



Conan the Buccaneer

Lin Carter, L. Sprague de Camp

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The hunt for a beautiful princess--and a king's treasure--brings Conan to the edge of the world, and the devil-ritten lands of the Nameless Isle. Awaiting him will be his fiercest battle: the cold steel of his sword against the hell-fed powers of the sorcerer Thoth-Ammon.

Conan the Buccaneer Details

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From Reader Review Conan the Buccaneer for online ebook

Michael says

This first full length Conan novel (as presented in this particular series), written by L. Sprague de Camp, and Lin Carter, presumably to fill in gaps in the chronology, is lean and mean and surprisingly entertaining considering it doesn't contain any material by Robert E. Howard. Like many of the previous stories, it recycles familiar elements such as young, nubile royalty in need of rescue, and monstrous statues that come to life. Thoth-Amon, referenced in *The God in the Bowl* appears in the flesh as the main villain, and Conan is reunited with his friend Juma, first introduced in *The City of Skulls* both from Book 1. *The Book of Skelos*, Howard's version of the *Necronomicon*, mentioned in *The Devil in Iron* (Book 4), and *Pool of the Black One* (Book 5), also comes into play. *The Book of Skelos* inadvertently leads to the long hidden *Cobra Crown*, described as the "sacred talisman of the serpent-men of Valusia-the most potent sorcerous sigil the earth had ever borne- the all-commanding crown of the serpent-kings, where with they had, in pre-human ages, gained the empire of the earth". Basically, it gives the wearer a nice little brain boost, allowing them to read and control the minds of thousands.

At one point in the story, Conan is sold into slavery and becomes the personal stud of Nzinga, Queen of the Amazons. Making the best of the situation, he excels in the role. Nzinga, quite enamored with her barbarian ramrod, considers making him king. Of course, her dreams don't come to fruition, and their differences are settled with the help of a flesh eating tree.

So, it's not on par with Howard's writing of course, but it has everything you would expect to find in a Conan story, just presented in a more blunted, straight forward fashion.

Stuart Dean says

A novel length Conan story written by L. Sprague deCamp and Lin Carter to bridge a chronological gap in the Robert E. Howard storyline. Conan has a letter of marque from the king and is now a professional, government sanctioned pirate. He stumbles into a bit of palace intrigue which leads him to cross horns with another pirate, his old friend Juma, an Amazon Queen, a buxom naked princess, and evil sorcerer Thoth Amon. He also battles a toad.

Good but not as well written as the Howard stories. Too much ancillary characters and not enough Conan. When he does show he acts accordingly, if a bit wordier than usual. The other characters are as wooden as ever, but the Shakespearean Viking is just annoying. "By Odin's left foot and Frigga's hoary beard doth I smiteth thee!" The action is good but it takes a while to get there. Literally takes a while, as in there's a lot of time spent travelling from one place to another. Unless that would adversely affect the plot, then travel is nearly instantaneous.

For an effort to explain the missing two years of Conan's life with no input from Robert E. Howard it does its job satisfactorily.

Gonzalo Oyanedel says

Sprague de Camp y Lin Carter en una de sus mejores colaboraciones sobre el héroe Howardiano, caracterizadas por un mayor enfoque en la acción que en los planteamientos existencialistas propuestos por el autor. Lectura amena, muy veloz y que incluye guiños no demasiado forzados al universo literario de Howard Lovecraft.

Aaron White says

Not sure why the reviewers were all down on this book. The writing suffered a little from not being Howard, and the story wasn't the best of all time, but I enjoyed the jaunt. Particularly as it wasn't a set of short stories, but one longer short novel, I tend to prefer those to short stories.

Olethros says

-Rellenando huecos en las aventuras del icono.-

Género. Narrativa Fantástica.

Lo que nos cuenta. La joven heredera del reino de Zingara tiene unos sueños terribles y busca ayuda en la deidad Mitra, lo que la empuja a seguir un camino que la llevará hasta una isla sin nombre y que la cruzará con los destinos de un mezquino aspirante al trono y a su mano, de un pirata sin escrúpulos, de un sacerdote que adora a fuerzas malignas y la de un bucanero implacable, brutal, caballeroso y muy lejos de su hogar llamado Conan.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

Phil Syphe says

Of all the non-Howard Conan stories, "Conan the Buccaneer" is my favourite.

