking as they collide. Artus LAUGHS.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Still fast Artus.

ARTUS

Fast, deadly, charming, rakishly handsome.

(to the pirates)

All hail Conan!

PIRATES

All hail Conan!

Artus slaps his hand on Conan's back and Conan winces in pain.

ARTUS

Sorry, friend. Looks like you've had a rough road.

CONAN

It won't get easier. Khalar Singh lives. He'll be coming for me and the girl.

ARTUS

Good. We're scrapping for a fight these days.

CONAN

This one may be more than you wish. I need you to get me close to Khor Kalba.

Artus rubs his beard.

ARTUS

Rest up. We'll get you there.

Conan withdraws to his room.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Conan collapses on the bed as Tamara follows him inside.

TAMARA

We go to Khor Kalba?

CONAN

I do.

Conan puts a brawny arm over his tired eyes.

TAMARA

No. We do.

CONAN

Just leave me to sleep.

But Tamara doesn't leave, forcing Conan to respond.

CONAN (CONT'D)

You would risk your life for
royalty? Why?

Tamara pauses, realizing she must trust Conan to gain his help.

TAMARA

Because she represent freedom, not
just ours but all Hyboria's. What
do you know of Acheron?

CONAN

A tall tale. Meant to scare
children.

TAMARA

It is no fable. It's my people's
history. Acheron was an empire that
swallowed all of Hyboria, led by
the King and his legion of demon
warriors. Unstoppable. Insatiable.
Immortal. But still it had one
weakness. For the true power of
Acheron laid not with its King, but
the Queen. Every twenty years, a
new queen from the royal line would
be coronated with a crown of iron.
Spikes would pierce her, slowly
drain her precious blood, and
through her suffering Acheron would
remain invincible. Until one of my
ancestors, an Acheronian himself,
put a stop to this tyranny. He and
others spirited the new Queen away,
hiding her from the empire and all
those who would raise it again.

CONAN

What care I for queens and empires?

Conan turns to head back to his bed. Tamara grabs him,
incensed.

TAMARA

Didn't you hear me? This evil faces us all. All of civilization will fall if the army of Acheron is raised again.

CONAN

I heard. Only I would happily put all of your "civilization" to the torch myself.

TAMARA

But -- you owe me a debt, you thankless oaf!

CONAN

My only debt is to my people. And it still lies unpaid.

EXT. MAN OF WAR - NIGHT

The enormous siege vessel lies before a burning PORT CITY.

A SAILOR, crying, grovels on his knees before Khalar and his men.

SAILOR

It was a pirate ship. They left as soon as the girl and the large one boarded.

KHALAR SINGH

Which way did they sail?

SAILOR

North.

Khalar is surprised.

KHALAR SINGH

Are you certain?

SAILOR

Yes, please, I'm telling you the truth!

Khalar nods to one of his men, who slits the Sailor's throat.

Khalar turns to his FALCONER, with the huge bird of prey on his arm.

KHALAR SINGH
Send word to Ukafa. They come to
him by sea.

The Falconer nods and heads off. Khalar looks to his
soldiers.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)
Find me a warship.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALLEY - NIGHT

The ship sails like a ghost over black water, the stars lit
up impossibly bright. Artus finds Tamara sitting near the
bow. He hands her a steaming bowl of food.

ARTUS
Try not to taste it going down
would be my advice.

TAMARA
You've known Conan long?

ARTUS
We sailed with him for a while. I
would like to say I know the man.

TAMARA
He is a riddle to me.

ARTUS
Aye, he's that too.

TAMARA
We have the same goal. Why will he
not trust me?

ARTUS
Why would he? He's a stranger in
every land he trods. A man with no
home, no people, none but the
company of ghosts. And he bears the
weight of their deaths every moment
of every day.

TAMARA
That is no way to live.

ARTUS

He doesn't live. I've seen in him great mirth, only to watch it smothered by greater melancholy. He owes a blood debt, and he can entertain no other joy, no other cause, until it is fulfilled.

TAMARA

And yet you call him friend, and risk death to help him.

ARTUS

Let me tell you something of Conan. He will never lie. He will never break a trust, once given. And he will never, ever give up.

TAMARA

He's a stubborn ass.

Artus LAUGHS.

ARTUS

He is that, lass. He is that.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNGEON - THE PIT - NIGHT

AKHUN and his Turanian slavers lead the female monks into a large circular chamber, lit by many torches. Before them lies a PIT, dark and foreboding, with a bamboo grid placed atop it.

Fariq enters, an AIDE holding the iron box he used earlier. Fariq has a bandage on his face where Conan struck him, and he looks even more angry and malevolent than before.

FARIQ

Here we stand again. Will the queen reveal herself, or must another innocent suffer?

Fariq walks past the row of women, each recoiling. He slaps one. Then another, his rage only building.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

My father, he tires of your charade. He grows impatient. But I have no such haste. I enjoy watching you squirm.

Fariq passes Ilira, slowing his pace. He closes in on the YOUNGEST FEMALE MONK, a true innocent with terrified eyes.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

Perhaps you'd like to see the end
your sisters faced back at the
monastery?

Fariq slowly opens the box before her.

ACHERONIAN BOX

In the darkness of the box slithers a grotesque TENTACLE. The tentacle is severed, but still alive, thirsting for blood.

Terrified as she is, the young monk says nothing. Fariq closes the box.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

No? Your fear is not enough yet?
Let's try harder.

Fariq nods to the slavers, who unchain her from the rest.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

I've read all there is to know of
mighty Acheron. Why would true
Acheronians protect a traitor to
their own? You once held the entire
world in your grasp, now you hide
and cower like pitiful mice.

He pushes the girl. She falls to the grid, the sound echoing down into the pit.

AN INHUMAN GROWL emits from the darkness. Something comes. The girl looks below.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

And mice are meant to be swallowed
whole.

Suddenly, a MASSIVE TENTACLE, ten times the size of the one in the box, comes hurtling up through the grid. It grabs the young monk, its barbs ripping into her, dragging her into the darkness below.

Her SCREAMS echo.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

What was in the box could only
drink from you one at a time. But
the beast of Acheron, it will claim
four of you this night.

(MORE)

FARIQ (CONT'D)
 Who will spare the rest and tell me
 which of you is the queen?

Not a single woman moves, resolved. Ilira catches herself, but also stays silent. She looks up to see Fariq staring at her.

CU - ILIRA'S EYES

Her pupils widen in fear as Fariq's cold stare bores into her.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 I am here, swine.

Fariq turns -- only it is another FEMALE MONK that glares at him.

FEMALE MONK
 I am the one you seek.

Fariq smiles.

FARIQ
 At last. Some bravery. But of course, you wouldn't expect me to take your word, would you?

As the Fariq reaches for her--

CUT TO:

INT. GALLEY - ROOM - NIGHT

Tamara awakens with a SCREAM, her body resting against the curved hull of the ship.

TAMARA
 No!!!

Tamara looks around with a panicked look, until she realizes where she is.

CONAN (O.S.)
 I hope I awoke with less clamor.

