

DRAY PRESCOT: 41

**SCORPIO
ABLAZE**

KENNETH BULMER
writing as
ALAN BURT AKERS

A Mushroom eBook

SCORPIO ABLAZE

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a Mushroom eBooks sample

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Dray Prescott

Dray Prescott tells us in muted tones of remembered horror of the time he spent as a slave of the Shanks and Katakis in the port town of Taranjin. Taranjin is the capital of Tarankar, a country on the west coast of South Loh. Here, Prescott has been sent by the Star Lords to drive the Shanks out. He has been forced to leave his new Companions from Loh — Mevancy nal Chardaz, a most spirited young lady, and Trylon Kuong, a young nobleman of honorable and romantic notions, and Llodi, a loyal fighting man and ex caravan guard. These folk are trying to follow Prescott, whom they know as Drajak the Sudden.

Prescott has had limited success in organizing the guerilla gangs in Tarankar, and his hopes are centered on a coalition of forces from allied Hamal, from his home, Vallia, and from Tsungfaril. Tsungfaril, a country across the desert to the east, has a new queen, Queen Kirsty with her consort Rodders. The Star Lords ordered Kirsty to be made queen of Tsungfaril. Now Prescott in Taranjin, employed to clean a Shank lord's armor aboard his flagship, is beginning to sense that he faces utter failure. He tries a last throw and places incendiary

devices aboard Shank ships, and then is told to clean weapons — including a great Krozair longsword.

Prescot has been described as a man above middle height, with brown hair and level brown eyes, oddly brooding and dominating, with enormously broad shoulders and powerful physique. He has an unmistakable aura about him, a charisma known in Kregish as the yrium. He moves like a savage hunting animal, swift, quiet and lethal.

Under the twin sun, Antares, the planet Kregen is a world of wonder and terror, of beauty and horror. Now, in the streaming mingled lights of the Suns of Scorpio, Prescot takes up the Krozair brand. He hears a commotion on the deck outside and sees Pazzian slaves about to be killed by the Shank lord using his trident.

He looks along the deck hearing the shrieks of pain and fear and sees the totally unexpected. He acts at once.

Alan Burt Akers

Chapter one

The Glitch Riders swept out of the dawn in a whirling welter of pounding hooves and spurting sand. Their furious onset billowing their desert robes laced with dust made them ghostly apparitions bursting from the half-light and shadows. Flashing blades swinging in lethal arcs and long slender lances stabbing mercilessly tumbled the sleepy caravan guards into instant ruin.

The first shrieks brought Mevancy to the flap of the tent in three lissom strides. She looked out with a caution ingrained in her. Directly before her a screaming guard running between the lines of tents threw up his arms and collapsed as the sharp narrow lance head pierced past his backbone.

The Glitch Rider reined up, withdrawing his lance, and his animal reared and his hooves pawed the dust-laden air. Mevancy saw that picture of primeval violence and mannish domination. The lance slanted down towards her, its head darkly stained. Under the brim of the turban-wrapped helmet and above the sand scarf, fierce dark eyes caught the radiance of the early suns and glittered upon her.

The Glitch Rider must have seen a defenseless woman's figure in the tent opening, a fine shapely woman clad in a single sheer yellow nightgown. He forced his animal's head around, hooves splaying sand, thrust the lance into its stirrup bucket and dismounted in a single smooth movement. A word into his mount's ear quietened the beast immediately. Beyond the opposite row of tents screams blistered into the dawn air. The Glitch Rider started for the tent in pleasurable anticipation. This was the kind of loot for which he and his companions attacked the desert caravans.

Mevancy nal Chardaz lifted her left arm and held it horizontally outstretched straight in front of her breast. Her arm pointed at the advancing warrior. Her clenched fist curled below the line of the horizontal. Blood suffused Mevancy's face. Her left fist twitched and there followed a glinting twinkle in the air. The Glitch Rider emitted just the one scream. His hands flew up to the red pudding that had been his face. The sand scarf flapped uselessly, shredded into pieces, blood stained. He doubled up, writhing, staggering, choking.

