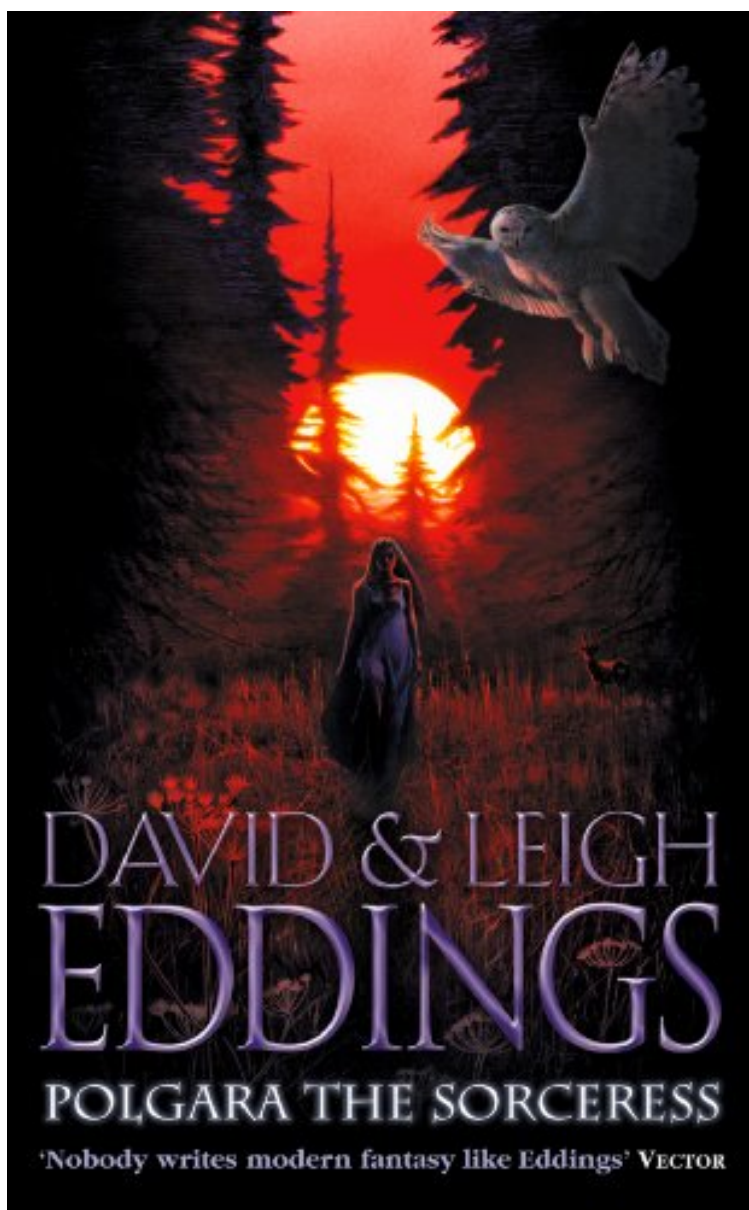


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Polgara the Sorceress



*Par David Eddings, Leigh Eddings
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Par David Eddings, Leigh Eddings :
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Description : Description du produitShe soars above a world of warriors, kings, and priests. The daughter of Belgarath and the shape-shifter Poledra, she has fought wars, plotted palace coups, and worked her powerful magic for three thousand years. Now, Polgara looks back at her magnificent life, in this fitting crown jewel to the saga that is the Eddings' Belgariad and Mallorean cycles. Her hair streaked white by her father's first touch, her mind guided by a mother she will not see again for centuries, Polgara begins life in her Uncle Beldin's tower, and in the prehistorical, magical Tree that stands in the middle of the Vale. There, she first learns the reaches of her powers. There she assumes the bird shapes that will serve her on her adventures. And there she starts on the path toward her destiny as Duchess of Erat, shepherdess of the cause of good, adversary of Torak the One-Eyed Dragon God, and guardian of the world's last, best hope: the heir

to the Rivan throne. Here is the legendary life story of a woman of wit, passion, and complex emotions, a woman born of two majestic parents who could not have been more unlike one another. Ordained to make peace and make war, to gain love and lose love, Polgara lives out her family's rich prophecy in the ceaseless struggle between the Light and the Dark. Polgara is the epic culmination of a magnificent saga, and a fitting farewell to a world which, once experienced, will never be forgotten.