Their roles reversed, now it is Tamara's turn to see Conan sitting nearby, drinking from a flask of mead.

TAMARA
 You're drinking? You were near death this time yesterday.

CONAN

Is there a better reason to drink?

Tamara actually manages to LAUGH.

TAMARA

Do you think--I could try some of that? I'm curious of its taste.

CONAN

You've never tasted mead?

Tamara shrugs, embarrassed. Conan hands her flask. She takes a deep swallow, some spilling out over her cheeks. But she doesn't cough, and smiles brightly afterwards.

TAMARA

It's good.

Conan reaches for the flask, but Tamara ignores him, taking another swig. It quickly loosens her tongue.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Let me ask you something. Once you've killed Khalar and claimed your vengeance, then what? You will be free from your ghosts. What of your future, Conan?

CONAN

I have no future. It died with my people, as I should have.

TAMARA

So your life is penance? For what, for living? And when you too die, what do you believe happens then?

Conan just shrugs, taking back the mead.

CONAN

Nothing.

Tamara, her tongue loosened by drink, laughs.

TAMARA

Nothing? I couldn't live without some kind of belief in the world after this.

CONAN

I believe in the cold of steel, the warmth of flesh. All else is fairy tales.

TAMARA

Perhaps. But I still die with faith
in my heart, belief in something
greater than one's self. What will
you die with?

CONAN

Purpose. I die with purpose.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ZINGARAN GALLEY - MORNING

Tamara steps out onto the deck, grabbing her pounding head.
Her first hangover. She hears a THUMPING sound, followed by
ANOTHER, and walks towards the side of the deck.

Tamara looks overboard, to the water below.

TAMARA'S POV

THE RIVER IS FILLED WITH BODIES! Bloated, they float in blood
red water as flies buzz around them. One of them hits the
hull of the boat. THUMP.

Tamara blinks, unsure if the vision is real -- but then she's
joined by other PIRATES who gape at the bodies below.

PIRATE 1

To stations! To stations!

Tamara turns and up ahead spies --

BLACK WARSHIP

The larger warship cuts through the water, manned by a legion
of rowers. On the deck of the warship, UKAFA and his SPEARMEN
stand. The SAILORS get the most out of the billowing black
sails. The ship gains fast.

THE GALLEY

Conan exits his room, sees the danger. Artus appears at his
side.

ARTUS

What do you think? They have us
outnumbered, but we might beat
their speed.

CONAN

That is what they wish. They drive us to another force, approaching from the south.

ARTUS

Then we fight?

CONAN

No. We give them what they think they want.

(to the Pirates)

About ship! Now!

The pirates leap into action, tacking and turning the galley with great speed and efficiency.

THE WARSHIP

Ukafa smiles, his gold teeth shining. The ship's CAPTAIN stands beside him.

CAPTAIN

They're turning to run.

UKAFA

Good. We only need stay close.

THE GALLEY

Is turned around now, fleeing. ARCHERS from the Warship fire arrows that barely reach the Galley. The Pirates dodge the few that land on deck.

Tamara reaches Conan and Artus. She's worried to say the least.

ARTUS

And now?

CONAN

Let us show them why she is called the Wasp.

Artus smiles. He was hoping Conan would say that.

TAMARA

Why is she called the Wasp?

ARTUS

Open astern! Load the stinger!

The Pirates rush to the back of the ship.

THE BLACK WARSHIP

The Captain stares ahead, confused.

CAPTAIN

They are doing -- something.

Sure enough, the stern of the ship begins to part, revealing -

A MASSIVE CROSSBOW

Mounted with a barbed harpoon, fifteen feet long.

CONAN

Fire!

They fire the weapon. The harpoon races for the bow of the Warship, a thick rope trailing it. It smashes into the wood, ripping through it like it was paper.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Rip her apart!

The Pirates grab the heavy rope and run, pulling the rope, and the harpoon back towards the Wasp.

As it's pulled out, the barbs of the harpoon rip a wider hole in the warship.

WARSHIP

The Captain and crew are in a panic. Men rush to patch the gaping hole in the hull.

SAILOR

We're taking on water!

CAPTAIN

Hard to port!

UKAFA

No. Let them fire again!

CAPTAIN

We will sink.

Ukafa guts the captain with his spear.

UKAFA

So be it.
(to his spearmen)
Get below. Be ready.

GALLEY

The pirates load the harpoon in the crossbow device a second time.

CONAN

Fire!

It fires, smashing again into the wooden hull of the Warship.

WARSHIP - INSIDE

The harpoon lodges deep inside the hull -- where Ukafa and his spearmen wait.

UKAFA

Now!

They rush forward and grab onto the harpoon.

GALLEY

ARTUS

Bring her back!

Again, the pirates pull the harpoon back out. It falls into the water as they pull on the rope tied to it.

They do not notice Ukafa and his dozen spearmen clasping the very same rope as its pulled toward the Galley.

Artus looks at the Warship. It's foundering and sinking quickly.

ARTUS (CONT'D)

She's dead in the water!

A CHEER goes up among the pirates --

And then one PIRATE takes a spear through the chest. All eyes turn to the side of the Wasp, where Ukafa and his men climb aboard.

Conan's eyes alight with fury.

CONAN

Good. I was growing weary with boredom.

Conan motions to a pair of pirates.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Hide her below.

BATTLE

The Spearmen rush to the attack. The pirates spring to the defense of the ship, countering the Spearmen with cutlass and dagger. Ukafa marshals his men as a fierce battle rages.

UKAFA

Find the girl!

The Spearmen quickly make their way to the interior of the galley, throwing the dead bodies of the pirates overboard.

CONAN

Conan grabs the nearby jib, swings over, and plants both feet in the face of one of the spearmen, knocking him over the side.

ARTUS

The sea captain proves dangerous in his own right, grabbing the head of one of the Spearmen and violently pulling it down to the gunwale of the ship, impaling the Spearman's eye on a handspike.

UKAFA

The massive warrior shows incredible speed as well, dodging one cutlass attack only to turn the weapon upon another pirate.

CONAN

The Cimmerian cuts through a Spearman, his gaze focused on Ukafa. Ukafa stares right back as he runs through a pair of pirates. Finally, the two warriors stand only feet apart.

The two warriors eye each other with satisfaction. Ukafa's frightening, sharpened gold teeth shine as he smiles.

UKAFA (CONT'D)

We are each the last of our tribe,
Cimmerian. Yours dies this day.

Conan responds by lunging forward, swinging his sword in a broad arc. Ukafa is just as quick, stepping back and allowing his spear to block the swing.

Ukafa whirls the war spear in great circles, forcing Conan to parry, stepping back beyond the spear's reach.

The two powerful warriors trade blows back and forth, neither able to gain the advantage.

UKAFA (CONT'D)

Your head will top my spear today,
but know Khalar's pig son will soon
share your fate.

Ukafa tries to spear Conan through the chest, and Conan decides to drop his sword, grabbing the spear as it passes by him.

Conan then pulls on the spear, throwing Ukafa off his balance, towards Conan. Conan then kicks the warrior in the chest, hurtling Ukafa backwards.

