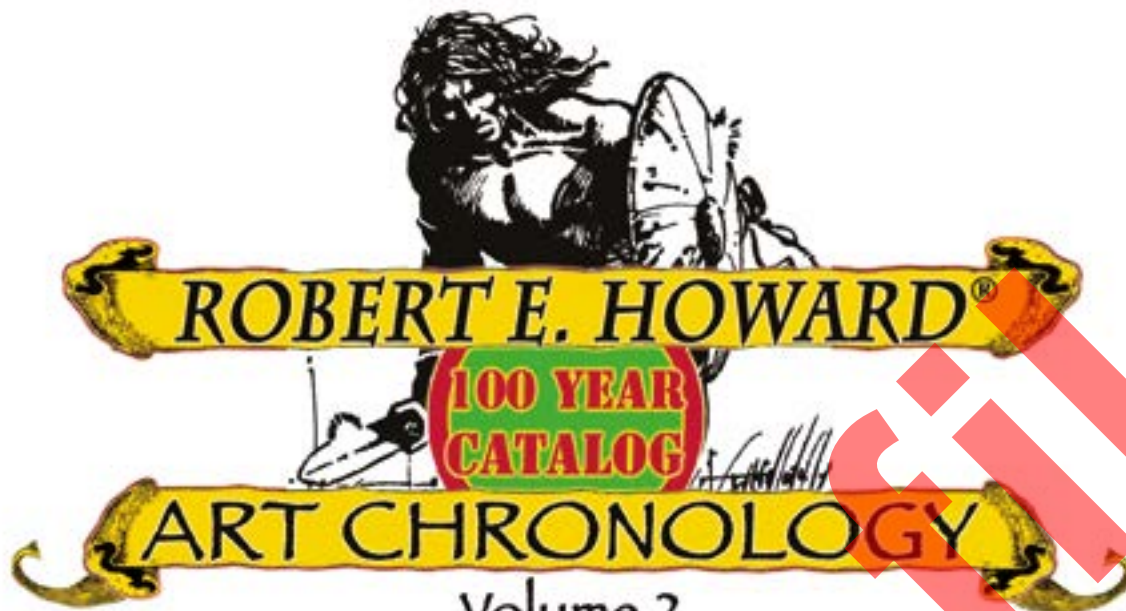
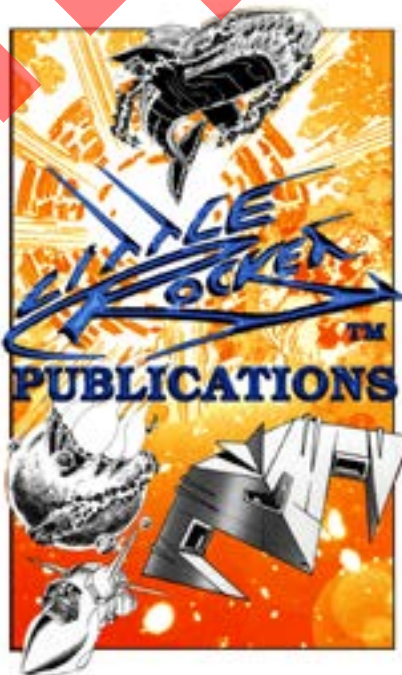


DEAN  
MORRISSEY  
1918-1977



Volume 2  
The Books:  
Literature With Sharp Cutting Edges  
by Michael Tierney

Authorized by Heroic Signatures Inc., Conan Properties International LLC, and Robert E. Howard Properties LLC