First read this in my early teens & fell in love with Princess Chabella who's vividly described as a peerless sex goddess!

Read this a second time in my early twenties & a third (and probably last) time 15-20 years later.

Good points:

- 1) It's a fast-paced adventure story

2) Even though no author but Robert E. Howard paints a better Conan, the two writers here still have this great character for their hero of the piece

3) Princess Chabella. Yes, I'm still in love (or lust) with her!

Bad points:

Carter & de Camp are *competent* writers in terms of fashioning characters & plot, but technically & stylistically they're not *good* writers. They tell rather than show for much of the time. They're way overfond of adjectives, which leads to lots of clunky sentences.

Mike S says

Not as good as Jordan but worth reading.

East Bay J says

More bad writing from De Camp and Carter. Chronologically, *Conan The Buccaneer* takes place before *Conan Of The Isles*, but was written after. This one is marginally better than *Conan Of The Isles* but still pretty rough. At least there's no scuba gear.

That's all I'm going to say about the story. This review will focus on the introduction by Lin Carter. It is ridiculous. It was very nice of De Camp to give Carter a crack at writing an intro but what a load of tripe. It starts with a pretty good first paragraph:

“This novel is set in a world where there are no television talk shows, no income taxes, no commuter trains, no air pollution, no nuclear crises or campus riots or midi skirts.”

Well, actually, there *were* income taxes in Conan's world; failure to pay resulted in imprisonment or death. I have not heard of this midi skirt but, if it's like a mini skirt, they had those in Conan's world, too. Let's move on to the second paragraph:

“A world blissfully innocent of detergent commercials, thirty cent subway fares, Spiro T. Agnew speeches, freeze dried coffee, electric toothbrushes, pornographic movies from Denmark, draft dodgers, Women's Lib and the Los Angeles Freeway.”

Translation: I am an uptight, sexist, porn watching weirdo. I can't vouch for Spiro but Carter *seems* to be saying all these things are negative and Conan's world does not contain these things. Perhaps I'm wrong. I see nothing negative about the Women's Liberation movement. And what's wrong with draft dodgers? Not everyone wants to risk death for no good reason. Also, I thought all good old school porn came from Sweden. Shows you what I know.

The writing continues in this sophomoric, adolescent fashion throughout this tired introduction. Examples:

“A gorgeous, improbable, romantic world where all the men are handsome and heroic, all the girls

impossibly beautiful and willing to dally back of the arena with a gladiator or two.”

Well, actually, not all the men in Conan’s world were handsome and many fewer were heroic. As for the women, they didn’t seem to have a lot of choice who they dallied with as they were considered property except in the rare instances, such as Conan’s old girlfriend, Belit.

“This is the world of a popular new kind of fiction we call Sword & Sorcery. Welcome to it!”

Thanks, Lin, but this “popular new kind of fiction” was at least forty years old by the time you and De Camp wrote this ridiculous piece of crap.

First paragraph, page 10, Carter says many people think reading for sheer entertainment is a crime and that a story “should really come to grips with something crucial and important.” Examples given:

“... like the oil slick on Laguna beach, or the vanishing yellow crested sandpiper. At the very least, such persons advise, the hero should be a Negro striving to free his people, a homosexual gaily battling for social recognition, a concerned college youth protesting the iniquities of the Pentagon by blowing up his English Lit class, or an Amerindian getting back at the paleskins by seizing control of Alcatraz.”

Now, I get his point, which is that escapist literature is enjoyable for what it is, not for what it means. The problem is the way he says it. It’s disrespectful and dismissive. This may not have been Carter’s intent, but that only highlights his ignorance.

One of the things I find most offensive about these fine gentlemen is that they essentially used something someone else (in this case, Robert E. Howard) created to make a lot of money. That phenomenon is nothing new but it’s always suspect. Carter gives a brief bio of Howard, ending with the statement, “He died [in Cross Plains] in 1936 when I was a little boy. I never knew him at all.” No, of course you didn’t, but you went ahead and capitalized off him, didn’t you? Didn’t even blink, eh, Carter?

There’s a hilarious statement on page 13 about how, though De Camp is older than Carter, it was Carter who first read the Conan stories. You know, “I found it first!” Yeah, found it first, did it worst. It’s no insult to De Camp, though, because Carter calls De Camp one of the “greatest living masters of the craft.” Oh, brother. He talks about how he, De Camp and Nyberg worked in collaboration with Howard on these stories.