Presentation de l'auteur The last and most amazing volume in the legendary Belgariad series: the story of the queen of truth, love, rage and destiny, Polgara the Sorceress. The queen of truth, love, rage and destiny reveals all. Polgara the Sorceress is the crowning achievement of the great fantasy epic which began with The Belgariad and continued with The Malloreon. Once again David and Leigh Eddings display the epic imagination, humour, and storytelling power which have made this series the most popular fantasy of modern times. In the story of Polgara, a beautiful woman whose constancy and inner power have been the foundation of all the luck and love that have saved the world, the full truth of The Belgariad is revealed.

Extrait This was not my idea. I want that clearly understood right at the outset. The notion that any one person can describe "what really happened" is an absurdity. If ten--or a hundred--people witness an event, there will be ten--or a hundred--different versions of what took place. What we see and how we interpret it depends entirely upon our individual past experience. My mother, however, has insisted that I undertake this ridiculous chore, and I will, as always, do as she tells me to do. The more I've thought about it, though, the more I've come to realize that when Ce'Nedra first broached the subject to me, and later to my mother, her obviously specious argument about "the well-being of the young" actually had more merit than the devious little girl realized. One day Geran will be the Rivan King and the Guardian of the Orb, and over the centuries I've found that people with at least a nodding acquaintance with true history make the best rulers. At least they don't repeat the mistakes of the past. If all Geran and his sons really needed to rule the Rivans were to be a flat recounting of the deeds of assorted rulers of assorted kingdoms in ages past, the tiresome repetition of the "and then, and then, and then" that so delights the stodgy members of the Tolnedran Historical Society would be more than sufficient. As my daughter-in-law so cunningly pointed out, however, the "and then"s of those Tolnedran scholars deal with only a part of the world. There's another world out there, and things happen in that other world that Tolnedrans are constitutionally incapable of comprehending. Ultimately it will be this unseen world that the Rivan King must know if he is to properly perform his task. Even so, I could have devoutly maintained that my father's long-winded version of the history of our peculiar world had already filled in that obvious gap. I even went so far as to reread Father's tedious story, trying very hard to prove to myself--and to my mother--that I'd really have nothing to add. Soon Father's glaring omissions began to leap off the page at me. The old fraud hadn't told the whole story, and Mother knew it. In Father's defense, however, I'll admit that there were events that took place when he wasn't present and others during which he didn't fully understand what was really happening. Moreover, some of the omissions which so irritated me as I read along had their origin in his desire to compress seven thousand years of history into something of manageable length. I'll forgive him those lapses, but couldn't he at least have gotten names and dates right? For the sake of keeping peace in the family, I'll gloss over his imperfect memory of just who'd said what in any given conversation. Human memory--and that's assuming that my father's human--is never really all that exact, I suppose. Why don't we just say that Father and I remember things a little differently and let it go at that, shall we? Try to keep that in mind as you go along. Don't waste your time--and mine--by pointing out assorted variations. The more I read, the more I came to realize that things I know and father doesn't would be essential parts of Geran's education. Moreover, a probably hereditary enthusiasm for a more complete story began to come over me. I tried to fight it, but it soon conquered me. I discovered that I actually want to tell my side of the story. I have a few suspicions about the origins of my change of heart, but I don't think this is the place to air them. The central fact of my early life was my sister Beldaran. We were twins, and in some respects even closer than twins. To this very day we're still not apart. Beldaran, dead these three thousand years and more, is still very much a part of me. I grieve for her loss every day. That might help to explain why I sometimes appear somber and withdrawn.

