



Conan the Invincible

Robert Jordan

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Conan is ensnared by the charms of the wily and beautiful Karela, who is secretly the Red Hawk, fearless leader of a crew of brigands. She leads Conan to face the awesome challenge of the serpentine evil necromancer Amanar.

Conan the Invincible Details

Date : Published February 1st 1998 by Tor Books (first published 1982)

ISBN : 9780812542257

Author : Robert Jordan

Format : Paperback 288 pages

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

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From Reader Review Conan the Invincible for online ebook

Ben says

This is my first Conan experience outside of the '80s films and whatever-the-shit that 2011 abomination was. I've put some time into the Age of Conan MMO as well, so I've got a little background in the world.

I started here solely based on Robert Jordan's name, hoping above all that he'd gained his unintelligible never-ending cycle of generic crap trait after Eye of the World. Knowing a little about Conan, I came into this expecting blood, tits, and violence, along with some sorcery for good measure.

I got all those things, but unfortunately it's wrapped up in a vomit taco that's about as discernible as writing your senior thesis on a feminine napkin and then accidentally using it as intended while blackout drunk on margaritas and shots of Patron at Don Pablo's happy hour on Wednesdays. I've seen thesaurus-flinging word drops before, but never like this.

It's as if Jordan read a thesaurus cover-to-cover in one sitting, then, while on a literary high, wrote down the most inane synonyms for common words he could think of, then injected them into a basic sword-and-sorcery setting that happened to have the Conan name attached. Since this is my first foray into the universe, I could be going at this all wrong if it's actually a staple of the Conan name. If that's the case, I have no idea how this series makes any money whatsoever.

The narrative is interesting enough for all couple hundred pages, and despite the word drops it's a fast read. The casual semi-rape was off-color, though the last few pages were humorous enough for a laugh-out-loud chuckle of redemption. I guess it's a shadow of '80s fantasy tropes. I don't know, it's not like I was (view spoiler) or anything, it was simply dumb.

In all, the convoluted garbage writing is what really killed it for me. If there was a time in which people actually spoke like this colloquially, it seriously is no wonder that we haven't had time-traveling visitors from the future--why the hell would they want to come back to this poppycock?!

Doppelganger says

This book was a very refreshing read for me. It was a welcome throw back to the stripped down, raw style of fantasy that I haven't read in a while. Although I haven't read any other Conan books to date, Robert Jordan really seemed to nail the prominent barbarians character. The story is well written (of course, its Robert Jordan), fast paced and has an energy that will keep you turning pages, right up until the very end. There are other excellent characters in the book that I hope will make an appearance in his other Conan novels I will soon be reading; most notably Karela, the beautiful red haired brigand leader known as the Red Hawk, and Hordo, the one-eyed brigand who is Karela's right hand man.

If you've ever read any of Jordan's work or even if you haven't and just enjoy a quick read of some good, solid and raw fantasy, I would check out his Conan books. I have a feeling I'm going to enjoy every one in this series.

Jim says

Good escapist fare.

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Malum says

Like many pastiches, there are some good bits here and there, but it's certainly not perfect.

We have lizard men, evil sorcerers, and a couple of love interests (one of which is pretty bad ass in her own right) for our hero and his mighty thews to manhandle in various ways. I also liked how it takes place in and around Shadizar, which gave it a bit of a Middle-East/Arabian Nights feel. The epilogue was also really funny.

It got bogged down, however, by the fact that a large part of the book is basically a long journey where everyone is incessantly arguing with one another. It was like watching a family road trip unfold. The bad guy also acts like your typical moronic villain that would rather posture than kill anyone when he has the chance.

Stuart Dean says

Though this one was published first, I read Conan the Magnificent previously. By doing so I became intimately familiar with Conan the Invincible. In both books Conan is thieving in Shadizar. Conan gets beaten to his loot by someone else. Conan takes off into the hills after a young girl. Conan meets a beautiful older woman leading a group of tough men. They encounter hillmen, soldiers, and a sorcerer. And there's a dragon at the end.