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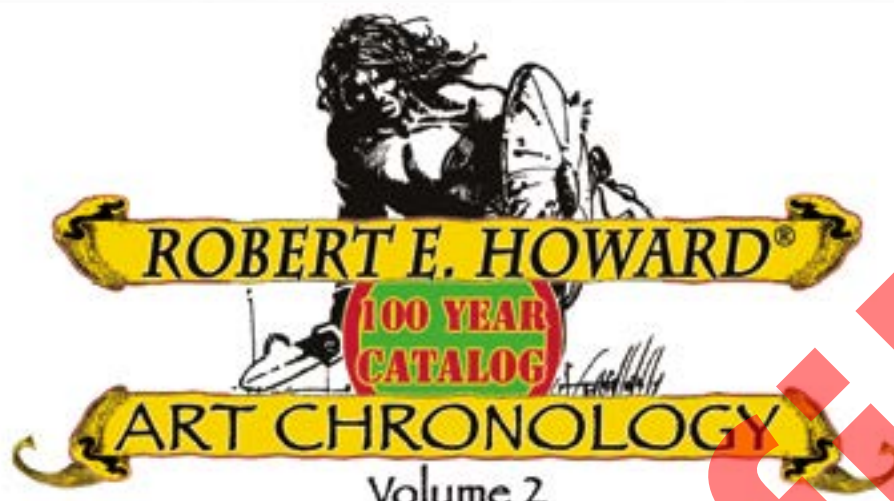
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 by Michael Tierney

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*Legal Page Art by Dan Green  
from tipped-in signature plate for  
The Devil in Iron,  
Donald M. Grant*

*Art Above by Ned Dameron  
from Black Colossus,  
Donald M. Grant*

# The Iron-Bound Books of Robert E. Howard

## *A Personal Retrospective*

Foreword by Roy Thomas

Anybody remember that old movie title, *The Bad and the Beautiful*, which adorned a 1952 Hollywood blockbuster about the film industry itself?

Probably not. Still, by my lights, that title fits this second volume of the Robert E. Howard-related art to a “T”—as long as the “T” stands for “Terrific to Terrible.”

At least, those are the two reactions I’ve had—along with just about every feeling in between—to the artwork that has fronted collections of REH’s work since the day I first discovered him in 1966.

Well, actually, I take that back. I really “discovered” Howard two years earlier, in 1964, when Ace Books’ edition of his novel *Almuric* hit the paperback racks. At the time, I was acquiring all the new Edgar Rice Burroughs and faux-ERB paperbacks my meager Midwestern teacher’s salary would permit. *Swordsman of Mars... An Earthman on Venus* (a.k.a. *Radio Planet*)... *Gulliver of Mars*... *Warrior of Llarn*... you name it, I bought it. I didn’t always read the damn things, either right away or ever, but I squirreled them away for some future day.

And so it was with the Ace *Almuric*, whose Jack Vaughan cover did capture a bit of the magic of the Burroughs mystique, I felt. I may even have read the blamed thing one night when I should’ve been grading freshman test papers, so discontent was I with my day job at the time... so eager to escape the bonds of, if not the planet Earth, at least those of Fox High School in Arnold, Missouri. Like many another fantasy-minded reader of that period, I experienced Esau Cairn before I was even aware of Conan the Cimmerian.

Still, it was Frank Frazetta’s cover for Lancer’s *Conan the Adventurer* that really blew me away. That image of the scowling barbarian atop a mountain of skulls, with a beautiful woman clinging to his knees, grabbed me by the eyeballs... just as it was doing, that same 1966 day, to young—and especially male—bookstore patrons all across the Home of the Brave.

I soon tried reading “People of the Black Circle” therein, but, having been led by the back-cover copy to believe I’d be encountering something akin to ERB’s John Carter of Mars stories, I quickly found myself not enthralled by the tale of a backwoods barbarian kidnapping a “Vendhyan” princess, and I just stuck the book onto a shelf with the others. Even so, I continued to buy the Conan books, and a year or two later I tried reading one again and discovered what I’d missed before—that this guy Howard was, at his best, an excellent writer who could spin a yarn that could make you believe it, no matter how fantastic it was. As a result, I even picked up the Conans with the Duillo covers. Not to mention the 1967 *King Kull*, with its luscious cover by Roy G. Krenkel, whom I soon got to know when he attended gatherings of comics pros and fans at my Manhattan apartment.