Mevancy went quickly back into the tent and snatched up her sword.

"What is it, Mevancy? What is that terrible noise?"

The girl in the other desert camp bed lifted her head and stared in understanding horror. The sounds were self-explanatory.

"Make yourself as small as possible, Bella. Make yourself look like a part of the tent. For an actress of your gifts..." and here Mevancy recognized her own

cruelty. Still, she was feeling particularly aggravated and annoyed at the stupidity of the guards who had fallen down on their job, so she finished: “That should not be difficult.”

Bella Chuan-Hsei gave a tiny shriek. Her hands pulled the sheet up tightly. Her arms were pink and smooth and firmly fleshed, glowing. Mevancy swung back to the tent opening. Her own forearms were granulated with a fine honeycomb of sunken points, the deadly bindles, some of which had destroyed the desert raider’s face. What Mevancy did not say was that no Glitch Rider was going to enter this tent whilst she still swung a sword or could shoot off her bindles. She didn’t say it because she felt that kind of fustian best left to Bella’s orations upon the stage.

When she stepped out onto the sand the Glitch Rider was rolling about and greasy blood splattered between his fingers. She used her sword efficiently and gave him his quietus. She breathed deeply and almost steadily.

Noise racketed on in the camp and now the sliding screech of steel upon steel told that the caravan was coming awake and resisting the raiders. Because she had learned more of the tricks of the trade from Drajak the Sudden in their journeys, she caught the bridle of the Glitch Rider’s mount and tied the reins to a tent peg. Booty, after all, was booty.

Around the corner of the next tent along a man ran swiftly into view. He cast a swift glance back. By the cut of his desert robes, the turban-wrapped helmet, the style

of his sword, he could be nothing other than a Glitch Rider. Mevancy lifted her own blade.

He saw her and momentarily checked and then came on furiously.

She lifted her left arm before her, held straight with the fist tucked down. A shadow fled past the corner of the tent and there were Trylon Kuong and Llodi the Voice running swiftly after the raider.

The dust kicked into the air slicked on her tongue flatly, dry, and her nostrils stung. She faced the Glitcher, a slender handsome figure of defiance.

“Keep away, my lady!” yelled Llodi. His strangdja glittered as the twin suns pierced their mingled streaming light over the tops of the tents. Light began to illuminate the world.

“Not until I’ve bindled the shint!”

The Glitcher swung up his sword expecting to cut down this girl and get clear of his pursuers. For him, at least, the raid had gone wrong. He saw the tethered animal, a narrow-flanked, spiky-headed, six-legged wegener. He saw the sprawled body of his tribesman. Unhesitatingly he sprang for the wegener.

That sideways movement took him at an angle so that Mevancy’s shot for his face splattered against the side of his helmet and shoulder. One or two of the little darts, her bindles, smacked into his cheek. He ignored the sudden and unexpected pain, reaching for the reins tied around the tent peg. Inflamed, Mevancy started for him, sword uplifted.

Kuong — young, limber, alive with a reckless passion in which honor and glory were all muddled up in his head — shouted in alarm.

“Mevancy!”

Llodi let rip a low growl of animal anger and fairly hurled himself on.

The glittering holly-leaf-shaped head of his strangdja, a killing instrument of cold steel, thrust forward as he charged. Llodi the Voice, a rough tough caravan guard who, had he been on watch, would never have been caught sleeping, put great store by his new friends, Trylon Kuong and the lady Mevancy — and, too, that hard and ferocious devil, Drajak the Sudden, who had so mysteriously disappeared. Oh, no, Llodi was not going to let anything nasty happen to the lady Mevancy.

The Glitcher reached the tethered wegener as Kuong leaped upon him and as Llodi thrust his strangdja forward past Kuong’s hurtling body.

Sword and strangdja slashed and pierced the desert raider. He let rip a screech of agony, trying to swing about, trying to get his own sword into action, and Mevancy delivered a last cunning stroke that smashed him to his knees into the churned-up sand.

