

AND SO ANOTHER SPAN OF DAYS HAD PASSED, AND IT WAS AGAIN TIME FOR CONCLAVE, THE MEETING OF CLANS GREAT AND SMALL FROM ALL CORNERS OF CIMMERIA.

YANNA.

CONAN!

THE ELDERS TALKED OF LAND DEEDS, HARVESTS, TRADE, AND THE HUNT.

AND TWO, WHO HAD BEEN CHILDREN ONLY THE PREVIOUS SUCH MEETING, FOUND THEMSELVES ON THE CUSP OF ADULTHOOD, BOTH WILD AND INARGUABLE.

WHEN THE CALL OF THE HEART ACHES FOR THE FIRST TIME, LIKE A SLIVER OF THE SUN.

BEFORE IT EVEN UNDERSTANDS ITS OWN VOCABULARY.

YOU'VE GROWN, HILL BOY.

THAT IS THE NATURE OF US ALL, FIELD MAIDEN.

FOR A MOMENT, THE GIRL FROM THE TRIBE WITH NO MEN STARED INTO HIS FACE.

WHERE WAS HER CAREFREE FRIEND FROM PREVIOUS SUMMERS?

CONAN, I HAVE TO ASK YOU, AS IT'S BEEN ON MY MIND.

DO YOU LIKE... DO YOU LIKE GIRLS?

YES, YES, I LIKE GIRLS.

THERE'S ONE NEAR MY HOME THAT--

WHY DO YOU ASK?

NO REASON. MAY I ASK OF YOU ANOTHER QUESTION?



FOR EACH OF THEM, IT WAS A JOYOUS DAY. A PERFECT DAY.

THEY HAD HAD FEW ENOUGH SUCH DAYS IN THEIR BRIEF LIVES AT THAT POINT.

DO YOU LIKE GIRLS WHO BEAT YOU IN A FOOTRACE?

LAST TO THE RIVER IS A SCULLERY MAID!

YOU VIXEN!

AND CONAN, SON OF THE BLACKSMITH OF A TRIBE OF LITTLE LEGEND...BORN ON A BATTLEFIELD, HE WHO COULD RACE FOR MILES WITHOUT FATIGUE...

...NEVERTHELESS FELT A GRIP ON HIS HEART AS HE WATCHED THE RAVEN-HAIRED GIRL HE BARELY KNEW FLY.

YOU'LL DO THE WASHING-UP, HILL BOY!

I WON'T!

IN HIS VILLAGE, LOVE WAS SHOWN, NOT TALKED ABOUT.

HE'D LIVED TWELVE SUMMERS AND BARELY HEARD THE WORD SPOKEN ALOUD.

EVEN SO.

EVEN SO.

IT FINALLY HIT HIM, LIKE THE WALKING STICK OF AN ANGRY ELDER.

HE WAS NO LONGER THE MASTER OF HIS OWN HEART.

STOP. STOP!

AND WHY SHOULD I, SHE-WHO-SCHEMES-TO-WIN-RACES?

BECAUSE... BECAUSE...

...BECAUSE I WANT TO DO A THING.

AND THEN I WANT TO SAY A THING.

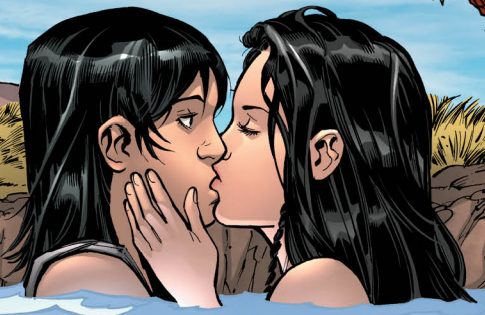
WHILE THE WELL OF MY COURAGE IS STILL DEEP, SON OF CONALDAR.



THE KISS WAS CHASTE. IT WAS TENDER,  
IN A WAY HE HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED.

AND IT WAS SAD,  
TOO, SOMEHOW.

AND THE GRIP ON CONAN'S HEART  
BECAME A MORE FIERCE THING ENTIRELY.



...  
YANNA...?

YOU  
HAVE TO  
FORGET ME,  
CONAN.

YOU HAVE  
TO FORGET  
WE EVER  
MET.



AFTER  
THAT?

YOU  
THINK I CAN  
FORGET?

I WILL  
NEVER.

YOU  
HAVE TO.



DON'T FOLLOW.  
NOW, NOR  
EVER.

I'M  
LEAVING, CONAN.  
LEAVING MY  
TRIBE.



AND THEN CONAN DISCOVERED A FEELING  
WORSE THAN ANY GRIEF OR WOUND HE'D  
ENDURED SO FAR. SO GREAT THAT NO ONE  
WORD IN HIS SIMPLE LANGUAGE COULD  
COVER IT ENTIRELY.

LOSS.

HELPLESSNESS.

EMPTINESS.





YEARS LATER.

THE SHIP HAD HAD A NAME ONCE, LONG BEFORE BEING STOLEN AND DISHONORED BY THE SAME SLAVERS WHO ABANDONED IT FOR THE DEPTHS WHEN A ZINGARAN PATROL SHIP HAD FINALLY CAUGHT THE CREW DISTRACTED.

NONE WHO KNEW ITS NAME SURVIVED ITS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH PIRACY.