Over the next decade or so, while and after I arranged for Marvel to license the comicbook rights to Conan, I made sure I acquired a copy of every book with a Howard story or theme, whether it was Lancer or Mirage or Donald M. Grant or Zebra or Berkley or whoever. Around 1972 I even bought, via dealer Russ Cochran, both a Frazetta oil (the very Conan-esque cover for *Thongor in the City of Magicians*, which would’ve made an equally perfect one for any volume containing REH’s “Scarlet Citadel”) and one of the artist’s paperback-cover watercolor roughs done for presentation to Lancer’s editor a few years earlier. The latter are what Frazetta himself called his “creative moment,” when the idea for a drawing was fresh and new, before he committed himself to the longer process of turning that image into a larger and more detailed oil painting. The one I bought (for a fast \$150—I hear it’s worth a little more now) was the one done for the Lancer volume titled simply *Conan*, which depicted the Cimmerian battling a fierce gorilla wearing a scarlet cloak. I still have the rough, though not the oil.

I owned one of Jeff Jones’ early Solomon Kane paintings for a few years, too—the one where

## Foreword

he battles a winged ape that was probably related to the one that had hanged Belit. He and Boris Vallejo and Ken Kelly (and of course Krenkel) were the best of the non-Frazetta REH illustrators, to my way of thinking.

Along the way, by a stroke of luck, I obtained the entire run of Conan hardcovers issued in the 1950s by Gnome Press, with their covers by Emsch, John Giunta, Wally Wood, et al. These were sold to me by my friend, comics artist Gil Kane, who had been given them personally years before by publisher Martin Greenberg.

Along the way, Glenn Lord, literary editor for the REH estate (and the man with whom I made the deal for Marvel to publish Conan comics), gave me one of his remaining spare copies of *Always Comes Evening*, his 1957 collection of the writer's poetry... and somewhere I even picked up a nice used copy of *Skull-face and Others*, the first book of any kind ever to collect Howard's pulp-adventure stories, including several Conan tales. From Arkham House I acquired *The Dark Man and Others*, just in time to adapt its non-Conan story "The Grey God Passes" for Marvel's *Conan the Barbarian* #3. I was starting to acquire a nice little collection of Howard's works, and I still own all those books.

I picked up the later, slightly revamped editions of the Lancer books, too (with their cruder, less attractive use of Frazetta's art), and even the English editions that often mangled his artwork—like the one for *Conan of Cimmeria* that trimmed away all that beautiful, snow-capped mountain scenery in favor of inferior reproduction of just Conan battling the Frost Giants. It was interesting to see later editions that opted for brand new artwork as well.

Hell, I even grabbed up copies of all the five million Tor Conan potboilers. Turned out they served me well in the 1990s, when I got to adapt one or two of the better ones for Marvel.

Even today, if I'm in a bookstore (not that there are many of those left nowadays) and I see a new tome containing Howard's work with a halfway interesting cover, I'll pick up a copy for my collection, because I love to compare different interpretations of the same Howardian scene, as envisioned by different artists over the decades.

But—and I brook no argument on this—there was never anybody who could measure up to Frank

Frazetta.

To me, Frazetta and Robert E. Howard and Conan the Cimmerian are forever joined at the hip... even though they never met, except perhaps in some fantasy-land somewhere across a darkness-enshrouded Rainbow Bridge.



*Photo by Dann Thomas of Roy holding Frank Frazetta's watercolor rough for Lancer's Conan paperback.*

*Roy Thomas has written stories featuring Conan and other creations of Robert E. Howard for Marvel Comics, Dark Horse Comics, a syndicated newspaper comic strip, dramatic-radio-style recordings, television, and film... and very early in the process became a fervent and lifelong admirer of the gent from Cross Plains.*

# Robert E. Howard's 100 Year Catalog Art Chronology

## Volume Two: The Books

### *Literature With Sharp Cutting Edges*

#### Introduction

### *Barbarian With a Pen*

by Michael Tierney

Robert E. Howard enjoyed many successes in placing his stories in the pages of multiple Pulp magazines, but there was one market where he had no success, despite repeated attempts—the book market.

