

Prologue

The Legend of Zabashi was a tale of a world whose existence was unknown to most. Those in an elite position of dominance wanted the hidden truths kept secret and away from the natives, never to be revealed. If the masses dared to understand the knowledge, wisdom, and power taken from them many years ago, it would destroy the very foundation of the current way of living, which took centuries to build.

Originating trillions of years ago within another dimension traveling through time and space, unknown to anyone outside of its own people, another world existed. *The First* most powerful deity who ever lived, created himself *under the cover of darkness*, by continually turning within the dark. It took the *Originator* many years to produce himself by using elements embodied within the darkness. On a

fateful day, he brought forth light along with many other elements needed in the new world.

After years of working alone and constructing a vast land, he realized the need for a partner. Someone who would be supportive, kind, nurturing, and able to reproduce—thereby creating a legacy. The *Originator* took a piece out of himself to create his other half. She was smart, beautiful, compassionate, and wielded her own significant power, becoming a deity in her own right. With his Empress by his side, they produced many other deities. However, no one ever evolved with the brainpower or ability to influence others, like *The First*. The *Originator's* kingdom stayed intact until, many centuries later when Yakov was born.

Long ago in the great city of Rabicca, in the House of Ba'kar lived two influential brothers, Lords Malik and Yakov. Lord Malik was the eldest and ruled Zabashi with love and peace.

Whereas Lord Yakov, a young deity, who held one of the greatest intellects throughout time, was *The First* to go outside of the *original* people—to create another kind of being. Ever since he was a young child, Lord Yakov possessed a brilliant intellect filled with curiosity and desire.

His brother Lord Malik being the oldest became the ruler of Zabashi, which made Lord Yakov feel pushed aside and less important, but in actuality he was the supreme being of his time. Growing dissatisfied each day, the escalating passion to make another culture consumed Yakov—the idea was for the *new creatures* to rule and control *his people* who lacked inquisitive minds and abilities.

Seeing his brother's hatred towards their people in Rabicca, Lord Malik did what was best for his community; with a broken heart,

he kicked his brother out of Rabicca and the surrounding lands.

Lord Yakov took a small group of people with him who were also displeased with his brother's ruling. They went to an island outside of Rabicca where it took several hundred years for Lord Yakov's strategy to materialize. He had experimented on and killed *his people*, until he was able to bring a vile, cold-hearted, inhumane and heartless horde of mortals into the world.

During their evolution, their features became fragile and disfigured, making them demonic creatures. As the demons evolved, they began to exhibit different abilities and turned savage, destroying everything and everyone on the island. Time passed, wherein the demons brought about a universal change that no one (but Yakov) ever imagined could exist for centuries.

When the demons left the island and traveled to different parts of Zabashi, they weren't accepted by the natives of Zabashi. When the *original* people realized that the new community of demons remained challenging to live with peacefully, they exiled them to an island on the worst part of Zabashi called Mt. Imarcu. Over many years of various events, factions transpired among these demonic beings. It was chaotic. No rulers or leadership—they were living a savage and demeaning life. Then one day, one from among them rose to lead them into a better and more prosperous life; his name was Malice, *The First* Lord of Darkness. He was strong and formidable, with black eyes and long jet-black hair.

Malice put a plan in place to infiltrate a small village outside of Rabicca, where a strong tribe of people lived. It took him twenty years to build up the people's trust, then one

day he convinced various men and women to follow him back to his homeland where mounds of gold supposedly existed and promised they could bring back the fortune to their families. After returning to Mt. Imarcu, the group soon realized they'd been tricked and had become enslaved by Malice and his demonic creatures.

As time passed many of the *original* natives of Zabashi submitted to the Dark Lord, while others who chose to resist underwent torture and execution. Malice had no love for the *originals* and treated them worse than human. Little did he know that one of his *original* captives would one day bring forth *his First* greatest foe.

****House of Ba'kar, Raziq****

The House of Ba'kar was an ancient kingdom that's been around for centuries. Every deity since the beginning of time lived within the

great walls. Lord Raziq sat on the ground outside the castle, surrounded by nature. The sun shined down on his brown skin; the smell of fresh air and aromatic plants filled his senses. He was in complete peace, allowing his mind to wonder. Suddenly a beautiful face appeared; it was the same face that haunted his dreams most nights—over the last two decades. "Zana," he breathed. Zana was his wife who one day many years ago had disappeared, leaving no trace of her whereabouts. He never knew what happened to her...and searched for her many times over the years.

Sadness filled his heart. He thought everything was perfect, and often wondered why his wife left him. He had been married once before—an arranged marriage to bring together two of the lands—but even though he cared for his first late wife...it was never the love he shared with Zana, she was his world. He thought about how often they spoke of

having children together one day. Even though it had been almost twenty-two years since he had seen his wife, he still had many questions. Why did Zana leave? Was she not happy? Did something happen? Now he sat alone once again, filled with various questions and years of regret.

