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# CONAN

THE BARBARIAN



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# CONAN

## THE BARBARIAN

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# NEMEDIAN CHRONICLES

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“**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.”

— THE NEMEDIAN CHRONICLES



# ON THE ROAD OF KINGS...

WESTERN SEA

**V**ENARIUM. Aquilonian forces surge northward in their conquest of the barbaric northern territories. The clans of Cimmeria have banded together to defend their southern border from the “civilized” invaders. Among the Cimmerian numbers is CONAN, the son of a blacksmith, about to have his first true taste of battle...

Karnath  
Zabhela  
Kush  
Shumballa  
Keshatta  
Luxur  
River Styx  
Stygia  
Shumir  
Nippr  
Eruk  
Akbitana  
Kothian Hills  
Koth  
Khoraja  
Sukhm  
Tombalku  
Lake Zuad



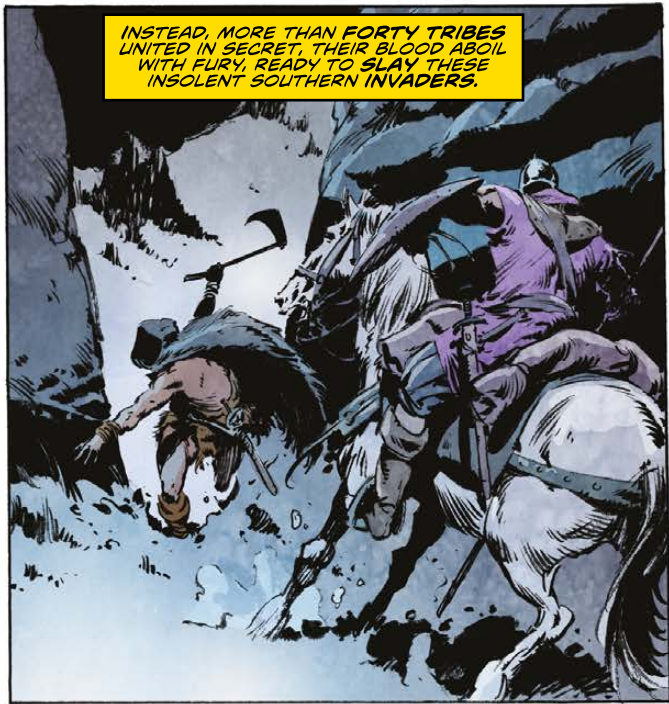
**L**EGENDS CAN BE FORGED  
IN UNLIKELY PLACES.

THIS LEGEND BEGINS IN  
THE GREY-GRIPPED  
LAND OF CIMMERIA AT  
A REMOTE FORTRESS  
KNOWN AS VENARILUM.

WHEN AQUILONIANS PUSHED THEIR  
BORDERS NORTHWARD WITH EYES ON  
CONQUEST, THEY DESTROYED THREE  
CIMMERIAN VILLAGES.



ARROGANTLY, THEY ASSUMED  
THE DISPARATE BARBARIANS  
OF THE REGION WOULD FLEE  
FROM THEIR MILITARY MIGHT.



INSTEAD, MORE THAN FORTY TRIBES  
UNITED IN SECRET, THEIR BLOOD ABOIL  
WITH FURY, READY TO SLAY THESE  
INSOLENT SOUTHERN INVADERS.