Father's narrative makes some issue of the fact that I seldom smile. What's there to smile about, Old Wolf? As Father pointed out, I've read extensively, and I've noticed that biographies normally begin at birth. Beldaran and I, however, began just a bit earlier than that. For reasons of her own, Mother arranged it that way. So now, why don't we get started? It was warm and dark, and we floated in absolute contentment, listening to the sound of Mother's heart and the rush of her blood through her veins as her body nourished us.

That's my first memory--that and Mother's thought gently saying to us, "Wake up." We've made no secret of Mother's origins. What isn't widely known is the fact that the Master summoned her, just as he summoned all the rest of us. She's as much Aldur's disciple as any of the rest of us are. We all serve him in our own peculiar ways. Mother, however, was not born human, and she perceived rather early in her pregnancy that Beldaran and I had none of those instincts that are inborn in wolves. I've since learned that this caused her much concern, and she consulted with the Master at some length about it, and her suggested solution was eminently practical. Since Beldaran and I had no instincts, Mother proposed to the Master that she might begin our education while we were still enwombed. I think her suggestion might have startled Aldur, but he quickly saw its virtue. And so it was that mother took steps to make certain that my sister and I had certain necessary information--even before we were born. During the course of a normal human pregnancy, the unborn lives in a world consisting entirely of physical sensation. Beldaran and I, however, were gently guided somewhat further. My father rather arrogantly states that he began my education after Beldaran's wedding, but that's hardly accurate. Did he really think that I was a vegetable before that? My education--and Beldaran's--began before we ever saw the light of day. Father's approach to education is disputational. As first disciple, he'd been obliged to oversee the early education of my various uncles. He forced them to think and to argue as a means of guiding them along the thorny path to independent thought--although he sometimes carried it to extremes. Mother was born wolf, and her approach is more elemental. Wolves are pack animals, and they don't think independently. Mother simply told Beldaran and me, "This is the way it is. This is the way it always has been, and always will be." Father teaches you to question; Mother teaches you to accept. It's an interesting variation. At first, Beldaran and I were identical twins and as close at that term implies. When Mother's thought woke us, however, she rather carefully began to separate us. I received certain instruction that Beldaran didn't, and she received lessons that I didn't. I think I felt that wrench more keenly than Beldaran did. She knew her purpose; I spent years groping for mine. The separation was very painful for me. I seem to remember reaching out to my sister and saying to her in what would become our own private language, "You're so far away now." Actually, of course, we weren't; we were both still confined in that small, warm place beneath mother's heart. But our minds had always been linked before, and now they were inexorably moving apart. If you think about it a bit, I'm sure you'll understand. After we awoke, Mother's thought was with us continually. The sound of it was as warm and comforting as the place where we floated, but the place nourished only our bodies. Mother's thought nourished our minds--with those subtle variations I previously mentioned. I suspect that what I was and what I have become is the result of that womb-dark period in my life when Beldaran and I floated in perfect sisterhood--until Mother's thought began to separate us. And then in time there was another thought as well. Mother had prepared us for that intrusion upon what had been a very private little world. After my sister and I had become more fully aware and conscious of our separation and some of the reasons for it, Aldur's thought joined with Mother's to continue our education. He patiently explained to us right at the outset why certain alterations were going to be necessary. My sister and I had been identical. Aldur changed that, and most of the alterations were directed at me. Some of the changes were physical--the darkening of my hair, for example--and others were mental. Mother had begun that mental division, and Aldur refined it. Beldaran and I were no longer one. We were two. Beldaran's reaction to our further separation was one of gentle regret. Mine was one of anger. I rather suspect that my anger may have been a reflection of Mother's reaction when my vagrant father and a group of Alorns chose to slip away so that they could go off to Malloreia to retrieve the Orb that Torak had stolen from the Master. I now fully understand why it was necessary and why Father had no choice--and so does Mother, I think. But at the time she was absolutely infuriated by what, in the society of wolves, was an unnatural desertion. My somewhat peculiar relationship with my father during my childhood quite probably derived from my perception of Mother's fury. Beldaran was untouched by it, since Mother wisely chose to shield her from that rage. A vagrant and somewhat disturbing thought just occurred to me. As I mentioned earlier, Father's educational technique involves questioning and argumentation, and I was probably his star pupil. Mother teaches acceptance, and Beldaran received the full benefit of that counsel. In a strange sort of way this would indicate that I'm my father's true daughter, and Beldaran was Mother's. All right, Old Wolf. Don't gloat. Wisdom eventually comes to all of us. Someday it might even be your turn. Mother and the Master gently told my sister and me that once we were born, Mother would have to leave us in the care of others so that she could pursue a necessary task. We were assured that we would be well cared for, and, moreover, that Mother's thought would be with us more or less continually, even as it had been while we were still enwombed. We accepted that, though the notion of physical separation was a little frightening. The