A sudden warmth filled his body and his ring glistened. "Zana?" His heart leaped. It had to be. Who else could it be? He stood and focused his mind on the power of the ring; taking one step forward, he vanished from the spot.

Lord Raziq emerged by the sea and spotted half a body lying in the water, while the other half rested upon the land. His heart stopped. "Zana!" He rushed to the woman's side and carefully turned her over. It was not Zana. It was someone else. Heart sinking, Lord Raziq gently lifted the woman out of the water and examined her, noticing a familiar resemblance.

After a moment of staring at her in confusion, he gradually raised the young woman into his arms and vanished back to the castle.

Inside, Lord Raziq laid her down and called for help. The physician immediately came and examined the woman. Days passed, and the *mysterious* woman stayed lifeless. Lord Raziq had inquiries he wanted answered, one was, how did she come across his ancestral ring? The other, had she seen his wife?

After a few days, he soon realized the woman wasn't getting any better. As a result, Lord Raziq called upon one of his young servants, Batisé. He trusted the young man entirely and knew great things would come to pass from the young man. A low knock on his chamber doors stopped Lord Raziq's mind from wandering.

"Enter." He stood as Batise walked in and bowed before him.

"My Grace." Batise faced Lord Raziq with his dark brown eyes. He stood a few inches shorter but more muscular than Lord Raziq's tall and well-built physique.

"Batise, I am in need of assistance." He explained the ring's history and the woman he found wearing it. "I need her to awaken, and I know how gifted you are in that aspect." Lord Raziq's dark hazel eyes twinkled in the candlelight. Batise's lips twitched.

"Thank you, my Lord, I will do the best I can. Although, I must warn you there are no guarantees it will work. I have yet to master—"

"I understand." He took a step towards Batise. "That is all I ask." He trusted that Batise could do it; the young man was more powerful than he realized. Batise gave a soft nod.

"Please give me a moment to gather my things and prepare. I'll meet you shortly." With another small bow, Batise left his chambers.

Twenty minutes later, Lord Raziq stood over the young woman while Batise's eyes scanned her body. He watched Batise suck in a deep breath, and muttered, "Beautiful." Lord Raziq watched him closely examine the woman; she was petite, with long thick black hair and glowing brown skin. He glanced at Batise.

"Can you do it?"

"I believe so," said Batise, rubbing his hands together. He placed one hand along her face and the other on her chest. Batise closed his eyes and breathed deeply. A radiant white light shined from his hands and shined over the woman. Lord Raziq observed her, yet nothing occurred.

Batise sighed and took in the young woman once more. His eyes softened. "You're a fighter. I can sense the damage your mind, body, and

spirit has endured. And yet, you are still holding on. Surviving. I need you to meet me halfway. Stop clinging to death and live in this lifetime. Let me help you." Batise leaned over her body, one hand placed above her chest and the other still on her temple, and he kissed the woman's pale lips. Lord Raziq watched in amazement as an impressive white glow materialized, and she gasped. The woman shivered and slowly blinked as Batise lifted his face, which was full of intense emotion.

Lord Raziq smiled down at the woman, "Welcome back."

Chapter One

****Qayya****

Have you ever wondered why many people go through so much each and every day? The struggles they experience in their lives...I

believe in a higher power and have faith that something is out there that is bigger than me, than everyone. However, one thing I can't seem to wrap my mind around is, why?

Why all the destruction, pain, chaos, and death? Why must I live in a world where I'm judged not by the kindness of my heart and actions, but in a world where one must suffer because of the pigmentation of one's skin, sex, or beliefs.

To live in a world where children have been snatched away from their parents at birth; or separated from their families to make a profit. An existence where if I dared open my mouth to speak my mind, I would be punished by those who rule. So, what do I do...sit back and watch women like myself—forced into submission by wicked and treacherous men? Or swallow the fear which was beaten into me since the age of three? Definitely *not* the latter.

Which is why I'm currently tied to three other women as we await our *death sentence*. That's right, I'm standing in long dirty white torn clothes, covered in dirt and bruises. My feet were bare, scraped and blackened; wrist and mouth were bound. My long thick black hair carried tree leaves and mud. The three ladies next to me were shaking beyond reason. I should also be in tears, trembling, with my heart trying to break out of my chest, yet I'm not doing any of those things—because unlike the ladies next to me—I welcome death.