Now Conan turns the spear on its master. Ukafa, unarmed, is forced to backpedal as Conan thrusts the spear at him. A pair of close misses leaves Ukafa with gashes on his chest and arm, but he manages to knock the spear from Conan's hands.

The battle goes to hand-to-hand. It's primal, each of them covered in blood. Ukafa bear hugs Conan, then resorts to using his teeth to bite into Conan's shoulder.

Conan YELLS IN PAIN, butting Ukafa's head and knocking him back. Conan falls to the stern of the ship, his back against the harpoon crossbow.

Ukafa shakes off the head butt, and sees his spear nearby. He picks it up.

UKAFA (CONT'D)

Now finally, you die.

He raises up to hurl the spear through Conan, only to see Conan manning the harpoon, NOW TURNED TO FACE UKAFA.

The crossbow fires and the harpoon punches a massive hole through Ukafa, its momentum throwing him off the galley, into the sea beyond.

TAMARA

She hides inside a small compartment of the ship. She hears FOOTSTEPS walking past, then returning. An ARM suddenly reaches in and grabs her.

As she's pulled out, Tamara SCREAMS right in Conan's face. He doesn't even flinch.

CONAN

Time to go.

EXT. GALLEY - NIGHT

The battle ended, the pirates toss the dead Spearmen into the sea and prepare to make sail again.

Meanwhile, Conan lashes his sword to his back, standing by the gunwales with Tamara and Artus, a SMALL DINGHY waiting below.

ARTUS

I could get you closer. Another half day along the coast --

CONAN

I need you head west, to draw off our pursuers. I'll find another path to Khor Kalba.

ARTUS

So be it. Swift wind at your backs.

EXT. DINGHY - DAY

Conan rows away from the galley with powerful strokes.

TAMARA

So you are taking me with you to Khor Kalba.

CONAN

I never said that. But I won't leave a virgin onboard a pirate ship, alone.

TAMARA

I -- but -- who said I was a virgin?

Conan just shakes his head as a parting fog reveals a large Colossus head, the fallen remains of an enormous statue, lying agape on the shoreline.

INT. COLOSSUS HEAD - DUSK

Conan pulls off his jerkin, revealing a torso rippling with muscles.

CONAN

We'll rest here until morning.

TAMARA

Will I awake alone? Do you intend to leave me?

CONAN

I would do you a kindness. Khor Kalba will bring only death.

TAMARA

Please, Conan. Artus told me of how you lost your tribe. I too had to watch as my people were taken from me.

Conan ignores her, gathering wood for a fire.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

All I ask is that you let me travel with you. I too have a purpose. I must get to the queen. I would rather you kill me here, than fail her again.

Conan continues collecting, infuriating Tamara.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I was wrong about you. You are no fearless warrior. Your heart is closed to all but fear -- and hate.

Conan draws flint, starting the fire. Only once his task is complete does he answer Tamara.

CONAN

We leave at dawn. I will not break stride for you. Not once. I will get you into Khor Kalba. Beyond that I have my purpose, and you yours.

Tamara offers a thankful nod, her anger subsiding.

TAMARA

Nice fire. Does it mean you'll actually cook the meat this time?

CUT TO:

EXT. KHALAR SINGH'S WARSHIP - DUSK

Khalar looks at the destruction of Ukafa's warship, the bodies filling the water. Khalar spots Ukafa's dead body floating there, harpoon still lodged in his chest.

The ship's CAPTAIN approaches.

CAPTAIN

The pirate ship sailed to the west.
Even under full sail it'll be no
easy task to overtake her.

Just then, a FALCON approaches. The Falconer retrieves it, a parchment tied to its talon. He passes it on to Khalar Singh.

Khalar Singh reads it, a smile creeping upon his face.

KHALAR SINGH

Fariq has done well.
(to the Captain)
Head east, back to Khor Kalba.

CAPTAIN

But our chase points the other way.

KHALAR SINGH

The chase is over. They come to me
now.

EXT. FOREST - LATE DAY

Tamara watches Conan from a distance. He silently stalks prey with nothing more than a knife.

A BOAR

Its ears listen intently, aware. Suddenly, it bolts.

CONAN

Is just as quick, racing through the forest on an intercepting course with the great beast. He leaps over a fallen log, throwing his dagger with a sweep of his arm.

The boar goes down, the blade through its jugular. Conan walks up to the struggling beast, showing no satisfaction as he mercifully SNAPS its neck.

INT. COLOSSUS HEAD - NIGHT

The great haunches of the beast roast over the fire. Conan turns the meat.

Behind him, Tamara approaches. She has cleaned herself up, her white robe translucent in light of the fire, her wet hair glistening.

Conan can't help but notice her supple skin, her curves. He stops chewing.

Tamara notices. Embarrassed, she turns so that he can only see her side. Conan returns to his food.

TAMARA

What were the women of your tribe like, Conan?

CONAN

They fought beside the men.

TAMARA

So they were equals. And your mother?

CONAN

She died in battle, even as I was born.

TAMARA

So you never knew her. It was the same with me. I've always known being a mother was somehow not my fate. But--

Tamara falters, unsure. But Conan's quiet eases her.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

You said earlier Khor Kalba will bring only death. Were you trying to scare me, or do you really believe our end lies there?

CONAN

I don't lie.

Tamara nods, having heard as much about Conan. She turns back to face him, no longer hiding her body.

TAMARA

Then we don't have much time. Your mother perished too young, but at least she died having known the touch of one who cared.

Tamara steps closer to Conan.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

So -- do you care, Conan?

Conan rises to her, his broad form looming over her slight build.

But Conan shows surprising gentleness as he removes her robe and pulls her naked body into his, their mouths meeting in a desperate kiss.

LOVE SCENE

Conan lies atop Tamara by the fire, their sinewy limbs intertwined, fingers locked together. He thrusts into her, causing her face to contort in pleasure and pain.

The fire grows brighter as Tamara rolls on top, undulating as their pace quickens. Tamara CRIES OUT in ecstasy.

AFTERMATH

Tamara stares into the fire, her body wrapped around Conan's. She gently caresses the notched scars cut into his arm.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I've only ever heard you speak of
what you'd die for, Conan. What
would you live for?

Conan, his eyes closed, keeps them shut.

CONAN

Do you ever tire of talking? Let me
rest, woman.

Tamara reaches down between Conan's legs. His eyes open.

TAMARA

I thought that may work.

Conan growls and pulls himself atop Tamara. Looking down at her face, her hair loose and wild, she's beautiful in the soft glow of the firelight.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I see you clearly now, finally,
after all this time.
(she kisses him deeply)
I would be that which you live for,
Conan, if you would have me. You
may have faith in nothing, Conan --
but I have faith in you.

Conan lowers himself back down upon her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - DAY

Conan powers his way to the top of a high ridge, spotting down in the vista below:

KHOR KALBA

Surrounded on three sides by the coastline, the stone fortress of Khalar Singh rests on a plateau, overlooking a bustling, tented city below.

Conan spots a long CARAVAN of packed camels working their way towards town, driven by DESERT TRADERS from Shem.