One of Howard's earliest efforts was the semi-autobiographical *Post Oaks and Sand Roughs*, which, after multiple drafts, may have been the book mentioned in a rejection letter from Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. in 1928. It would be 61 years later before this novel was finally published—in French. A year after that, the first English edition was released by publisher Donald M. Grant.

*West of the Rio Grande* was another novel that Howard worked on around the same time. Based on a first draft written by R. Fowler Gafford, another resident of Cross Plains, Texas, *West of the Rio Grande* fared no better with book publishers. Sadly, this manuscript has since been lost.

Also in 1928, Howard compiled a collection of his poetry titled *Singers in the Shadows*, which was rejected by Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., who explained that "... we are not going in for any poetry at the present time."

After these multiple disappointments, and with his successes beginning to mount with multiple Pulp publishers, Howard concentrated his endeavors there. He would only return to long-form storytelling two



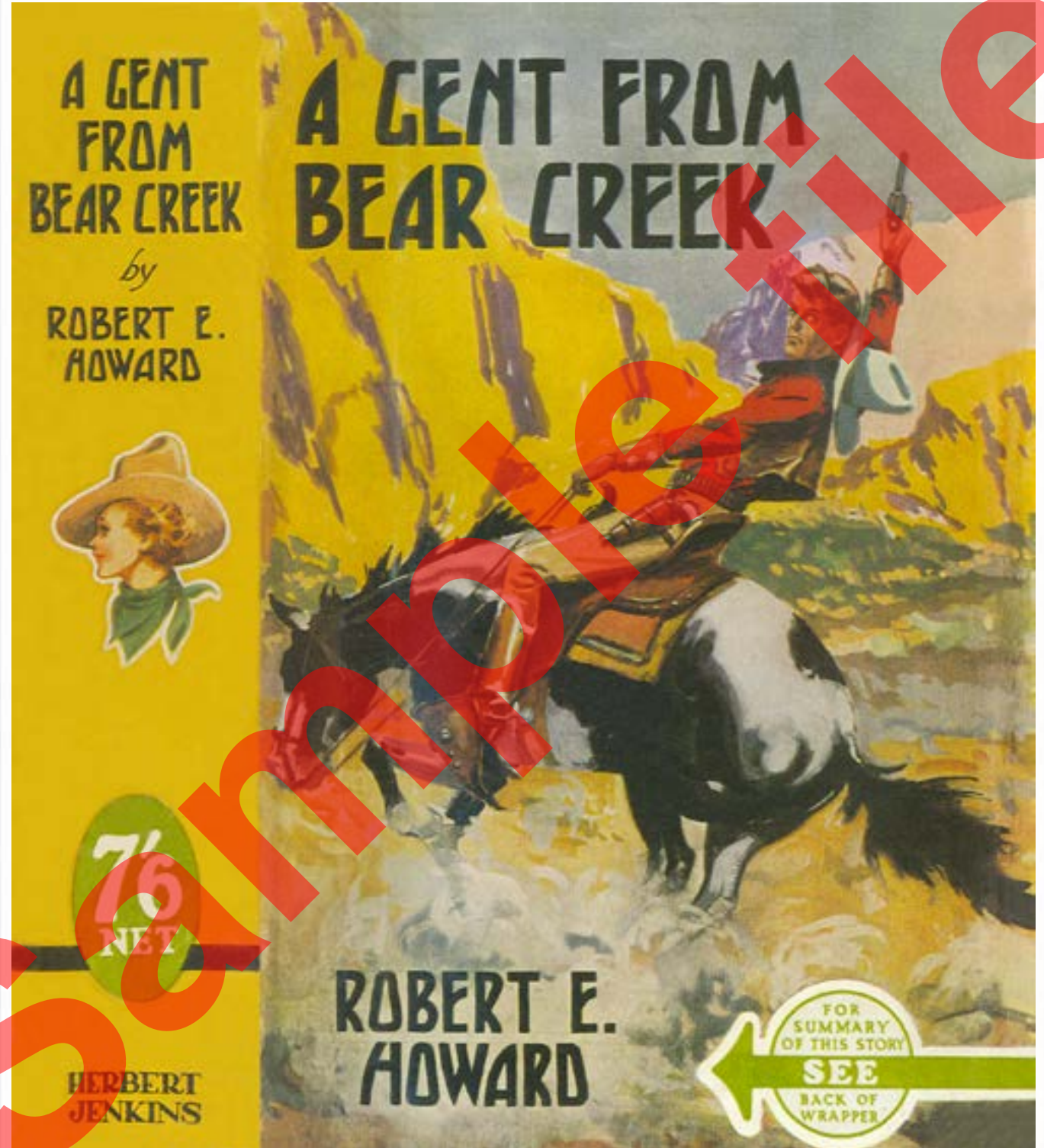
more times. One effort was the novel-length Conan the Cimmerian adventure, *The Hour of the Dragon*, most commonly known today as

