

DAVID EDDINGS

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QUEEN OF SORCERY

BELGARIAD 2

About the Book

The Accursed One is not dead . . .

He only sleeps . . .

The evil God Torak covets dominion over all men. If the stolen Orb of Aldur reaches him, he will surely gain what he desires.

Garion travels through strange lands with master sorcerers Belgarath and Polgara in frantic pursuit of the Orb. But as his own powers grow, Garion starts to realize that he too may have a part to play – a part he is not sure he wants . . .

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About the Author

Also by David Eddings

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EDDINGS

Book Two of The Belgariad

QUEEN OF SORCERY

*For Helen,
who gave me the most precious thing in my life,
and for Mike, who taught me how to play.*

Prologue

Being an Account of the Battle of the Kingdoms of the West against the most heinous Invasion and Evil of Kal Torak.

– based upon *The Battle of Vo Mimbre*

In the youth of the world, the evil God Torak stole the Orb of Aldur and fled, seeking dominion. The Orb resisted, and its fire maimed him with a dreadful burning. But he would not give it up, for it was precious to him.

Then Belgarath, a sorcerer and disciple of the God Aldur, led forth the king of the Alorns and his three sons, and they reclaimed the Orb from the iron tower of Torak. Torak sought to pursue, but the wrath of the Orb repelled him and drove him back.

Belgarath set Cherek and his sons to be kings over four great kingdoms in eternal guard against Torak. The Orb he gave to Riva to keep, saying that so long as a descendant of Riva held the Orb the West would be safe.

Century followed century with no menace from Torak, until the spring of 4865, when Drasnia was invaded by a vast horde of nadraks, Thulls, and Murgos. In the center of this sea of Angaraks was borne the huge iron pavilion of one called Kal Torak, which means King and God. Cities and villages were razed and burned, for Kal Torak came to destroy, not to conquer. Those of the people who lived were given to the steelmasked Grolim priests for sacrifice in the unspeakable rites of the Angaraks. None survived save those who fled to Algaria or were taken from the mouth of the Aldur River by Cherek warships.

Next the horde struck south at Algaria. But there they found no cities. The nomadic Algarian horsemen fell back before them, then struck in vicious hit-and-run attacks. The traditional seat of the Algarian kings was the Stronghold, a man-made mountain with stone walls thirty feet thick. Against this, the Angaraks hurled themselves in vain before settling down to besiege the place. The siege lasted for eight futile years.

This gave the West time to mobilize and prepare. The generals gathered at the Imperial War College in Tol Honeth and planned their strategy. National differences were set aside, and Brand, the Warder of Riva, was chosen to have full command. With him came two strange advisers: an

ancient but vigorous man who claimed knowledge even of the Angarak kingdoms; and a strikingly handsome woman with a silver lock at her brow and an imperious manner. To these Brand listened, and to them he paid almost deferential respect.

In the late spring of 4875, Kal Torak abandoned his siege and turned west toward the sea, pursued still by Algar horsemen. In the mountains, the Ulgos came forth from their caverns by night and wreaked fearful slaughter on the sleeping Angaraks. But still were the forces of Kal Torak beyond counting. After a pause to regroup, the host proceeded down the valley of the River Arend toward the city of Vo Mimbire, destroying all in its path. Early in the summer, the Angaraks deployed for the assault upon the city.

On the third day of the battle, a horn was heard to blow three times. Then the gates of Vo Mimbire opened, and the Mimbrate knights charged out to fall upon the front of the Angarak horde, the iron-shod hoofs of their chargers trampling living and dead. From the left came Algar cavalry, Drasnian pikemen, and veiled Ulgo irregulars. And from the right came the Cherek berserks and the legions of Tolnedra.

Attacked on three sides, Kal Torak committed his reserves. It was then that the gray-clad Rivans, the Sendars, and the Asturian archers came upon his forces from the rear. The Angaraks began to fall like mown wheat and were overcome by confusion.

Then the Apostate, Zedar the Sorcerer, went in haste to the black iron pavilion from which Kal Torak had not yet emerged. And to the Accursed One he said, 'Lord, thine enemies have thee surrounded in great numbers. Yea, even the gray Rivans have come in their numbers to cast defiance at thy might.'

Kal Torak arose in anger and declared, 'I will come forth, that the false keepers of Cthrag Yaska, the jewel which was mine, shall see me and know fear of me. Send to me my kings.'

'Great Lord,' Zedar told him, 'thy kings are no more. The battle hath claimed their lives and those of a multitude of thy Grolim priests as well.'

Kal Torak's wrath grew great at these words, and fire spat from his right eye and from the eye that was not. He ordered his servants to bind his shield to the arm on which he had no hand and he took up his dread black sword. With this, he went forth to do battle.

Then came a voice from the midst of the Rivans, saying, 'In the name of Belar I defy thee, Torak. In the name of Aldur I cast my despite in thy teeth. Let the bloodshed be abated, and I will meet thee to decide the battle. I am Brand, Warder of Riva. Meet me or take thy stinking host away and come no more against the kingdoms of the West.'

Kal Torak strode apart from the host and cried, 'Where is he who dares pit his mortal flesh against the King of the World? Behold, I am Torak, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I will destroy this loud-voiced Rivan. Mine enemies shall perish, and Cthrag Yaska shall again be mine.'

Brand stood forth. He bore a mighty sword and a shield muffled with cloth. A grizzled wolf marched at his side, and a snowy owl hovered over his head. Brand said, 'I am Brand and I will contend with thee, foul and misshapen Torak.'

When Torak saw the wolf, he said, 'Begone, Belgarath. Flee if thou wouldst save thy life.' And to the owl he said, 'Abjure thy father, Polgara, and worship me. I will wed thee and make thee Queen of the World.'

But the wolf howled defiance, and the owl screeched her scorn.

Torak raised his sword and smote down upon the shield of Brand. Long they fought, and many and grievous were the blows they struck. Those who stood near to see them were amazed. The fury of Torak grew great, and his sword battered the shield of Brand until the Warder fell back before the onslaught of the Accursed One. Then the wolf howled and the owl shrieked in one voice together, and the strength of Brand was renewed.

With a single motion, the Rivan Warder unveiled his shield, in the center of which stood a round jewel, in size like the heart of a child. As Torak gazed upon it, the stone began to glow and flame. The Accursed One drew back from it. He dropped his shield and sword and raised his arms before his face to ward away the dread fire of the stone.

Brand struck, and his sword pierced Torak's visor to strike into the eye that was not and plunge into the Accursed One's head. Torak fell back and gave a great cry. He plucked out the sword and threw off his helmet. Those who watched recoiled in terror, for his face was seared by some great fire and was horrible to behold. Weeping blood, Torak cried out again as he beheld the jewel which he had named Cthrag Yaska and for which he had brought his war into the West. Then he collapsed, and the earth resounded with his fall.