

DRAY PRESCOT: 33

WEREWOLVES OF KREGEN

KENNETH BULMER

writing as

ALAN BURT AKERS

A Mushroom eBook

WEREWOLVES OF KREGEN

ALAN BURT AKERS

a Mushroom eBooks sample

For Simon de Wolfe and the Hundred Henchfolk.

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First published by Daw Books, Inc. in 1985.

This Edition published in 2007 by Mushroom eBooks, an
imprint of Mushroom Publishing, Bath, BA1 4EB, United
Kingdom

www.mushroom-ebooks.com

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The Witch War Cycle

Dray Prescott tells the story of his adventures on Kregen on cassettes which he sends me from time to time during his visits to Earth. He has had a remarkable and varied career on that remarkable and varied world, four hundred light-years away, eventually being elected Emperor of Vallia. Each of the volumes of his story is arranged to be read as an individual book, so although *Werewolves of Kregen* is #33 in the Saga, it can be picked up and read with enjoyment by a reader unfamiliar with the preceding volumes. Of course, familiarity with the fascinating ins and outs of Dray Prescott's story must give greater enjoyment; but, then, a reader coming to the Saga for the first time has that pleasurable satisfaction in store.

The island Empire of Vallia, sundered by internal dissension and invasion, is gradually reestablishing itself. Prescott returns from the island of Pandahem to the south to help in that struggle. *Werewolves of Kregen* is the first book in a new cycle of adventures chronicling that struggle and the beginning of the Nine Unspeakable Curses Against Vallia. Under the streaming mingled

lights of the Suns of Scorpio, Dray Prescot must go on to whatever fate destiny holds for him.

Alan Burt Akers

Chapter one

The first deaths

Gray mist parted before the prow of the narrow boat, clung damply to our faces, dewed our evening cloaks with diamonds. Gaunt fingers of mist reached across the canal to the opposite bank where the blank stone rear of a villa patched a mass of darkness against the night.

We were a silent company with only the soft ripple of water as an accompaniment. Then Seg said: “A damned spooky night, this, my old dom.”

Seg Segutorio is one of the fey ones of two worlds, and at his words his wife Milsa put her arm through his more securely and pressed closer. Delia responded with one of her silvery-golden laughs and was about to pass a scathing comment on the gullibility of some folk over ghouls and spookies and the Kregen equivalent of things that go bump in the night, when young Fortin, standing in the prow with his boathook, called out.

“Look! On the bank — there!”

We all looked. A man wrapped in a cloak walked unsteadily along the towpath and I was about to inquire with a touch of sarcasm of young Fortin what we were supposed to be staring at when a humped gray mass launched itself through the air.

The man had no chance. Screaming, writhing, he went down into the mud.

A monstrous shaggy shape hunched above him. The impression of crimson eyes, of yellow fangs, of a thick and coarsely tangled pelt, of a beast-form bunched with demonic energy, was followed by the clearly heard crunch of bones breaking through.

The people in the narrow boat set up a yelling. The beast reared his head. He stared out full at us. Smoky ruby eyes glared malevolently. The yellow fangs and black jaws glistened thickly with blood that darkened ominously in that uncertain light.

Seg reached around to his back for the great Lohvian longbow that was not there. We were all dressed for the evening's entertainment, with rapiers and left-hand daggers. A lady and gentleman do not normally need longbows and war-swords and shields along the streets and canals of Vondium, the capital of the Empire of Vallia.

Kregen's first Moon, the Maiden with the Many Smiles, cast down her fuzzy pink light upon the slatey waters, and tendrils of mist coiled up to engulf the light. The air darkened.

"Steer for the bank!" I bellowed.

Old Naghan the Tiller put his helm over at once and we glided into the bank. Fortin fended us off and Seg and I leaped ashore.

The poor fellow was dead, his throat torn clean out.

Delia said, "Call the Watch."

"Can you see the damn beast?" Seg glared about.