The three friends stood, together, over the body, and looked about for any more of these pestiferous Glitchers. They had no need to speak. They acted as a team.

A galloping wegener in his lolloping six-legged gait crashed past with his rider dangling from the saddle, his chest a mass of red under the crushed mail. Others appeared, running, and following them a vengeful mob

of Kuong's personal guards mixed with caravan guards and mercenaries of other nobles and merchants traveling with the caravan.

"Bad cess to 'em," growled Llodi, grounding his strangdja. "What with murdering and thieving an' all."

"That's their way of life," observed Kuong. He glanced at Mevancy and the tiniest dent appeared in his forehead between his brows. "You are — well, Mevancy?"

"By Spurl!" She tossed back her dark hair, impatient with herself. "It was just that first sight of the Gahamond-forsaken bastard that startled me. He looked so — so—" She did not repeat the thought that had slammed through her brain at sight of the Glitcher — so mannish. Instead, she finished: "His damned evil eyes flashed like those of a risslaca."

"He was meat ripe for the chopping, my lady." Llodi sounded positive.

"Yes."

"Then," said Kuong briskly, in his best manner of young nobility, "it is time we had the first breakfast."

Not for the first time Mevancy saw with pleasure that briskness in Kuong, an attitude to life vastly different from the majority of his countrymen and women down here in Tsungfaril in Southern Loh. Of course, he was a Paol-ur-bliem, a man sentenced to the punishment of being reincarnated over and over again until he had purged himself of his own crime against the god Tsung-Tan seasons upon seasons ago.

Those who were not the Accursed, not paol-ur-bliem, lived only so that they might after death enter the paradise of Gilium. Their lackadaisical way of existing infuriated strangers who did not share their religious beliefs. Kuong had a goodly number of lifetimes to live before he could dream of entering Gilium and living in paradise for eternity.

Because Kuong was a trylon, the third highest rank of nobility, he could sit at the folding table with his friends and grandly eat the first breakfast whilst others cleaned up the camp. The Glitchers' bodies were stripped of everything useful and then taken out and dumped.

The caravan master, Nath the Horizons, a man whose face bore the creases of seeing vast distances across the desert, walked up to the table. He looked troubled. Gracefully, Kuong invited him to sit down and partake of the first breakfast.

"Thank you, lord. I bring grave news." He sat down but did not eat.

Levelly, Kuong said: "Tell me."

"Those shints. May Tsung-Tan in his infinite wisdom consign each one individually to the Death Jungles of Sichaz." The words were heavy, flat on the dusty air. "They slashed the water skins."

"Oh, no!" burst out Mevancy before she could stop herself.

"Aye, my lady. It is serious—"

"Water must be rationed at once." Kuong stood up. "We must gather up every last drop. We must know how much we have left."

Llodi stood up instantly and Nath the Horizons also rose, more slowly. He was an important man in the desert, and knew it; also he was not a lord.

“There may be just enough to see us all back to Makilorn. There is no question of going on our way farther west.”

“Just so that we all arrive alive,” breathed Kuong.

Mevancy threw him a quizzical glance. The young trylon, when he died, would be reincarnated into the chosen body of a newborn baby. It could well be thought he would welcome the chance of a genuine death so as to get his punishment over with as soon as possible. Yet Kuong did not, as far as Mevancy could see, appear to share that common ambition of all the Accursed, the paol-ur-bliem.

About to throw the dregs of her cup into the sand, an unthinking action, she hauled herself up. “Every last drop,” she said.

“Aye.”

“Reminds me of the time when old Perlandi got caught in that dratted sandstorm. We were short of water, then. But we survived.”

“We will, my lady,” said Llodi with gravity, “survive now.”

She was about to agree in a rolling oath or two with Llodi when Nath the Horizons said in his heavy way: “If it is the will of Tsung-Tan, I shall accept that with joy, if he calls me up to Gilium at last.”