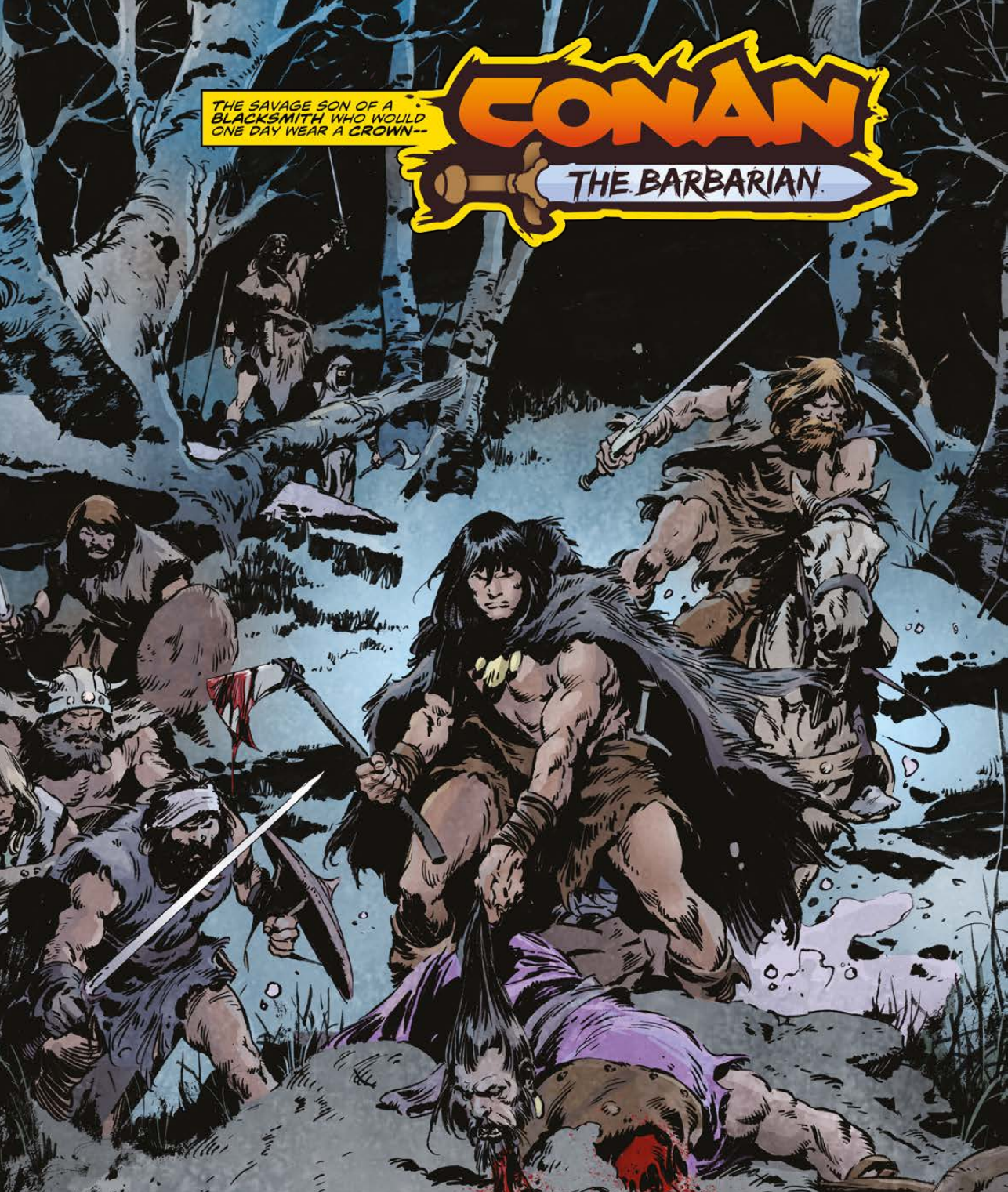


FIRST TO SURGE FORTH IS A WARRIOR  
EAGER TO PROVE HIS WORTH.

THE SAVAGE SON OF A  
BLACKSMITH WHO WOULD  
ONE DAY WEAR A CROWN--

# CONAN

## THE BARBARIAN



# LOOKING FOR LANDS BEYOND

**GRIM**  
JIM ZUB  
WRITER

**RAVAGING**  
ROB DE LA TORRE  
ARTIST

**VILLAINOUS**  
JOSÉ VILLARRUBIA  
COLOR ARTIST

**RIOTOUS**  
RICHARD STARKINGS  
LETTERER

**MERCILESS**  
MATT MURRAY  
EDITOR



IN AN INSTANT, THE AIR TURNS BRUTAL AND BLOODY. THE PENT-UP RAGE OF CIMMERIAN TRIBESMEN UNLEASHED UPON ARMORED AQUILONIAN SOLDIERS.



CONAN IS NOT INTIMIDATED BY THEIR SHARPENED SWORDS OR GLEAMING HELMS.



THOUGH UNTESTED ON A BATTLEFIELD, HIS BRAWN WAS BUILT BRINGING DOWN BEASTS...





...AND HIS SENSES WERE HONED IN THE HUNT.