In the shifting shards of pinkish illumination, with the mist bafflingly obscuring details, we could see no sign of that monstrous shaggy beast.

Dormvelt, the bo'sun, hauled out his silver whistle — it was a whistle and not a pipe — and blew. The City Fathers, instituted by the Presidio to run many of the day-to-day functions of Vondium, had suggested that a City Watch would be in keeping with the requirements of law and order. The Pallans, the ministers or secretaries, responsible for their various departments of Vallia, had agreed. I was pleased now to see how rapidly the Watch tumbled up, summoned by Dormvelt's call.

These were not the happy, rapscaillon, lethargic Watch of Sanurkazz, who invariably turned up too late at a fracas, with swords rusted into their scabbards. These men were old soldiers, with stout polearms, and lanterns, and a couple of werstings on leather leashes reinforced with brass.

"What's to do, koters?" called their leader who wore yellow and white feathers in his hat.

Then he saw me.

He knew better than to go into the extravagant full incline, all slavish indignity in a free man.

"Majister!"

“Lahal, Tom the Toes,” I said, for I recognized him for an old churgur of the army. As a churgur he still carried sword and shield. His men shone their lanterns on the corpse.

“A bad business. Did you see a monstrous great animal running off?”

“No majister.” Tom the Toes rattled his sword against his shield. “Larko! If you can’t keep those dratted werstings quiet in the presence of the emperor, then—”

“I dunno, Tom — look at ’em! They’re going crazy...”

Werstings, those vicious black and white striped hunting dogs, are popularly supposed to be tamed into serving humanity as watchdogs and hunting dogs. But most folk eye them askance, knowing with that sixth sense of humans that the dogs are only pretending to be tamed and that they will break out into their savage ways at the first opportunity. Now the two werstings were drawing back their lips, exposing their fangs. They were snarling deep in their throats, guttural and menacing sounds. The hair around their necks stood up and their backs bristled.

Larko held onto the leashes, hanging back, and I’d swear that at any moment he’d be towed along with his heels slipping in the mud.

“The beast’s scent upsets them,” said Delia. “So we follow.”

Trust Delia to get to the heart of anything faster than anyone else.

Tom the Toes, holding himself very erect, huffed and puffed, and got out: “Majestrix! My lady! You are not dressed or weaponed for danger — majestrix—”

Delia, who is the Empress of Vallia as well as the lady of many other realms of Kregen, knew exactly the right answer to this tough old soldier.

“You have the right of it, Tom. Therefore you brave lads can go on ahead into the danger, and I will skulk along at the back. Does that please you?”

“Delia!” I said, and looked at Tom, who bit his lip, and then swung about and yelled with great ill-temper upon his men. He was, of course, a Deldar in command of this patrol, and, like all Deldars, he could bellow.

We all set off after the werstings who now that the backward pressure was released from their leashes seemed mightily reluctant to follow the scent that so disturbed them. They started off, and then they stopped, making horrid little noises low down in the scale.

“They won’t have it,” announced Larko. Now he was trying to pull them along, and they dragged back. “This ain’t like my werstings at all — come on, Polly, come on, Fancy. Don’t make a fool of me in front o’ the emperor and the empress.”

But the werstings, it was quite clear, were prepared to make a fool of anybody rather than follow that scent.

We were getting nowhere so I made the obvious decision.

The City Fathers had allocated houses in each precinct to be turned into guardhouses where the patrols of the Watch were based. Since the Time of Troubles, which

had torn Vallia into shreds, peoples' lives were vastly different from what they had been in the old prosperous days of peace and plenty. The times bred restless spirits, men and women hardened by suffering who demanded back from anyone available what they considered their due. A Watch even in Vondium was necessary. We had not worn war-gear; the times, wrong though they were, were not as bad as that.