Do I want to die? Of course not. However, I can no longer take the abuse, not just the physical, but emotional and mental torment, I've endured *each and every* day. How much longer will I have to put up with Malice and his men? Until they take every ounce of life I have left? I prefer to go out with a little pride, rather than like my mother who was ripped apart and left soulless until they showed mercy and slit her

throat, teaching me the lesson—*Do as you're told or you too will meet your mother's fate.*

That happened many years ago before I reached womanhood. Yet, not before a man touched me. Now, whenever a man glances my way, I shiver and tense up at the thought of him physically placing hands on me. That is what this world has done to me. If I thought for a moment that I could live in a world where terrible things didn't happen, I wouldn't welcome my future fate so effortlessly.

The doors to the dungeons opened, breaking me out of my train of thought. "Rukay?" called a harsh voice. The demon must not have been that smart, or he could see that I cannot answer with my mouth tied. I grunted. He finally realized no one could speak and came closer to untie my bruised lips. "Which of you four parasites is Rukay?" he asked again.

I met the dark, cold gaze of the man who said my name with such spite and answered, "It's Ruqayyah." I tried to sound strong, but it came out as a croak. I tried to think back to when was the last time that I had any water.

"Don't talk back! Follow me," he snapped. Dragging the heavy chains which bonded my hands and feet, it felt like minutes had already passed by the time I reached the front of the small cell. The demon roughly released my sore wrists and ankles. "If you move out of line, I'll kill you on the spot." I bit back the part where I was about to die anyway. Maybe it was from years of submission and learning not to talk back, or how my mother always warned me about my tongue. So, I didn't say anything.

"You dumb parasites always getting into trouble," he ranted. "You're not even smart enough to do as you're told...bet you think you're going to try and run."

I glared at him as he chuckled and declared (since I was going to die anyway), "I wouldn't dream of it." He slapped me hard across the face.

"I thought I told you not to talk back. No wonder you're getting put to death, you don't listen, now move it!" The pain from his hand still stung my cheek, and blood dripped from my split lip, but I refused to cry in his presence.

As I walked behind him, I reached into my clothing and grasped the ring my mother gave me. I had never worn it. I'd always kept it hidden, in case a demon tried to take it. The thought of selling it for food had crossed my mind a few times, but I could never bring myself to do it.

I viewed the guard and noticed he was not paying me any mind, and I glanced back down at the ring. It bore a gold band, with four separate colored crystals, divided by diamonds. It was exquisite. Placing the ring

onto my right finger, it glowed, and a pleasant warmth embraced my heart. A tear slid down my face while I thought about how I'll have my mother with me as I join her in death.

Outside, the crescent moon and stars glowed in the night. Mt. Imarcu was a large island, in its center held a spot where many *factions* enforced their torture and punishment on others. They wanted everyone to witness what would happen if they stood out of line—death. Villagers were compelled to observe as they forced me to the center, where a massive fire burned in the chilly night.

Shivering in part from the cold night, and a bit from the fear that I had unexpectedly begun to experience. I would be lying if I wasn't a tad afraid, not of dying but of what happens after. Taking a deep breath, I forced myself to ignore the ache in my chest and awaited my fate.

I stood listening to the demon explain what my crime was...my crime, HA! I had stopped a demon from beating a woman to death in front of her child. My crime was for being out of line and laying hands on a demon. “Anyone who disobeys us will receive punishment under the law as we have told you many times before. Our Lord Malice has come tonight, to hand down this girl’s sentence personally.”

The blood in my veins ran cold, Malice! For the first time that day, I shook violently, and my heart twisted. Not in fear, but in utter anger.

Malice was the Dark Lord who tortured and murdered my mother ruthlessly in front of me many years ago. Straightening up tall, I gulped back the bile that threatened to surface as Malice strolled up to the center. He was tall, yet burly, with cold black eyes and long black hair. The atmosphere in the clearing shifted, and fear roamed the area. Even the sky promptly altered from clear skies to stormy weather.

No one spoke, Malice's demeanor spoke volumes. The only sound heard in the vicinity were the drops of rain beginning to fall. Malice bore a mark along the side of his neck of a snake that I had never seen before. He met my gaze, and another shiver went down my spine. Grinning wickedly, Malice said, "Tonight, we must execute four women who disobeyed the laws I have set up to make this world more...durable. I give you food, clothes, and shelter. In return, you are only asked to work off your debt and follow the laws I have put into place to keep everyone on the same page." Again no one dared to speak.

"Don't blame me for your inability to listen and follow the rules. You put this on your own selves. If I do not punish you, we would have a society where things would get out of hand and chaotic, a world you do not want to live in."

The wind picked up and began blowing through my hair. The waves of the sea started to splash in a vigorous manner. Thunder and lightning streaked the sky as Malice finished his speech, cheers rang from his demonic followers.