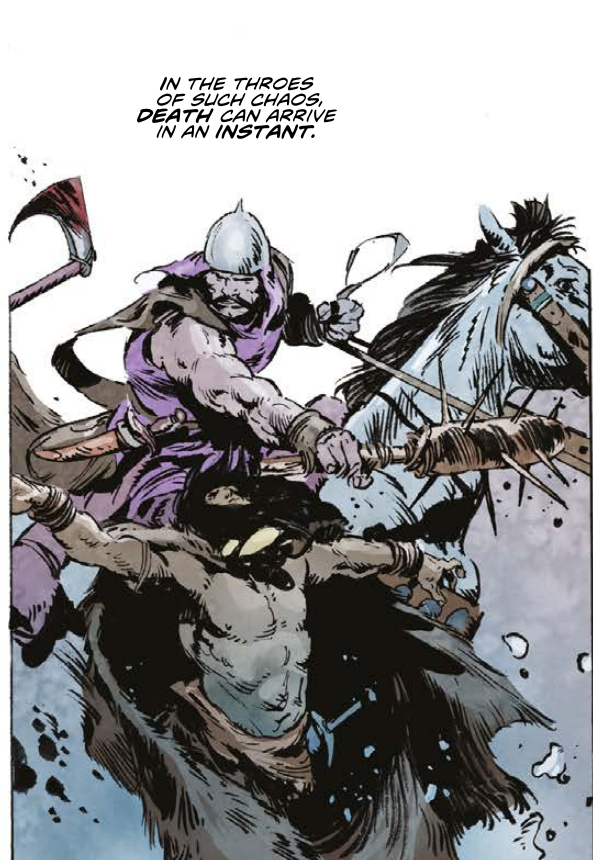
WITH CAT-LIKE SPEED, THE CIMMERIAN YOUTH AVOIDS A WAYWARD SHOT AND DIVES DEEPER INTO THE FRAY.



EACH MOMENT, THERE ARE MORE ARROWS, MORE MEN...



...A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS TIDE OF FEARLESS FOOLS READY TO FACE THEIR RUIN AS HE BURIES HIS WEAPON WITHIN THEM.



IN THE THROES OF SUCH CHAOS, DEATH CAN ARRIVE IN AN INSTANT.





FOR ANY OTHER,  
THIS IS WHERE THEIR  
TALE WOULD END.

AN INSTANT'S  
REGRET BEFORE  
THE BECKONING  
OF OBLIVION.

BUT THIS SON OF CROM  
WILL NOT STAY DOWN.

NOT TODAY...

...NOT EVER.



WITH A SURGE OF  
STEEL, HE DRIVES  
BACK HIS FOES...



...AND FIGHTS ON  
TIL NONE ARE  
LEFT STANDING.

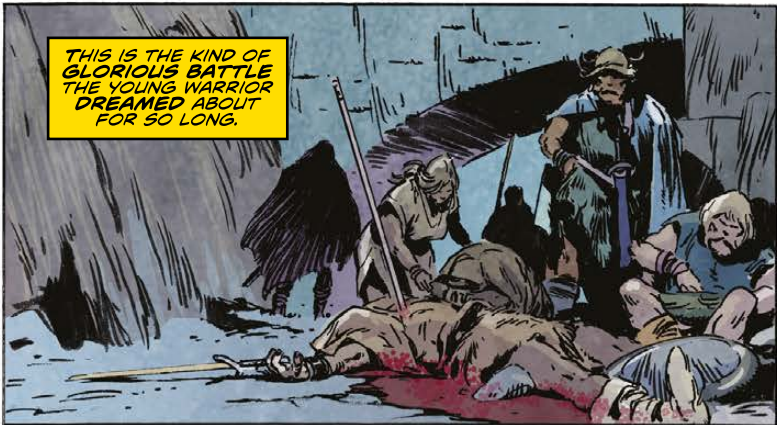


HOURS LATER, CONAN STANDS AMONGST THE VICTORIOUS TRIBESMEN.

ROARS OF VICTORY ECHO OFF THE FORTRESS WALLS AS CORPSES AND TREASURES ARE PILED HIGH.



THE MANY DEAD ARE SENT TO THEIR JUST REWARDS WITH PRAYER AND SONG BEFITTING THEIR HOMELAND.



THIS IS THE KIND OF GLORIOUS BATTLE THE YOUNG WARRIOR DREAMED ABOUT FOR SO LONG.



IT SHOULD BE A TRIUMPH...



...AND YET, HE'S SURPRISED HOW EMPTY IT ALL FEELS.

HOW MUCH HE YEARNS FOR MORE.

EVERY ITEM GATHERED, EVERY  
JEWEL OR WEAPON...