I said, "Tom, better get back to your guardhouse and report. It is clear the werstings will not track that beast. Tell the Hikdar that I want an immediate check on all known menageries, zoos, arenas — we have to discover where that beast escaped from. And, by Vox, his owner will have a deal of explaining to do, believe me!"

"Quidang!"

"Tell all patrols to be on the alert — well, you don't need me to tell you your duty. Just look at this poor devil's throat. We have to find that animal, and fast."

Delia put a hand on my arm.

"I suppose you will go off—"

"Only until the prefect is alerted and we have men searching—"

"And I suppose Marion will wait?"

This was, indeed, a problem of etiquette.

As I pondered the implications, Seg broke in to say: "Did anyone recognize that beast? I did not."

"No — nor me." No one, it seemed, had any clear idea of just what kind of animal it was who had ripped out a poor fellow's throat.

A cloak was thrown over the corpse and the Watch lifted it up and prepared to carry it back to the guardhouse. The werstings were only too happy to leave.

I held Delia, and said, “Only as long as it takes, my heart. Marion will understand.”

“Yes. She will.”

“H’mmm — that means she won’t like it. Well, of course not. But by the same token that she does not want to start the evening until the emperor and empress arrive, I am the emperor and have my duties.”

Seg said, “Milsy, my love, if you go with Delia, Dray and I’ll be along as soon as we can.”

“Oh?” I said, as Milsy nodded immediate understanding acceptance.

“Too right, my old dom.”

Sometimes there is no arguing with Seg Segutorio, with the wild mane of black hair and those fey blue eyes. If I was going off into what might appear a mundane business of reporting this killing and seeing that the hunt was up, he intended to be there too, just in case...

With a beautifully controlled touch of temper, Delia pointed out the obvious.

“The prefect will do all you can do, Dray.”

“I expect nothing less. All the same—”

“Very well. Off you go. And don’t be long!”

The mist swirled about us, clammy and concealing, as the ladies and their escorts reentered the narrow boat.

The smell of the water lifted to us, tangy and tinged with that strange scent of the canal waters of Vallia. Some of the Watch did not venture within six paces of

the edge and were without the slightest interest in those slatey waters. Others walked near and did not mind. The first were not canalmen, and while the second might not be vens, either, they could drink of the water and not die.

The narrow boat vanished into the mist.

Seg and I and the others started off to the guardhouse.

“That monstrous brute worries me, Dray.” Seg shook his head. “You know me, my old dom, and a hulking great monster scares me sometimes. But this one, this is different.”

“We’ll find out what idiot let him loose. You know the new laws prohibit wild-beast entertainments. Well, if I find some lout has been enjoying himself torturing animals and killing them in the name of sport — no wonder the thing attacked. It’s probably hungry and thirsty, scared out of its wits, and ready to turn on anyone.”

“True. And it’s dangerous, Erthyr knows.”

We did not spend long at the guardhouse. The Hikdar in command there jumped into action when we appeared. Mounted messengers were sent off galloping to warn the other precincts, search parties were organized, and a man was dispatched to haul the prefect out to take overall command. When all that was done Seg suggested we ought at last to take ourselves off to the party.

“Yes. And I own I am looking forward to it.”

“I need a wet, and that is sooth.”

“I’m with you there. Also, I’m interested in meeting this Strom Nango ham Hofnar.”

Seg grimaced.

“The very sound of the name, here in Vondium, rings strange.”

“Aye.”

“Well, if Marion is set on marrying him, there’s an end to it. These women, once they’ve made up their minds, are never deflected.”

“You do not, of course, Seg, include the Lady Milsi in this wild and extravagant generalization?”

He had the grace to throw his handsome head back and roar with laughter.

“You may think you have me there, my old dom, but I tell you — I cannot say which one of us was the more eager.”

