

**NATIONAL BESTSELLER**

**RAYMOND E. FEIST**

Author of **SHADOW OF A DARK QUEEN**

**Rise of a  
Merchant  
Prince**

Book Two of  
**THE SERPENTWAR SAGA**



**Rise of a Merchant Prince**

Serpentwar Book 2

Raymond E. Feist

## Cast of Characters

**Aglaranna** - Elf Queen in Elvandar, wife of Tomas, mother of Calin and Calis

**Alfred** - corporal from Darkmoor

**Avery, Abigail** - daughter of Roo and Karli

**Avery, Duncan** - cousin of Roo

**Avery, Helmut** - son of Roo and Karli

**Avery, Rupert 'Roo'** - young merchant of Krondor, son of Tom Avery

**Avery, Tom** - teamster, Roo's father

**Aziz** - sergeant at Shamata

**Betsy** - serving girl at the Inn of the Seven Flowers

**Boldar Blood** - mercenary hired by Miranda in the Hall of Worlds

**Borric** - King of the Isles, twin brother of Prince Erland, brother of Prince Nicholas, father of Prince Patrick

**Calin** - elf heir to the throne of Elvandar, half brother of Calis, son of Aglaranna and King Aidan

**Calis** - The Eagle of Krondor, special agent of the Prince of Krondor, Duke of the Court, son of Aglaranna and Tomas, half brother of Calin