...THEY EACH HAVE  
THEIR OWN STORY  
TO TELL.



THE GLINT OF A  
FOREIGN BLADE  
CATCHES  
CONAN'S EYE.



WELL BALANCED,  
WELL FORGED...

...THE MARKINGS ARE  
UNKNOWN TO HIM BUT  
SUGGEST SUBSTANCE  
AND LEGACY.



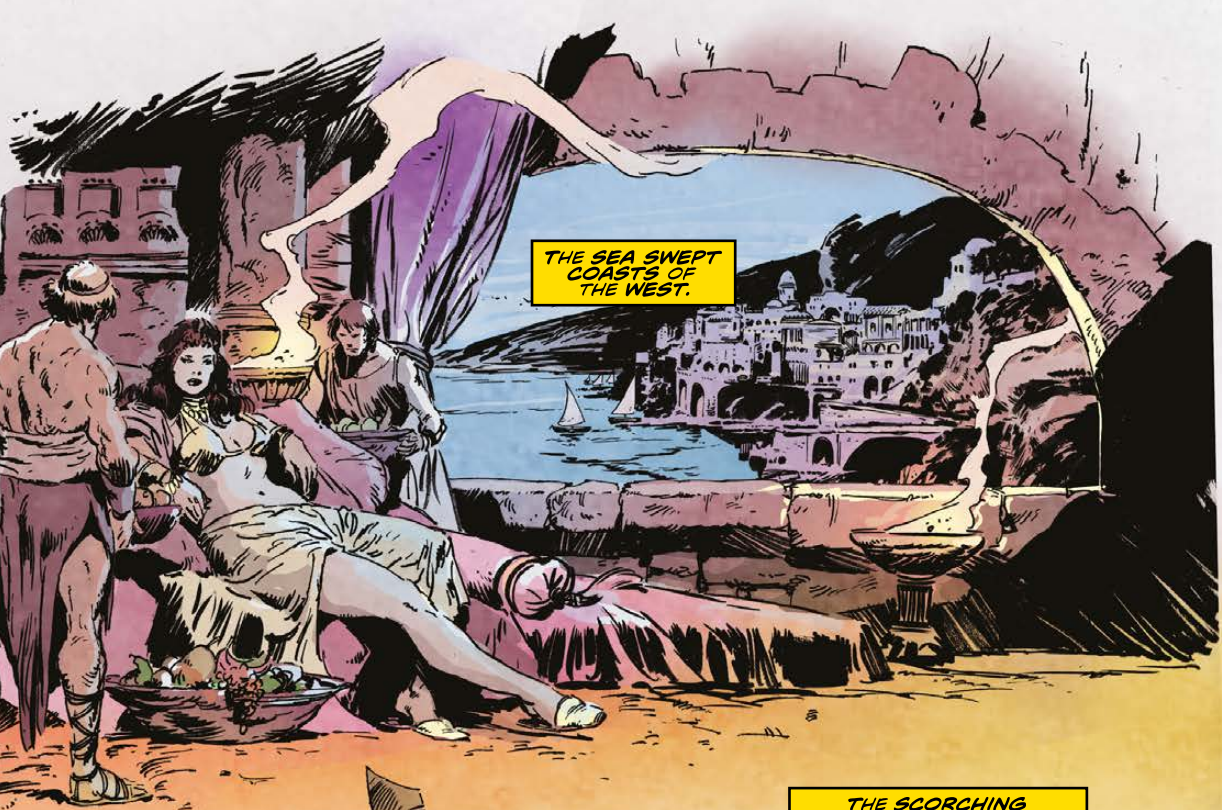
A GLIMPSE OF LANDS  
BEYOND TOLD TO HIM  
BY HIS GRANDFATHER.



THE FROZEN REACHES  
OF THE NORTHLANDS.



SEEDY  
CITIES...



THE SEA SWEEP  
COASTS OF  
THE WEST.