The truth was, I was overjoyed that my blade comrade had at last found a lady. The Lady Milsi, who was Queen Mab of Croxdrin and who thusly had made Seg into King Mabo, I knew to be right for him, a wonderful lady, a great queen, and a girl any man would joy in. She’d had the sense to pick on Seg and go to very great lengths to make sure she won him. Very soon we would have to make arrangements to take her to the Sacred Pool of Baptism in the River Zelfh in far Aphrasöe, the Swinging City. There the immersion in that magical milky fluid would confer on her not only a thousand years of life but the ability to throw off sickness and to recover from wounds in incredibly short times.

The narrow boat returned for us and we boarded at the spot where this mysterious beast had killed his poor victim. We pushed off and floated near silently along the canal.

On duty tonight as escort were twelve men of the Second Regiment of the Emperor's Sword Watch. They made an interesting contrast among themselves. The 2ESW system provided training for young officers who would eventually go to places in the line as well as a corps of seasoned fighting men to take their place in the Guard Corps. So it was that among these twelve were to be found the hard-faced veterans of a hundred fights, and the beardless cheeks of lads just beginning their careers as soldiers.

Their crimson and yellow uniforms showed bravely in the lamplight, their weapons glittered brightly. The rest of the duty squadron would be waiting at Marion's villa where the party for her affianced groom was to be held.

As the craft glided along the canal I still felt a fretfulness at the back of my stupid old vosk skull of a head that by rights I ought to be out there in the streets and avenues of the city, a sword in my fist, leading the hunt for that monstrous and uncanny beast.

Echoing my thoughts, Seg grumped out: "Had I my bow with me..." He heaved up his shoulders, and finished: "I felt so confoundedly useless."

Lights bloomed ahead flooding down a warm yellow radiance. The mist wisped away. The narrow boat glided expertly into the space of water penned between two other boats and her way came off.

Nath Corvuus, the Jiktar in command of the duty squadron, tut-tutted and let out a: “By Vox! Someone will have a red face!”

Seg cocked an eye at me, and I own I smiled back.

The lads of the Guard Corps were mighty proud of their duties, and quick to resent any implied slight of the emperor or empress. It was clear that in Jiktar Nath’s opinion, a space alongside the jetty should have been reserved for the emperor’s boat and kept clear of all other craft. Well, this is all petty nonsense to me, but I had to maintain the gravitas and mien of your full-blooded emperor from time to time. Now was not the time.

“Let us not worry about that on a night like this, Nath. This is a pre-nuptial party. And remind your new lads again what will happen if they get drunk.”

“Oh, aye, majister. I’ll remind ’em.”

Drunkeness, either on duty or off, was not a crime in the Vallian Imperial Guard Corps. The first offence would see the culprit run up in front of his Jiktar where he would be solemnly warned. The second offence was the last. The idiot would be discharged, not with ignominy, just sent off, and transferred to another unit of the line. There was much good-natured drinking in the Guard; there was practically never any drunkeness.

We hopped nimbly across the intervening boats and stepped onto the stone jetty. Here the duty squadron lined up, forming an alleyway bounded by crimson and yellow, by steel and bronze. The brave flutter of their

feathers caught the torchlights. They were all at pike-stiff attention.

With that suitable gravitas Seg and I marched up between them to the porticoed entrance to Marion's villa. Here she stood forth to welcome us, as was proper. A crowd of guests clustered to one side. Delia and Mils, looking absolutely marvelous, stood a little ahead of the rest. In the case of Delia, and Mils, too, this was also perfectly proper. I am the last person in two worlds ever to forget that my gorgeous Delia, my Delia of Delphond, my Delia of the Blue Mountains, is an empress.

"Lahal, majister! Lahal and Lahal!"

"Lahal, my lady Marion. Lahal all."

The greetings were called, the people welcomed us, and very soon we were able to enter the villa and see about that wet.

But before that, the lady Marion came over and looking up said, "Majister. May I present Strom Nango ham Hofnar."

"Lahal, Strom," I said, very formal, not smiling, but trying to be easy. "Lahal. You are very welcome to Vallia and to Vondium."