CONAN

We'll slip in, along with those traders. But you'll need a change of clothes, those monks' robes will draw attention.

Tamara looks down at her loose-fitting robes.

TAMARA

What will I wear?

EXT. KHOR KHALBA - ENTRANCE - DAY

The caravan rides up to the walled entrance to the city, guarded by Khalar's troops. Blended in amongst the others, Conan now wears the elaborate head scarf and clothes of Shemish traders, obscuring all but his eyes.

TAMARA

Tamara is dressed like a Shemish serving girl, her taut body barely covered by silken drapings. She glares at Conan, miserable.

TAMARA

I don't understand why I couldn't be dressed as you are. I look like a whore.

CONAN

And what better disguise for a monk?

Conan tugs on the rope for the camel to move faster. The Camel BRAYS and rears. Conan yanks harder and the camel flies forward, its eyes wide.

Conan meets its eye.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Do not test me, beast.

TAMARA

Is there not a living thing you can
be at peace with?

They ride into the city, past the troops.

EXT. KHOR KHALBA CITY - ENTRANCE - DAY

Conan and Tamara walk through the town's teeming market, a
otherworldly bazaar replete with animal sacrifices, veiled
faces and not a hint of morality.

STRANGER

A FIGURE, his form hidden beneath a cloak, spots Conan and
Tamara as they enter, and begins to follow them.

WOODEN PLATFORM

The city ends at the sheer cliff wall at the bottom of the
plateau. There stands a WOODEN PLATFORM that is lowered by a
massive winch, unloading a cavalry regiment and then raising
back up to the fortress above.

CONAN

It's probably only way into
Khalar's fortress. I'm sure it is
heavily guarded at all times, day
and night.

TAMARA

So we must try to scale the cliff.

CONAN

And dodge arrows as we do so?

Conan motions up to the winch. Standing beside it are a half
dozen of the four-armed ARCHERS.

CONAN (CONT'D)

During the day, we'd easily be
spotted on the climb. And it would
be useless to even attempt at
night. No, we must find another
way.

STRANGER'S POV

As Conan continues around the base of the mesa, the Figure
following Conan is joined by TWO OTHERS.

ALLEYWAY

Conan and Tamara reach a less crowded area of the village when a VOICE rings out behind them.

VOICE (O.S.)

Halt.

Conan spins, sword at the ready. From out of the shadows comes a pair of MEN, their beady eyes fixed on Tamara.

CONAN

Thieves. You'll regret finding me.

VOICE (O.S.)

I think not.

From out of the shadows steps the ONE-EYED THIEF, the same one who Conan saved from Lucius' beatings. He smiles at Conan, lifting a KEY from a rope around his neck

ONE EYED THIEF

It took longer than you think to cut this out of Lucius' stomach. After all that work, I figured I'd keep it -- for old times' sake.

INT. THIEVES' TAVERN - AFTERNOON

A rundown hall, built beneath the city. Wooden supports hold up the buildings of the entire city block overhead.

And within the hall, a gathering of THIEVES and ROGUES. They're a flinty collection, many of them missing fingers or even hands, evidence of Khalar's cruel justice.

They eat and drink, sharing tales and tips, WENCHES and SERVING WOMEN their cautious eyes following the Cimmerian outsider.

The One Eyed Thief takes them to an open table, and immediately three of the serving women descend upon Conan, caressing him.

Tamara watches this, jaw dropped, and manages a COUGH, even as a SERVING GIRL delivers mead to the table.

Conan just smiles as he enjoys the silky bodies of the nubile women, their breasts practically framing his face.

CONAN

What? Do you wish to join in?

CUT TO:

Conan cleans mead from his face, scowling at Tamara, as the One-Eyed Thief uses the tabletop to explain the fortress.

ONE EYED THIEF

--so you were right about the platform. You'll be long dead before you make it top. Same with scaling the cliff. There's no known way to break into the fortress.

CONAN

So that's it?

ONE EYED THIEF

I didn't say that. I just said there's no known way in -- because no one has ever tried to. But breaking out -- that's another story. It's not much easier, but it's possible.

The One Eyed Thief offers the same gap-toothed grin.

ONE EYED THIEF (CONT'D)

You just need to find someone crazy enough to show you the way.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

Tamara is the last to follow Conan, the One Eyed Thief and the three THIEVES from before down a short ladder. Below lies a darkened catacomb, lit only by their torches.

ONE EYED THIEF

These catacombs run underneath the entire city, even to the cistern that drains out from the fortress dungeon.

Tamara's foot drops into knee high water. She immediately grabs her nose.

TAMARA

Catacombs? You mean sewers.

ONE EYED THIEF

Piss and shit are the last things you need to worry about down here.

Tamara eyes the muddy water, nothing visible beneath its murky surface.

INT. OTHER SEWERS - NIGHT

The group wades through the water, single file. Conan notices HIEROGLYPHICS and carvings on the wall of the catacomb. Massive creatures of the sea, dark sorcery, ritual sacrifice.

CONAN

What is it?

TAMARA

A warning. These catacombs are connected to the sea. It says that the beasts of Acheron protect its secrets.

CONAN

Not from me.

Conan presses on, into the darkness.

INT. CISTERN - NIGHT

The catacomb widens out to a giant circular cistern, its walls rising up high into the darkness. As the torches bring light to the space, we see HUNDREDS OF DEAD, ROTTING BODIES.

As Conan and Tamara walk forward, the One Eyed Thief and the other stop at the entrance.

ONE EYED THIEF

Sorry, friend. We stop here. We've heard too much about what lies within to go any further.

Conan simply nods and the thieves depart. Conan raises his torch, illuminating the near wall.

TAMARA

Where now?

CONAN

Around. Up.

Conan heads off one direction, leaving Tamara to navigate the other half. Her torch illuminates the grizzly path ahead. She inhales deeply and takes her first step.

CONAN

Following the slick wall, he passes many DEAD BODIES, but only one catches his eye. He stops before it.

DEAD WARRIOR

Nothing more than a skeleton, picked clean by the rats. But he still bears his leather armor, and a horned helmet that resembles his father's own.

Conan takes the helmet and places it on his head. It fits perfectly.

TAMARA

Tamara is gingerly making her way through the knee high sewage water and the dead bodies submerged within.

TAMARA

Oh!!!

Tamara leaps up, swinging the torch down towards the water. Conan, nearby, unsheathes his sword.

CONAN

What?

TAMARA

Something touched me. Something slimy.

Conan walks over, the torchlight revealing something on Tamara's leg. It's a SLUG, which he flicks off.

CONAN

Crom! Stop wasting time.

But when Conan steps forward, something ROILS THE WATER right before him. He spots a HUGE TENTACLE just before its submerges back into the water.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Crom indeed.

Then Tamara SCREAMS as another tentacle rises up from the water, wrapping around her waist. Tamara grabs hold of the wall as the tentacle tries to pull her underwater.

Conan immediately SLASHES the tentacle, pulling Tamara away. The squirming decapitated tentacle squirts black blood everywhere, the knee high water seems to come alive with roiling intensity.

