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NEMEDIAN CHRONICLES



"**K**now, oh prince, that between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the years of the rise of the Sons of Aryas, there was an Age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars — Nemediā, Ophir, Brythunia, Hyperborea, Zamora with its dark-haired women and towers of spider-haunted mystery, Zingara with its chivalry, Koth that bordered on the pastoral lands of Shem, Stygia with its shadow-guarded tombs, Hyrkania whose riders wore steel and silk and gold. But the proudest kingdom of the world was Aquilonia, reigning supreme in the dreaming west.

Hither came Conan, the Cimmerian, black-haired, sullen-eyed, sword in hand, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth, to tread the jeweled thrones of the Earth under his sandalled feet."





ON THE ROAD OF KINGS...

ΑΓΓΡΑΙΚΑ ΕΞΙΣΠΟΛΙΤΗΣΑΙΣΟΝΚ

Conan of Cimmeria has seen much in years as a reaver and mercenary, yet still some things remain shrouded in dark mystery. In his travels, Conan has come in contact with a malevolent force bound in enigmatic BLACK STONE, a power whose influence and malice has followed him through both the Hyborian Age and the swirling mists of time. Now, at an Aquilonian outpost on the edge of the Pictish wilderness, the Cimmerian feels another pulse from that enigmatic power, and with it, the stirring of memories and dangers he'd thought long left in the past...

LEGENDS CAN BE FORGED
IN UNLIKELY PLACES.

THIS LEGEND BEGINS IN THE
SUN-DAPPLED PLAINS OF
TEXAS, IN A REMOTE
DISTRICT KNOWN AS
LOST KNOB.

A WRITER NAMED
JAMES ALLISON...

...A BLANK
PAGE...

...AND A REFLECTION ON
THE POSSIBILITIES
FOUND WITHIN.

A WORD, A NAME, SPILLS
FORTH FROM THE LOCKED
CHAMBERS IN HIS MIND...

...AND WITH IT,
A TERROR MADE
MANIFEST.



ACROSS THE AGES,
UNBEKNOWNST TO ALL...

...A WAR HAS
BEGIN.

BATTLE



PRELUDE

THE STARING SIGIL

OF THE BLACK STONE

GRIM
JIM ZUB
WRITER

JAUNTY JONAS
SCHARF
ARTIST

FLEE OR
FACE THE
BLADE!

CONAN

THE BARBARIAN

JUMPING
JOÃO CANOLA
COLOR ARTIST

RASCALLY RICH
STARKINGS
LETTERER

CALAMITOUS
CHRIS BUTERA
EDITOR

MERCILESS
MATT MURRAY
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

THE HYBORIAN AGE

CONAJOHARA IS A NEW AQUILONIAN PROVINCE ANNEXED FROM THE LAND OF THE PICTS.

ITS BORDER, FIERCELY CONTESTED.

ITS DEFENDERS, A BATTLE-HARDENED GROUP OF AQUILONIAN SOLDIERS AND SCOUTS LODGED AT FORT TUSCELAN.

FIERCEST AMONGST THEM, CONAN OF CIMMERIA.

HRK!

TASTE STEEL MONGREL!

THE CIMMERIAN HAS ENDURED DOZENS, NAY, HUNDREDS OF BATTLES BY THIS POINT IN HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER.

THE FIGHT IS AS NATURAL AS BREATHING FOR THE BARBARIAN.





--AND MY AXE STANDS READY.



THE CHILDREN OF CROM ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR STRENGTH, WITH SKIN LIKE STONE.



NAFF!!



BUT CONAN IS FAST AS WELL--



--WITH A POUNCE LIKE A PANTHER.



AND HIS WEAPON IS EVER-HUNGRY.



AFTER THE BATTLE, THE AQUILONIAN FORCES TAKE STOCK OF THE DEAD.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, CONAN?