"Lahal, majister. I thank you. I bear a message from the emperor for you."

"Good! Nedfar and I are old comrades. I trust he is well and enjoying life to the full."

"Indeed yes, majister. To the full."

Studying this Nango ham Hofnar I was struck by his air of competence. He was not overly tall, yet he stood a head higher than the lady Marion. His hair, dark, was

cut low over his forehead. There was about the squareness of his lips and jaw a reassurance. This man, I saw, was useful...

He wore gray trousers, a blue shirt, and over his shoulders was slung a short bright green cape, heavily embellished with gold lace. This was smart evening wear in Hamal. Among the folk of Vallia he looked highly foreign and exotic.

Also, I noticed he wore a rapier and main gauche.

A great deal of the rigorous security maintained by my guards had been relaxed in recent seasons, and they now allowed people they didn't know to wear weapons in my presence, although they were still mighty jumpy about it, by Krun.

The Vallians here wore evening attire. Now your normal Vallian will wear soothing pastel colors in the evening, gowns most comfortable to lounge about in. This was a pre-nuptial party and the folk wore startling colors. This was all part of the fun and freedom of the occasion, of course. My Delia astounded me, at least, by wearing a brilliant scarlet robe, smothered in gold. This was a far cry from her usual laypom or lavender gown. Milsis's gown was a virulent orange. She and Delia had struck up a firm friendship, thank Zair, and Milsis was happy to be guided by the empress in matters of dress and protocol in this new land.

Yet, inevitably, there were very very few blue robes among that throng. Green, yes, Vallians have no objection to green. So, sizing up this Strom Nango, I guessed Marion had tactfully suggested he wear a

differently colored shirt, and he'd simply smiled and said that he usually wore a blue one because it suited him.

After a few more words the strom was hauled off to meet other folk and Delia could corner me. We stood by a linen-draped table loaded with comestibles.

"Well? What happened?"

"Nothing. Seg and I just got things started and then left."

"I have not mentioned it here. Milsa and I thought it best. No need to spoil the party."

"Quite right."

"And your impressions of this Hamalese strom?"

"A tough character. Hidden depths. He's a pal of Nedfar's now, it seems, although he fought against us in the war."

Delia wrinkled up her nose. She knows full well how dangerous a thing for her to do in public that is. I managed to control myself.

"We beat the Hamalese in fair fight, the war is over, and now we're friends. You put Prince Nedfar on the throne of Hamal and made him emperor. And his son Tyfar and our daughter Lela are—"

"Zair knows where."

"So Marion presumably knows what she is doing."

I gave Delia a look I hoped was shrewd. "She is not a Sister of the Rose."

"Of the Sword."

"Ah."

“And we cannot stand talking together like this at Marion’s party for her husband-to-be. It is not seemly. There is old Nath Twinglor who promised me a three-hundred-season-old copy of “The Canticles of the Nine Golden Heavens” and if his price is right I shall forgo a great deal of other fripperies. Now do you go and try to be pleasant to Sushi Vannerlan who is all by herself over there.”

“Oh, no—” I began.

Very seriously, Delia said, “Sushi’s husband, Ortyg, was recently killed. He fell in a battle Drak only narrowly won. It would be seemly.”

Our eldest son Drak was still hammering away down there in the southwest of Vallia trying to regain the losses we had sustained when that rascal of a fellow, Vodun Alloran, who had been the Kov of Kaldi, treacherously turned against us and proclaimed himself king of Southwest Vallia. As I walked slowly across to speak to Sushi Vannerlan, with the noise of the party in my ears and the scents of good food and wine coiling invitingly in the air, I reflected that I was not at all ashamed that I had not known Jiktar Ortyg Vannerlan had been slain in battle.

I’d been away in Pandahem until recently and was still in process of catching up with all that had gone on during my enforced absence.

