



BUSTED RIBS AND BROKEN ENGLISH

Published irregularly by

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Distributed through REHupa

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Volume 1, Issue 3

December 1997

Much Ado About...

It would be virtually impossible to be an REH fan, let alone a REHupa member, without being aware of the editing job Mr. de Camp did when compiling the Conan stories for publication by Lancer. Reaction to these edits have ranged from “Who cares? It's the same story! Maybe even better.” to “I wish he hadn't, but what's the real damage?” to “Tar and feathers are too good for him!”.

Especially troublesome are those stories which have never been reprinted (or in some cases printed at all) sans Mr. de Camp's (or some one else's) editorial hand. These stories are:

- “Xuthal of the Dusk” (aka “The Slithering Shadow”)
- “Drums of Tombalku” (unfinished)
- “Wolves Beyond the Border” (unfinished)

“Wolves” has only been published in de Camp completed and edited form.

“Drums” has been printed in two forms. The paperback version was finished and edited by de Camp. The Grant hardcover edition was published in its incomplete form, but was heavily edited by someone, presumably Don Grant.

“Xuthal” is an interesting case. It has only been reprinted in the de Camp edited form, but an “clean” version can be had if you have access to the September 1933 *Weird Tales* (unlike the previously mentioned stories where the only

“clean” versions are the original typescripts). So at PulpCon this year, I swallowed my budget and purchased a copy of this issue. Many hours later, after much time with a scanner and OCR software as well as (seemingly) endless proofreading, I had an online, text-only version to use for comparison. I then did the same with an Ace copy from *Conan the Adventurer*. The bulk of this article is an analysis comparing these two texts.

From the info here, the budget-minded REH purist can markup a copy of *Conan the Adventurer* to obtain the original *Weird Tales* text without draining his wallet. This is especially important to married REH fans...

I'm assuming that Ace only typeset *Conan the Adventurer* once. My particular copy appears to have been a first printing, but I doubt this matters. Should anyone note discrepancies between the page and paragraph numbers listed here and their copy, please let me know.

Ace did a rather poor job of typesetting this. I don't have a Lancer copy of this volume, but I do have a Sphere edition to compare against. In every case where I noted a difference between the *Weird Tales* and Ace texts, I consulted the Sphere edition to try to determine whether this was a deliberate editorial change or just a typo. I did not do a complete analysis of the Sphere edition, it was only consulted to verify changes.

There is also at least two genuine typographical errors in the *Weird Tales* text. These are noted

below.

Page numbers are from the Ace edition described above. Paragraph numbers are numbered starting with the first on the page, even if it is incomplete.

I have flagged each change with one of the following indicators. These are strictly my opinion, but I don't think they will be too controversial:

- Change - This is a deliberate (and often gratuitous) change
- Correction - This is a correction of an error in the *Weird Tales* text
- Difference - This is a trivial appearance change more likely made by a typesetter than an editor
- Error - This is an error introduced in the Ace (or Lancer) text