PICTS SURGING FORTH... FROTHING WITH RAGE LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

TRUE ENOUGH. WE'VE KEPT BACK AND HAVEN'T ENGAGED THEM IN WEEKS.



WHY ATTACK NOW WITH SUCH SUICIDAL FURY?



MAYBE THEY WERE MOTIVATED BY THIS MURDEROUS MAMMOTH?
IF HE WAS ONE OF OURS, WE'D CERTAINLY BE INSPIRED TO PUSH THE FRONT AND STIR UP SOME BLOOD, EH?



WHY, I'D WAGER HE--
CROM'S DEVILS!





ON THE GIANT'S BARREL-BROAD CHEST, A PRIMITIVE MEDALLION ETCHED WITH AN EQUALLY PRIMITIVE MARK.



A SIGN.



A SIGIL--



NNG!

FRESH, YET HORRIFICALLY FAMILIAR.



CONAN!
W-WERE YOU
INJURED,
MAN?!

RRRR-!

IT SHAKES THE
BARBARIAN TO
HIS VERY CORE...



...AND BREAKS DOWN
BARRIERS HIS MIND SET
STRONG LONG AGO.

DARK MEMORIES.

THE PICT SCOUT WHO FOUGHT BY HIS SIDE AGAINST AN ARMY OF THE DEAD BEFORE LOSING HER LIFE.



THE REAPER'S FACE 'NEATH CURSED WATERS.



THE SPECTERS UNLEASHED IN SHADIZAR.



POSSESSION...DECAY... DESTRUCTION.



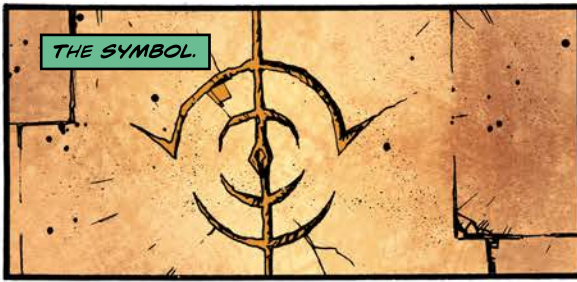
ALL OF IT SENT BY THAT SEARING EYE.

AN EYE CARVED IN BLACK STONE.



***EVENTS AS SEEN IN CONAN THE BARBARIAN #1-8.**





THE SYMBOL.



THE MARK.



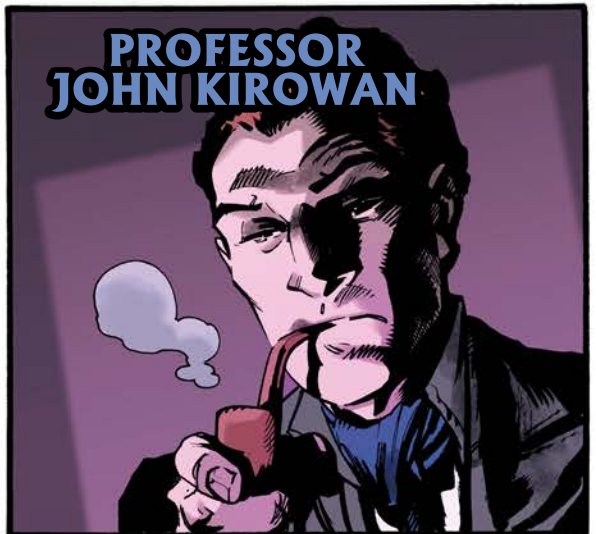
A BALEFUL PRESENCE.



A PROMISE OF POWER.



EL BORAK



PROFESSOR JOHN KIROWAN



A STORY YET TO BE TOLD.



AN EPIC ADVENTURE BEGINS IN SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #4 & CONAN: BATTLE OF THE BLACK STONE #1

CONAN BATTLE OF THE BLACK STONE



**NEW EVENT
STARTING THIS FALL!**

ACROSS THE HOWARDVERSE



by Jeffrey Shanks

"Each man on earth, each woman, is part and all of a similar caravan of shapes and beings. But they cannot remember—their minds cannot bridge the brief, awful gulfs of blackness which lie between those unstable shapes, and which the spirit, soul or ego, in spanning, shakes off its fleshy masks. I remember. . ." — James Allison, "Valley of the Worm".