Conan spins, finding a circular stone staircase tiled into the far cistern wall.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

EXT. CIRCULAR STAIRWAY - CISTERN

As they work their way up the circular stairwell, towards a thin shaft of firelight up ahead.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Carved out of solid black rock, both sides of the broad corridor are occasionally punctuated by thick steel doors, leading to prison cells.

Conan and Tamara emerge from a sewer drain, pushing their way to the floor of the hallway. The heavy darkness presses in on Conan's torch like a sentient, animate thing.

The floor of the corridor is lined with DEAD BODIES, in varying states of decay. There are buckets, filled with entrails and feces, upended. Tamara put her hand over her mouth.

Conan continues down the hallway. He and Tamara begin to hear the sound of EERIE CHANTING.

TAMARA

What is that?

Up ahead, the torch-lined dungeon plunges into darkness as the torches end. Conan holds up his own torch, struggling to peer into the black void.

CONAN

Nothing good.

Conan takes a step forward when suddenly a POWERFUL WIND blows out his torch. A moment later, there's the sound of A GATE WHISTLING DOWN AND CRASHING INTO THE GROUND.

In the darkness, comes a DEEP, EARTHY CHUCKLE.

VOICE (O.S.)

Welcome.

A HOST OF OIL LIGHTS SUDDENLY COME UP, revealing that the gate that closed behind them was actually just a door to a vast CAGE built around a massive PIT.

INT. THE PIT - NIGHT

The same pit where Fariq sacrificed the female monk, only now, a half dozen COMBATANTS stand on the grid above the void.

Hanging high above the pit, in baskets, lie other PRISONERS, including Tamara's fellow female monks. Several of them YELL out Tamara's name as they see her.

And watching everything, from an amphitheater above the cage, is the massive Akhun and several of his slavers.

AKHUN

Which ever one of you slaves gets
me the girl, lives.

The Combatants all close in on Conan and Tamara, each taking a different plank way to get to them.

CONAN

(to Tamara)
Stay behind me.

Tamara steps behind Conan, who blocks the others' path to her.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Who dies first?

The first two COMBATANTS attack as one, the first wielding a short sword, the other a pike. The pikeman thrusts first, Conan deftly stepping aside, then pulling the pike, sending the wielder off balance and into the abyss.

The prisoner with the short sword doesn't fare much better, as Conan evades his swipe and decapitates him with a single blow.

TAMARA

Tamara sees that the prisoner baskets are suspended by the top half of the metallic cage. She begins scaling the cage, her eyes set upon the imprisoned monks.

CONAN

Three more COMBATANTS step in to replace the fallen duo. Conan readies himself as the first one steps up, only to have the combatant suddenly grabbed by a ENORMOUS TENTACLE, much like the one Conan cut through earlier.

TENTACLED MONSTER

Up from the darkness of the pit comes a gargantuan monster; a gigantic octopus-like behemoth, with multiple tentacles that feed a pulsing black orifice lined with razor sharp teeth.

The creature reaches out and grabs another SCREAMING combatants, lowering him to its mouth and devouring him in its gnashing maw.

The creature reaches for Conan, who ducks underneath the tentacle, the slices it off. He immediately turns back to check on Tamara -- and he discovers she's not there.

He looks up to see Tamara scaling the cage, now nearly fifty feet directly above him.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Crom!

AKHUN

The massive warrior spots Tamara getting close to the prisoner baskets and motions to his two Jailers.

AKHUN

Get her!

TAMARA

She's reached the base of the chain supporting one of the baskets when she spots the two Jailers closing in, climbing towards her from either side.

CONAN

Spotting Tamara overhead, Conan tries to keep beneath her, evading the swarming tentacles while balancing on the rickety planks.

TAMARA

She's scaling down the basket supporting chain when the first Jailer reaches out to grab her. She reacts by GASHING his eyes, and as he instinctively grabs them, he FALLS TOWARDS THE PIT.

CONAN

Conan barely dives out of the way as the fallen Jailer SMASHES through the plank he was on, forcing Conan to jump to another.

Just then another COMBATANT comes swinging for the Cimmerian, forcing him to defend while still not balanced.

TAMARA

The next Jailer grabs her, pulling her off the cage. He struggles to pull towards a nearby exit hatch when she BITES HIS EAR OFF.

The Jailer drops Tamara, who SCREAMS as she falls.

CONAN

Conan spots Tamara plunging towards him. In one swift move, he SLASHES his opponent, ducks underneath a writhing tentacle, and reaches out to GRAB TAMARA BY THE ARM AS SHE FALLS. His shoulder nearly pops out, but he manages to hold onto Tamara.

TAMARA

She swings above the chasm, the gnashing teeth of the monster below her. Only a single splintering plank holds her and Conan aloft.

CONAN

With a grunt, he swings Tamara and throws her to safety, at the edge of the pit.

But as he gets to his feet, he spots the massive Akhun entering the arena.

AKHUN

The giant warrior grins as he boards the same plank as Conan. He thrusts his thunderous legs down, causing the plank to bend and warp.

Conan struggle to balance on the undulating plank, but his training in Cimmeria serves him well.

Akhun smiles and step closer, again thrusting down with his legs. Conan's balance is thrown, but there's no other plank close enough for him to jump to.

AKHUN (CONT'D)

You'll make a nice meal.

Akhun steps down on the plank one last time, but this time Conan uses the momentum to SPRINGBOARD UP INTO AIR.

Conan soars into the air, his cat-like reflexes keeping him focused as he lands right before the stunned Akhun. With one great slash of his blade, Conan eviscerates Akhun.

Akhun's innards drop out of his belly as he falls into the abyss, only to be snapped up by the massive beast.

CUT TO:

INT. ARENA OF THE PIT - LATER

Conan lowers down the last of the baskets. Tamara use a sword to smash open the lock, freeing the prisoners inside.

Tamara shares hugs of joy with the other monks of her flock. The women look worn, but unbroken.

TAMARA

Where is Ilira?

FEMALE MONK

She was taken away by Fariq.

TAMARA

Then I'm too late.

One of the stronger looking women, an ELDER MONK, steps forward.

ELDER MONK

No. She was just taken this morning. It's not yet midnight, and Khalar still must bring her to the cave of Acheron.

Tamara nods and the women begin to ARM THEMSELVES. Conan shakes his head at the rag-tag group.

CONAN

You're going to fight Khalar's troops? Just you?

The Elder Monk grabs and nearby pike and twirls it expertly about her body, clearly well versed in it use.

TAMARA

Cimmerians aren't the only women who know how to fight. And to kill.

Tamara looks at the other monks.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Our duty was to keep the queen safe. We failed. But if Khalar brings her to Acheron, it will rise again -- and all our peoples' sacrifice is for nothing.

(MORE)

TAMARA (CONT'D)

So if the queen is not free by the stroke of midnight -- she must be already dead.

The other monks nod and they start to head off. Tamara is the last to head off, her eyes burning into Conan's.

CONAN

You want my help again.

TAMARA

No. You kept your word, I'll keep mine. I pray you fulfill your debt.