**Carline** - Dowager Duchess of Salador, aunt of the King

**Chalmes** - ruling magician at Stardock

**Crowley, Brandon** - trader at Barret's Coffee House

**De Loungville, Robert 'Bobby'** - sergeant major of Calis's crimson Eagles

**De Savona, Luis** - former soldier, assistant to Roo

**Dunstan, Brian** - the Sagacious Man, leader of the Mockers, used to be known as Lysle Rigger

**Ellien** - town girl in Ravensburg

**Erland** - brother of the King and Prince Nicholas, uncle of Prince Patrick

**Esterbrook, Jacob** - wealthy merchant of Krondor, father of Sylvia

**Esterbrook, Sylvia** - Jacob's daughter

**Fadawah** - general leading the Emerald Queen's army

**Freida** - Erik's mother

**Galain** - elf in Elvandar

**Gaminia** - adopted daughter of Pug, sister of William, wife of James, mother of Arutha

**Gapi** - general in the Emerald Queen's army

**Gaston** - wagon dealer in Ravensburg

**Gordon** - corporal at Krondor

**Graves, Katherine 'Kitty'** - girl thief in Krondor

**Greylock, Owen** - captain in the Prince's service

**Grindle, Helmut** - merchant, father of Kadi, partner of Roo

**Grindle, Karli** - daughter of Helmut, later wife of Roo Avery, mother of Abigail and Helmut

**Gunther** - Nathan's apprentice

**Gwen** - town girl in Ravensburg

**Hoen, John** - manager of Barret's

**Hume, Stanley** - trader at Barret's

**Jacoby, Frederick** - founder of Jacoby and Sons, traders

**Jacoby, Helen** - wife of Randolph

**Jacoby, Randolph** - son of Frederick, brother of Timothy, husband of Helen

**Jacoby, Timothy** - son of Frederick, brother of Randolph

**James** - Duke of Krondor, father of Arutha, grandfather of James and Dash

**Jameson, Arutha** - Lord Vencar, Baron of the Prince's Court, son of Duke James

**Jameson, Dashed 'Dash'** - younger son of Arutha, grandson of James

**Jameson, James 'Jimmy'** - elder son of Arutha, grandson of James

**Jamila** - madam at the White Wing

**Jason** - waiter at Barret's, later accountant for Avery and Son and the Bitter Sea Company

**Jeffrey** - wagon driver for Jacoby and Sons

**Kailed** - ruling magician at Stardock

**Kurt** - bullying waiter at Barret's

**Lender, Sebastian** - litigator/solicitor at Barret's Coffee House

**McKeller** - head waiter at Barret's

**Milo** - innkeeper in Ravensburg, father of Rosalyn

**Miranda** - magician and ally of Calis and Pug

**Nakor the Isalani** - gambler, magic user, friend of Calis

**Patrick** - Prince of Krondor, son of Prince Erland, nephew of the King and Prince Nicholas

**Pug** - magician. Duke of Stardock, cousin of the King, father of Gamina

**Rivers, Alistair** - innkeeper of the Happy Jumper

**Rosalyn** - Milo's daughter, wife of Rudolph, mother of Gerd

**Rudolph** - baker in Ravensburg

**Shati, Jadow** - corporal in Calis's company

**Tannerson, Sam** - thief in Krondor

**Tomas** - Warleader of Elvandar, husband of Aglaranna, father of Calis

**Vinci, John** - merchant in Sarth

**von Darkmoor, Erik** - soldier in Calis's Crimson Eagles

**von Darkmoor, Manfred** - Baron of Darkmoor, half brother of Erik

**von Darkmoor, Mathilda** - Baroness of Darkmoor, mother of Manfred

**William** - Knight-Marshal of Krondor, Pug's son, Gamina's adopted brother, uncle of Jimmy and Dash

## **BOOK 2 - Roo's Tale**

Wealth, howsoever got, in England makes  
Lords of mechanics, gentlemen of rakes;  
Antiquity and birth are needless here;  
'Tis Impudence and money makes a peer.

Daniel Defoe

The True-Born Englishman, Pt. 1

## PROLOGUE - Demonica

The soul screamed.

The demon turned, and as its gaping maw was set in a permanent grin, the only hint of its increased delight was a slight widening of its eyes, black orbs resembling those of a shark: flat and lifeless. It studied the jar it held for a moment, its only possession.

This soul was especially active and the demon had been fortunate to find it and keep it. Placing the jar under its chin, the demon closed its eyes and felt the energy flow into it from the jar. The creature's emotional makeup knew nothing that could be called happiness, only lessened states of fear or anger, but the surge of feeling within was as close to happiness as the creature could know. Each time the soul within the jar struggled, the energy created filled the little demon's mind with new ideas.

As if suddenly concerned its toy would be taken from it by one of its more powerful brethren, the demon glanced around. The hall was one of many in the grand palace of Cibul, capital of the now destroyed Saaur race.

Then the demon remembered: destroyed save those who had fled through a magic gate. It felt its anger return, and then the emotion quickly fled. As a minor demon, it was not intelligent, only cunning, and it didn't fully understand why the escape of a small part of this nearly obliterated race was important. But it was, for the Demon Lords were even now gathered upon the plains to the east of the city of Cibul, inspecting the site of the now closed rift through which the Saaur survivors had fled.

The Lords of the Fifth Circle had attempted once to open the portal, managing to keep it open long enough to slip a tiny demon through, before it collapsed upon itself, sealing the rift between the two realms and stranding the tiny demon on the other side of the rift. There was much consultation among the greater demons on reopening that rift and gaining entrance to this new realm.

The demon wandered the halls, oblivious to the ravages around it. Tapestries that had taken a generation to weave were torn from the walls and trodden upon, soiled by dirt and blood. The demon cracked a Saaur rib bone underfoot and absently kicked it aside. At last it came to its secret room, the one it had claimed as its own while the Host of the Fifth Circle resided on this cold planet. Leaving the demon realm was a terrible experience, thought the young demon. This had been the demon's first

journey to this realm, and it wasn't sure it cared much for the pain of transition.

The feasting had been glorious; never had it known such a wealth of food, even though it was limited to scraps from the feasting pits, thrown out by the mightiest of the host as they fed. But scraps or not, the demon had devoured much and had grown. And that was creating problems for itself.

It sat down, attempting to find a comfortable position as its body changed. The feasting had continued for nearly a year and many of the lesser demons had grown. This particular demon had grown faster than most, though it still hadn't matured enough to have developed significant intelligence or a sexual identity.

Looking down at the plaything, the demon laughed, a silent gaping of jaws and sucking of wind. The mortal eye could not behold the thing within the jar. The demon, who didn't have a name yet, had been most fortunate to snare this particular soul. A great demon captain, almost a lord, had fallen to mighty magic even as the great Tugor had crushed and eaten the leader of the Saaur. One of the Saaur magic users, a powerful one, had destroyed the demon captain, but at the cost of his own life. The little demon might not be intelligent, but it was quick, and without hesitation it had seized the fleeing soul force of the dead magic user.

The demon inspected the device again, the soul jar, and poked at it. The magic soul within rewarded it by thrashing, if something without a body could be said to thrash.

