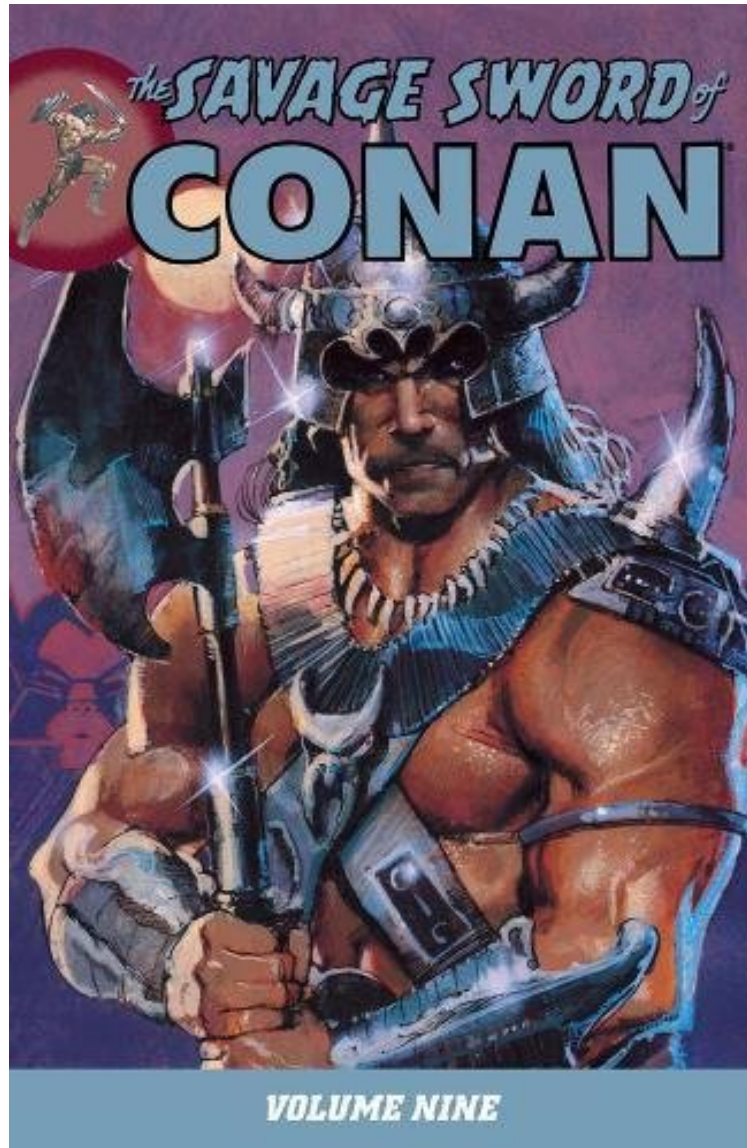


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## The Savage Sword of Conan Volume 9

*Michael Fleischer*

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**Michael Fleischer : The Savage Sword of Conan Volume 9** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Savage Sword of Conan Volume 9:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Art Overtakes StoryBy Bill SlocumMarvel Comics' Conan the Barbarian character had always rested on the impact of fantastic visual presentations. This, the ninth collection of stories from Marvel's "Savage Sword Of Conan" magazine, offers some sumptuous eye-feasts but also reveals too much of a good thing can be bad for even the mightiest Cimmerian.Michael Fleisher was in his third year writing

"Savage Sword" by the time these issues were originally published, November 1983-July 1984, and his once-original take on Conan was getting tired. Though Vol. 9 shows signs of fresh perspective, it also continues Fleisher's overreliance on superhero tropes and magic, not to mention convoluted storylines. Much of Conan's comic greatness had rested in the pencils of lead artist John Buscema, and four of Vol. 9's main stories include Buscema on the script side of the equation for the first time, providing plots Fleisher fleshed out into fuller stories. The Buscema-plotted stories not surprisingly employ brilliant visuals, like seaweed-choked ships adrift in a foggy sea, a giant vivified idol pulverizing the jungle temple where it is worshipped, and lust-filled revelers at a palace orgy presided over by an evil, nearly naked queen. With splash pages like these, you want to forgive Fleisher's tendency to lose Conan's vitality and grounded personality and lapse into goofiness. The first story, "Death Dwarves Of Stygia," presents Conan with the challenge of saving his latest woman from the clutches of an island enchantress by taking on the title characters, three dwarves that by sitting on each other's shoulders transform into a hulking djin, as well as a second magic-user who can will himself to take possession of other people's bodies. Like too many of Fleisher's stories, there's nothing organic to the story, just random encounters designed to make full use of Buscema's pen. When Conan and his woman need to be shipwrecked, why settle for a simple storm when a kraken attack will do instead? "Night Of The Rat" employs an exotic, quasi-Asian setting to good effect, and there are some good story moments mixed in that reveal Fleisher's high imagination. Here as elsewhere, the story elements often don't cohere, and there are some head-scratchers. Why would a king agree to rule under a system that places him in constant fear of sudden death, and why would a kingdom put its ruler under such constraints before he could even produce an heir? You try not to sweat stuff like that and enjoy the ride. But it adds up. There's also the reintroduction of Wrrarl, the soul-sucking humanoid with the bat-winged helm introduced in one of the issues featured in Vol. 8, back for a second crack at his least-favorite "manling." Wrrarl's a great visual but a pretty dull character, pretty much just defined by his lust for vengeance and his hunger for souls. Not surprisingly, Fleisher uses him as a secondary character in a predictable mystery story about an ape-bat which Conan takes on for the sake of another lovely lass, pushing him in the foreground only for a climactic battle with Conan that proves too much even for Conan to handle without the help of some timely magic. Fleisher's willingness to push the boundaries of Conan comic stories presents some striking moments. In "When A God Lives," he finds himself pursued by a dogged captain of a city guard which he must make common cause with when both find themselves set upon by a savage jungle tribe. "The Siren" starts out as a story of Conan helping out a besieged castle, then does a nifty one-eighty into being a ghost story at sea. Several stories similarly pull the rug out from under you in Vol. 9. You even get an unusual high percentage of stories with unhappy endings. Yet Fleisher writes too much for splashy effect and dazzling visuals. Gone is the more grounded Hyborian world of Conan as created by Robert E. Howard and carefully elaborated upon by prior Marvel scribe Roy Thomas. Fleisher's Hyboria is a setting where anything can happen, and probably will. It's sometimes exciting, but hardly ever satisfying.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.  
CromBy Samantha E Blake Any Conan fan knows this will be a great read. This is a great collection of stories. I highly recommend the volume style where you get several stories more for your money.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.  
GoodBy Francisco Gonzalez Oldie but goodie. Been a fan since a child and still a fan as an adult. Bring on the king Conan movie before Arnold kicks the bucket

The Savage Sword of Conan Volume 9 contains over five-hundred, jam-packed pages of adventure, betrayal, and revenge by some of the most respected names in comics! Michael Fleisher, John Buscema, Ernie Chan, Pablo Marcos, and other familiar talents make sure that Conan has his hands full with a demigod that wields the awesome powers of the leopard, three deadly dwarves, a siren with an army of undead pirates, and the return of the Devourer of Souls! This collection also includes the fan-favorite stories "The Blood Ruby of Death," in which a priceless gem turns even the staunchest of allies into enemies, and "When a God Lives," where the theft of a seemingly harmless statue unleashes the ancient, arcane energies of a god whose only goal is to destroy Conan and anyone else foolish enough to get in his way!