Llodi and Mevancy exchanged impatient, annoyed glances. Still, neither wanted to question the fanatically held religious beliefs of these people.

Mevancy contented herself with: “Well, by Spurl, I have a great deal to do. I intend to return to Makilorn in one piece.”

“And,” said Kuong, looking into her flushed face, “so do I.”

The caravan wrapped up and set off, heading east, and by agreement the second breakfast was omitted.

There was water, just, to get them through on savagely reduced rations.

When Mevancy suggested to Kuong, and he passed on the idea to Nath, that they should dump unnecessary impedimenta, thus lightening the load and increasing their speed, the reaction of most nobles was one of rejection.

“If we leave our tents and personal goods here in the desert,” protested Laygon Fariang, a stout lord with a stutter, “they will be lost! The Glitchers may come back, there are bandits — oh, no, my slaves will carry their burdens.”

“Quite right!” confirmed Stromni Yriang, purple-faced, jewel-bedecked.

“Well,” temporized Kuong, “we will see.”

In the event, when the caravan staggered with only half their animals left into the city of Makilorn, they left a trail of abandoned goods in their wake. No one sweated. Dust and sand caked them. They were a

procession of ghosts stumbling to the banks of the River of Drifting Leaves.

Kuong's people had not suffered as badly as the slaves of the other nobles. By the same token, most of his possessions now lay dumped back in the wastes of sand. Going up to his villa, he said: "I'll send out for the gear. If it is still there."

"Which it won't be if those rackety Umblers stumble across it."

Even in their exhausted condition they had to smile at the thought of Umblers — erratic, incompetent diffs. Llodi finished: "They are a funny old lot, an' all, an' no mistake."

In Kuong's villa, Mevancy said decisively: "A bath. A long long soak."

Kuong's people bustled about. After bathing, a meal and then rest brought Mevancy, Llodi and Kuong back to normalcy. The experience had turned out not too badly in the end; it could easily have killed them all. They decided to walk across to the Mishuro villa early the next day to see Lunky and as Llodi said: "Find out if he's seen Drajak, an' all."

"Strange business," observed Kuong. "Oh, I know Drajak is a bit weird; but it's not like him to go off like that."

Mevancy opened her mouth, and closed it. She was a kregoinya as Drajak was a kregoinye and they worked for the Everoinye. Drajak could have been snatched up by the Star Lords and sent somewhere else on Kregen.

Mevancy knew all about that. That was how she and Drajak had met, in a burning building.

The guards stiffened up to attention as Kuong Vang Talin, the Trylon of Taranik, entered the Mishuro villa. Lunky greeted them with outstretched hands, puzzled at their return. When he'd heard the story he gave thanks to Tsung-Tan for their safe deliverance and then startled them.

"Drajak? Yes, he was here. But he's flown off again."

A light quick step brought their attention to a young man who bore a face remarkable for its clash of emotions. His forehead was broad and his features well formed with a rebellious set to his jaw. His red Lohvian hair was neatly trimmed. That young unlined face expressed baffled fury, scorn, self-pity and a growing rebellious determination.

Lunky introduced the young man as Rollo the Runner.

The moment the lahals were done with, Rollo burst out: "And damned ungrateful he is! By Chuzto! Just flew off and left me here to rot!"

"What is all this about flying?" demanded Kuong, not quite sure how to take this emphatic young man.

"Drajak had a boat that flew through the air," said Lunky.

"Yes!" Rollo waved his arms about. "He calls it a voller. Flew away and left me here." Only then was it borne in on Rollo just how his passionate words could be interpreted. Instantly he swung towards Lunky. "I beg your forgiveness, San Lunky. I did not mean — I am sure you realize—"

Not too long ago Lunky had been just such a young man; now with the death of his master he had become a most powerful Diviner. His face had filled out. He carried himself with poise and assurance. His marriage to Mistress Telsi would soon take place. And, since the discomfiture of the opposition party led by Shang-Li-Po, the party of which he and his friends formed the heart had come to power.

