

# SCENARIOS OF SHADIZAR

## MORE ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR THE CITY OF SHADIZAR FOR CONAN THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

A sorcerous wife sacrifices an antagonistic husband to a demon in return for a promise of a more congenial husband. The new husband is in the shape and form of the old husband but the Player Characters note the substitution. The sorcerous wife, so happy with the exchange, begins to offer her services to other aggrieved wives.

A husband suspects his wife is about to sacrifice him to a demon and begs the Player Characters to protect him.

A father suspects his wife is going to sacrifice one or more of his children to a demon and begs the Player Characters to intercede.

A lascivious husband sacrifices his fat, grumpy wife to a demon in exchange for the services of a shapely demoness but the gorgeous succubus refuses to remain loyal to the man and is sucking the souls out of as many people as she can, turning his home into a dark bordello he has no desire to be a part of.

The cult of Zath, one of Zamora's many spider cults, has decided to purge Shadizar of its iniquities and has begun a massive vigilante campaign.

A wife of a noble has rejected an adulterous lover and this lover is now persecuting his beloved's husband. The rejected lover may involve the characters in some manner or the wife may hire the characters to stop the estranged lover. The husband may

even involve the characters by hiring them for protection.

A grotesque cultist has managed to ensnare a beautiful wife and cause her to betray her loving husband in favour of the cultist, who loves the woman. Variations can be used wherein the grotesque and odious cultist is a voyeur and wants



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to hurt the woman's husband, so he convinces the young bride to sleep around with others so he can watch – eventually this involves the Player Characters, who may take exception to being watched or it may bring about the means for the cultist to blackmail aristocrats, nobles and Player Characters.

A perverse wife decides to antagonise her husband, despite his obvious good nature, by sleeping with a commoner (or Player Character) and intentionally arranging to get caught.

A Hyperborean Witch King (or Queen) sets up a cult in Shadizar and his bizarre Witchmen begin to run sections of Shadizar as crime bosses (see *The White Hand of Hyperborea* article in *Signs and Portents* issue 9 for details on Witch Kings and Witchmen).

A werewolf is stalking the shadowed streets of Shadizar. Authorities believe the werewolf is one of the Player Characters.

A scholar has smuggled a Stygian sarcophagus into the city so he can worship it in private. Within the sarcophagus is an ancient vampire, who the scholar believes to be a god.

A woman is the mistress of a father and son at the same time, both of whom accept the arrangement. However, the mistress' husband does not and seeks vengeance. The father and son approach the Player Characters for protection or to murder

the husband of their mistress. Alternatively, the husband of the mistress may intend the Player Characters to be the instrument of his wrath.

A woman has become enamoured of a bull. The bull is sacred to the cult of Anu but she wants him and will stop at nothing to own the bull. This enraptured feeling may be natural to her perverted mind or it may be artificially introduced by a sorcerer or demon as an experiment or means of revenge. Other animals, such as swans, horses or snakes may be substituted.

A man has become enamoured of one of the male Player Characters. If rebuffed, he (or his heirs if he is killed for his impertinence) plots revenge. He may try to get the characters enslaved so he can buy the character, he may attempt blackmail to get what he wants, he may turn to occult means to enslave the characters or he may try old fashioned murder.

A Player Character discovers his parents were brother and sister. They want the character to marry his sibling to maintain the purity of their bloodline and use diabolic means to pressure the character. A variation might use a Non-Player Character as the discoverer of his parents' lineage and murders them in self-righteous outrage and pins the crime on the Player Characters.

A nobleman discovers his wife's family has barbaric blood and he throws her to the street. The wife's family, now wealthy, wants the nobleman dead. The wife may appeal to the Player Characters for aid as she may not be able to cope with life on the street or her family is in another city and cannot aid her.

A man discovers his sister is a prostitute in Shadizar. He hires kidnappers (perhaps the characters) to bring her home but she does not want to go.