Tamara kisses Conan's cheek one last time and heads off.

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

The monk travel in single file, the Elder Monk leading the way. Suddenly, she stops, motioning to an entranceway ahead.

ELDER MONK

(whispering)

Guard.

TAMARA

(whispering)

Don't kill him. We need to find out which way Ilira was taken.

The Elder Monk nods and slips up ahead. We hear a SMASH.

INT. CATACOMB ENTRANCEWAY - NIGHT

The stunned GUARD lies before the assembled monks. Tamara glares down at him.

TAMARA

Tell us where the last girl was taken.

The Guard just LAUGHS at them through bloody teeth.

CONAN (O.S.)

Let me ask.

The Guard's face drops as Conan steps out from the darkness.

TAMARA

Your debt --

CONAN

Will be where your queen is.

Tamara smiles. She knows it is a half truth.

INT. FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

As Conan and the monks enter, the throne room is empty, scattered light barely illuminating the expansive chamber.

Ilira sits on the throne, crown on her slumped head. Tamara runs over to her.

TAMARA

Ilira!

She raises Ilira's head, only to discover lifeless eyes. Tamara cradles her best friend's face.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

She's dead. It's over.

VOICE (O.S.)

Not yet.

Before the monks can react, ARROWS STREAK OUT FROM THE DARKNESS, killing them all. Only Conan is quick enough to dodge his arrow by diving aside.

When he comes up, Khalar has Tamara, his sword at her neck. Several ARCHERS stand behind him, at the ready.

KHALAR SINGH

It's only begun. Because that one was not the heir to Acheron.

Khalar smiles down at Tamara.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

She is.

Slowly, what he's saying dawns on her.

TAMARA

No. It can't be --

KHALAR SINGH

Secretive, the traitors of Acheron. It wasn't easy, but Fariq finally wrung honesty from the girl. That poor innocent was forced to live a lie, even as the truth was kept from the queen herself.

(MORE)

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

(to Conan)

And you did the rest, barbarian. My thanks for delivering the Queen to me.

TAMARA

No!

Suddenly, a trap door opens beneath Conan and drops down in the darkness, landing with a heavy THUD.

INT. FORGE - NIGHT

Conan awakens to the familiar sound of a hot blade SIZZLING as it hits the cooling vat.

But this is no dream of his father's forge -- as he looks up to see Fariq holding a sword, its tip still red hot, the flames of the fortress's forge behind him.

Conan's thrusts forward, only to find his arms chained around a heavy mortar and stone pillar.

Fariq strokes his newly acquired scar.

FARIQ

At last you awaken, Cimmerian. It's been hours you've made me wait for my fun.

Conan says nothing, but his eyes scan the room, taking in everything.

FARIQ (CONT'D)

You made me lose face in front of my father. That wasn't wise. But what should I expect from a Cimmerian?

CONAN

A swift end!

Conan strains at the chain, ripping the skin beneath his shackles -- but a thin wisp of mortar comes loose from the pillar.

FARIQ

Hardly. But that is a difference between you and me. A swift end would be a mercy I do not intend to grant. No, you must suffer for your transgressions.

(MORE)

FARIQ (CONT'D)

You must beg for your suffering to end. Just as your people did.

He waves the glowing sword tip in front of Conan's face.

CONAN

You lie. I was there. My father never uttered a sound.

Fariq LAUGHS, amused.

FARIQ

You were there? What were you doing, warrior? Watching your father die, without saying a sound? Taking your eyes will be justice indeed, coward.

Fariq pushes the hot tip of the sword against Conan's skin. Conan's face reddens with pain, but he doesn't utter a sound. But as Conan pulls on his chains -- more mortar falls. As Fariq turns back to place the sword in the forge, Conan notices one of the bricks the chains are fastened to is LOOSE.

CONAN

I saw my father die. Slain by one who can only kill men already on their knees.

Fariq turns, his eyes blazing. He glances over at the two GUARDS by the door, who try not to listen.

FARIQ

I've killed many in battle, cur.

CONAN

Really? Then why did your father not let you face me before, when I had sword in hand. He thought you unequal to the task.

Fariq responds by pushing the red hot blade against Conan's chest. Conan just YELLS back at him.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Coward! Prove your strength!

Again, Fariq pushes the hot blade against Conan's skin.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Take my eyes, coward -- if you can.

Fariq yells and thrust the tip of the sword at Conan's head. Conan lifts his manacles, forcing the blade up into the brick holding his chain.

Then Conan pulls on the chains with all his might, loosening the heavy brick, which falls to the ground.

In one powerful movement, Conan begins SWINGING the chain with the mortar block on the end, a homemade ball and chain.

The two Guards come forward, sword drawn, only to meet with a CRUNCHING blow by Conan's weapon. Both their heads get caved in.

Fariq rushes Conan, getting in too close for Conan's wide swings. Conan simply meets Fariq's sword with the heavy chains, then encircles Fariq's neck with the steel bonds.

Fariq CHOKES, falling to the ground, gasping for air. But Conan doesn't kill him -- yet.

THE FORGE

A vat of molten steel bubbles in a cauldron within the forge. Conan uses tongs to lift the cauldron out.

FARIQ

Conan kicks him onto his back. Fariq's last vision is that of Conan, tipping the cauldron, the hot iron descending toward his eyes. Fariq SCREAMS.

Conan reaches down and picks up Fariq's sword. THE SWORD CONAN'S FATHER MADE FOR HIM.

EXT. SEA PENINSULA - NIGHT

By torchlight, Khalar Singh leads his black-armored PERSONAL GUARD, two dozen men strong, across a rocky peninsula, jutting out into the sea. On the back of Khalar's horse, bound, rides the helpless Tamara.

As they round a large rock spire they spy a fearsome and awe inspiring sight. A massive SKULL, seemingly a natural rock formation, rises over the peninsula.

As they ride closer, we can make out one more detail -- the mouth of the skull is actually a massive door, at least sixty feet high, and seemingly made up of jagged bone. It has the appearance of teeth, completing the skull illusion.

INT. ACHERON CAVE - NIGHT

It takes the full complement of soldiers to open the enormous doors. Khalar Singh rides in. Moonlight from the huge eyes of the skull illuminate terrifying faces in the darkness. Faces of demonic warrior statues.

At their feet lie the decaying bones of human skeletons, too numerous to count.

TAMARA

This is no empire, only a
graveyard.

KHALAR SINGH

You see only with your eyes.

Khalar nods to his men. Two Guardsmen take their torches and light other torches set in the walls. It sets off a chain reaction. As far as the eye can see torches ignite revealing the true scope of this place.

An enormous cave, the walls lined with monumental columns that frame countless bas relief carvings of demonic origin.

And at the far of the cave, an ALTAR sits beneath a raised THRONE, surrounded by a SACRIFICIAL POOL. The pool is empty.

Khalar turns to his guards.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Close the gates and stay here. Send
my son to me when he arrives.
(motioning to two of them)
You two, come with me.