He said: "That is perfectly all right, Rollo. I do understand. I am doomed to lead an inactive life now. You may stride out to adventures—"

"Ha!" Rollo's fury burst out anew. "I may? When Drajak the Sudden sees fit, you mean. Where are the men he promised?"

"As to that, they will arrive in Tsung-Tan's good time."

"Did he," said Kuong, "explain where he'd been and why he didn't join us after we had — ah — rescued queen Leone?"

Mevancy remained silent. She could not be sure; but she felt fairly confident that the Everoinye had, indeed, taken Drajak up.

"No, trylon, not a word. But he had this wonderful flying boat." Talk of airboats aroused conflicting emotions in Loh. Lack of fliers was often given as one reason for the decline and collapse of the Empire of Loh. Conversation became general as Lunky led the party in for a splendid Kregan meal.

At one point, in answer to Rollo, Kuong said: "Our journey has merely been interrupted. We shall start west again with the first caravan."

"In that case, trylon," quoth Rollo the Runner, "I would ask leave to accompany you. I am doing no good here. Drajak has gone to Tarankar, so that is where I must go."

Looking at Rollo's determined young face, Mevancy saw clearly what an impression Drajak had made on this young man. Could other people see in her face the impression Drajak had made on her?

The episode with Leotes she had now firmly put away from her thoughts. He was paol-ur-bliem like Kuong. The new Repositors would be appointed by the college to collect every scrap of information about the lives of the Accursed in their care, thus ensuring continuity. Now, before Kuong could rush off again, he had to wait for his new Repositor. Lunky threw up his hands in regret, but, as he said: "This is your fate."

In the event Trylon Kuong received a small, sedate man with a nose more pointed than round, and a chin more round than pointed. He habitually put his hands into the opposite sleeves, and smiled. This was San Cheng.

Mevancy decided to reserve her opinion of him.

Some time elapsed in fresh preparations. Some of Kuong's gear was retrieved from the desert. A caravan formed and, at last, they could set off west for Taranik and Tarankar. The days in the desert passed as desert days do as the twin suns rose and set. The patient

animals plodded on, and, eventually, via Orphasmot and the oases of Claransmot and Hanjhin, took the party to Taranik. Here, in this large and splendid oasis and its imposing lake, they were greeted by the Crebent left in charge by Kuong. T'sien-Fu was able to tell them that the flying boat had flown in and off and that Drajak the Sudden had asked after the very people with the trylon now.

“Well, at least we are following him,” said Mevancy.

Whilst Kuong was in a hurry, it was needful for him to spend some time in his estates of Taranik. No further troubles had been experienced from the Glitch Riders, and the bandits were lying low. T'sien-Fu's mop of black hair quivered as he spoke to his lord. “But, lord, to go to Tarankar!”

Speaking with heavy gravity, Kuong said: “I have been ordered to go by the queen. Queen Kirsty is forming an army. It is necessary to find out all that we can.”

“But, lord, the man Drajak in his flying boat has gone.”

“It was our agreement to go together. Queyd-arn-tung!”[\[1\]](#)

With considerable reluctance, despite the urgency of their mission, the party left the peace and plenty of Kuong's estates of Taranik. The groves of trees, the cultivated fields, the herds of fine animals and the wonderful scent of Kregan flowers all called to the wanderer to pitch his tents and settle down here. The glitter of the twin suns off the lake was the last sight of water before She of the Sundering, the river marking the

eastern boundary of Tarankar. Kuong took a last deep draught of the perfumed oasis air and then swung resolutely away into the desert.

The wasteland here was real desert, mile after mile of shifting sand. Known as the Glarkie Dunes, the barrier it formed was formidable.

Husbanding water and supplies, keeping steadily on, the party could only speculate what the future held for them.

At last came the day when Llodi, in the lead, hauled up and shaded his eyes, peering intently ahead. Kuong reined in beside him.

“Yes, Llodi. I think those are clouds.”

“And mountains under ’em. That’ll be the river, an’ everything.”

