DYNAMITE
ENTERTAINMENT
1
RED SONJA
SHE-DEVIL WITH A SWORD
MICHAEL TURNER

RED SONJA™

SHE-DEVIL WITH A SWORD

Send Your Comments To:
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We'll be presenting your thoughts on Red Sonja #0 and #1 next month, but we thought we'd turn the page over to one of the writers making Sonja so great again, Michael Avon Oeming:

Red Sonja, She-devil with a Sword.

She was the first of her kind, the first of the "bad girls" long before there ever was such a silly craze. Let's be clear, it was Robert E. Howard who breathed life into Red Sonja, a gun carrying fire-haired woman who appeared in only one story by the author, yet it was Roy Thomas who took that life and gave it purpose, personality and soul. Without Roy, dare I say, Sonja would be nothing more than a great chapter in the life of Conan. Thank you Roy, Frank [Thorne], and John [Buscema], for while Howard may have been Sonja's father, it was you three who raised her.

When Dynamite first asked me to write Red Sonja, I didn't know quite what I was in for. Sure I was excited, but really, I wasn't prepared. There was so much research to do. Oddly, much of the research did not relate directly to Red Sonja, as much as her world and her setting. Lucky for me, Mike Carey was already attached as co-writer, and knowing that I had not only a former school teacher, but a man who Neil Gaiman dubbed as the "next Neil Gaiman" to write and rediscover Red Sonja with me? I knew I was in blessed hands.

All this and art by Mel Rubi. Read the issue again, but don't read the words. Just look at the visual storytelling that Mel brings. Sure they are beautifully drawn, with an exciting flair and style, but look closer, strain your eyes, and you will see the soul of the artist and of Sonja on the paper. You may even hear the wind or the heartbeat of a warrior's rage.

We hope this series brings you half the joy and adventure Mike, Mel and myself have had in bringing it to you. Issue #0 was hugely successful, but we measure that success not in numbers, but in the pleasure of our readers. We saw in that issue glimpses of things to come... the Dark God that has cast its hand over the people of Hyboria and the people who live under it. This hand, and those it controls are doomed to clash with Sonja. How and why we will reveal in time. Do not rush for such answers, as this is a long journey, full of mystery, adventure and death.

So come with us, pack lightly, bring your swords and maps, and pray that Mitra blesses our journey!

Michael Avon Oeming, June 2005

writers
Michael Avon Oeming with Mike Carey

art
Mel Rubi

letters
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with Josh Johnson and Rich Wenzke

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based on the heroine created by Robert E. Howard

Special thanks to Arthur Lieberman at Red Sonja Corporation

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RED SONJA #1 COVER CHECK LIST

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Cover B: Paolo Rivera
Cover C: Joseph Michael Linsner
Cover D: John Cassaday
Cover E: Alex Ross

Cover: A

Cover: B

Cover: C

Cover: D

Cover: E

"Know also, O Prince, that in the selfsame days that the Cimmerian did stalk the Hyborian Kingdoms…
"…. one of the few swords worthy to cross with his was that of a warrior-woman out of majestic Hyrkania.
SKREEE!
"She, the mother of vengeance….
THUNK
THUMP
"…hunter of evil,

"...the RED SONJA!"
~ The Nemedian Chronicles ~
YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL, THORNE.
IF I HADN'T FOUND THIS NIGHT-HUNTER, I'D HAVE TO EAT YOU.
WELL, HE GAVE ME LIFE. ALL I CAN GIVE HIM IS REMEMBRANCE.
A ONE-SIDED BARGAIN.
HFFPHH
BUT THERE'S STILL NO SIGN OF THE CITY AND WHO WE HUNT.
DO YOU REMEMBER OUR BARGAIN? A HOT MARE FOR YOU WHEN NEXT WE STOP INSIDE CITY WALLS.
I THOUGHT THAT WAS ALL THE INCENTIVE A STALLION NEEDED.
THE MESSAGE

WHOA! STEADY, THORNE.
STEADY NOW.
HOO OOO OOOOO
WERE YOU FRIGHTENED BY AN *OWL*, SWIFT ONE?
OR WAS IT SOMETHING *ELSE* THAT STARTLED YOU?
AAAAAAGGH!