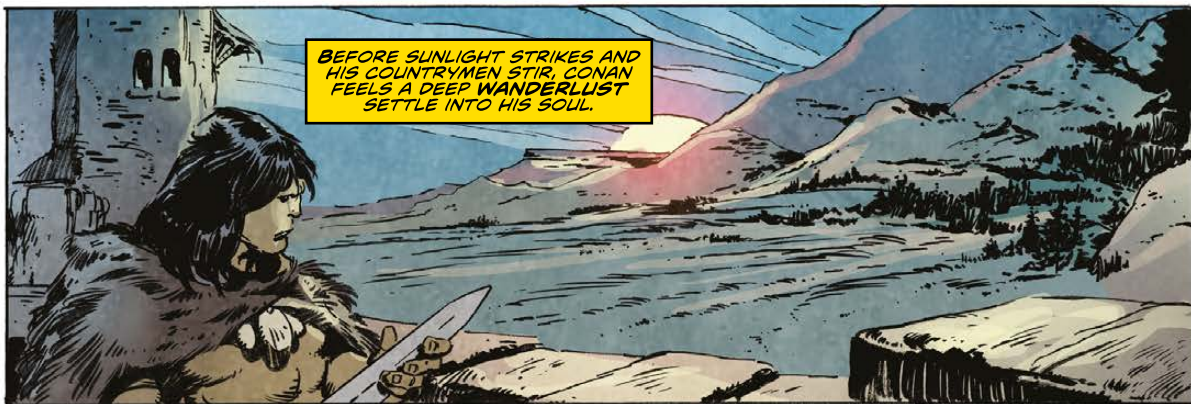


THE SCORCHING  
DESERTS IN THE SOUTH.



...AND FIERCE JUNGLES.

EACH ONE BRIMMING WITH  
DANGER AND DELIGHT.



BEFORE SUNLIGHT STRIKES AND HIS COUNTRYMEN STIR, CONAN FEELS A DEEP WANDERLUST SETTLE INTO HIS SOUL.



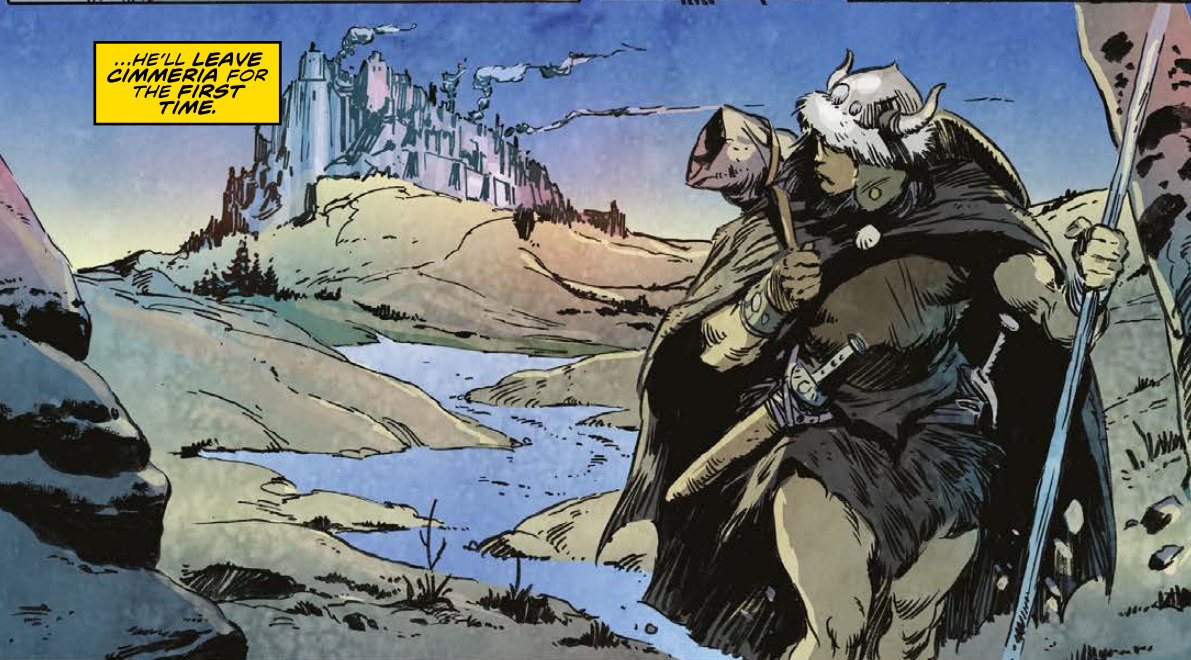
HE KNOWS WHAT HE MUST DO.



SET WITH STRANGE STEEL...



...AND A HEARTY HELM...



...HE'LL LEAVE CIMMERIA FOR THE FIRST TIME.