I enjoyed Conan the Magnificent, but not so much that I wanted to read it again two weeks later renamed Conan the Invincible. This is some seriously lazy writing. Maybe Jordan needed a quick paycheck or he was up against a deadline and needed something in a hurry, but I'm not impressed. It was well written and entertaining, but so was the other one. I sometimes lost track of which book I was reading. I haven't read any of the Wheel of Time stuff and if it's more like this then I'm not inclined to start.

Aaron White says

Classic Conan. Fast paced, well told - Jordan does a good job.

Scott Lee says

This is not my first Conan, but it's my first Conan not in comics form. Howard created a fascinating character and world, and there have been numerous comics arcs over the years that I've really enjoyed, but I'd just never quite gotten into it enough to get around to the novels. Even at this point it was my completist streak as a collector that led to this novel as I'm a tremendous Wheel of Time/Robert Jordan fan and so I had to have everything he's written.

I enjoyed the novel. It's a fascinating world, Conan is well represented and avoids seeming like a the serious version of Gru the Wanderer that he reminds me of in the weaker stories I've read over the years. The handling of the character is realistic (within the world) and echoes of Howard's own Barbarian Vs. Civilization theme resonates nicely under the service of a well-written adventure tale. I really enjoyed the book, and Jordan drew me in as I pressed on. He doesn't get a lot of credit as a writer, the way a Neil Gaiman does, or even Tad Williams and Patrick Rothfuss do. And He's not a writer in their league in the sense of his direct handling of the language. I think that's probably intentional, a conscious choice to be closer to Asimov's clarity or Orwell's clear pane of glass theory than the slightly more aesthetically wordy authors mentioned above. Still whether he's not quite as good at the sentence-by-sentence level as the best in the field, or whether it's a deliberate choice to chose clarity over extra beauty his tremendous skill as a story teller couples with a definitely more than adequate skill as a user of the English language. I don't think he gets the credit he deserves in part because he just isn't showy. Still there were lines here and there with a spare beauty that echoed the harsh, wild beauty of Howard's world and characters. I think what I liked best about the novel was discovering Jordan all over again in a new place with a new voice. I'll be reading more with anticipation now.

Ronald Wilcox says

First in a series of novels about Conan that fill in gaps of the barbarian's life between Howard's original stories. Conan is but 18 years of age and still just a thief. He is hired by a sorcerer to steal five pendants given as a gift to a local king but the pendants are stolen by a group of pilgrims before Conan can retrieve them. He must follow and join forces with the Red Hawk and her band of marauders. Gods, demons, sorcerers, torture, serpents all the classic elements of Conan tales are here

Nicolas says

Comme beaucoup d'entre vous le savent, je suis un fan du musculeux barbare sous la plupart de ses incarnations : le cinéma, les romans, tout ça ça me plaît bien. Alors, qu'est-ce qui pourrait m'empêcher d'apprécier cet assez court roman où, encore une fois, le barbare va affronter un mal innommable pour le renvoyer dans les profondeurs dont il n'aurait jamais dû sortir ?

Si ce roman avait été l'oeuvre de Howard, rien, évidemment, n'aurait pu m'empêcher de louer les formidables qualités narratives de ces épopées barbares, qui renvoient le Seigneur des anneaux à son rôle de pensum diarrhéique (1). Seulement voilà, l'auteur n'est pas l'illustre dépressif, mais un vulgaire gratté-papier du nom de Robert Jordan. Vous savez, celui de La roue du temps(2) ? Et il s'avère que certains éléments, qu'on peut croire spécifiques à son grand oeuvre, sont en fait des éléments propres à son univers, comme par exemple la