*Conan the Conqueror*, intended for the U.K. market and released in *Weird Tales* when that publisher had gone into receivership by the time his manuscript arrived. His other attempt was the interplanetary adventure *Almuric*, which would not see publication in *Weird Tales* magazine until after his death.

*Almuric*, *The Hour of the Dragon/Conan the Conqueror*, and *Singers in the Shadows* would all eventually be released in book form by multiple publishers, decades after Howard's death.

But Howard did make one other effort to crack the book market by revamping and stringing together a series of his previously published short stories about a mountain man named Breckinridge Elkins, mixed with new material in an effort to create a single narrative. Had he lived just one year longer, Howard would have finally realized his elusive goal of seeing a book bearing his byline sitting on the shelves of his personal library.

It would take many more years to gain momentum, but once the book industry finally recognized the demand for his work, book collections of Howard's work followed in an avalanche that continued until every known piece of his writing was available in book form—a rare accomplishment for any writer.





1937

There are many types of people who collect Robert E. Howard's work, from the casual fan to the most hardened cognoscente. One item that they all dream of owning is Howard's first book publication of *A Gent From Bear Creek*, released in the U. K. by Herbert Jenkins.

At the time of this writing an 18th copy of this hardcover was recently discovered—and only one of those retained its original dust wrapper with artwork by an unknown artist. That copy was purchased from Arkham House publisher August Derleth by Howard agent and historian, Glenn Lord. After Lord's death, it was subsequently sold in a 2016 auction for \$19,500.

There are rumors that a 1938 "cheap edition" may also exist, but no copy has ever been found. With both editions having been printed before World War II, most copies were likely recycled during the British paper drives in much the same way that many old pulp magazines and comic books were in the U. S.

Titled after one of its chapters, *A Gent From Bear Creek* collected several Breckinridge Elkins short stories that had previously appeared in *Action Stories* magazine (see *Volume One: The Pulps for more details*), where Elkins had first appeared in "Mountain Man" with the March-April 1934 issue. In 1935, Howard tweaked this collection and connected them with new material to create a continuous narrative about Elkin's romance with Glory McGraw, and their eventual marriage.