Sushi was a slightly built woman, vivid and dark, and she’d painted on redness in lips and cheeks. Her eyes sparkled indicating the drops nestling there. Her dress was a shining carmine. Her hair fluffed a little, but it

was threaded with gold and pearls. I feel I spoke the few necessary words with dignity and sincerity. Ortyg, her husband, had been a damned fine cavalry commander and I was sorry for all our sakes he was gone.

“Sushi!”

The voice, heavy and most masculine, sounded over my shoulder. Sushi jumped and genuine color flushed into her cheeks making the paint appear flaked and gaudy. She looked past me.

“Ortyg! Shush — this is the—”

“No matter who it is, they shall not steal you away from me!”

At the sound of the name Ortyg I felt for a moment, and I own it! that her husband had returned from the dead. Somehow this night with its mists and shifting moonlight had created an uneasy feeling in me. The swiftness and lethality of that shaggy beast seemed out of the world. And now Sushi was calling to her dead husband...

I turned sharply.

The man was like his voice, heavy and masculine. He wore the undress uniform of a cavalry regiment; he was a Hikdar, with two bobs, a bristly moustache, hard dark eyes, and a mouth full and ripe. His smile was a marvel.

“Ortyg! Please—”

“Now now, Sushi! I know I am late; but there had been a furor in the city and I was almost called out.” He was not looking at me. “But my Jiktat let me off, may Vox shine his boots and spurs for evermore!”

As he spoke he advanced, still looking at Sushi, and made to pass me. I stood back. I was highly amused. Also, this tearaway cavalryman was doing all the right things for Sushi she needed and that I, despite being the emperor, could not do.

He put his left arm about her waist and then swung about, holding her, to face me. He was flushed and triumphant.

“I claim Sushi, my lad, and don’t you forget it!”

Now I was wearing a rather stupid evening lounging robe of the self-same brilliant scarlet as that worn by Delia. This was her idea. So I looked a popinjay beside this cavalryman in his trim undress. The two bobs on his chest testified to two acts of gallantry in battle.

He saw me.

He didn’t know who I was, that was clear, yet my face, despite that I was making heroic attempts to smile, caused him to flinch back.

“By Vox! Sushi — who—”

“I’m trying to tell you, you great fambly! Stand to attention, my dear.” She looked at me, and she picked up her voice and it did not quiver, as she said:

“Majister, allow me to present to you Ortyg Voman, Hikdar in the Fifteenth Lancers. Ortyg, you stand in the presence of your emperor.”

“Ouch!” said Hikdar Ortyg Voman, of the Fifteenth Lancers.

And I laughed.

Then I stuck out my hand. “Shake hands, Hikdar Ortyg. I know of the Fifteenth. Mind you take care of Sushi.”

“Quidang, majister!”

Leaving these two to their cooing and billing I went off to see about a refill. The party really was a splendid affair. Marion, who was a stromni, had spared no expense. There must have been four or five hundred people circulating through the halls and galleries of her villa. Wine flowed in vast lakes and winefalls. Food weighed down the tables. Orchestras positioned at strategic points warbled tunes into the heated air without clashing one with the other.

Now Marion, the Stromni Marion Frastel of Huvadu, had quite clearly in my eyes not been able to pay for all this luxury herself. In these latter days Vondium and Vallia, it is true, had recovered considerably from the pitiless wars that had ravaged the country. We could throw a good shindig when we had to. But Marion’s stromnate of Huvadu lay right up in the north, north of Hawkwa country in the northeast. It was barely south of Evir, the most northerly province of Vallia. All the land up there above the Mountains of the North was lost to we Vallians and was now ruled by some upstart calling himself the King of North Vallia. He raided constantly down into Hawkwa country, and we maintained a strong army up there to resist his encroaches.

This meant Marion’s estates were lost to her, and therefore her wealth. It seemed to me that the Hamalese,

Strom Nango, must have paid for this night's entertainment.