“Collaboration” doesn’t mean taking a dead man’s work and doing what you will with it. It must have been a thrill for these fanboy hacks to put their name next to Howard’s on a book cover. On page 15, Carter has the audacity to say that Howard “inadequately chronicled” Conan’s life. Yeah, because he’d moved on from Conan before he became troubled and depressed enough to take his own life, you money grubbing vulture!

Carter says that he, De Camp and Nyberg “probably added more wordage to the Conan saga than Howard wrote originally.” Wordage. That’s a fantastically accurate way to put it. *Wordage*. Wordage sounds like mediocre filler. Even when reading for sheer entertainment, I expect more than mediocrity. I expect passion and talent, neither of which are present in the Conan stories of De Camp, Carter and Nyberg.

I realize I’m being pretty caustic here, but I think it’s at least somewhat appropriate. De Camp must have pissed himself the day he found those “unfinished manuscripts” in Howard’s estate. Sure, partially because he’s a fan, but he had to know how much he had to gain by capitalizing on those Conan fans who Carter says were “clamoring for more.” Can you imagine if two half wit musicians decided they were going to continue The Beatles without John, Paul, George or Ringo? It would have been crap. At least in that instance, though, the two half wits would have gotten their asses sued off. Thanks to Robert E. Howard and Glen Lord, these

jokers got a career out of it.

At least Frazetta's cover art kicks ass.

M. Jones says

I'll start with a quote from a different source entirely: "If ya don't like singing, stay outa the opera." (Hamilton Khan).

Staring moodily past the language (cliches, surfeits of synonyms, and strings of unnecessary adjectives) as well as the universally aimed body-image stereotypes (all women are buxom and "bouncing", all men are tall and strong, except the mean, meek, and mischievous ones, who are all short and weedy), this is a stick of seaside rock/candy cane with the word ROMP printed in big pink tooth-rotting letters all the way through it. No real twists, but twists for twists' sake are just twistle. Lots of fairground fun: you might regret it a tiny bit afterwards, but just go with it.

Bob says

Conan the Buccaneer, by L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter is the sixth book in the Ace series by de Camp and Carter (and that Howard fellow...). In William Galen Gray's chronology it is the seventy-fifth Conan tale, following Robert E. Howard's The Pool of the Black One and taking place before Howard's Red Nails.

When I read one of these books from the De Camp/Carter corpus, I try to remember that these were unusual. The glut of pastiches available to us today weren't written yet. Fans of Conan only had Robert E. Howard's original tales. The sword-swinging Cimmerian wasn't yet quite the fantasy icon he is today (now THAT is understatement). So they were doing something new. The library of Conan tales was small and they were plowing relatively virgin soil.

Interestingly enough, he's not a pirate this time out, and his buccaneering activities as a privateer for King Ferdrugo don't really come into play much, except that he has a ready crew and ship available (which is certainly handy).

A nice aspect is the inclusion of Zarono and Thoth Amon, characters from Howard's tales. Also, Sigurd and Juma are characters that appear in other de Camp and Carter stories. Bearing in mind that there weren't very many Conan tales and the now prolific cast of characters, this was a treat to the fan.

On the Conan sex scale, this one is pretty modest. He becomes the love slave of an amazon queen (yes, seriously), but that's about it.

What we do have is the standard quest for treasure and a damsels in distress. Basically, it's a chase book. Conan chases a boat. Then he is chased. Then he chases it some more. Then he chases somebody else. There's also a hurried voyage that is sort of a 'chase after the fact.' If you like Conan hurrying to and fro, you've got it here. Combat-wise, I'd say, for 90% of the book, it's got the lowest body count of any novel-length tales in the entire saga. Possibly so even after the climax.

I rather enjoyed Conan the Buccaneer, though it isn't a standout. Perhaps because it reflects a time before a relentless publishing schedule buried us in plot-thin Conan books (my last review was Conan the Indomitable: ugh). And, it does fill in Zaronos' background. The fallen count is key player in Howard's The Black Stranger, which was renamed (for the better) The Treasure of Tranicos by Carter/de Camp.

This one is definitely worth a read, but it doesn't quite feel 'weighty' enough; though that certainly does not make it unique in that regard among stories of the muscle bound barbar.