THE ALTAR

Khalar dismounts at the sacrificial altar, carved of out of purple-shaded rock. Around its edges are deep channels, for the blood of its victims. And on its four corners -- shackles of bone.

KHALAR SINGH

The Acheronians had a wonderful
sense of balance, don't you think?
For one to ascend to royalty,
another must fall.

With the flick of a wrist, Khalar cuts Tamara's bonds.

Tamara head butts him, struggling to escape, but Khalar absorbs the blow effortlessly. He throws Tamara upon the altar, his two guards shackling her in place.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

For a hundred generations the kings
of Acheron were crowned, and the
queens were sacrificed.

Khalar snaps his fingers and two guardsmen bring an ornately carved BOX MADE OF BONE, laying it before the altar. Like a Chinese puzzle box, Khalar manipulates the carvings of skulls, sacrifices, and creatures until the box UNLATCHES.

And from the box he lifts two items. A CROWN OF GOLD and A CROWN OF IRON. The crown of gold is magnificent, ornately detailed gold that glows in the firelight.

But the crown of iron is terrifying. Huge rough spikes extend from it in every direction. It looks more like a weapon than a crown.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

What a day for you. This morning
you were a handmaiden. Tonight, you
are a queen giving birth to an
empire.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Bloodied and weary, Conan approaches the Skull Rock. He has nothing more than his sword, his loincloth and a small BURLAP SACK tied to his hip.

He stumbles, falling to his knees. His wounds have taken a grave toll. Still he stands and presses on.

He pushes on the doors. They do not budge in the least. He puts his shoulder to the doors -- his every muscle straining to their utmost. Again -- no movement.

Conan backs away, taking stock of the surroundings. He climbs up the side of the rock.

INT. ACHERON CAVE - NIGHT

Khalar Singh CHANTS in Acheronian. Ancient, harsh words, as he lifts the two crowns overhead, offering them to the statues of dark gods all around.

TAMARA

Stop. You don't know what you are about to do.

KHALAR SINGH

But I do. For thirty years I have dreamed of this day. The day our people rise from the ashes.

Khalar Singh continues his chant and places the gold crown upon his head. As he does so, the light from the moon reflects off the crown, bathing the sacrificial pool in an unnatural glow.

THUMP-THUMP. A deep and foreboding sound echoes throughout the cave, shaking everything like an earthquake. It sounds like the heartbeat of a giant.

Khalar next places the iron crown around Tamara's head. She thrashes and struggles but to no avail.

Once the crown is around her head -- THUMP-THUMP! The spikes around the iron crown grow shorter AS THE SPIKES DRIVE THEMSELVES INTO HER HEAD. She SCREAMS in agony.

Blood drips from beneath the crown, flowing into channels around the edges of the altar.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

It begins. You give birth to an empire.

EXT. THE SIDE OF THE SKULL - NIGHT

Conan climbs -- muscles straining -- slipping -- hanging on by one hand -- and climbing again.

THUMP-THUMP. The statuary shakes, indeed the whole earth does. Conan nearly slips, but keeps his grip.

CONAN

Crom.

He reaches the eye of the skull.

REVERSE ANGLE

With the moon over his shoulder, Conan stares down at the unholy sight before him. We pull back revealing Tamara, her blood draining from her body.

INT. ACHERON CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Tamara, her face pale from blood loss, begins to pray in pained whispers.

KHALAR SINGH
It's good that you pray. Gods will
be here soon.

Tamara struggles to speak, her body wracked with pain.

TAMARA
He'll--be---here--sooner.

KHALAR SINGH
Who?

CONAN (O.S.)
Me!

Khalar turns to see the outline of Conan, framed by the moonlight, looking down at Khalar from atop of one the warrior statues. A thick vine dangles nearby, Conan's route down from the cave roof above.

Conan then leaps down to the skeleton covered floor before the altar. It is a killing floor.

The two Guardsmen leap for him, but Conan dispatches them with a pair of strikes. Both fall down dead.

Conan meets Tamara's eyes, a look of determination, assurance. He starts toward the altar.

KHALAR SINGH
I will say this for you, barbarian.
You are hard to kill.

CONAN
Let her go.

KHALAR SINGH
You've faced me before and lost.
What do you think has changed now?

CONAN
My purpose.

Conan lunges for Khalar, their swords meeting with a flash of sparks. They fight to a brief standstill when ---THUMP, THUMP.

THE ALTAR

Tamara writhes in pain as the spikes drive deeper into her head. More blood pours forth. The blood in the channels speeds up and finds the channel leading down to the sacrificial pool.

Conan makes another movement toward the altar, but Khalar nimbly blocks his path.

KHALAR SINGH

You are strong, Cimmerian, but we both know you are not my equal.

Conan takes the burlap sack wrapped at his hip pulls it off.

CONAN

Once you used my father to teach your son a lesson about strength. Now let me teach you.

Conan tosses out what is inside. It falls to the ground, rolling to Khalar Singh's feet.

FARIQ'S HEAD

Khalar looks down at the ground -- at the head of his beloved son, his eyes gone, replaced by molten metal. Khalar trembles in shock and rage.

KHALAR SINGH

No.

Khalar reaches for the severed head, giving Conan a brief window to rush to Tamara's side. Conan tries to lift her off the altar, but the bone shackles still pin her down.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

Cimmerian!!!

Enraged, Khalar CHARGES Conan throwing all his skill and force into an all-out attack. Conan simply sidesteps it, then shatters the bone shackle holding one of Tamara's wrists. Before he can shatter the other, Khalar charges again.

Khalar swings, Conan spins, his blade catching Khalar's just inches from his face. Conan throws Khalar off him, knocking the warlord back ten feet. Khalar's attack is feral, uncontrolled. He's lost his balance.

Spinning and striking blindly, Conan smashes the second shackle on her wrist. He continues his motion, bringing his sword around to meet Khalar's next strike.

Now Khalar looks like the enraged amateur, and Conan the more polished warrior. Their battle takes them away from the altar.

With her hands free, Tamara struggles to pull the spikes out and remove the crown.

THE KILLING FLOOR

Conan repels another Khalar attack, this time striking Khalar's chest and drawing blood. The Guardsmen arrive from the other side of the cave, drawing their swords.

Khalar waves them off, his fury aimed at the Cimmerian.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)

The Queen. Shackle her!

THE ALTAR

In agony, Tamara pulls one of the spikes out, then another. She pushes with all her might, lifting the crown of iron off her bloodied head --

When the Guardsmen charge her, pin her down, and force the crown back on.

THUMP, THUMP! The crown spikes imbed themselves even deeper as Tamara SCREAMS. The blood now fills the channels of the altar.

WE FOLLOW the trail of blood, down the side of the altar, in a spiral channel around the leg, and in a wide circle around the altar until reaching the channel's end --

THE FIRST DROP OF TAMARA'S BLOOD TOUCHES THE SACRIFICIAL POOL. It BOILS instantly, multiplying itself exponentially, bubbling forth and filling the entire pool.

AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE. A massive earthquake jolts the entire cave.

THE KILLING FLOOR

As Khalar Singh and Conan battle, the ground beneath them on the wide cave floor CRACKS and SPLINTERS.