A man discovers that his mistress, formerly a prostitute, has returned to her former life for unknown reasons. The man may want to discover the reasons, kill her, kill her clients (which may include the Player Characters), sacrifice her in a dark ceremony to grotesque Shemite deities or may go on an enraged rampage through the town, killing everyone in sight.

A horrible communicable disease is devastating Shadizar and the cause is a coven of unclean prostitutes dedicated to slaying as many as possible before the disease kills them. The disease could be caused by an unknown carrier who is spreading it to the prostitutes and wives of Shadizar. The disease could also be the work of a sorcerer or demon.



A man discovers his lover is a sorceress devoted to a horrible demon-cult. The discovery, after he tells the Player Characters about it, costs him his life.

A man discovers his wife is a demon made flesh and his children are horrible monsters that need to be eradicated but he is unable to kill his own children, so he hires or tricks the Player Characters into doing it for him.

A woman out on the town takes a mysterious lover. Later, while talking to the Player Characters, she is arrested and murdered by the royal guard because her mysterious lover was none other than the drunken king of Zamora who now has regretted his indiscretion.

A man discovers his Pelishtim wife is actually an ancient woman served by grey devils. She has been luring people to their deaths to maintain her beauty and feed her black-hearted servants. The man seeks the help of the Player Characters or the Player Characters become involved when the wife attempts to lure them to their doom.

A downtrodden woman discovers that her husband/lover is obsessed with some vice and she uses that obsession to further her own ambitions.

An honourable man discovers his son or daughter is the noted assassin or bounty hunter who hunted down and killed his brother or friend. He contrives to kill himself in some manner that implicates his child but the child believes the Player Characters are the murderers due to circumstantial evidence.

A sorcerer commits or causes to be committed, two arsons in each quarter of the city simultaneously as part of a spell to destroy Shadizar and resurrect an ancient Atlantean-era city that once existed on the site before



the arrival of the Zhemri. The characters must somehow stop the completion of that spell.

A person discovers a sibling is a sorcerer of vile repute and decides to kill the sibling. The attempt fails and the sibling seeks retribution, which also fails and the cycle begins anew. The Player Characters get caught in the middle or is hired by one side or the other.

A nobleman discovers his wife was once a prostitute and her former pimp or a former client is blackmailing her, threatening to expose her past. The nobleman may hire the characters to kill the blackmailer or to dispose of the wife, depending on his feelings toward her.

A raised corpse somehow regains his memory, perhaps through the untimely consumption of salt and escapes the sorcerer who raised him. He beseeches the Player Characters to help him rest in peace and visit vengeance upon the vile sorcerer who resurrected his body for dark purposes.



A rebel plots against the king of Zamora, not knowing he is a bastard son of the king. He is secretly being watched by the king's men, who are aware of the son's treachery but are hoping to use that treachery to further their own ambitions. The Player Characters become involved on one side or the other.

Women with no blood in their bodies are being found each night in Shadizar. No, it is not a vampire but a sorcerer bleeding the women dry in dark rituals for some nefarious purpose (see the Bleed Dry feat in *Scrolls of Skelos*).

A hauntingly beautiful Nordheimer woman is dancing at a tavern and each night she leads a dozen men to her quarters and none of them are ever seen again. She is casting *Dance of Atali* as she dances and leading the men to her demon lover (see *Scrolls of Skelos* for the spell description).

A Player Character (probably a noble would work best) is contacted by his family and given the duty of travelling to Shadizar to punish a traitorous relative. Characters with a familial allegiance or the noble social ability of family ties are the most likely to be motivated by this plot hook. The family member to be punished may or may not be guilty.

A family's devotion and happiness is disturbed by the parents-in-law to such a degree that the spouse kills them, then must hide the deed from the other spouse. The Player Characters could be hired to find the in-laws, hired to kill the in-laws, hired to protect the in-laws or framed for the murder of the in-laws. One or more of the Player Characters could even *be* the in-laws...