AAAA
ARE YOU MAD?
I AM A MESSENGER. A MESSENGER! YOUR KING WILL HAVE YOUR HEADS!
HE SENT US TO KILL YOU, PALE BASTARD!
AND SEND YOU BACK WITHOUT YOUR HEAD. THAT WILL BE OUR MESSAGE!
KREEEE

KRAKATHOOM
YOUR SOUL TO THE HELLKIN! YOUR BLOOD -- GAAAAHH!
AGH!
ARROWS? TO ME, MEN OF GATHIA! TO ME!
AGH!
WE ARE SURROUNDED!
AAGH

FOR MY LORD!
HERE THEY COM-- AGH!

THUP
THAK

ARRAHGH!

BEAST!
BLOODY
DIRTY
FILTHY
THAK
THAK
THAK
BEAST!
TARIM'S BLOOD, MAN, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FIRST KILL.
WHAT? MY BLADE HAS TASTED DOZENS OF THESE SCUM. I'VE -- I'VE LOST COUNT OF --
YOUR LYING IS EVEN WORSE THAN YOUR SWORDPLAY.
IF IT'S GUILT THAT UNSETTLES YOU, REST EASY. THESE MEN WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU JUST AS READILY.
WHAT MEN? THESE WERE NO MEN.
AND WHERE ARE THE ARCHERS WHO CAME TO MY--?
IT -- IT WAS YOU. YOU ALONE?
YOU'RE AS QUICK WITH A BOW AS A HARKANIAN RIDER! WHO ARE YOU?

HAH! THAT WAS A SHREWD GUESS. AS FOR MY NAME --
-- THAT'S A GIFT I ONLY GIVE ON NEARER ACQUAINTANCE.

WELL, THEN I HOPE WE MAY COME TO KNOW EACH OTHER MORE -- INTIMATELY.
YOUR ARMOR, WOMAN -- IT SCARCELY PROTECTS YOUR MODESTY, LET ALONE YOUR VITALS.
MEN ARE EASILY DISTRACTED.
MOST OF THEM NEVER EVEN NOTICE MY SWORD... UNTIL THEIR HEADS ROLL OFF THEIR NECKS.

I -- TAKE YOUR POINT.
I ALSO OWE YOU MY LIFE. I AM A MESSENGER OF GATHIA...
GATHIA?

AYE. RETURNING FROM A MISSION TO THE ZEDDA TRIBES. WHOSE WOMEN SMELL LIKE CATTLE AND WHOSE BREATH IS PERFUMED WITH DUNG.
I DELIVERED THEM A MESSAGE OF SURRENDER. OF MERCY AND PEACE.
THEY'RE LIKE DOGS. THEY PREFER BLOOD TO WINE.
DIDN'T LOOK SO PEACEFUL TO ME.
HOO OOO OOOOO

HOW MUCH FURTHER IS YOUR CITY?
A DAY'S RIDE.
IN FACT...
... WE CAN SEE IT FROM HERE.
I'VE BEEN *LOOKING* FOR GATHIA. I'VE HEARD MANY TALES AND RUMORS...
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO FINDING OUT HOW MANY ARE *TRUE.*

CAREFUL NEAR THE *WATER*, RED-HAIR... STRANGE BEASTS ONCE DWELLED THERE. NOBODY KNOWS IF THEY'RE GONE OR JUST *ASLEEP*.
GATHIA WAS LONG SINCE *CLEANSED* OF SUCH CARRION, BY OUR LORD --
DOES THIS *LORD* OF YOURS HAVE A NAME?
MY LIPS WOULD *PROFANE* HIS HOLY NAME! HE IS OUR SAVIOR!

HE *REBUILT* THE LAND AFTER THE FAMINE AND THE PESTILENCE. HE *PURIFIED* US -- GAVE US THIS PARADISE TO *DWELL* IN.
RAISED US *ABOVE* THE ZEDDAS AND THE *OTHER* BEASTS OF THE FIELD.

