



## Prisoner of the Horned Helmet

*James Silke , Frank Frazetta (Illustrator)*

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**Prisoner of the Horned Helmet** James Silke , Frank Frazetta (Illustrator)

\*taken from the back cover

In an age before Atlantis rose, an age rife with sorcery and violence, the earth trembled beneath the all-conquering hooves of the Kitzaak Horde, and only one man, Gath of Baal, dares to confront the Kitzaak lances to stand between the never-defeated armies and the lush valley that will, long millenia in the future, be known as the Mediterranean Sea. To save the peaceful People of the Forest, Gath must dice with the gods, and the price he must pay is to become death made flesh, the Prisoner of the Horned Helmet.

## Prisoner of the Horned Helmet Details

Date : Published February 1988 by Tor Books (first published January 1st 1988)

ISBN : 9780812538236

Author : James Silke , Frank Frazetta (Illustrator)

Format : Mass Market 314 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Heroic Fantasy, Sword and Sorcery



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## **From Reader Review Prisoner of the Horned Helmet for online ebook**

### **Charles says**

This was first in a series of books based on Frank Frazetta's painting of Death Dealer. There are 4 in the series and all have covers featuring the Death Dealer character.

I had very high hopes for these and they didn't quite live up to what I hoped for, but that's not the author's fault. They were in general pretty good, with an interesting character and a lot of bloody good fighting.

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### **Kyra Dune says**

The Kitzaak Horde is overtaking and devouring all the land they come across. When they reach the lands of forest dwelling barbarians the never defeated army seems assured of victory. Only one man, Gath of Baal, has any hope of stopping them. With the help of a magical helmet belonging to the Master of Darkness, Gath becomes the Death Dealer, an unstoppable demon with a thirst for blood. But the helmet extracts a price for its service; one that may cost Gath his life.

At first, it was a little hard for me to get into this book because there wasn't a clearly defined main character. It's a big story and requires a number of varied viewpoints to tell. But once Gath and Robin Lakehair, and old Brown John get into the picture the story is rolling along nicely. I liked the characters once I got a chance to know them. There's plenty of action in the book and a little romance. I like the voice of the story, although I did have to roll my eyes a little at the way the two main female characters, Robin and Cobra, were described.

I enjoyed the story and look forward to reading the next one in the series.

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### **Sam says**

One of the few series that I have read multiple times and I believe it's time for another read.

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### **Jakk Makk says**

Fine entertainment, if you like this sort of thing.

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### **Eric Woods says**

An underrated and little known series but one that drips sword and sorcery from every page. Demons, dark

gods, drug swayed decadence, black magic, brutality, wonder, and even a sprinkling of innocence. The book has it all in grand fashion.

Plus it's cover art is Frank Frazetta. It's worth having on your shelf for that alone.

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### **Serpent Deceiver says**

Gath is like Conan.. if Conan had a learning disability. I'd say he is a bad character, but he has no character in the first place. The moron stares and grunts throughout the entire book while bland sidekicks lead the way.

I thought I was getting some old-school, pulpy sword-and-sorcery. Instead I read a book about heaving chests and straining muscles. Seriously, the way the author describes everything has some weird sexual undertones that I didn't want.. at all.

Huge miss here. I want more stuff like Howard and Moorcock and thought this might fill that want, but no. Not close.

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### **Michael says**

"It has been said that art is a tryst, for in the joy of it maker and beholder meet." ~Kojiro Tomita

I feel like I got fucked by this one. So, so bad.

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### **Matt says**

A solid sword and sorcery novel painting a bleak world that is magical, interesting, deadly, and gritty. Do not think you are stepping into a Tolkien fantasy when you open this one, this is a real, adult, and dangerous world.

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### **David says**

So much better than I was expecting. A really fun, fast-paced Sword and Sorcery origin tale. I utterly devoured this book in a few hours. Really looking forward to reading the rest of this four-part series. Highly recommended to all Fantasy fans, especially those who love the artwork of Frazetta.

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### **Jason says**

My older brothers bought the Death Dealer books as they were coming out, so I was familiar with the character from an early age. It was not until I was in my early teens that I read them for myself, and I read through the quartet again while living on my own in Arizona (sometime in early 2003). I have been in need

of some good fantasy, so I dusted off the Death Dealer and read the first book again.

Though I enjoyed the books a great deal in my youth, I was surprised at how poorly they were written. James Silke makes use of numerous metaphors that are, in my opinion, very poor. He also writes in a style that I shall call “hyper-masculine” in which girls are typically dainty little things with many “pert” parts, and more innocent than newborn babies.

What the author excels at is writing in a pulp fiction format in which every chapter leaves you hanging onto the edge. Characters are larger than life and established by their very presence before any action is even taken. Although the story does not seem very unique at first- barbarian people threatened by foreign conquerors, the Horned Helmet itself and the nature of the invaders makes the story very interesting and filled with twists and turns worthy of a weekly serial.

The Death Dealer books depend on a strong visual style in which people, places, and events are described in detail, but no time is lost. Everything must move forward, and the chapters are generally one or two pages. Compared to a lot of the fiction out there, the Death Dealer books, and the first one in particular, are much better than what is out there. Still, the poor execution does make the story feel like a cheap B-budget barbarian movie sometimes. I suppose that should not surprise me since the author was the writer of some of the less memorable Hollywood movie scripts.

### 3.5 Characters

The characters in the story are rich, complex, and very vibrant. They’re easy to envision, but not always easy to predict. Brown John is an interesting character, and Gath of Baal is distinct from other well-known barbarian heroes such as Conan. Female characters are generally caricatures though, with simple motivations and actions that are tired, predictable, and sexist.