AS HIS FOOTSTEPS CRUSH THROUGH CRISP MORNING SNOW, THE CIMMERIAN PONDERES HIS FUTURE...

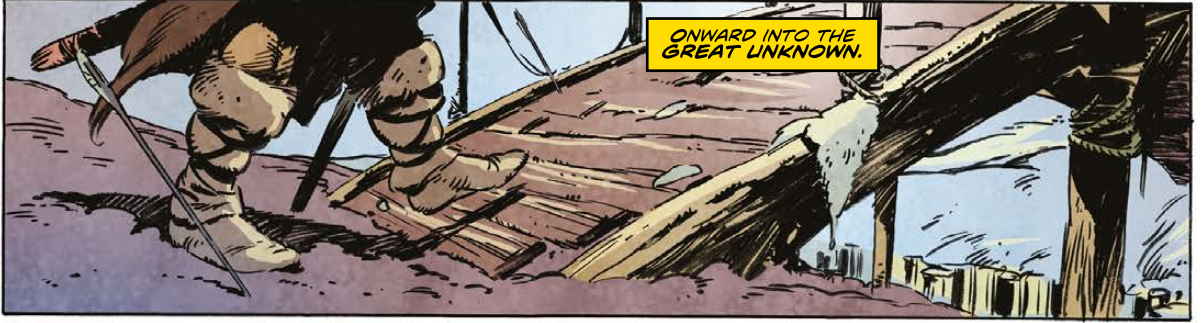
WHAT GLORY YET  
LAYS BEFORE HIM?



WHAT STORIES  
WILL BE TOLD OF  
HIS GRAND  
ADVENTURES?



IT'S TIME TO  
FIND OUT.



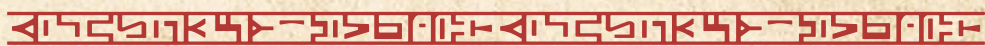
ONWARD INTO THE  
GREAT UNKNOWN.



A NEW ERA OF ADVENTURE BEGINS IN  
**CONAN THE BARBARIAN #1!**



# A WORD FROM THE WISE HITHER CAME CONAN



by Jeffrey Shanks

When CONAN THE CIMMERIAN first appeared in the pages of the pulp magazine WEIRD TALES in 1932, it not only marked the debut of writer ROBERT E. HOWARD's most famous character, but also the dawn of the barbarian archetype in popular culture. Without CONAN as a prototype, there would be no He-Man, no Khal Drogo, no GOD OF WAR, no barbarian class in D&D.

Created at the height of America's Great Depression, when the public's mistrust of the structural pillars of civilization was at its peak, CONAN, a thief, pirate, and mercenary was the perfect anti-hero. After all, it was an era when politicians and financial institutions were the enemy, and bank robbers were the folk heroes. Over the next century, CONAN would continue to resonate with those who hold a cynical eye towards authority—and perhaps that is why he remains such a popular character in increasingly cynical times.

As with other great fictional archetypes like Dracula, Sherlock Holmes, or Superman, CONAN too has transcended his original prose medium, appearing in films, television, animation, video games, RPGs, and of course comicbooks. It is in this last form that CONAN has arguably achieved his greatest success, first appearing in bootleg Mexican comics in the 1950s and '60s, then becoming one of the best-selling titles for Marvel in the 1970s and '80s. This was followed

by a critically acclaimed relaunch by Dark Horse in the early 2000s and more recently a well-publicized return to Marvel. Now HEROIC SIGNATURES and TITAN COMICS carry on this great



tradition, and what better way to relaunch such a storied character, then a recounting of the first significant event of his youth: the sack of Venarium?

It was at the Aquilonian fortified settlement of Venarium that a teenaged CONAN—already bigger than most full-grown men—would receive his baptism of blood. It was at Venarium that CONAN would get his first glimpse of civilization as one of the horde of

Cimmerians that overwhelmed and destroyed the frontier town. And it is with Venarium, that we get a glimpse of HOWARD's critical commentary on the hubris of imperialistic overreach. The sack of Venarium is first referenced in the original CONAN story "BEYOND THE BLACK RIVER," recounted in flashback by an older CONAN -- ironically working as a scout for Aquilonia in a similarly doomed attempt at colonization.

It's in this story that one of the characters voices HOWARD's own take on the millennia-long struggle between barbarism and civilization:

"Civilization is unnatural. It is a whim of circumstance. And barbarism must always ultimately triumph."