AND HOW DOES THIS *PARADISE* KEEP ITS PRIVACY? NO ENEMIES, NO THREATS FROM BEAST OR MAN.
IS IT JUST THAT YOU'RE AS FAR FROM *CIVILIZATION* AS STYGIA IS FROM *HEAVEN*?

OUTSIDERS WOULD *DILUTE* OUR PURITY.
OUR LORD *CHOSE* US, THE BEST OF ALL THE TRIBES OF THE WORLD, LIFTED US FROM THE MUD AND GAVE US NEW LIFE. HE COMMANDS US TO GUARD...
ONLY THE FACT THAT YOU *SAVED* ME ACCORDS YOU A WELCOME.
AND STILL YOU *REEK* WITH THE SINS OF THE WORLD. YOU'LL HAVE TO BE *PURIFIED*....

...UNLESS YOU *DANCE* AS WELL AS YOU FIGHT.

GULP
GULP

GULP CUAGH CUPH CAUGH! GUCH GACK UGH--
THAT'S WATER, FRIEND, NOT ROT-GUT BRANDY! DO ALL GATHIANS TAKE THEIR DRINK SO--?
AAAGGGHH!
TARIM'S BLOOD!

SHLKK
NO!
AUUUGGH!
RRRRRA--

-AAAAAAA!

DAMN!

WELL, I'M SORRY, FRIEND. IT SEEMS I ONLY LENT YOU A *DAY'S* MORE BREATH.

BUT I'LL DELIVER YOUR *MESSAGE,* AT LEAST.
I'LL PROMISE YOU *THAT* MUCH.

SORRY, THORNE, WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT TILL *GATHIA* TO QUENCH YOUR THIRST.

¿GASP¿
THMP THMP

HO!
WOMAN WHO IS NOT *OURS,* WHY COME YOU TO OUR WALLS? TO WHOM DO YOU *BELONG?*
I *BELONG* TO NO ONE. I BRING HOME A FALLEN *GATHIAN!* YOUR *MESSENGER!*

NOW OPEN UP, OR I'LL BE FORCED TO DUMP HIS *BODY* AT YOUR GATES!
COME *IN* THEN, WOMAN.

WELCOME, STRANGER. WELCOME TO THE CITY OF GATHIA. I AM CAPTAIN DULITHAIN.
IT'S BUT RARELY WE GET... VISITORS.
I SEE.
IS THAT WHY EVERYONE IS TAKING SUCH AN INTEREST IN ME?
I'M AFRAID I BRING NO GOOD NEWS HOME TO GATHIA.
YOUR MESSAGE OF PEACE FELL ON DEAF EARS.

THOSE STRINGS WILL LOSE THEIR *TENSION* IF YOU HOLD THEM TAUT FOR TOO LONG.
NOW MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO LET THEM *REST.*

I'VE HEARD *STORIES* OF A LONE FEMALE WARRIOR... WITH *RED* HAIR.
HER REPUTATION HAS BEEN A *BURDEN* TO ME.
YOUR MESSENGER WAS ATTACKED. I... INTERVENED.
BUT THEN HE SUCCUMBED IN THIS LAND TO A *DARK* MAGIC. SOME *THING* FROM THE WATER.

SO I BRING HIM *HOME* TO HIS REST.

GASP
YOU, WOMAN --
YOU'RE A LIAR! BEFORE OUR LORD, YOU ARE A LIAR!
KREEE
HOW COULD THIS THING BE? HOW COULD A DARK MAGIC OR A FOUL BEAST REMAIN IN OUR LORD'S LANDS?
SUCH WORDS ARE TREASON.
OR WORSE, BLASPHEMY.

I CAME HERE IN PEACE, TO GIVE YOU YOUR *KINSMAN* FOR BURIAL.
BUT IF PEACE WILL NOT *SERVE*--

NO! YOU ARE THE *RED SONJA!* WE HAVE HEARD THE STORIES!
WE *KNOW* WHO YOU SEEK!

THERE IS A TRADITION WE HAVE NOT *OBSERVED* IN THESE WALLS FOR A GENERATION! FOR THE MESSENGER WHO RETURNS WITH *ILL* NEWS...

...DEATH!

EUHPH!
THORNE!

EYAAHHH!

KREEEE

FIRE.

To Be Continued?

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