### 4.5 Pace

The pace of the book is red-hot. It hardly ever slows down, chapters average two or three pages, and the hero is engaged in bloody battle within ten pages of the beginning.

### 4 Story

I like this story a lot. The idea of a powerful warrior imprisoned by a demonic helmet is interesting, but I also love the Kitzakks, the Grillards, and the power struggle over the fate of Gath of Baal by Brown John and Cobra, with Robin Lakehair in the middle of it all.

### 2.5 Dialogue

Most of the dialogue is decent and appropriate, but it also feels too predictable at times. Brown John, despite his roots as a performer and actor, is frequently too verbose. I didn’t feel his arguments were strong enough. In general, I thought his talk to Robin in Chapter 12 was weak, but his conversation with Gath in Chapter 57 was a good example of his character. Gath’s dialogue was suited to his temperament, but he used a few too many barbarian clichés at times (such as “You lie”).

### 2 Style/Technical

There was almost no moment that I didn’t cringe while reading. Though I love the story, characters, and fast pace, there is something in the technical execution that I do not like. Descriptions were broken into too many one-word sentences, many of the metaphors felt insipid or needlessly macho, and the author seemed to focus a lot of his energy on something that could be described as “majestic” or “epic” when he should have simply focused on the story.

### 3.3 Overall

“Prisoner of the Horned Helmet” is a good fantasy book, and far better than most of the other fantasy out there, but not a great book in its own right. Tolkien and Howard produced superior work, and James Silke

relies on a hyper-masculine story that feels clichéd and corny. At the same time, his characters are generally vibrant, the fight scenes exciting, and the pace unrelenting. If it were not for the frequent mild pornographic content, I could recommend this book to anybody.

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### **Ward G says**

Enter a realm of myths, barbarians and magic.

Simply put, if you like the Conan stories.  
You most likely will enjoy this.  
Gath is a large warrior living in seclusion.  
When enemy invaders, begin targeting his woodlands.

Add some magic, gods, goddesses, along with a cursed helmet.  
Sorcery and savagery.  
With a nice amount of detail to settings and good story flow.  
Not bad for an opening book, in a series.  
Added bonus.  
The Frank Frazetta artwork on the covers.

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### **Mike says**

Dark, dirty and well written. The finale's action and imagery is something to look forward to. I will read this book again and again.

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### **Brenna says**

My boyfriend loves this series. He knows that I love to read so he gave me the first book. It took a minute to get into it but boy am I glad that I stayed with it. Is it the best book ever written? No. But it has good entertainment value. I look forward to reading the rest of this series.

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### **Dirk Grobbelaar says**

In 1973 Frank Frazetta painted **The Death Dealer**. It is a rather provocative piece of work as far as fantasy art goes, featuring a sinister figure atop a large black steed and wielding a bloody axe; face lost in shadow except for two smouldering red eyes gazing contemptuously out of the frame. It also has its own Wikipedia entry.

*He stripped each body and made a blanket from their leather tunics. He heaped their armor and weapons along with his broken axe and helmet on the blanket, tied them in a bundle. He drank from the stream in animal fashion, and washed most of the dry blood and gore off his body. Then he picked up the bundle,*

*heaved it to his back, and started down a narrow trail beside the stream.*

In 1988, the first in a series of novels entitled “Frank Frazetta’s Death Dealer” was published: it was titled **Prisoner of the Horned Helmet**. The author (James Silke) draws his inspiration directly from Frazetta’s painting, and strives to infuse the story with the same menace and grittiness that Frazetta so successfully portrayed. It is also, unsurprisingly, a nod to the works of Robert E. Howard and his contemporaries. The prose is purple and the battles are bloody; the somewhat psychotic (anti) hero protagonist says nary a word and scantily clad maidens swoon at the first sign of danger.

Politically correct this may not be, but it **is** powerful stuff. The first battle featuring Gath of Baal (a.k.a. the Death Dealer) is nothing short of breathtaking. He is somewhat invincible, which negates the stress factor to an extent, but *hot-damn* if I’d gotten hold of this in my teenage years I may well have pursued a career in pillaging or, barring that, writing.

*He was a massive horned demon of black metal and sinew graced by golden light, drinking air and holding the bridge with booted feet as if all the elements were personal possessions. The helmet had transformed him. He was death, and he had never felt so alive.*

Does the novel succeed in what it sets out to do, i.e. to bring to life the Death Dealer of Frazetta’s painting? To an extent, sure enough, but it does have some shortcomings: the plot is on the thin side and there is no character development to speak of. It’s a simplistic and occasionally silly story, but hey, who cares? They don’t make them like this anymore. If anything, you need to read this for the adrenaline fueled and uncompromising fighting sequences. Also: if you really wanted to, you could think of this book as “Beauty and the Beast” on some seriously hardcore enhancement drugs.

Finally, a note on the cover art, also by Frank Frazetta. I always appreciate it if I am able to relate the cover of a book to its contents. In this instance we have Gath of Baal laying into some slave drivers at the ruins of a place called “Chela Kong”. Yes, it’s in the book.

I’ll be rating this quite high, thank you very much. Nothing wrong with some pulpy goodness every now and then, although it’s not **quite** as good as, say, Karl Edward Wagner’s Dark Crusade.

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### **Tony Reyes says**

This was a revisit for me, I read it a couple of times before. I just truly enjoy the art of Frazetta and for one of his creations to have a few books that give it life....well I am willing to give it a try. I think this is my favorite in the series. Though I have enjoyed the others quite a bit.

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