THUMP-THUMP! The earthquake intensifies and the entire floor of the cave GIVES WAY, tumbling into an incredible abyss. Conan and Khalar alike grab onto the only rocks they can reach to prevent them from falling further.

Conan ends up against one of the walls on the side of the cave. Khalar clings to the rocks on the edge of the sacred pool.

Their bodies are illuminated by a fiery glow. They look below, searching for the source of the glow.

ACHERON

Another two hundred feet deep lies the golden spired city of ancient Acheron. The cave is but a forechamber, the slightest taste of the true glory and horror of Acheron.

And as they stare down into the ancient city, the shadows there MOVE.

Is it a trick of the light? No. Whatever the dark forms are, they are coming this way, climbing the tallest demonic spires and leaping impossibly far to climb up after Conan and Khalar Singh.

Khalar gazes down at the city with wide eyes.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)
Beyond my dreams --

THE ALTAR

Tamara, her body's blood nearly drained, is still shackled to the altar, which now teeters over the edge of chasm, poised to fall into the fiery depths.

TAMARA
Conan!!!

CONAN

On the other side of the abyss, Conan spots her and scales the cave wall, up to a tiered plateau. He moves quickly, trying to get to Tamara.

KHALAR SINGH

Khalar watches, entranced, as the first of the creatures rises out of the pit. They climb the walls like insects, clinging to the walls, their heads swiveling like a praying mantis.

ACHERONIAN WARRIORS

The look like the statues above -- a hybrid -- part human, part demon. Their skin is a perfect black, armor carved of black bone, faces once human but now demonic with blood red eyes and gnashing teeth.

They advance on Khalar Singh, who is furthest down now that Conan climbs upward towards Tamara.

KHALAR SINGH
(in Acheronian)
*I am Khalar Singh, King of Acheron.
I command you to kneel!*

And this demonic horde advances right for him, their razor sharp teeth bared. Unsure, Khalar grips his tulwars tight. The demonic creatures draw close, and they -- kneel. They climb out of the abyss and immediately lower their heads before Khalar Singh.

Out of the corner of his eye, Khalar spots Conan, drawing near.

KHALAR SINGH (CONT'D)
(in Acheronian)
*Show him the might of the army of
Acheron!*

But they do not rush to follow the order. They stir. One of them with more ornate bone armor than the rest looks over at Khalar's Guardsmen.

ACHERONIAN COMMANDER
(in Acheronian)
First, we feed.

Its voice is somewhere between a whisper and a hiss.

KHALAR SINGH
Fine. Take your fill. I will kill
him myself.

CONAN

Conan is on an intercept course with Tamara, leaping across chasms from statue to statue. Just below him, the first wave of Acheronian Warriors reach the Khalar's remaining Guardsmen.

KHALAR'S GUARDSMEN

Khalar's Guardsmen, who have been watching the events with mouths agape, realize the danger too late. The horde of Acheronian Warriors leaps on them and a massive battle ensues between the demonic warriors and the soldiers.

CONAN

His climbing is dizzying, reminiscent of his youth scaling the cliffs of Cimmeria.

KHALAR

Intercepts Conan just below the altar, his tulwars at the ready.

CONAN

Your story ends here.

The two warriors square off, fighting even as they cling to the statues.

ACHERONIAN WARRIORS

The demon warriors not only slay Khalar's Guardsmen, but rip their still living bodies apart, dousing themselves in the blood of their victims. It is a violent ritual, both Bacchantic and gruesome.

KHALAR

Launches himself at Conan, his tulwars sparking off the stone statuary. Conan leaps to another statue, parrying the blows. Khalar overextends himself, and Conan's sword just barely misses his throat.

Khalar pulls back, tries to settle himself. Conan's eyes narrow, he knows what Khalar is doing.

CONAN (CONT'D)

Like a woman, Fariq cried and begged me to spare him.

Khalar ROARS in rage, launching an all-out offensive. Conan backs up slowly, waiting for his moment.

And it comes quickly. Conan ducks below the tulwars and CUTS Khalar across the stomach. Khalar loses his balance and falls, one hand grabbing a protruding statue arm, dangling over the abyss.

Conan raises his sword to finish the job.

TAMARA (O.S.)

Conan!!!

Conan glances down. The Acheronian Commander drank his fill, and now moves to the altar itself, his claw stroking Tamara's body. With one touch, the shackles open. He and the Acheronian Warriors drag her pale body toward the abyss.

Khalar grins up at him through bloody teeth.

KHALAR SINGH

They take her to a place you can never follow. Who will you fail, Cimmerian? Your father or your woman?

Conan leaps down to the altar. The Acheronian Warriors attack. Standing atop the altar, Conan cuts down all comers, cutting his way through the enemy, working his way to Tamara.

CONAN

Tamara!!

They leap on Conan, impossibly fast. They stab him. They cut him. But he does not stop. Even wounded, he throws them into the abyss.

And he reaches Tamara, just before the Commander drags her below. He grabs her arm. The Commander grabs her other arm, baring his shark-like teeth.

BLAM! Conan punches him in the mouth with his free hand and the Commander falls into the abyss.

The bloody Conan pulls Tamara up into his arms. Only for Tamara to scream.

TAMARA

Conan!

Conan spins just in time as Khalar strikes. Khalar's tulwar narrowly misses, and Conan counters. His father's sword runs Khalar Singh through.

Khalar's body falls into the abyss.

But the Acheronian Warriors surround them. Thousands climb out of the abyss, teeth bared, closing in on the wounded Conan. Tamara, badly weakened herself, grabs Conan.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Conan, you know what you must do. Kill me.

CONAN

No.

TAMARA

It is the only way to end this. My death gives others life.

CONAN

I cannot.

TAMARA

You must. Your parents both understood that purpose. Now it is yours. Live, Conan.

A tear falls from Tamara's face. The demonic warriors prepare to strike.

Conan drives his sword into Tamara's heart. The crown spikes retract and it falls from her head, tumbling into the abyss.

BOOM! A seismic explosion shakes everything, an unearthly GUST OF WIND pulling the Acheronian Warriors back down into the abyss.

ACHERONIAN CAVE

The cave begins to fall, massive sections of the roof dropping in to decimate the pyramid and the city below.

ALTAR

Conan pulls Tamara's body away, even as the world descends into dust and debris.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Khalar's HORSE stands near the entrance. Conan puts Tamara's body carefully atop the horse, then mounts it himself. He positions her in front of him, his arms encircling her.

Conan gives her lifeless body one last kiss, her blood staining his lips red, as his mother's did as a child.

EXT. HIGH PLATEAU - DAWN

A blazing sun threatens to explode over the nearby mountains. Conan holds a single torch in his hand. His look is hard. Grim.

We pull back to reveal a funeral pyre, Tamara's body atop it. Conan places the torch to the pyre. It quickly spreads.

We move in, closer and closer upon Conan's ice blue eyes, a blazing fire erupting in them. A fire that will never be extinguished.

TAMARA (O.S.)

Live, Conan. Live.

FADE TO BLACK.