Conan the Barbarian is, of course, the most famous creation of Texas pulp writer Robert E. Howard, but he is far from the only one. Howard contributed to many genres that were popular when he was writing in the 1920s and 30s – and in fact has been credited with being the "father" of several hybrid genres like sword-and-sorcery and weird westerns. And so Howard's many protagonists range from barbarian warriors and two-fisted

detectives, to Texas gunslingers and bloodthirsty pirate captains. What's more, Howard makes it very clear in his stories that most, if not all, of his characters exist in the same universe – a "Howardverse," if you will. The teams at Heroic Signatures and Titan Comics are excited to begin exploring that Howardverse in this very issue, with several characters that many readers might not be familiar with.



CONAN

BRISSA

JAMES
ALLISON

DARK
AGNES

After Conan and Kull of Atlantis, perhaps Howard's next most famous character is Solomon Kane, the grim Puritan adventurer and avenger. "Dark" Agnes de Chastillon, the fiery, crimson-haired sword-woman of 16th century France certainly deserves to be better known as she is one of Howard's best protagonists. Francis Xavier Gordon – "El Borak" – is a Texas gunslinger, turned expat adventurer exploring the treacherous and mysterious hills of South Asia against the backdrop of early 20th century Great Game geopolitics. Professors John Conrad and John Kirowan are scholars specializing in history, archaeology, and the occult – and who have a tendency towards unearthing the most diabolical of Eldritch horrors.

But perhaps one of the most unique and interesting of Howard's characters is James Allison. A resident of 1930s rural Texas, Allison is an invalid due to a permanent disability, but has the ability to recall all of his past lives, usually as a warrior of some kind in the distant past. Structurally these are framework stories, with Allison serving as an unreliable narrator recounting adventures from one of his past lives.

Howard completed three James Allison stories, "Marchers of Valhalla," "Valley of the Worm," and "The Garden of Fear," along with several synopses and fragments. Most of Allison's previous incarnations lived at the end of the Hyborian Age, or in its aftermath when

the Hyborian kingdoms had fallen. They are pure sword-and-sorcery at its finest, with "Valley of the Worm" in particular often cited as one of Howard's best stories. In it, Allison recalls a life as Niord, an Aesir warrior who finds an unlikely ally in a Pict. The two face off against a giant snake and other horrors in the crumbling ruins of a long-since abandoned Hyborian city – a setting that feels almost post-apocalyptic.

The concept of reincarnation is something that does seem to have appealed to Howard personally, though its use as a literary device was clearly borrowed from one of Howard's favorite novels, *The Star Rover* by Jack London. The protagonist of London's novel, Darrell Standing, is a prisoner in San Quentin locked in solitary confinement and bound in a straightjacket. Like James Allison, his physical body is immobilized, but his mind is able to transcend the depths of time and space and recall his numerous past lives.

It's not hard to see the appeal of such a character to Howard. Like Darrell Standing and James Allison, Howard must have felt trapped and confined – bound by circumstances to a small rural town in Texas, while his incredibly prodigious mind was free to roam the cosmos of his imagination. Through his writing, Howard was able to escape his prison to live vicariously through his many characters, slashing, shooting, and fighting his way across his own Howardverse.