David Sarkies says

This book is just plain bad

18 August 2012

I probably should not comment on the introduction to this book because somebody has already done a really good job at tearing it apart, though I must admit that this particular person seemed to have a bee in his bonnet regarding the fact that de Camp and Carter have gone and made a bucket load of money off of somebody else's idea. Now, while that is true, the fact that Howard has been dead for a very long time, and that his Conan stories were very popular, taking the concept and working with it is probably not all that bad. Okay, Conan was not what I would call 'canned fiction' in the sense that the Hardy Boys were, but still, as Carter says in the introduction, Conan is pulp fiction, and was never intended to be anything more than pulp fiction.

Personally, I do not mind pulp fiction, as long as the story and the writing are good. There are thousands of books on the shelves of bookstores these days, and with the development of portable e-readers such as the Kindle, this is only going to increase a thousand fold. Take Goodreads for instance: there is a part of the site where people can produce their own stories for others to read (and you can also self-publish on Amazon). The fact that the publisher has now effectively been sidelined, anybody and everybody can publish content, and it does not need to be all that good. The challenge is, though, to be able to sift through all of the rubbish and find things that are worth reading. Remember, reading a book tends to take a lot more time than watching a movie, and while writing a book is a lot cheaper than making a movie, reading them tends to be a lot more time consuming.

Now, I bitterly disagree with Carter that Homer was little more than Ancient Greek pulp fiction. The fact that the Odyssey was used as the standardised text book to teach children simply raises it far above that. Teachers do not use pulp fiction to teach children these days, and many teachers will fly into a rage if you even thought of writing a book review on such works. However, we must also remember that what one person considers literature is not what somebody else might consider literature. In fact I have been tempted at times to go up to owners of bookshops to ask them how they determine what is literature and what is not.

This book was written in 1971, and while Howard can, to an extent (as there is no excuse for racism) can be excused for making his bad guys Negroes or Arabs, by the time Carter and de Camp came around, things had changed. However, I discovered as I made my way through this book that this was not the case. It appears that simply because Howard made the Negroes bad, does not mean that the later authors can do so either, however it appears that de Camp and Carter have done just that.

Now, this book is bad, very, very bad. There seems to be no consistent plot and the story itself was very hard to follow. While I find other books to be in the same category, there is an excuse. These other books were

written hundreds of years ago which makes contextualisation difficult. This book, though, was written post civil rights movement, and as such there is no excuse for demonising Negroes, as has been done here.

The other problem that I found, other than bad writing that is, was that the book was hard to follow (which is probably a symptom of bad writing). I simply could not see a major plot which moved the book from the beginning to the end. This book simply seemed to be Conan going on a journey and encountering things along the way, only to end with him killing somebody that he did not particularly like. Also, the book was badly written (did I say that already, oh well, I guess I am making an important point). In a way I was looking forward to a full length Conan novel, however when I did get to reading this one I discovered that I was sorely let down. I simply could not wait to finish this book to move on to something better.

I think, thus, I will stick with my friend's opinion. If you want Conan, read the Howard originals and simply sideline the de Camp and Carter stories. There are much better books out there to read, so you don't need to read some book that has effectively been plagiarised by some later authors, as has happened here.

Charlie Devlin says

Honestly the best stories of Conan packed into a great interconnected story against the insidious lord Thoth. Conan at his best.

Colin Dwyer says

Worst book I've read where the author wasn't attempting to create some iconic work of art. I appreciate that the author (is it carter or sprague. . what's up with that?) embraces the crappiness of pulp fiction. As a closet Howard-Conan fan(?) the writing in this just doesn't flow with the rich and decadent extremes that Howard's writing does. Best part of the book is the Frazetta painting on the cover. You would read five pages, put it down because you can't stand how bad it is, then you would see that badass Frazetta cover, enticing you to continue and endure five more painfully written pages. The most I could read at one time was on a 5-hour flight with nothing else to do, I stomached an hour of it. A well-written book will lead you through the pages like a leaf on a stream. This was like rollerblading on cobblestones.

Derek says

Ehh. Definitely not the best Conan book. The plot was convoluted and jumped from place to place. Certain characters acted completely against their nature. There was just no real driving force behind this one.

Charles says

Strictly pastiche work. Readable but it isn't really Conan.