Page 103 - Difference

Weird Tales has no section numbered 1

Page 103, Paragraph 1 - Change

Weird Tales: clean-cut

Ace: cleancut

Page 104, Paragraph 1 - Change

Weird Tales: hard bronzed

Ace: hard, bronzed

Page 104, Paragraph 13 - Change

Weird Tales: motionless and immobile

Ace: motionless

Page 104, Paragraph 14 - Change

Weird Tales: quick painless

Ace: quick, painless

Page 105, Paragraph 4 - Change

Weird Tales: hope. ``Or

Ace: hope: ``Or

Page 105, Paragraph 9 - Change

Weird Tales: foot-wear

Ace: footwear

Page 105, Paragraph 11 - Change

Weird Tales: Lands of Shem

Ace: lands of Shem

Page 106, Paragraph 3 - Change

Weird Tales: a Shemitish seraglio

Ace: the Shemitish seraglio

Page 106, Paragraph 5 & Page 107, Paragraph 1 - Difference

Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 107, Paragraph 1 - Change

Weird Tales: smooth greenish

Ace: smooth, greenish

Page 108, Paragraph 10 - Change

Weird Tales: and grasping

Ace: and, grasping

Page 109, Paragraph 3 - Change

Weird Tales: Let us go

Ace: Let's go

Page 109, Paragraph 6 & Page 109, Paragraph 7 - Difference

Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 109, Paragraph 7 - Change

Weird Tales: green glassy

Ace: green, glassy

Page 109, Paragraph 8 - Change

Weird Tales: with a human body

Ace: with human body

Page 109, Paragraph 9 - Change

Weird Tales: weird unreal

Ace: weird, unreal

Page 109, Paragraph 9 - Change

Weird Tales: dim silent

Ace: dim, silent

Page 109, Paragraph 9 - **Change**

Weird Tales: soft weird

Ace: soft, weird

Page 110, Paragraph 7 - **Difference**

Weird Tales italicizes the quotation marks surrounding the italicized text, Ace does not

Page 110, Paragraph 7 - **Change**

Weird Tales: mannanan

Ace: mannanam

Page 110, Paragraph 8 - **Change**

Weird Tales: end, and seizing

Ace: end and, seizing

Page 110, Paragraph 8 - **Change**

Weird Tales: him: exotic

Ace: him; exotic

Page 110, Paragraph 8 & Page 110, Paragraph 9 -
Difference

Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 111, Paragraph 1 - **Change**

Weird Tales: near-by

Ace: nearby

Page 111, Paragraph 3 - **Change**

Weird Tales: drunk and

Ace: drunk, and

Page 112, Paragraph 1 & Page 112, Paragraph 2 -
Difference

Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 113, Paragraph 3 - **Change**

Weird Tales: surprize

Ace: surprise

Page 113, Paragraph 6 - **Change**

Weird Tales: dreamy sensuous

Ace: dreamy, sensuous

Page 113, Paragraph 6 - **Change**

Weird Tales: Oh, girl

Ace: O, girl

Page 114, Paragraph 1 - **Change**

Weird Tales: I'll vanish

Ace: I vanish

Page 114, Paragraph 4 - **Change**

Weird Tales: we ate it.

Ace: we ate.

Page 114, Paragraph 4 - **Change**

Weird Tales: country, no

Ace: country no

Page 114, Paragraph 4 - **Change**

Weird Tales: place, where

Ace: place where

Page 114, Paragraph 4 - **Change**

Weird Tales: rise, and

Ace: rise and

Page 114, Paragraph 8 - **Difference**

Weird Tales italicizes the question mark and quotation mark after the italicized text

Ace italicizes the question mark after the italicized text

Sphere italicizes nothing after the italicized text

Page 115, Paragraph 4 - **Change**

Weird Tales: in hell

Ace: in Hell

Page 115, Paragraph 4 - **Difference**

Weird Tales italicizes the exclamation point and quotation mark after the italicized text

Ace italicizes the exclamation point after the italicized text

Sphere italicizes nothing after the italicized text

Page 116, Paragraph 6 - **Correction**

Weird Tales: When Thog wants me, he will come for me?

Ace: When Thog wants me, he will come for me.

Page 116, Paragraph 11 - **Change**
Weird Tales: a light musical laugh
Ace: a lithe musical laugh

Page 116, Paragraph 12 - **Change**
Weird Tales: That man you mentioned
Ace: The man you mentioned

Page 117, Paragraph 2 - **Change**
Weird Tales: non-committally
Ace: noncommittally

Page 118, Paragraph 2 & Page 118, Paragraph 3 - **Difference**
Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 118, Paragraph 8 - **Error**
Weird Tales: fur-covered daises
Ace: fur-covered daisies
(Sphere doesn't make this change)

Page 119, Paragraph 6 - **Change**
Weird Tales: he ejaculated aghast
Ace: he ejaculated, aghast
(Sphere doesn't make this change)

Page 119, Paragraph 7 - **Change**
Weird Tales: the shadow of the priests
Ace: the shadow of a priest

Page 120, Paragraph 3 - **Error**
Weird Tales: the outer gates."
Ace: the outer gates.