“I trust,” said Mevancy, her sand scarf trailed across the lower half of her face, “I sincerely trust we may swim in the river.”

“That is something to be discovered.”

Although they did not urge their animals to a faster gait, the beasts soon snuffed water ahead and speeded up. San Cheng, his yellow robe flapping, held onto his saddle in a most awkward fashion. He carried a sword and Llodi, for one, promised himself not to stand too close to the Reposer if it came to a fight.

San Cheng had no need to give his history. He had been chosen early on showing signs of promise, had been trained up by the college, and would spend the rest of his life recording Kuong’s doings and sayings. When this body inhabited by Kuong died the Diviners, now led

by Lunky, would discover Kuong in the body of a new born baby. By that time it was highly probable that San Cheng's successor would be the trylon's Reposer.

Mevancy cried out and pointed.

"Look! That must be Drajak!"

Fleeting swiftly from the distant smudge of cloud and skimming over the desert towards them a dot rapidly grew in size and turned into a flying boat.

Mevancy started to wave and Rollo, after a single look, shouted: "No! No, my lady. We must hide!"

"Hide!" exclaimed Kuong. "Where, by Lohrhian of the Springing Branch, can we hide in this hellish place?"

"What is it, Rollo?" Mevancy was appalled by Rollo's panic-stricken vehemence.

"Shanks!"

The flying vessel swooped down. Her brightly-painted squared-off upperworks glinted with gilding above the sleek black hull. Quite clearly her crew had seen the party below. Llodi clapped his heels in and started a blind rush off to the left, Rollo went galloping off to the right, San Cheng was carried off willy-nilly. Kuong cast a glance at Mevancy and ripped out his sword.

"From all I have heard about these Shanks," she said, speaking as evenly as she could, feeling her heart thudding, "we do not have much chance."

"Nevertheless—"

"Oh, yes, I agree. Your company has been pleasant, Kuong, and much appreciated." She drew her sword.

The Shanks flew with precision. Circling, they dropped nets, parties of fish-faced soldiers alighted. All

Kuong's people were rounded up and of them all only two servants were killed. Everyone else was taken.

They resisted. They fought. Of course, they fought.

They were ruthlessly smashed down entangled in the nets, clubbed senseless.

Some awful time later, thrown down into a dark wooden-walled space deep within that black hull, they huddled together, nursing their cuts and bruises. The sight of these fishy people, these Shanks, affected Mevancy profoundly.

Used as any inhabitant of Kregen must be to the wonderful array of diffs, people who are not built as *Homo sapiens sapiens* is built, she still recoiled in revulsion. These Fish Faces repelled in a fashion at once nauseating, hideous and terrifying.

San Cheng simply sat with his hands thrust into the sleeves of his robe, head sunk on breast. Llodi was trying to prise a splinter of wood away from the wall. Some of Kuong's servants were crooning a slave dirge as old as slavery itself. Kuong said: "When we are taken out. There are no nets on us now."

Mevancy, on a breath, said: "Oh, yes!"

They all felt the bump shiver through the room and only then realized they had been flying through the air.

Rollo said: "You'll get used to it. Now, I do not stop fighting."

He, and the others, did not stop fighting as they were dragged out. Indifferently, the Shanks clubbed them down, hauling their kicking protesting bodies by ankles or wrists or hair. Mevancy had a chance to let fly with

her bindles. Sensing this was the end, she did not husband her biological arsenal but let rip with both forearms.

Three Shanks screamed, dropping their weapons and clasping their ruined fishy faces. Others beat her to the deck and hauled on her hair, dragging her up to the top deck. Even then, in pain, half blind, she did not fail to note the callous treatment living Shanks afforded dead Fish Heads.

Repeatedly struck, dazed, Kuong and his party staggered from the flying ship, still attempting to struggle. Other ships lay on the landing field and the suns shone.

Now black-browed Katakis appeared to take over. These were slavers of Paz, man managers, utterly indifferent to other peoples' pains. They flashed their tails, to which were strapped six inches of daggered steel, and their whips rose and fell.

