



The People of the Black Circle

Robert E. Howard (1906 - 1936)

Read by:	Phil Chenevert	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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The People of the Black Circle is the eleventh of the Conan stories ; it was published by *Weird Tales* in three parts in the fall of 1934. Set in the mythical Hyborian Age in the south Asian regions of Vendhya and Ghulistan (now India-Pakistan and Afghanistan), the story centers around Conan's kidnapping of princess Devi Yasmina of Vendhya and thwarting an attempt at world domination by the Black Seers of Yimsha. The action begins when Conan, chief of a tribe of hillmen, sets out to rescue seven of his men that have been captured and held by the princess to force him into killing her enemies. Conan instead kidnaps the princess, but the two are set upon by Kerim Shah, agent of the King of Turan, intent upon invading Vendhya. They escape into

the mountains, followed by Kemsha, who catches up with them just as he is attacked by Rakhshas from Yimsha, who kill him and capture Devi. Enter a group of Irakzai, who team up with Conan to rescue the princess. All are eventually rescued by the Vendhyan army and join forces to defeat the Turanians. The inevitable attraction between Conan and the princess smolders but never catches fire as forces inexorably draw them apart. The action-packed story is considered one of the finest in the Conan canon due to its epic sweep and insights into magical powers.

Robert Ervin Howard (January 22, 1906 – June 11, 1936) was an American pulp fiction author best known for his character Conan the Barbarian and considered the father of the “sword and sorcery” fantasy fiction subgenre. Born and raised in Texas, his father was a country doctor who had a penchant for get-rich-quick schemes. The resulting financial problems led to marital difficulties and frequent moves. His mother, who suffered from tuberculosis his entire life, felt she had married beneath her station. As a child Howard dreamed of becoming an author of adventure fiction and achieved his first success at age 23. His writings were published in a wide selection of magazines, journals, and newspapers in several genres. The main outlet for his stories was the Depression-era pulp magazine *Weird Tales*, which featured Conan the Barbarian, a character whose cultural impact has been compared to that of such icons as Batman, Count Dracula, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, and Tarzan. Howard remains a popular author, with his best works still continuously in print. His suicide at the age of 30 led to speculation about his mental health: when he learned that his mother had entered a permanent coma, he walked out to his car and shot himself in the head.