A marriage is prevented by inequality of rank, so the lower ranked lover arranges to have the higher ranked family dishonoured in secret.

A man gets even with his bothersome in-laws by causing them to be kidnapped and sold into slavery, leaving him in peace.

An enemy of the Player Characters finally lets down his guard and is tracked down. Unfortunately, the opportune moment is the villain's wedding. When the characters disrupt the wedding to slay their foe, the foe's family seeks revenge.

A girl's marriage is forbidden on account of her arranged betrothal to a higher-ranking member of society by her parents. She beseeches the characters to help her marry her chosen lover, not the one her family has arranged for her.

A girl's marriage to her lover is forbidden because her parents intend to sacrifice her to their demonic overlord in a diabolic wedding ceremony that will make her a queen of Hell. She begs the characters to intercede on her behalf.

A girl's marriage to her lover is forbidden because her lover is her brother. They have fled to Shadizar to get married and the characters have been hired to bring them back.

A girl cannot marry her beloved because she incorrectly believes her beloved is already secretly married. Nothing will convince her of the falsity of her belief and she has hired the characters to assassinate the imaginary wife of her beloved. The characters may incorrectly kill a female friend of the beloved, causing any number of further complications.

A street gang is causing trouble for a local business owner (perhaps one of the characters' favourite businesses, such as a tavern or brothel). The owner implores the king for assistance but is jailed. The owner's daughter appeals to the Player Characters to aid them.

The king of Zamora has outlawed one of the more esoteric religions (one shared by a member of the Player Character party works best) in Shadizar, feeling its popularity is beginning to rival his own. All the ordained priests are jailed. The congregation of this religion learns one of the characters can perform the ritual, which they believe must be done yearly or a calamity will occur and begs the character to perform the forbidden act for them. Alternatively, the congregation might hire the characters to free their leaders.

The King's Own (or a rival temple) have confiscated the Holy Remains of a local religion's patron saint/founder. The religion wants the corpse back.

A character seeks to hire the characters to avenge a slain, seduced or dishonoured ancestor, friend, sibling, mistress, wife or child. Alternatively, the character does the avenging and the Player Characters have to hunt him down.

A Non-Player Character (or a group of them) is jailed for a crime he did not commit. He escapes from the king's maximum-security jail to the Shadizar underground. Seeking revenge, they begin to harass the king of Zamora and disrupt local government.

A business owner is ruined because of a false accusation about his goods and/or services. He seeks vengeance.

A powerful man in Shadizar (perhaps even the king) decides to get rid of one of his advisors, a scholar of repute. He has the man drowned, hanged, buried alive and other gruesome deaths, yet each time the scholar arrives for work the next morning as if nothing had happened. The Player Characters are hired to kill the advisor once and for all.

The characters become engaged in the professional pursuit of criminals. They may find out they are bringing in dissidents the king suspects of treason, not actual criminals.

The characters happen upon a scene where the king's soldiers are arresting a group of dissidents. The Player Characters are assaulted and arrested as well. If the arrest succeeds, the characters are jailed and must escape. If the arrest fails, they become wanted men for resisting arrest and, if any guards are killed, murder.

The king of Zamora has a man condemned to death. The man's daughter vows revenge and begins to study the black arts. She starts marrying noblemen under assumed identities and avenging her father's death on her husbands, one after another, by sacrificing them to a demon, who is promising eventual marriage to one of Zamora's princes.

Zamora suffers a humiliating defeat against the Turanians. Turan occupies Shadizar and the Player Characters are put in a position where they can lead a revolt and restore Shadizar to Zamora's king.

The king of Zamora is overthrown and Shadizar, like the rest of Zamora, is thrown into chaos and mob rule during the resulting power struggle and civil wars. Turan takes advantage of the situation and begins attacking fringe cities, as well as Shadizar itself.