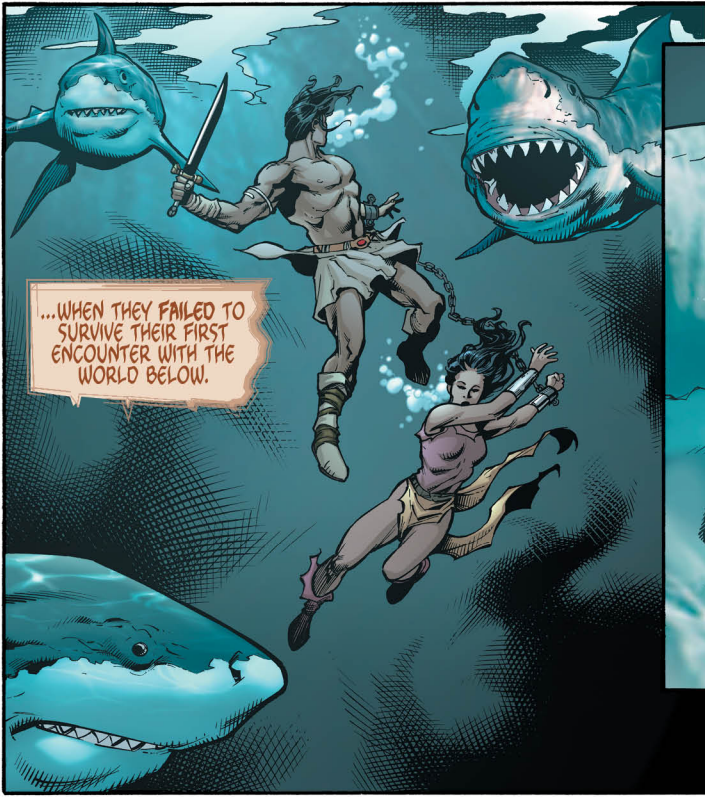
JUST AS FEW WOULD REMEMBER THE NAMES OF THE PITIABLE CONSCRIPT CREW...

# THE DANCE OF WICKED CROWS

WRITTEN BY GAIL SIMONE  
PENCILED BY AARON LOPRESTI  
INKED BY MATT RYAN  
COLORED BY WENDY BROOME  
LETTERED BY SAIDA TEMOFONTE

COVER BY DARICK ROBERTSON AND TONY AVINA  
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CONAN® CREATED BY ROBERT E. HOWARD

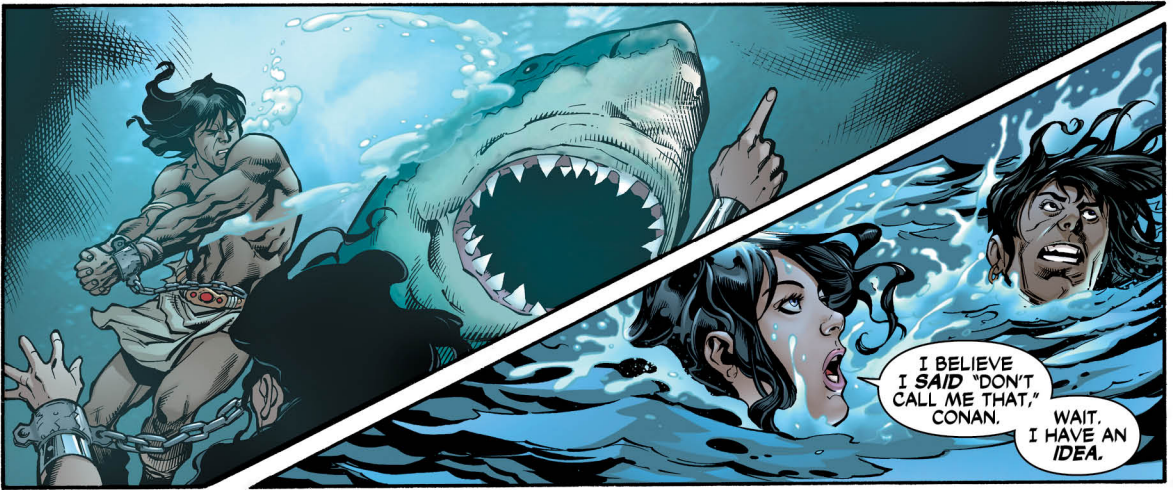
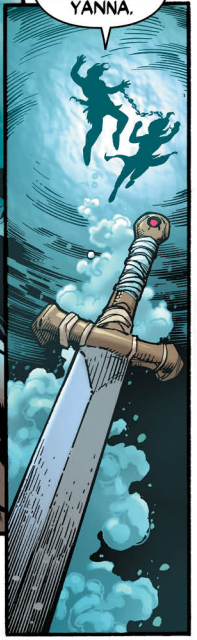




...WHEN THEY FAILED TO SURVIVE THEIR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE WORLD BELOW.

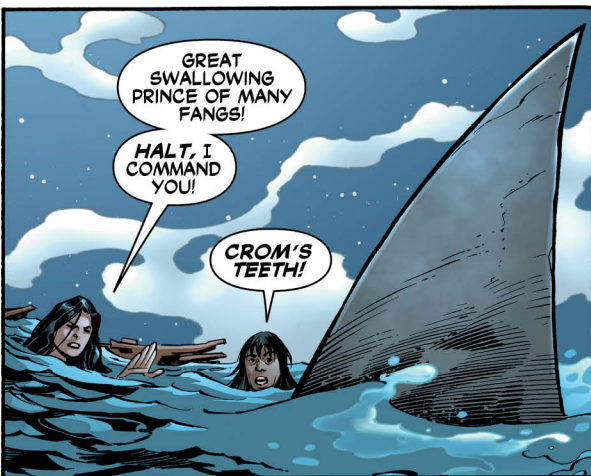


THIS DOESN'T BODE WELL, YANNA.



I BELIEVE I SAID "DON'T CALL ME THAT," CONAN.

WAIT. I HAVE AN IDEA.



GREAT SWALLOWING PRINCE OF MANY FANGS!

HALT, I COMMAND YOU!

CROM'S TEETH!



MOVE, WOMAN.

THESE BEASTS DON'T SPEAK LUNATIC, IT TURNS OUT.