

Conan the Barbarian: A Literary Odyssey Through the 1970s and 1990s with Roy Thomas



: The Birth of a Legend

Conan the Barbarian, the iconic character created by Robert E. Howard in the 1930s, has captured the imagination of generations with his unparalleled strength, ferocity, and indomitable spirit. The character's literary journey has spanned decades, with numerous authors contributing to his mythos. Among them, Roy Thomas stands as a towering figure, having shaped Conan's adventures in the comic book medium for over two decades.



Conan The Barbarian (1970-1993) #70 by Roy Thomas

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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The Marvel Years: 1970-1993

Roy Thomas's association with Conan began in the early 1970s, during his tenure as editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics. Recognizing the character's potential, Thomas and writer Gary Friedrich launched the first Conan the Barbarian comic book series in October 1970. The series quickly became a bestseller, with Thomas's intricate storytelling and John Buscema's dynamic artwork capturing the essence of Howard's creation.

Thomas's Conan stories delved deeply into the character's psyche, exploring his motivations, fears, and desires. He introduced iconic villains such as Thulsa Doom and Zara, as well as memorable supporting characters like the Red Sonja and the wizard Thoth-Amon. Through his deft

handling, Thomas imbued Conan with a depth and complexity that had been hinted at in Howard's original stories.

The Dark Horse Years: 1985-1992

In 1985, Marvel's license to publish Conan comics expired, and the rights reverted to Conan Properties International. The series was subsequently picked up by Dark Horse Comics, with Thomas continuing as writer. During the Dark Horse era, Thomas's Conan stories took a darker and more introspective turn, reflecting the changing cultural landscape of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Thomas explored the consequences of Conan's violent past, his struggles with self-doubt, and his search for redemption. He also introduced new characters and storylines that further expanded the Conan mythos. Among the most memorable of these creations was the Witchblade, a sentient weapon that played a significant role in Conan's later adventures.

The Return of Conan: 1993

In 1993, Dark Horse Comics published a new Conan the Barbarian film based on the character's Marvel Comics adventures. The film, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the title role, became a commercial success and further cemented Conan's status as a pop culture icon. Thomas was heavily involved in the film's development, serving as a consultant and co-writing the screenplay.

Legacy and Influence

Roy Thomas's contribution to the Conan the Barbarian legacy is immeasurable. Through his work on the character's comic book adventures, he helped shape Conan's personality, motivations, and place in

the Hyborian Age. His intricate storytelling and dynamic collaboration with artists such as John Buscema, Barry Windsor-Smith, and Mike Mignola elevated the character to new heights.

Thomas's influence on Conan is evident not only in the comics but also in the film adaptations and other spin-off works. The 1993 Conan film drew heavily on Thomas's characterization and storylines, and subsequent Conan comics and novels have continued to build upon his foundation.

: A Timeless Adventure

Roy Thomas's journey with Conan the Barbarian is a testament to the enduring power of storytelling. Through his imagination, he breathed new life into a character created decades earlier, captivating readers and inspiring them to explore the thrilling and dangerous world of Hyboria. Conan's adventures, as shaped by Thomas, continue to resonate with audiences around the world, proving that the timeless tale of a barbarian warrior's quest for glory and redemption has the power to endure and inspire for generations to come.



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