The collection was comprised of:

- "Striped Shirts and Busted Hearts" (first publication)
- "Mountain Man"
- "Meet Cap'n Kidd" (first publication)
- "Guns of the Mountains"
- "A Gent from Bear Creek"
- "The Feud Buster"
- "The Road to Bear Creek"
- "The Scalp Hunter"
- "Cupid from Bear Creek"
- "The Haunted Mountain"
- "Educate or Bust" (first publication)
- "War on Bear Creek"
- "When Bear Creek Came to Chawed Ear" (first publication)

In August of 1935, Howard submitted the novel to his agent, Otis Adelbert Kline, who had no luck with U. S. publisher Caxton Printers (later known as Caxton Press), and suggested submitting it to a British publisher. Kline submitted the novel to the publishers Macmillan in November of 1935 and Paradise in June of 1936. The U. K. edition from Herbert Jenkins, named after the publisher's founder, was released in 1937, the year after Howard's death.

*A Gent From Bear Creek* would not be published in the U. S. until 30 years later, when the 1965 Donald M. Grant 1st edition was released as part of an eventual trilogy of *Bear Creek* hardcovers that collected all 26 tall tales of Breckinridge Elkins.



Fantasy and Horror writer August Derleth, who was responsible for the preservation of the only known dust jacket of *A Gent From Bear Creek*, was also a successful publisher.

Along with fellow writer/editor Donald Wandrei, Derleth had tried unsuccessfully since 1937 to sell a collection of H. P. Lovecraft's stories, titled *The Outsider and Others*. Eventually the two men decided to form their own publishing company using the name of a town from Lovecraft's writings, and Arkham House was created.

*The Outsiders and Others* was their first release in 1939.



1946

The 17th book released by Arkham House was a collection of Howard's writings under the title of *Skull-Face and Others*. With the same size and format as *The Outsiders and Others*, this hardcover was graced with a colorful dust wrapper by Hannes Bok.

Hannes Bok (January 2, 1914—April 11, 1964) was born Wayne Francis Woodard in Kansas City, Missouri. Despite his only training being art classes during high school, Woodard began contributing illustrations to science fiction fanzines under the name of Hannes Bok, a derivative of composer Johannes Bach. After moving to New York City in 1939, Bok began selling his art, short stories, and poetry to *Weird Tales*, an association that would last for 15 years and led to work with many other magazines of science fiction and fantasy. He also began creating numerous book covers for publishers like Arkham House and others. In the 1950s, he began writing astrological articles for *Mystic Magazine*, and his fascination with the occult became an unhealthy obsession. Destitute by the time he died of a heart attack at the young age of 49, Bok left behind several unpublished novels and a treasure of richly colored cover illustrations.

The complete contents of *Skull-Face and Others* were:

- "Which Will Scarcely Be Understood" (verse)
- "Robert E. Howard: A Memoriam" by H.P. Lovecraft, first published in the September 1936 issue of *Fantasy Magazine*.
- "A Memory of Robert E. Howard" by E. Hoffman Price
- "Wolfshead"
- "The Black Stone"
- "The Horror from the Mound"
- "The Cairn on the Headland"
- "Black Canaan"
- "The Fire of Asshurbanipal"
- "A Man-Eating Jeopard"
- "Skull-Face"
- "The Hyborian Age"
- "Worms of the Earth"
- "The Valley of the Worm"
- "Skulls in the Stars"
- "The Rattle of Bones"
- "The Hills of the Dead"
- "Wings in the Night"
- "The Shadow Kingdom"
- "Mirrors of Tuzun Thune"
- "Kings of the Night"

"The Phoenix on the Sword"

"The Scarlet Citadel"

"The Tower of the Elephant"

"Rogues in the House"

"Shadows in Zamboula"

"Lines Written in Realization That I  
Must Die" (*verse*)

Howard's work would appear in a total of 17 Arkham House editions, 18 if you include E. Hoffman Price's memoir of Howard in the 2001 *Book of the Dead*, but only two other titles would be exclusively dedicated to Howard's work, one prose and one poetry collection. The rest were all anthologies.





## The Dark Man and Others

1963

With an introduction by August Derleth, Arkham House released their 75th hardcover with a dust wrapper by Frank Utpatel in an edition of 2,029 copies.