guerre des sexes, présentée ici par l'opposition entre notre héros parmi tous et celle qu'on surnomme le Faucon rouge mais qui n'en a qu'assez peu les traits. Et vous pouvez me croire, essayer de faire rentrer le guerrier taciturne dans la peau de l'homme perplexe devant les insondables mystères de la féminité, ça ne marche absolument pas. Du coup, l'un des ressorts principaux de l'intrigue tombe à plat, et le lecteur (moi en l'occurrence) essaye de se refaire une santé avec de la bagarre, de l'héroïsme, du sanglant, bref, du Conan ! Après tout, on est quand même là pour ça, non ? Et bien non, l'auteur n'assure même pas le minimum de prouesses physiques qui auraient rompu tout autre homme. Et ça, c'est vraiment ignoble. D'autant plus que l'absence totale de style du récit rend le héros totalement ordinaire, prolixe dans ses paroles et presque conscient de ses actes (ce qui est quand même un comble pour ce monument du "Carpe Diem"). Est-ce que ça vaut le coup que j'aille plus loin ? je ne crois pas. Ce livre est un authentique roman de gare, terminé et oublié deux heures après avoir été commencé, et je me demande même ce qui a bien pu me prendre de lire un truc pareil. A bon entendeur,..

(1) Dit comme ça, ça fait comme si je ne pouvais pas piffer cet oeuvre surdimensionnée, surmédiatisée. Bon, en fait, c'est un peu la vérité, sauf que ça a donné de vrais bons films. Mais Conan a lui aussi donné au moins un authentique chef-d'oeuvre.

(2) qui comme monstruosité littéraire bodybuildée ramène l'annuaire des terres du milieu suscité au rang de lecture d'après-midi brumeuse.

Kevin Rubin says

This is the first time I've read a non-Howard Conan story in at least 10 years.

"Conan the Invincible" is a Conan novel by Robert Jordan, from before he started his own work with the Wheel of Time series, when he was still writing stories about Robert E. Howard's character. When it was first printed in the 80's the cover said "No one alive writes Conan better than Robert Jordan" but he's gone now, and the book certainly isn't any better...

In this we follow a less than 19 year old Conan, already a master thief, already letting most of his money slip through his fingers on wine and women, from the Desert district of Shadizar in Zamora on the trail of some gems and a slave girl he promised to free.

Along the way he twice saves the life of Karela, also known as the Red Falcon, the leader of the most feared bandits around Zamora, and then is captured by her band. As usual, he quickly goes from being captive to virtually a leader, but not quite in this case.

He shows some leadership and strategy skills by several times pitting enemies chasing the band against each other, with narrow escapes.

And a final confrontation with the evil sorcerer who uses the gems for magic protection and the slave girls as sacrifices...

Jordan's writing is pretty rotten and Conan didn't feel like Conan, not Robert E. Howard's Conan. In "The Invincible" Conan swears oaths to the gods and refuses to break them, even when he wishes he could to save Karela at the end, compared to Howard's Conan who wouldn't make oaths to the gods anyway, and if so, would still always do what he thinks is right anyway, gods be damned...

Jordan writes quite a bit, here and there, about the womens' breasts in it, whether it's Conan or the evil mage who's fondling or staring. Not that that's a bad thing, but it just makes the character not seem like Conan.

Overall, a mediocre fantasy book, that would work better by itself if he didn't bring down Conan.

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Shivesh says

Robert Jordan is best known for his Wheel of Time series, but recent bad press on that work plus his untimely death has cast a pall over that series for me. From what I understand it could have been a legendary fantasy epic, a Tolkien for our time (although there is no way he or anyone would be able to match Lord of the Rings). But I have heard much about Jordan's descriptive style and rhetoric. Plus I love Conan. Put 'em together and we have Jordan's first Conan novel from 1982, taking a tale from Conan's youth trade as a thief of Shadizar, a corrupt little city near Aquilonia, his future kingdom. This adventure begins when our young hero is hired by a disguised wizard to retrieve a treasure of jewels, which have been stolen from the King by a necromancer in the wilderness. Conan, fearing nothing, chases the treasure to the shadowed fortress of the evil sorcerer, which is guarded by thousands of reptile creatures 'from an age before Man.' On the way, our hero encounters plenty of naked women, an insecure bandit princess and her group of raiders, a Kingdom guard, primitive hillmen and foul sorcery.