Page 120, Paragraph 5 & Page 120, Paragraph 6 - **Difference**
Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 120, Paragraph 6 - **Change**
Weird Tales: intertwining her slender fingers
Ace: intertwining slender fingers

Page 120, Paragraph 6 - **Change**
Weird Tales: your little blond
Ace: your little blonde

Page 121, Paragraph 2 - **Change**
Weird Tales: interested in me
Ace: interested in one

Page 122, Paragraph 4 - **Correction**
Weird Tales: We're merely wasting time
Ace: we're merely wasting time

Page 124, Paragraph 3 - **Error**
Weird Tales: Brythunian
Ace: Byrthunian
(Sphere doesn't make this change)

Page 126, Paragraph 2 - **Difference**
Weird Tales starts a new paragraph (and inserts a vertical break) at ``Give me that dagger"

Page 126, Paragraph 3 - **Change**
Weird Tales: violence and horror
Ace: violence, and horror

Page 127, Paragraph 5 & Page 128, Paragraph 1 - **Difference**
Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace does not

Page 128, Paragraph 3 - **Change**
Weird Tales: flew or crept
Ace: flew, or crept

Page 128, Paragraph 3 - **Change**
Weird Tales: blinking toad-like
Ace: blinding, toad-like

Page 128, Paragraph 3 - **Error**
Weird Tales: distinctness
Ace: distinctness
(Sphere doesn't make this change)

Page 128, Paragraph 4 - **Change**
Weird Tales: dim repulsive face
Ace: dim, repulsive face

Page 129, Paragraph 1 - **Change**
Weird Tales: represented it was not
Ace: represented, it was not

Page 129, Paragraph 4 - **Change**
Weird Tales: he turned they surged
Ace: he turned, they surged

Page 130, Paragraph 3 - **Change**
Weird Tales: fighting-brain
Ace: fighting brain

Page 131, Paragraph 3 & Page 131, Paragraph 4 -
Difference
Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace
does not

Page 131, Paragraph 5 & Page 131, Paragraph 6 -
Difference
Ace inserts a vertical break here which was not
in *Weird Tales*

Page 133, Paragraph 1 & Page 133, Paragraph 2 -
Difference
Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace
does not

Page 134, Paragraph 2 - **Change**
Weird Tales: heaving billowing mass
Ace: heaving, billowing mass

Page 134, Paragraph 2 - **Change**
Weird Tales: it disappeared and Conan
Ace: it disappeared, and Conan

Page 134, Paragraph 3 - **Change**
Weird Tales: These ceased, and Natala
Ace: These ceased and Natala

Page 135, Paragraph 5 - **Change**
Weird Tales: devil out of hell
Ace: devil out of Hell

Page 135, Paragraph 6 - **Difference**
Weird Tales italicizes the question mark and
quotation mark after the italicized text
Ace italicizes the question mark after the
italicized text
Sphere italicizes nothing after the italicized text

Page 137, Paragraph 1 - **Change**
Weird Tales: ``I hear it," he licked
Ace: ``I hear it." He licked

Page 138, Paragraph 3 - **Change**
Weird Tales: suddenly roused interest
Ace: suddenly aroused interest

Page 138, Paragraph 12 - **Change**
Weird Tales: he answered. ``It may
Ace: he answered, ``It may

Page 139, Paragraph 3 & Page 139, Paragraph
4 - **Difference**
Weird Tales inserts a vertical break here, Ace
does not

Page 139, Paragraph 6 - **Change**
Weird Tales: his silk rope
Ace: the silk rope

Page 139, Paragraph 6 - **Change**
Weird Tales: loop, and drawing
Ace: loop and, drawing

Page 140, Paragraph 2 & Page 140, Paragraph
3 - **Difference**
Ace inserts a vertical break here which was not
in *Weird Tales*

Well, that's it. It would be a stretch to say that de Camp "ruined" this story. The changes are not that major and the story is not Howard at his best to begin with. But... why were they made at all? The making of "Hell" into a proper noun, for example. Isn't that sort of a Christian convention? And the change to imply that there is one particularly notable priest in Stygia. Sigh...

That's all, folks...

Out of time far too early again. No mailing comments. I'll try harder next time, honest. I hope to have some good original REH humor as well.