



The Devil in Iron

Robert E. Howard

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Premium-sized adventure short featuring Conan. While one could say a lot against some of the sexist fantasies in Conan stories, Howard's stories always are crisp and satisfying through their completeness. Don't miss yet another from the master of adventure pulp!

The Devil in Iron Details

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Author : Robert E. Howard

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From Reader Review The Devil in Iron for online ebook

John says

Reading Conan never gets old...

Seth Kenlon says

A trap is set for Conan by a local ruler named Agha. Conan is lured to the island of Zapur, and the story gets wild.

If you like lost cities and elder gods and mystery, then this is a great Conan story for you. Interestingly, it's not my favourite, maybe because Conan doesn't get *that* much screen time. He doesn't even make an appearance, I think, til Chapter 4. That would be alright if the supporting cast was interesting but they're not, really, so all in all this one is light on Conan. It could make for a pretty good basis of an RPG scenario, maybe.

Not a bad story, just not the best of the original Robert E Howard ones.

Douglas says

I occasionally peruse Project Gutenberg "shelves" to see what's out there. I was looking over the science fiction section when I found The Devil in Iron by Robert E. Howard. It seemed to be pretty popular and though I had never heard of the book or the author before I gave it a shot.

So I'm reading along and even though it qualifies as science fiction because it takes place on another world, it is a sword and sorcery type story. Not my usual genera, but it wasn't too long and I occasionally like to read "a blast from the past" such as this. Pretty soon the characters start talking about a barbarian, ok. Then we find out the barbarian's name is Conan! I had stumbled on an early "Conan the Barbarian" story. I didn't even know the movies had started out as short stories and books.

The novelette is a typical 1930's story with a noble female character who faints at the drop of a hat, disobeys orders and endangers others, yet defends her honor at all costs.

This is a must read for Conan fans and fans of early 20th century fiction or just to reflect on how thankful we can be that things have changed.

Fred says

Fairly typical Robert E. Howard Conan story. I think that from the writing style of this one it was one of his earlier ones. It didn't seem quite as dark and gritty or polished as some of his better stories. It's interesting going from reading some of his later stories in the last few weeks back to this one. The differences were relatively glaring.

Matthew Hunter says

Meh. Breathless action at the end covers up for a weaker story. Conan's like a belligerent teenage boy. His "me love women, booze, and a good brawl" act falls flat with any hiccup or laziness in world-building. Simply put, Howard got lazy here. My recommendation? Start somewhere else in the Conan canon.

Steve Scott says

Conan saves the girl from evil...classic Conan. However at the end he forces himself on her, and she resists, unwilling. In what would be an Hollywood trope, he over powers her and she eventually melts in his arms.

It doesn't work that way in real life, of course. Women have never gone for that. Such behavior would get you arrested today, and rightly so.

Still a fun and well written read in spite of that. Howard was a master of English. I learn at least one new word with each of his stories.

Charles says

My copy of this is published by Grosset and Dunlap, and is a recreation of the Donald Grant editions. This one has "The Devil in Iron" and "Shadows in Zamboula," both Conan stories.

Timothy Boyd says

Robert E. Howard is my all time favorite writer, but for many years much of his work was heavily edited. This is another of the heavily edited collections of Robert E. Howard's stories. I am a purist when it comes to a writers works. I know some of these stories are no longer PC but they should be read as Howard wrote them and understood that he wrote in another time period. Don't read this book unless you just can't find any others of Howard's unedited books to read. Message me if you need a list of what is good from this awesome fantasy and action writer.

John says

Loved this from the perspective on Conan's enemies.
"Hey, he likes girls, let's use the cute slave girl as a trap."
And of course it blows up in their face.

Tasha says

Not as good as The People of the Black Circle, but who cares. Still fun!

Tom Marcinko says

Pulp classic, from (I think) a Gutenberg freebie.

Perry Whitford says

Conan leads the kozaks, or wastrels, a growing band of raiders that harry the mighty kingdom of Turan. Jehungir Agha, lord of Khawarizm and keeper of the coastal border is responsible for stopping them. His wily counsellor, Ghaznavi, must have read some of the previous chronicles and thinks he knows how to get to the barbarian - beautiful women and strong drink.

Using Octavia, the daughter of a Nemedian lord taken into slavery, as bait - especially chosen for her 'vitality and substantial figure'- the island of Xapur, which rises sheer from the Vilayet Sea, becomes the scene of a deadly trap for Conan and the resurrection of a thousand year old city and its transubstantiated being from the Abyss, Khosatral Khel.

'The Devil in Iron' is a curate's egg of a Conan chronicle, where some sloppy plotting is (almost) redeemed by a terrific full-throttled finale, where the mighty thews of the Cimmerian are thrice tested in a hat-trick of confrontations.

Seth Skorkowsky says

I've been on a Conan kick the past week and have been pounding through the Librivox audio library of Howard's classics.

Interesting monsters and world-building. The iron golem (for lack of a better term) was a fun concept, but the story itself felt more backseat than the other Conan adventures, and more of a means for Howard to show off some of the cool ideas. Definitely worth the read if you enjoy Conan, but it wouldn't be the first story I'd recommend to introduce a new reader to him.
