

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Ed Greenwood

Swords of
The Knights of Myth Drannor, Book I
Eveningstar



Prologue

Delyn Laquilavvar laughed in farewell and let the mists claim him. Then he was falling, a brief and silent plunge toward an elusive brightness beyond the swirling blue endlessness . . .

His boot came down on soft moss, the great dark trees familiar and friendly around him. Sunfall soon; the shadows were already long as he crossed his glade. The unseen wards stirred at his approach, and amid their gentle caresses Delyn of the Seven Spells chuckled softly, remembering the merry jests Fluevrelle and the others had just flung.

Most elf mages—if they disliked bullying apprentices or taking awed and fearful lovers—walked alone, and grew as wary as the ancient Horned Ones of the forests. He was fortunate to have such friends, and so escape tha—

His wards hummed serene and unbroken, nothing amiss. Nor had the ancient way he'd just taken, to cross half of Faerûn with a single step, been a whit different.

So why now, with his wards singing all around him, was something coiling—nay, *uncoiling*—sickeningly, deep inside him.

“What—?”

He'd time for no more than that before something gnawing, strange, and impossibly large surged up into his throat, chokingly . . .

Delyn reeled, clawing vainly at the empty air. His tree-cats, who'd been mincing unconcernedly to join him, now shrank back, arching and hissing.

Whatdoomcanthisbe? Wherewhatracingoutofmyownmindto—to—



The elf swayed, face as white as winter moonlight, towering over Myrithla, eldest and longest of his furred companions, who watched in grim fear as her master's eyes went as dark and empty as the sockets of a skull. Even before they shriveled, she

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could see that he was no longer there behind them.

No one was.

Whatever had been Delyn Laquilavvar had been snatched—or drained—away, leaving behind a suddenly spasming, trembling body that flung wide its arms, dropped its jaw slack to drool a foamy river, and . . . started to flare at its fingertips.

Flare as in *flames*, licking and rising, as swiftly as if the elf were dry deadwood and not living flesh.

Myrithla hated fire, and sprang back, spitting in fear. The other rethren were already fleeing behind her, mewling their terror in loud unison.

Their cries were abruptly drowned out by a loud wail, a shriek that burst not from the elf mage's mouth but from his every orifice, air and juices boiling forth together as the flames built into their own roar.

Myrithla flung herself back, heedless of rough landing.

Her master was a column of flame, already shedding ashes, the air thick with the stink of scorched meat . . .

And like all rethren, Myrithla hated her meat cooked.



The scrying orb glowed brightly, lighting up a soft smile.

The column of flames in its depths was already beginning to shrink and flicker, the evening gloom of that distant deep-forest glade returning around its fading brilliance.

“Perfect,” said the owner of that smile, in a voice soft with satisfaction. “And such spells, Laquilavvar! This one should give me just the key I need to open Dathnyar’s wards. *Thank you.*”