**SOLOMON
KANE**



EL BORAK

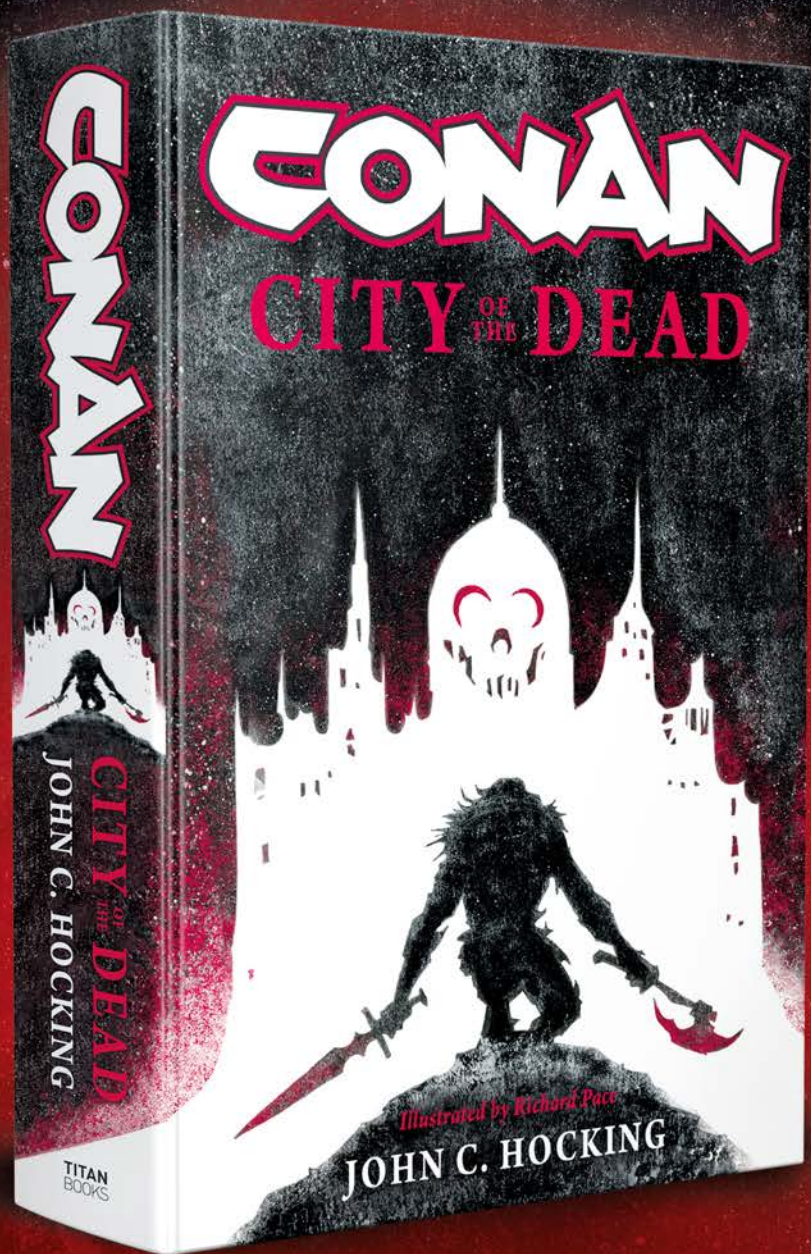


**JOHN
CONRAD**



**JOHN
KIROWAN**

BY CROM! TWO FANTASTIC
TALES IN ONE EPIC HARDBACK



IN BOOKSTORES THIS JUNE!