An earthquake levels part of Shadizar, including some of the defensive walls. Opportunistic Hyborians or Turanians take this chance to attack and capture Shadizar. Characters may be part of the invading force or the defending armies. Characters may be part of a recapturing force of Zamorians or a rival band of Hyborian mercenaries intent on taking Shadizar from its conquerors.

A group of Picts, brought here from Pictland as a curiosity on the command of the king, escapes and the king of Zamora is killed or believed to be killed. The Picts stage a coup and one of the Picts usurps the throne. The king of Zamora (or one of his heirs) is discovered by the Player Characters and he appeals to them for help in restoring him to the throne.



The Player Characters find a noblewoman in a wretched state, despoiled and ruined in an alley. Her bodyguards attacked her and left her for dead. She promises great wealth if the characters avenge her. She lets the city believe she is dead so the characters can find out who the mastermind was.

The characters are hired by one of the king's advisors to do a job for the king of Zamora. They must retrieve some relic or capture a holy site. After the quest is done, it turns out the advisor



wants the item or place so he can use its power to betray the king. When the coup fails, the advisor deftly saves himself by implicating the Player Characters.

The Player Characters uncover a conspiracy against the king of Zamora accidentally. They must choose to either join or be hunted down by the paranoid conspiracy, who are afraid the Player Characters will obstruct them in some manner.

A demon carries off someone or something desired by the characters but leaves a few clues behind.

A noblewoman of Shadizar decides to marry but only wants the most brave and adventurous of husbands so she designs a quest for a fabulous object of myth and legend. The characters either have their own motivation to join the quest or are beseeched to enter the quest on behalf of another.

A prince, princess or other aristocrat is kidnapped and a reward posted, as well as a hefty bounty for the capture of the kidnapper. Unfortunately, the victim is either in love with or has fallen in love with her captor and does not want to return to her sheltered, pampered life. If the characters allow the 'victim' to remain with her lover, an advisor to the aristocratic parents manages to implicate the characters as part of the crime and the aristocrat's personal guard arrests them. They are to be tortured for information about the whereabouts of the victim if the arrest is successful. As a variation, the players may discover (after the arrest or attempted arrest) that the victim is half-demonic and must be kept sheltered and innocent or an abomination will be born that will destroy the world/that particular family/Shadizar. Another variation could prove that the victim's protectors are not interested so much in the victim but in something the victim took with her. Yet another variation could show the victim is destined to be a sacrifice in a vile ceremony and if that ceremony

is not undertaken, a horrible demon lord will awaken and devastate the world, bringing about an Age of Darkness.

A riddle is given to the king of Zamora that needs to be solved on pain of death; the characters are in a position to solve the riddle. The woman who gave the cursed riddle to the king is a vindictive scholar who is coveted by the drunken king. She, on the other hand, hates her drunkard father, the king and is using this riddle to stall his unholy appetite for her.

The malicious rivalry of two noble siblings catches the Player Characters in the middle as they try to get their father/mother/uncle/aunt to recognise each as the preferred heir and reject the other as unfit.

A 'voice in the night' is inducing the slaying of trusted lovers and paramours. The voice may be a

vindictive scholar or a demon. One of the lovers of a Player Character tries to slay the character. As a variation, the voice in the night convinces the character to do the unjust slaying if a Will save is failed.

A Player Character is deemed mad and an attempt is made to arrest and hold the character by the local authorities. The character needs to avoid arrest and clear his name. Perhaps there is a madman on the loose or perhaps a jealous rival has set them up.

Madness is running rampant throughout the city, causing the slaying of beloved kinsmen, leaving many distraught kinsmen and quickly filling the jails as these mad people turn themselves in. When the king is nearly assassinated because of this contagious insanity, he offers a reward for a cure or culprit.

A man discovers his parents were powerful sorcerers who went insane. Afraid that insanity is hereditary, the man slowly drives himself insane. His insanity creates complications for the Player Characters when he buries alive another character, perhaps one sought after by the Player Characters.