important thing in our lives from the moment that our awareness had awakened, though, had been the presence of Mother's thought, and as long as that would still be with us, we were sure that we'd be all right. For a number of reasons it was necessary for me to be born first. Aldur's alterations of my mind and my personality had made me more adventurous than Beldaran anyway, so it was natural for me to take the lead, I suppose. It was actually an easy birth, but the light hurt my eyes right at first, and the further separation from my sister was extremely painful. In time, however, she joined me, and all was well again. Mother's thought--and Aldur's--were still with us, and so we drowsed together in perfect contentment. I'm assuming here that most of you have read my father's "History of the World." In that occasionally pompous monologue he frequently mentioned "The humorous old fellow in the rickety cart." It wasn't long after Beldaran and I were born that he paid us a call. Although his thought had been with us for months, that was the first time we actually saw the Master. He communed with us for a time, and when I looked around, a sudden panic came over me. Mother was gone. "It's all right, Polgara," Mother's thought came to me. "This is necessary. The Master has summoned one who'll care for you and your sister. That one is short and twisted and ugly, but his heart's good. It'll be necessary to deceive him, I'm afraid. He must believe that I'm no longer alive. No one--except you and Beldaran--must know that it's not true. The one who sired you will return soon, but he still has far to go. He'll travel more quickly without the distraction of my presence." And that's how Uncle Beldin entered our lives. I can't be entirely sure what the Master told him, but he wept a great deal during those first few days. After he got his emotions under control, he made a few tentative efforts to communicate with my sister and me. To be honest about it, he was woefully inept right at first, but the Master guided him, and in time he grew more proficient. Our lives--my sister's and mine--were growing more crowded. We slept a great deal at first. Uncle Beldin was wise enough to put us in the same cradle, and as long as we were together, everything was all right. Mother's thought was still with us--and Aldur's--and now Uncle Beldin's, and we were still content. My sister and I had no real sense of the passage of time during our first few months. Sometimes it was light and sometimes dark. Beldin was always with us, though, and we were together, so time didn't really mean very much to us. Then, after what was probably weeks, there were two others as well, and their thought joined with the ones which were already familiar. Our other two uncles, Beltira and Belkira, had entered our lives. I've never fully understood why people have so much difficulty telling Beltira and Belkira apart. To me, they've always been separate and distinct from each other, but I'm a twin myself, so I'm probably a little more sensitive to these variations. Beldaran and I had been born in midwinter, and Uncle Beldin had moved us to his own tower not long afterward, and it was in that tower that we spent our childhood. It was about midsummer of our first year when father finally returned to the Vale. Beldaran and I were only about six months old at the time, but we both recognized him immediately. Mother's thought had placed his image in our minds before we were ever born. The memory of mother's anger was still very strong in my mind when Beldin lifted me from my cradle and handed me to the vagabond who'd sired me. I wasn't particularly impressed with him, to be honest about it, but that prejudice may have been the result of Mother's bitterness about the way he'd deserted her. Then he laid his hand on my head in some ancient ritual of benediction, and the rest of my mind suddenly came awake as his thought came flooding in on me. I could feel the power coming from his hand, and I seized it eagerly. This was why I'd been separated from Beldaran! At last I realized the significance of that separation. She was to be the vessel of love; I was to be the vessel of power! The mind is limitless in certain ways, and so my father was probably unaware of just how much I took from him in that single instant when his hand touched my head. I'm fairly sure that he still doesn't fully understand just exactly what passed from him to me in that instant. What I took from him in no way diminished him, but it increased me a hundredfold. Then he took up Beldaran, and my fury also increased a hundredfold. How dared this traitor touch my sister? Father and I were not getting off to a good start. And then came the time of his madness. I was still not familiar enough with human speech to fully understand what Uncle Beldin told him that drove him to that madness, but Mother's thought assured me that he'd survive it--eventually. Looking back now, I realize that it was absolutely essential for Mother and Father to be separated. I didn't understand at the time, but Mother's thought had taught me that acceptance is more important than understanding. During the time of my father's insanity, my uncles frequently took my sister to visit him, and that didn't improve my opinion of him. He became in my eyes a usurper, a vile man out to steal Beldaran's affection away from me. Jealousy isn't a particularly attractive emotion, even though it's very natural in children, so I won't dwell here on exactly how I felt each time my uncles took Beldaran away from me to visit that frothing madman chained to his bed in that tower of his. I remember, though, that I protested vociferously--at the top of my lungs--whenever they