HOWARD wrote those words in an era when colonial empires were beginning to crumble and modern technology was just beginning to explode; and yet nearly a century later, these concepts are still relevant as we see anxieties about social media overload and the environmental consequences of technological advancement. Sometimes modern civilization can feel pretty unnatural, and CONAN remains a refreshing alternative perspective and his adventures make one helluva a great read!

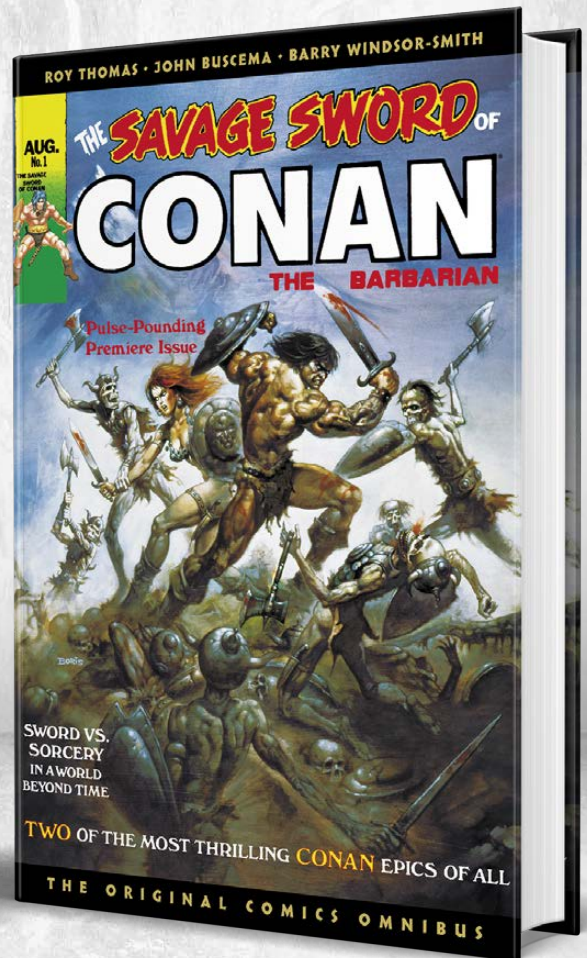
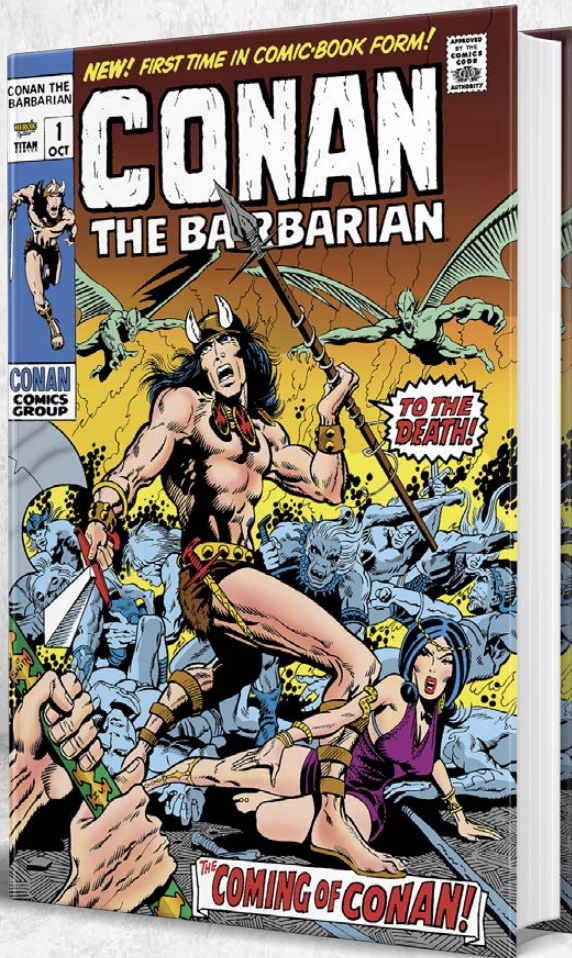