This being Jordan's first Conan book you can tell he is gaining his feel for the character, who after all an icon in the fantasy genre. However, there is a huge difference in most Conan fare - this is the down and dirty fantastical, the so-called "sword & sorcery" epic. There are no elves or dwarves or magical beings to be seen. Mostly, the magic comes from evil sorcerors conducting terrifying spells using the blood of newborns and the horn of a unicorn, etc., so all things magical are to be distrusted. Indeed, it goes without saying that women are openly objectified in this genre: they are either seductresses or innocent waifs. There is no major complexity in the story or characters - they are archetypes of stuff told long before Howard conjured up Conan the Cimmerian. But these archetypes work well when the rules governing their world are obeyed and stereotypes stay true to form. In fact it is quite entertaining.

The only real heroic power to be admired is the cold steel of the barbarian and his twisted sense of honor. In 'Conan the Invincible', our hero somehow sticks to his sense of honor throughout his adventures. Repeatedly, Jordan evokes Conan's various oaths and vows, and stays consistent in keeping them, to the very end of the book.

We know, of course, that Conan triumphs over all adversaries by the end of this story. His future is even hinted at by other characters, who remark that the barbarian will one day be a general, or 'mayhap a King'. Conan is nonplussed. He is a thief and will remain a thief, he says. But we all know better.

And thus, Jordan succeeds quite well in the bounds he has set for Conan. Following the tone and temper of Howard's original Conan opus, Jordan gives us another great story in a fantastical firmament already well populated by legends and stories. His writing is quite good here, filled with great imagery, description and savagery. However, he does stoop to telling, not showing. He frequently describes things as 'evil', instead of showing us why it is evil. For example, the necromancer's chamber 'permeates evil'. Well, okay. Not only that, some of the effects later on in the book regarding a god-demon and green smoke kind of reminds us of wacky and cheese-tastic '80s special effects... Hey, kind of like Arnold's movies! So this story fills the niche, and does it nicely.

We can only have so many expectations for a book that was undoubtedly dashed off quickly to the publisher in order to make the rent on time. In that spirit, this is truly a pulp fantasy novel of the best kind! For setting the right expectations and meeting them, Jordan gets 4 stars for his first Conan book.

If you are into high fantasy only, this may not be for you. If you like the Arnold movies, and cheesy sword tales, Jordan's book is great stuff. A light snack before plunging back into proper fantasy, 'Conan the Invincible' is still entertaining and well written.

Now I'll keep an eye out for Jordan's other Conan tales next time I am at the used bookshop.

Edwin Baeyens says

My review: <http://boekenzolder.blogspot.be/2016/...>

Chip Hunter says

Robert Jordan wrote this first Conan book in 1982, and it is a far cry from his later work on the Wheel of Time. That being said, I do think Jordan does a fair job of portraying the most famous sword and sorcery hero of all time. Conan represents an almost unstoppable force with a unique moral outlook, best described as an honorable thief. Jordan's battle scenes are bloody and quick, men are greedy and dirty, wizards are dark and sinister, and (best of all) women are sexy and usually naked.

'Conan the Invincible' tells of Conan accepting a job that turns out to be more than he expected. A strange wizard pays him to steal some jewels from the king of Zamora, but somebody beats him to it. As he tracks the thieves, he encounters a number of interesting characters that'll show up in following novels, including Kerala. Evil wizards and snake men pose quite a challenge to the young Conan, but nothing he can't handle.

Don't expect anything too deep or complicated here and you'll be pleased.