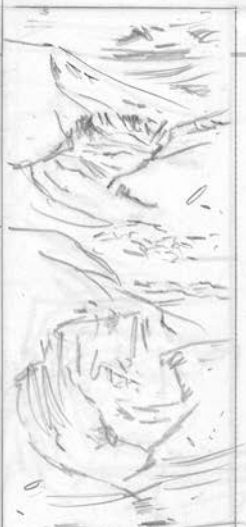


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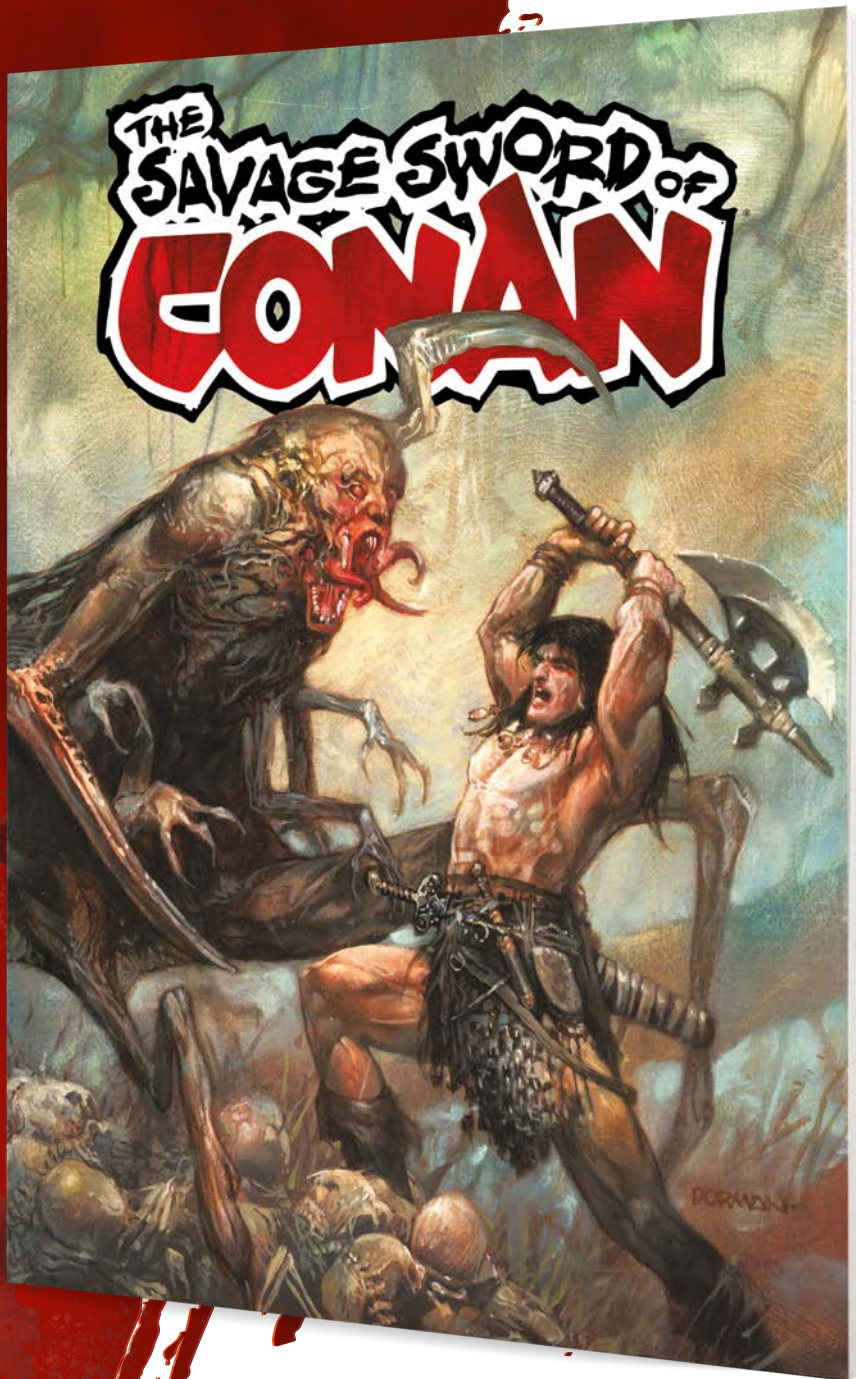
SNEAK PREVIEW!



*Peek behind the scenes of Conan the Barbarian Issue #13, the first part of **FROZEN FAITH**. A new adventure celebrating the 90th anniversary of Robert E. Howard's classic story "The Frost Giant's Daughter."*
On Sale this July!



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CONAN IS
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