**"ROBERT E. HOWARD GROUP SHOT" - Rafael Kayanan**

- |                  |                                |                          |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Ace Jessel    | 6. Cormac Mac Art              | El Borak"                | 15. Sonya of Rogatino          |
| 2. Valeria       | 7. Wulfhere                    | 11. Robert Ervin Howard  | 16. Sailor Steve Costigan      |
| 3. Grom          | 8. Kull                        | 12. Wild Bill Clanton    | 17. "Dark" Agnes de Chastillon |
| 4. Bran Mak Morn | 9. Conan of Cimmeria           | 13. Esau Cairn           | 18. Breckinridge Elkins        |
| 5. Solomon Kane  | 10. Francis Xavier Gordon -- " | 14. Turlogh Dubh O'Brien | 19. Brule                      |

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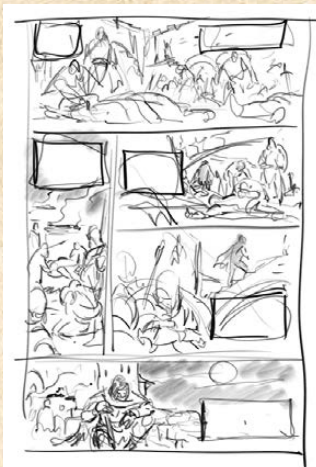
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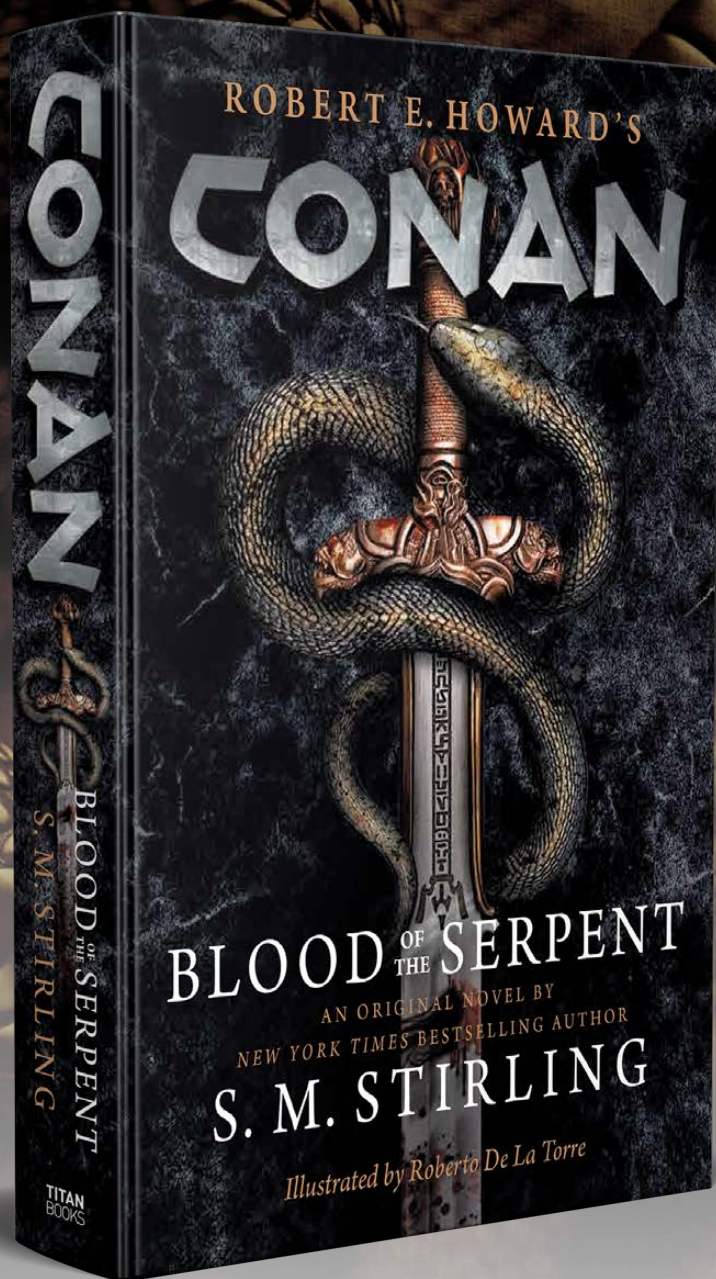
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Presented here  
are the humble  
beginnings  
of Conan  
comics from  
thumbnails  
through to  
final lettering.



THE PULSE-POUNGING  
RETURN OF CONAN!



An all-new adventure from *NYT*  
bestselling author S.M. Stirling

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# CONAN

## THE BARBARIAN

**ISSUE 1**  
ON SALE  
JULY 2023

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