

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

RAYMOND E.
FEIST



QUEEN
OF
STORMS

BOOK TWO OF THE FIREMANE SAGA

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

RAYMOND E.
FEIST



QUEEN
OF
STORMS

BOOK TWO OF THE FIREMANE SAGA

QUEEN OF STORMS

FIREMANE: BOOK TWO



RAYMOND E. FEIST

 HARPER Voyager
An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

Dedication

*To Rebecca and James,
This book is dedicated to the start of your great adventure together.
Love,
Dad*

Contents

Cover

Title Page

Dedication

Prologue

1: Hunting and an Unexpected Encounter

2: An Unplanned Event and a Surprise Reunion

3: More Mysteries and a Short Journey

4: Reflections and Bloodshed

5: Celebration and Murder

6: Destruction, Abduction, and Rage

7: Loss and Determination

8: Recovery and Resolve

9: Disasters and Questions

10: Captives and Mysteries

11: Investigations, Discoveries, and the Unexpected

12: Changes on Fate's Tides

13: Plans and Consequences

14: Reversals and the Unexpected

15: Appraisals, Guesswork, and Repurposing

16: Revelations and Secrets

17: Voyages and Disasters

18: Choices, Chaos, and Change

19: Betrayal, Acceptance, and Piracy

20: Planning and Resolutions

21: Triumph and Escape

Epilogue

About the Author

Also by Raymond E. Feist

Copyright

About the Publisher

Prologue

A Voice from Within Shadows

He was known as Bernardo Delnocio of Poberto, which was the first of many lies about him. His birth name had not been Bernardo, nor was he from a family named Delnocio. That family had been famous and powerful until a war took the last son; he claimed to be a distant cousin, from a lesser branch of the family, with no claim to any legacy but a once-noble name. Nor had he been born in Poberto, a prosperous town surrounded by the villas of the wealthy and powerful. That notable community rested just outside Brojues, the capital city of the Kingdom of Fondrak, home to the Church of the One. Instead, he had come from the poorest squalor of Aliestes, a minor city on the far continent of Enast many miles from the splendor of Brojues.

As a boy, the man calling himself Bernardo had been an abandoned guttersnipe, raised by a gang of urchins. He had grown up roaming the streets, surviving in a vicious world that provided few respites from struggle, living by his wits and a brutal determination to survive, until he had been recruited by the Church.

His natural combativeness and will to survive had been recognized and his early training had been channeled effectively into serving the Church. He had spent nearly ten years as a member of the Order of the Church Adamant, the martial arm of the Servants of the One, soldiers willing to die

unquestioningly to defend the faith and, more important, attack its enemies without hesitation.

His will to survive had elevated him above the other soldiers, first by avoiding duty that would have trapped him in a permanent role as a pioneer, engineer, or gynnour, though he had been clever enough to learn a bit about building advanced entrenchments, rigging bridges, repairing roads, and operating siege engines, so he became as well-rounded as possible.

He had a knack for accents and quickly improved his speech so that his common origins faded as he learned to adopt more refined rhetoric and behavior. He soon became the youngest minor officer in the Church Adamant.

After only three years as a unit commander, he realized the true power wasn't in the army, but being a cleric in the Church, and that was when his urge to survive had been transformed into a desire to thrive, rise, and become more powerful at every turn. He had surprised, even shocked, his companions when, as a rising young officer, he had announced he was leaving the Church Adamant to take holy vows and become the lowest of the clergy.

He did not remain a minor priest for long. Bernardo was not the most overtly aggressive player in the deadly internal politics of the Church of the One, but he had an intuitive grasp of something few did: he could quickly recognize the true organization of any group, where the power actually resided as opposed to ostensible ranks and titles. He identified those who were public figures and those who moved quietly in the background. Above all, he had a lethal instinct for when an opponent was vulnerable and no hesitation in taking advantage of that recognition.

He immediately understood that while the Council of the Episkopos was the governing body of the Church of the One, there was a handful of men within the Council who controlled every aspect of the Church. The Church priesthood had as many barriers and dead ends as the army had, and picking a path to power had given him a challenge, but surviving in the streets had proved a harsh yet enlightening education.

His natural skills and intuition meant he knew the right moment to act, and more than once he had managed to convince someone else to be responsible for the fall of one of his rivals. He merely suggested something and other people acted, and he made sure they believed it was their own brilliance that had led to the targeted rival's downfall. Gang leader or