The first professional work by Frank Albert Bernhardt Utpatel (March 4, 1905—July 12, 1980) was interior illustrations done for *Weird Tales*, and he soon moved on to a long career creating covers for Arkham House, starting with H. P. Lovecraft's *The Shadow of Innsmouth*.

*The Dark Man and Others* contained:

"The Voice of El-Lil"  
"Pigeons From Hell"  
"The Dark Man"  
"The Gods of Bal-Sagoth"  
"People of the Dark"

"The Children of the Night"  
"The Dead Remember"  
"The Man on the Ground"  
"The Hyena"  
"The Garden of Fear"  
"The Thing on the Roof"  
"Dig Me No Grave"  
"The Dream Snake"  
"In the Forest of Villefère"  
"Old Garfield's Heart"

### *Other titles*

See the "Poetry" section for Arkham's collection *Always Comes Evening*. See both the "Prose Anthology" and the "Poetry Anthology" sections for other listings.





## GNOME PRESS, INC.

In 1948 small press publisher Gnome Press was founded by a pair of science fiction fans, Martin Greenberg and David Kyle. Greenberg, who had previously been involved with the small press New Collectors Group, has often since been confused with another prominent science fiction editor who was active around the same time period; Martin H. Greenberg of Greenberg: Publisher. But these were two separate individuals.

Over the course of its existence, Gnome Press released 86 titles that included a number of memorable milestones. Of special note were the first three books in Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series, and six *Conan* books—seven if you include *The Return of Conan* that had no content by Howard, and which most fans prefer to ignore. The Gnome Press list of writers reads like a Who's Who of science fiction and fantasy, including Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Heinlein, Fritz Leiber, C. L. Moore, Andre Norton under the pseudonym of Andre North, Frederick Pohl, Clifford D. Simak, A. E. van Vogt, Jack Williamson, and many, many others.

Operating primarily as a mail order business, Gnome Press was financially strapped from the beginning, and lost many authors in disputes and legal battles over unpaid royalties. Even more fateful was when larger publishing houses with retail bookstore distribution began to take notice of the science fiction and fantasy markets that Gnome Press had pioneered in book form.

By the time the company folded in 1962, their once quality books had been reduced to cheap formats and their sales came primarily from back stock inventory.

If someone ever wanted to build a collection based strictly on one publisher's work, a complete Gnome Press selection would create a very impressive bookcase.