took Beldaran away. And that was when Beldin introduced me to "the puzzle." I've always thought of it as that. In a peculiar sort of way "the puzzle" almost came to take on a life of its own for me. I can't be entirely certain how Beldin managed it, but "the puzzle" was a gnarled and twisted root of some low-growing shrub--heather, perhaps--and each time I took it up to study it, it seemed to change. I could quite clearly see one end of it, but I could never find the other. I think that "the puzzle" helped to shape my conception of the world and of life itself. We know where one end is--the beginning--but we can never quite see the other. It provided me with endless hours of entertainment, though, and that gave Uncle Beldin a chance to get some rest. I was studying "the puzzle" when Father came to Uncle Beldin's tower to say his good-byes. Beldaran and I were perhaps a year and a half old--or maybe a little younger--when he came to the tower and kissed Beldaran. I felt that usual surge of jealousy, but I kept my eyes firmly fixed on "the puzzle," hoping he'd go away. And then he picked me up, tearing my attention away from what I was working on. I tried to get away from him, but he was stronger than I was. I was hardly more than a baby, after all, although I felt much older. "Stop that," he told me, and his tone seemed irritable. "You may not care much for the idea, Pol, but I'm your father, and you're stuck with me." And then he kissed me, which he'd never done before. For a moment--only a moment--I felt his pain, and my heart softened toward him. "No," Mother's thought came to me, "not yet." At the time, I thought it was because she was still very angry with him and that I was to be the vessel of her anger. I know now I was mistaken. Wolves simply don't waste time being angry. My father's remorse and sorrow had not yet run their course, and the Master still had many tasks for him. Until he had expiated what he felt to be his guilt, he'd be incapable of those tasks. My misunderstanding of Mother's meaning led me to do something I probably shouldn't have done. I struck out at him with "the puzzle." "Spirited, isn't she?" he murmured to Uncle Beldin. Then he put me down, gave me a little pat on the bottom, which I scarcely felt, and told me to mind my manners. I certainly wasn't going to give him the satisfaction of thinking that his chastisement in any way had made me change my opinion of him, so I turned, still holding "the puzzle" like a club, and glared at him. "Be well, Polgara," he told me in the gentlest way imaginable. "Now go play." He probably still doesn't realize it, but I almost loved him in that single instant--almost, but not quite. The love came later, and it took years. It was not long after that that he turned and left the Vale, and I didn't see him again for quite a number of years. From Library Journal A sorceress reminisces on her proud life in this final volume in the authors' best-selling sf series, "The Belgariad" (e.g., Belgarath the Sorcerer, LJ Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.