His stromnate, I gathered from Delia, lay in the Black Hills of Hamal, the most powerful empire in the continent of Havilfar south of the equator. He must either be wealthy himself or be spending lavishly now with an eye to the future. Marion's husband the late strom had only just inherited himself through a collateral relative. If Nango eventually lived up in Huvadu once we had regained the stromnate he'd find it damned cold after the warmth of Hamal.

If Marion decided to go to live in Hamal then she'd cope with the heat. She was a fine woman, not too tall, and full of figure, a strong and forceful personality who did not take kindly to fools. She had a way with her that could at times be misconstrued and sometimes turned people unable to see her good points against her. I wished her and this Nango well, and strolled off to catch a breath of air.

People nodded and smiled as I passed; but I did not stop to talk. A group of girls, laughing and clearly playing pranks on one another, rushed past. I raised my glass to them and they all replied most handsomely. They were all Jikai Vuvushis, I knew, Sisters of the Sword, most probably, in Marion's regiment. They fled off, shrieking with laughter, as far as one could imagine from the tough fighting women they were on the field of battle.

Out under a portico where the fuzzy pink light of the Maiden with the Many Smiles fell athwart the paving

stones I spotted the serene face of Thantar the Harper. He was blind. He was not blind in the way that many a harpist was blinded on our Earth but as the result of an accident in youth. He wore a long yellow robe, and his acolyte walked a few paces astern carrying the harp. He would delight us later on in the evening with his songs and stories. He grasped a staff in his right hand and his left rested on the fair hair of a boy child who led him and was his eyes.

“Lahal, Thantar.”

“Lahal, majister.”

He knew my voice, then.

“I am most pleased to know you are here. You have a new song for us among all the old favorites?”

“As many as you please, majister.” His voice rang like a gong, full and round. A splendid fellow, Thantar the Harper, renowned in Vondium.

A hubbub started beyond the edge of the terrace where the Moonblooms opened to the pink radiance and gave of their heady perfume. I looked across.

A group of roisterers with their backs turned to me staggered away to the sides. Their yells turned to screams. A man stepped through the gap between them, walking in from the terraced garden beyond. He carried a young lad in his arms.

The hard, tough, experienced face of Jiktar Nath Corvuus was crumpled in with grief and rage. No tears trickled down his leathery cheeks; but the brightness of his eyes, the flare of his nostrils, his ferociously protective attitude, told that he suffered.

In his arms he carried one of his young lads, the brilliant crimson and yellow uniform hideously bedraggled in blood and mud. The boy's helmet was lost and his brown hair shone in the lanternlight, swaying as Nath brought him in.

“Look!” choked out Nath Corvuus.

The boy's throat was a single red mass, a glistening bubble of horror.

**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

The Delian Cycle:

- 1. Transit to Scorpio*
- 2. The Suns of Scorpio*
- 3. Warrior of Scorpio*
- 4. Swordships of Scorpio*
- 5. Prince of Scorpio*

Havilfar Cycle:

- 6. Manhounds of Antares*
- 7. Arena of Antares*
- 8. Fliers of Antares*
- 9. Bladesman of Antares*
- 10. Avenger of Antares*

11. Armada of Antares

The Krozair Cycle:

12. The Tides of Kregen

13. Renegade of Kregen

14. Krozair of Kregen

Vallian cycle:

15. Secret Scorpio

16. Savage Scorpio

17. Captive Scorpio

18. Golden Scorpio

Jikaida cycle:

19. A Life for Kregen

20. A Sword for Kregen

21. A Fortune for Kregen

22. A Victory for Kregen

Spikatur cycle:

23. Beasts of Antares

24. Rebel of Antares

25. Legions of Antares

26. Allies of Antares

Pandahem cycle:

27. Mazes of Scorpio

28. Delia of Vallia

29. Fires of Scorpio

30. Talons of Scorpio

31. Masks of Scorpio

32. Seg the Bowman

Witch War cycle:

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