**GNOME  
PRESS**



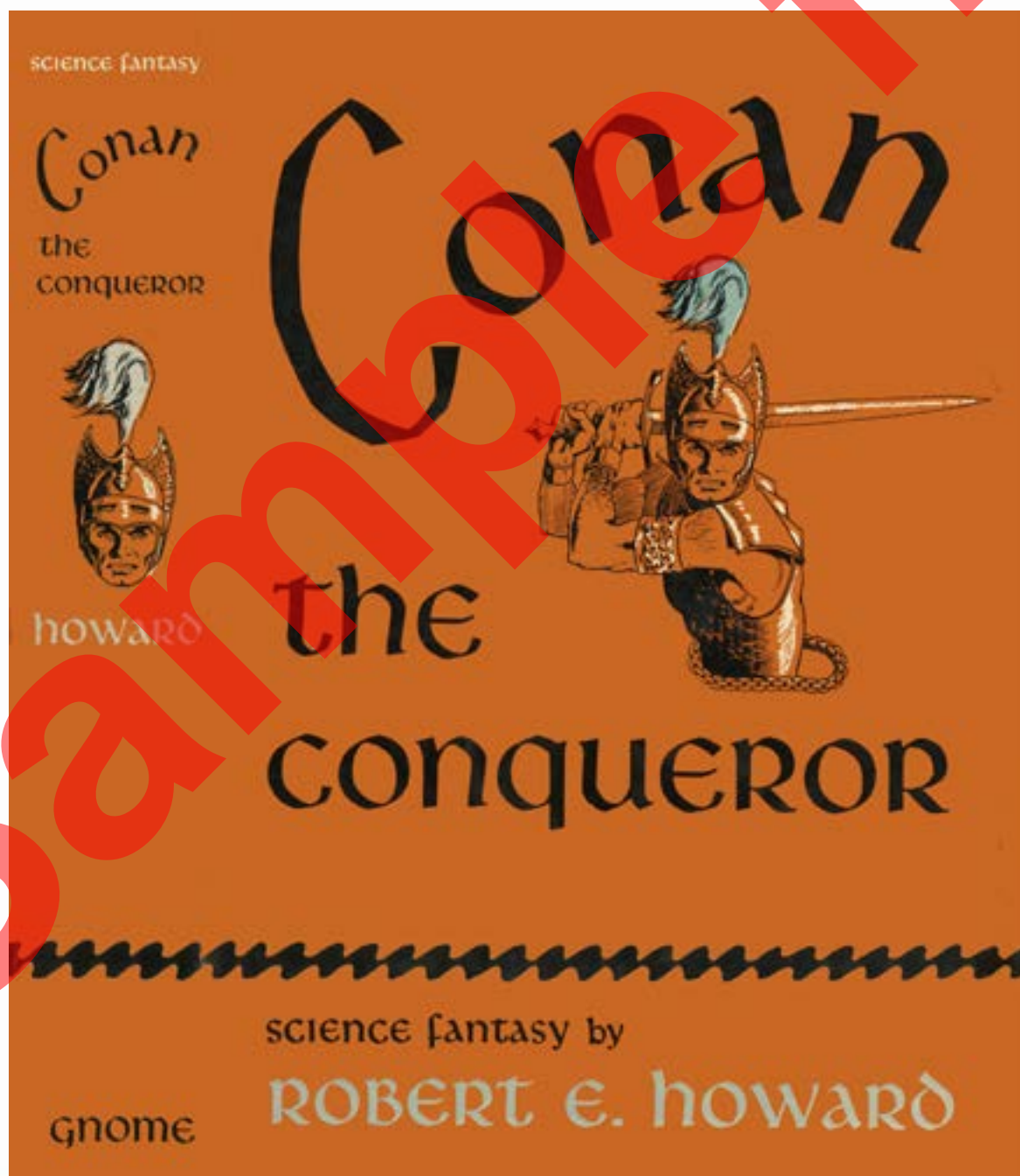


1950

Originally published as *The Hour of the Dragon* in *Weird Tales*, this 1st hardcover book edition was released with a dust wrapper illustrated by John Forte, in a print run of 5,000 copies. Edited by John Clark, this version differs from the *Weird Tales* release. The introduction was written by John D. Clark, and Howard's "Nemedian Chronicles" was presented before the title page.

A special feature were endpapers with a map of the Hyborian Age by David Kyle, which would be included in subsequent volumes, printed in different colors of ink that matched the color scheme of the wrappers.

*Conan the Conqueror*, like many Gnome Press titles, was reprinted in the U.K. by T. V. Boardman & Co., Ltd., London.





## The Sword of Conan

1952

The second Gnome Press *Conan* hardcover began collecting his short stories from *Weird Tales*. Beneath a dust wrapper illustrated by the artist of the endpaper maps, David Kyle, the front flap had an introduction by John D. Clark, and the back flap showed an advertisement for *Conan the Conqueror*. “The Nemedian Chronicles” was presented here in place of an introduction, serving as another form of advertising for the previous volume. The print run was 4,000 copies.

Beginning with this volume, each story is prefaced with a quote from “An Informal Biography of Conan the Cimmerian” by P. Schuyler Miller and John D. Clark, explaining the chronology and providing a review of preceding events.

The contents were:

- “The People of the Black Circle”
- “The Slithering Shadow”
- “The Pool of the Black One”
- “Red Nails”