The slave coffle under the whips staggered on. Shouting and screaming, the line of slaves was hauled aboard another of the black hulled flying ships and thrust against the bulkhead. Mevancy lifted her head. On the deck a group of Shank officers glittered in scaled armor, glinting with gold, surrounding one who shone more magnificently than his aides. He, then, was the chief. He held a trident. Mevancy stiffened in fresh horror.

Perfectly clearly the whole situation was at once apparent. The Shanks had grown tired of the slaves' antics, annoyed and aggravated. The Shank lord would go along the line and thrust his trident deeply into each

person's guts, twist and pull. That would be a dreadful object lesson to the rest.

Rollo surged forward and was beaten back by the smash of a trident butt.

The Fish Face lord thrust his trident into a Mionch who went down screaming to snap one of his long tusks against the deck.

The trident lifted. In the next heartbeat it would degut Mevancy.

A heavy throwing spear with red feathers flaunting where head joined shaft abruptly sprouted between the fish lord's shoulder blades. He went down at once. The other Shanks shrieked in uncomprehending rage, and ripped out their swords, lifted their tridents. They turned to stare down the deck.

Mevancy, sick with the horror and the stink of rotten fish, looked.

She did not really believe.

A voice of power and passion bellowed: "Hai Jikai! Hai Jikai, you murdering torturing kleeshes of Fish Faces! Hai Jikai!"

A bronzed and lithely muscular figure clad in a flaring scarlet breechclout leaped down the deck straight for the Shanks. A great two-handed longsword flamed under the Suns of Kregen.

"Hai Jikai!"

**That's the end of the sampler. We hope you enjoyed it.
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About the author

Alan Burt Akers was a pen name of the prolific British author Kenneth Bulmer, who died in December 2005 aged eighty-four.

Bulmer wrote over 160 novels and countless short stories, predominantly science fiction, both under his real name and numerous pseudonyms, including Alan Burt Akers, Frank Brandon, Rupert Clinton, Ernest Corley, Peter Green, Adam Hardy, Philip Kent, Bruno Krauss, Karl Maras, Manning Norvil, Chesman Scot, Nelson Sherwood, Richard Silver, H. Philip Stratford, and Tully Zetford. Kenneth Johns was a collective pseudonym used for a collaboration with author John Newman. Some of Bulmer's works were published along with the works of other authors under "house names" (collective pseudonyms) such as Ken Blake (for a series of tie-ins with the 1970s television programme *The Professionals*), Arthur Frazier, Neil Langholm, Charles R. Pike, and Andrew Quiller.

Bulmer was also active in science fiction fandom, and in the 1970s he edited nine issues of the *New Writings* in

Science Fiction anthology series in succession to John Carnell, who originated the series.

More details about the author, and current links to other sources of information, can be found at www.mushroom-ebooks.com, and at wikipedia.org.

The Dray Prescott Series

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- 2. The Suns of Scorpio*
- 3. Warrior of Scorpio*
- 4. Swordships of Scorpio*
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33. Werewolves of Kregen

34. Witches of Kregen

35. Storm over Vallia

36. Omens of Kregen

37. Warlord of Antares

Lohvian cycle:

38. Scorpio Reborn

39. Scorpio Assassin

40. Scorpio Invasion

41. Scorpio Ablaze

42. Scorpio Drums

43. Scorpio Triumph

Balintol cycle:

44. Intrigue of Antares

45. Gangs of Antares

46. Demons of Antares

47. Scourge of Antares

48. Challenge of Antares

49. Wrath of Antares

50. Shadows over Kregen

Phantom cycle:

51. Murder on Kregen

52. Turmoil on Kregen

Notes

[1] Queyd-arn-tung — No more need be said. *A.B.A.*

[2] dernun? An imperative demand: ‘Do you understand?’ Not very polite. *A.B.A.*

[3] bratch! Move, jump, get on with it. Not as ferocious as the infamous grak! *A.B.A.*