An oracle in Shadizar declares a certain girl in the city must be sacrificed to one of the loathsome gods of the Zamorians and further declares one of the Player Characters must perform the sacrifice or the god will arise and devastate the city in its search for the girl and the character. Unfortunately for the Player Character, the girl to be sacrificed turns out to be his sister or daughter, one he has not seen since she was a baby.

A political rival to the Player Characters has made the courts unbearably hot and unstable for the players and the only solution is the slaying of the rival. Unknown to the characters the rival is a daughter/son or sister/brother to one of the



characters, long unseen or totally unknown – until just before the killing is about to start.

A chaste religious order in Shadizar is hunting one of its priests, who has broken his religious vow of chastity for a passion or vice that will ultimately prove fatal if the characters do not intervene.

A nobleman threw away his future as a general on his passion for a low-ranked coppersmith's daughter. Disgraced but having won his bride, he lives now in abject poverty. In order to buy himself back into society, he has conceived of a plan to steal the gorgeous heirlooms of his cousin. However, he refuses to debase himself by performing the actual theft himself, so he hires the Player Characters. Unfortunately, the copper-smith father-in-law catches wind of the plot and does not want his daughter taken into society, where he will not be welcome, so he warns the victim of the Player Characters' intended theft, keeping the name of his son-in-law out of it.

If the players had known a particularly honourable Non-Player Character from former games/campaigns, they could meet up with him again in Shadizar, although now his honour and/or fortune are both in ruins because of his erotic vices, which found free (and cheap) expression in Shadizar. He is now in dire straits and the players need to pull him out of the situation.

A scholar or dabbler Player Character is discovered as a sorcerer and the king's men attempt to arrest him. Should he be captured he will be tortured until he 'confesses' and implicates all of the other Player Characters.

A scholar must sacrifice his daughter to a powerful demon in fulfilment of an agreement made years ago, before the daughter was even born. The scholar begs for the Player Characters to intercede.

A rising cult in Shadizar is demanding its members sacrifice non-member friends and family to prove their faith to the cult leader. One of the Player Characters' friends or a family member of one of the Player Characters has decided to target the Player Character(s) for this mass sacrifice.

The Player Characters are in Shadizar's jail and the only other man in the cell with them is a lowly Brythunian thief. This thief, however, has been in the prison many times and has loosened a stone in the wall. He leads the characters on a daring escape, possibly necessitating a hasty exit from Shadizar entirely on some adventure initiated by the thief.

A scholar decides to kill the king of Zamora. She builds a unique pleasure house catering to the upper classes. Finding out the vices and obsessions of the upper court, she begins blackmailing them all. She arranges a mass orgy and uses her clout to force the entire court to be in the pleasure house at once, allowing her and her mercenaries to kill them all, including the king of Zamora. One of the pleasure house slaves, however, is loyal to the king and, through some circumstance, also knows at least one of the Player Characters and confides in him the plot.

A man is cursed; he is not allowed to fall in love and express that love in any fashion. This has been his plague since he was a child. Every time he falls in love, a demon begins to plague the object of his love, causing his beloved's fortunes to fail, her honour to become compromised or even her life taken from her in savage brutality. The man pleads with the Player Characters to end his curse or, if one of the Player Characters is female, falls in love with that character. The plot also works if the cursed victim is a virginal female and she falls in love with one of the male Player Characters and

the demon begins his horrible work to bring about the downfall of the Player Character. The victim may not know there is a demon at work. The curse could have been brought on by the victim or by the victim's ancestors.

An immortal character (a sorcerer, mummy or vampire) has become jealous of a Player Character's success and has decided to eradicate the Player Character. Perhaps the character seduced a person desired by the immortal, perhaps the character stole something desired by the immortal or won a contest or game the immortal feels should have gone to it.