The demon shifted its weight. It knew it was getting more powerful, but the nearly nonstop feeding was at an end. The last of the Saaur were dead and devoured, and now the demon host was depending on lesser animals for food, animals with negligent soul force. There were some client races, who would breed children, some of which would go to the feasting pits, but that meant slow growth in this realm. Its body would continue to mature, but not significantly until the next realm had been entered.

Cold, the demon thought as it glanced around the large room, ignorant of its original use: a bedroom for one of the Saaur leader's many wives. The native realm was one of wild energies and pulsing heat, where the demons of the Fifth Circle grew like wild things, devouring one another, until strong enough to escape and serve the Demon King and his lords and captains. This demon had but vague recollections of its own beginning, remembering

only anger and fear, and an occasional moment of pleasure as it devoured something.

The demon settled down on the floor. With a changing body, it couldn't seem to find a comfortable position. Its back itched, and with certainty it knew wings would grow there soon, tiny at first, then growing larger as it rose in power. The demon was never enough to know it would have to fight to gain rank, so it had better rest. It had been lucky so far, as the critical periods in its growth had come during the war on this world, and most of the host were too occupied with devouring the inhabitants of this world to contest in their own ranks.

Others were now fighting, and the losers would add strength to the winners as they were devoured; any demon without enough rank was a fair target for another save when a lord or captain demanded obedience. It was simply the way of this race, and each who fell was considered unworthy of a second thought. This demon considered that there must be a better way to gain more strength than an open challenge and outright attack. But it couldn't think of what it could be.

Glancing around what had once been a regal and richly appointed dwelling, the demon closed its eyes, but not before glancing one last time at the soul jar. Feeding might cease awhile, and with it physical growth, but it had learned during the war that physical growth, while impressive, wasn't as important as knowing things. The contents of the soul jar were a being rich in knowledge, and this little demon meant to have that knowledge. The demon placed the jar against its forehead and mentally prodded the soul, causing more thrashing, and the energy that resulted flowed into the demon. Powerful, like a drug to a mortal, the sensation was among the most glorious known to demonkind. The demon felt something new in its experience: satisfaction. Soon it would be smarter, know things, and then it would be able to use more than animal cunning to gain rank and a position of power.

And when the Demon Lords finally discovered a way to open fully the gate that had been sealed behind the fleeing Saaur, then the Demon Host of the Fifth Circle would follow and then there would be ample opportunity to feed upon the Saaur and upon whatever other intelligent, soul-bearing creatures lived upon the world of Midkemia.

## ONE - Return

A ship swept into the harbor.

Black and dangerous, it moved like a dark hunter bearing down on its prey. Three tall masts, majestic under full sail, propelled the warship into the harbor of a great city as other ships gave way. Although she looked like a great pirate vessel from the distant Sunset Islands, her foremast flew the Royal Ensign, and all who saw the ship knew that the King's brother was returning home.

High aloft that ship, a young man worked quickly, reefing the mizzen topsail. Roo paused a moment as he tied the final reef point, and looked across the harbor at the city of Krondor.

The Prince's city spread out along the docks, rose on hills to the south, and spread out of sight to the north. The panorama was impressive as the ship sped in from the sea. The young man - eighteen years of age at the next Midsummer's festival - had thought on numerous occasions over the past year and more that he would never see the city again. Yet here he was, finishing up his watch atop the mizzen mast of the *Freeport Ranger*, a ship under the command of Admiral Nicholas, brother to the King of the Kingdom of the Isles and uncle to the Prince of Krondor.

Krondor was the second most important city in the Kingdom of the Isles, the capital of the Western Realm and seat of power for the Prince of Krondor, heir to the throne of the Isles. Roo could see the multitude of small buildings scattered across the hills surrounding the harbor, the vista dominated by the Prince's palace, which sat atop a steep hill hard against the water. The majesty of the palace was in stark contrast to the rude buildings that lined the waterfront close by, warehouses and chandlers' shops, sail- and rope-makers, carpenters and sailor's inns. Second only to the Poor Quarter as a haven for thugs and thieves, the waterfront was thrown by the proximity of the palace into an even more seedy aspect.

Yet Roo was pleased to see Krondor, for now he was a free man. He glanced one last time at his work, ensuring that the sail was properly reefed, and moved quickly along the footrope with a sure balance learned while crossing treacherous seas for nearly two years.

Roo considered the oddity of facing his third spring in a row without a winter. The topsy-turvy seasons of the land on the other side of the world