

**DRAY PRESCOT: 34**

**WITCHES  
OF KREGEN**

**KENNETH BULMER**  
writing as  
**ALAN BURT AKERS**

**A Mushroom eBook**



**WITCHES OF KREGEN**

**ALAN BURT AKERS**

**a Mushroom eBooks sample**

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## Witches of Kregen

The story of Dray Prescott on the fascinating world of Kregen four hundred light-years from Earth is arranged to be read in individual volumes. Taken to Kregen first by the Savanti, the mortal but superhuman people of the Swinging City of Aphrasöe, he was rejected by them as too unruly and rebellious a spirit. The Star Lords — the Everoinye — selected him to carry out their mysterious projects for Kregen and, in between these exploits, Prescott hurtled headlong into adventures on his own account. The people of the Empire of Vallia called him to be their emperor and bring them out of the Times of Troubles, and one of his tasks is to rebuild the empire and clean out the slavers, the reiving flutsmen and those who batten on misery.

The plan to re-unite all Vallia is now under threat from the obstructions caused by Csitra, a Witch of Loh, who has Pronounced the Nine Unspeakable Curses Against Vallia. A plague of werewolves has left many of the people who shouted for Dray Prescott as emperor suspicious and fearful for the future.

There are many foes still to be overcome on Kregen; but Prescott has many good comrades and his never-failing source of strength, the Empress Delia, to stand at

his side. Now in the streaming mingled lights of the  
Suns of Scorpio, the jade and ruby fires of Antares, Dray  
Prescot must go forward to whatever of peril and  
headlong adventure his future may bring.

*Alan Burt Akers*

# Chapter one

## Frogs

The first frogs fell from the sky on the morning of the day selected for the decisive battle against Layco Jhansi's army of crazed fanatics. Kov Turko's Ninth Army, busy preparing the first breakfast, stopped as the sky filled with the tumbling bodies. Frogs fell everywhere, into cooking pots, sizzling in the fires, impaling themselves on spears, stampeding the riding animals, bearing down tents by the sheer weight of their numbers.

Frogs, roklos, toads and lizards blackened the brightness of Zim and Genodras, the twin Suns of Scorpio.

Some squashed as they hit the hard-packed earth here on the border between Vennar and Falinur. Most hopped about, their ribbiting filling the air with clamor. Everywhere the ground appeared an undulating sea of shining green backs.

"That dratted witch!" Seg's black hair swirled as he batted at the descending swarms.

Nath na Kochwold hoisted his red pikeman's shield aloft and the crimson flower rang and bucked with the rain of bodies buffeting it.

Turko ran to join me under the hard projecting edge of a fighting gallery of a ship of the air. His powerfully muscled body, that of a master of the arcane wrestler's arts, as much as his lofty rank of kov, eased him through the press of men sheltering under the gallery. He looked mad clean through.

"That Witch of Loh! That Csitra! This must be another of her Curses."

"Indubitably."

He glared at me, for a tiny moment unsure of my tone, and then: "Yes! And she's successfully spoiled our plans for today."

"It seems to me," I said, and I spoke mildly, "she has made a grave mistake."

"By Morro the Muscle!How?"

"Why, if she'd waited until we were about to come to handstrokes with Layco Jhansi's poor deluded—"

"I see that. Those screaming idiots would have believed it was the doing of their own sorcerer, and—"

"Precisely," said Seg, storming up, looking ugly. "But she's done enough damage as it is. Look at them!"

The Ninth Army had turned into a mob. Frantically the soldiers ran and yelled and flailed away at the falling frogs. The succulent early-morning odors of breakfast were replaced by the stink of roasting and charring amphibians. The uproar was prodigious. Any resemblance to a disciplined army was entirely lost.

“It’ll take all day today and tomorrow just to get the animals back.”

“And,” I said, “if Layco Jhansi attacks we’ll be mince-meat.”

I spoke with deliberate emphasis, expecting to be instantly contradicted.

I was not disappointed.

“If Jhansi dares to attack,” rapped out Turko. “By Vox! We’ll have him. Have him whole and spit out the pips.”

“He’ll certainly break his rotten teeth on my lads,” promised Nath na Kochwold, as hard and intolerant of imperfection as ever, a true fighting leader of the Phalanx.

The uproar overturning the camp racketed on unabated. There seemed no end to the supply of falling toads and roklos. Frogs hopped everywhere, clambering over one another, tumbling off the heaped piles of squirming bodies, and their ribbiting croaked on and on.

“Where’s Khe-Hi?” Seg buffeted a luckless toad who tried to hop into our refuge under the fighting gallery. The men with us pressed close to the wooden curve of the ship’s lower hull. A few feet away the packed bodies were piling up breast high. We’d be drowned under frogs soon if the rain did not cease in a very short time.

“Like any sensible man, he’s with his lady love.” Turko held a sensible respect for Wizards of Loh; but he was still Turko the Shield and therefore his respect was inevitably tinged with a quizzical amusement. “And

even though she may be a Witch of Loh, Ling-Li-Lwingling is a remarkably attractive woman.”

No one of my comrades offered to make some cuttingly amusing remark about Turko’s qualifications for making that judgment. The situation here for all its unlikely bizarreness was damned serious. The piles of bodies continued to rise higher out there on the plain and most of the campfires had been unpleasantly extinguished.

“So,” said Seg, “he’s likely to be occupied and not realize what’s going on.”

“Then,” I said, and in that familiar yet empty gesture that indicates determination, I hitched up my sword. “Then we’ll have to bust our way through to him.”

“Through that lot?” yelped Turko.

“Any other ideas?”

“No. But we’ll have to move sharpish.”

“Right.Wenda!”

“Wenda!” said Seg with enormous sarcasm. Wenda means “let’s go!” “We’ll be like men sludging through treacle.”

Seg was right. There was another way, though its employment would give me little pleasure. But when it is a matter of your life versus a trifle of valuable property, there is no conflict of interests. None at all, by Krun!

A creak overhead snatched our attention.

The wooden fighting gallery projecting from the side of the sailing flier of the air groaned again, and a little spurt of wood-dust spouted from a joint. The gallery











