A local noble lady has become politically popular and is rivalling the king of Zamora in her influence among the upper echelons of ranking nobility, as well as being popular among the merchant and lower classes. The king of Zamora, who does not permit of rival politicians, decides to have her eliminated but openly doing so would incite a rebellion. He decides to dupe people into killing her for him, using a smear campaign against her. A sorcerer convinces the king to allow him to use his magic to make her look guilty of witchcraft in the eyes of the populace. Perhaps the Player Characters are in the employ of the lady and must defend her honour and expose the king. Perhaps the Player Characters are duped into killing the lady and thrown into prison by the king for public execution so he can look the hero, even though he orchestrated the murder behind the scenes. Perhaps the king's sorcerer kills someone important to the Player Characters and evidence points to the lady in question, leading the players to confront her and either kill her or discover the truth and expose the king.

A sorceress has ensnared the king with her magic and is using him to further her own dark desires, allowing her to arrest people she does not like so she can sacrifice them to her own black gods and demon lords. She is effectively ruling the kingdom and intends to ruin it, perhaps to hand over to the Turanians, the Brythunians or to her demon god.

The priests of two opposing religions stir up a religious war in the middle of Shadizar, destroying buildings and disrupting what little order there is.

The Player Characters are hired as assassins to take out both religious leaders.

A woman has fallen in love with one of the Player Characters but so has a sorceress. The sorceress intends to use magic to win the rivalry for the character's love. The other woman pleads with the other Player Characters to help.

Out in the countryside, an exiled scholar from one of the temples of Shadizar is binding demons to scarecrows. He then proceeds to craft amazing



scarecrows and mannequins for sale in Shadizar, shipping them to the crowded bazaars. Once in the bazaars, the demon-scarecrows begin slaughtering the masses, among whom are the Player Characters.

A Player Character inadvertently says or does something offensive to a follower of one of Shadizar's many gods. That Player Character is marked for punishment for contempt of that god by the followers.

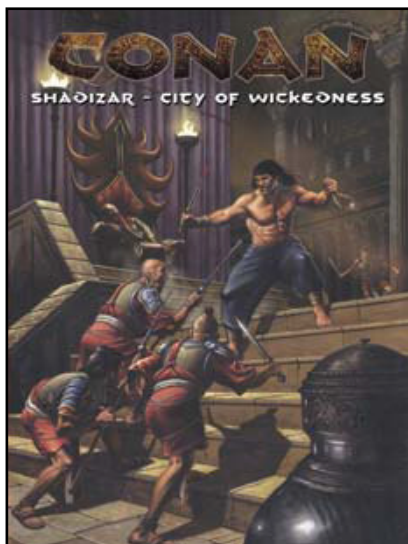
A nobleman in Shadizar is being told baseless rumours of his wife sleeping with one of the Player Characters. The enraged nobleman punishes his wife unfairly and plots malicious revenge against the Player Character(s) while the author of the rumours watches, delighted. His goal is to make a fool of the nobleman so he can have the wife for himself or he has reason to want vengeance against the Player Character(s).

A friend of the Player Characters believes the Player Characters are guilty of crime but he does not want them to suffer, so he draws false suspicions on himself to save the Player Characters, believing he has the clout to get out of any serious punishment. However, the crime is far worse than he originally believed and now he is being tortured for a 'confession' and will be condemned to die. He also learns the Player Characters did not do the crime in the first place, so his sacrifice is completely in vain. He manages to get word to his friends and begs them for assistance.

A woman joins a new cult in Shadizar against her lover's wishes. An acquaintance convinces him his girl is now possessed by a demon and he hires the Player Characters to destroy the cult and free her from the supposed possession. The cult is actually a good one, based on positive thinking and mutual support and they do not appreciate being destroyed.

# Monty's Offer of the Month

## GATEWAY TO SHADIZAR



This month Monty thought Vincent Darlage's adventure hooks for Shadizar in Conan The Roleplaying Game were so good that many of you would rush to start, only to remember you hadn't bought the box set yet. Kindly mongoose that he is, Monty has directed that we provide you with encouragement, so walk with us through the Gates of Shadizar with this great offer! for just \$30/£20, post free!

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