Without warning, two strong over-sized hands lifted me from the ground. My pulse increased by the second as they dragged me across the terrain. Malice placed a cold hand around my slim neck, while my right eye twitched uncontrollably. I summoned as much saliva as I could in my dry mouth and spit on his smug face. Satisfaction coursed within me as fury blazed in his dark eyes. Malice's fist met my face, and pain struck me for a third time that night. Except, I didn't care—rage, disgust, and *malice* came over me. Without worrying about the consequences, I scratched his haughty face with all I had. Blood

appeared on his cheek, and gasps rippled through the night.

We stared at one another, and a glimmer of rage and lightning flashed across his face. Seething, Malice tossed me to the *earth*, and all the air left my lungs. Covered in part dirt, and a portion of blood, my body throbbed. I endured the aching pain but did not move. Trying to focus on breathing, I kept my golden-brown eyes closed, until hands gripped my body once more, yanking me towards the water. Thunder boomed as Malice smiled. He leaned over and whispered into my right ear. “Too bad, you’ll never know why I killed your mother.”

My eyes expanded as I met his gaze, and I tensed up. My heart stopped, and the blood drained from my face. “If you see your mother again, you can ask her why.” Then he sent a ball of fire into my body. Shocked from his words, I didn’t notice the heated blaze coming

towards me until I felt the flames on my body. The force of the power tossed me into the *air*, and I screamed as the *fire* consumed my body. *Lightning* struck mid-flight, hitting the ring my mother gave me, and part of my body. The ring beamed brightly in the night, I shut my eyes from the fierce glow, and darkness filled my mind as I crashed into the deep *sea*.

****Malice's Home, Mt. Imarcu****

I paced the floor. “What do you mean they won't comply?” I hissed. Ruk winced.

“The people we just picked up...won't leave the ship.”

“What do you mean?”

“They refuse to leave the ship, my Lord.” I narrowed my eyes at the weak man before me.

“Then take the young and kill the rest! Once you do that, get another group. This time Ruk,

go to a different village.” Ruk bobbed his head and hurried out of the room.

I took a moment to observe the home I had made for myself, or rather the mansion I had made others build for me. The massive white mansion held many rooms and vast land that was near the ocean. To the outside world...I *Lord Malice*’ was a wealthy, handsome businessman who kept to himself, loved and envied by many. However, I was hated by those who knew the truth—that underneath the mansion where I resided were dungeons, and inside the cells were many people who had been tortured—and were enslaved for many years.

To be truthful, I didn't have to hide my real character from the world, but it would be best if I did. At least until I had the whole world under my reign. I couldn't risk someone finding out what I was up to until it was too late to do anything about it. I already ventured out of Mt. Imarcu for over twenty years—I lived with and

befriended some of the best people who were ever created—I learned their culture, gained their trust, and tricked the *original* people of a few villages that surrounded Rabicca. They were fools.

I remembered how they willingly came to my vessel, leaving their families and loved ones...all to follow me to the land of the gold—where I had promised them, they could bring it back to their homes and family. I chuckled from the memory of how easy it was, granted it took longer to build their trust than I initially considered. Nevertheless, I succeeded. For a second, I almost felt bad about killing the ones who believed me to be their close friend—only a second.

In the end I took their children and raised them without any knowledge of who they were, what greatness and power they possess inside, or where they were from. I named them, kept them in line, and used them to build

me a lucrative wealth. Over the years, I taught and passed down teachings to my children and my men on how they too would accomplish much from others' hard work and free labor.

The brainwashing was difficult and tedious with all the killings and torture, but in the end, I triumphed. At least I believed that I had, until one day in my *lair* years ago, a young woman entered my chambers shaking from head to toe. Her shoulder-length dark hair was messy, and her golden-brown eyes were wide with fear. My eyes wandered over her small curvy body wrapped in a white bed sheet and noticed a fresh bruise on her tanned arm. She glanced around the room, her eyes spotted the bed in the corner, slowly backing away until bumping into my guard Fawn, with a small yelp she jumped. Fawn back-handed the young woman across the face and tossed her onto the bed—she didn't cry out, she was a tuff one, I could

sense it— Fawn bowed out as he left my chambers.

A small tear fell down her gorgeous face.
“Please, my daughter—”

“Shhhh.” I touched her face, and her eyes glossed over shinning a greyish white. Stunned, it took a moment before I let go. She gasped, locking her normal eyes onto mine. I knew that look. I had seen it many times when I lived in that small town outside of Rabicca...she had a vision. My chest tightened from the look she bore upon her face. “What did you just see?”

“Nothing,” she choked. I didn't believe her, so I tortured her for days, but she would not break. She was stronger than I thought, but I had patience. I waited twenty years to get her people to trust me, and I could wait a few more days—once I give her something to think about. I ordered my men to bring in her young daughter, the woman pleaded and cried, but I

left her alone. Isolation would be suitable for her.

I returned a few days later. She was weak, cold, and hungry. “My daughter, please...I must see her. Please,” she whispered. My lips curled into a grin, and I knew I had her.

“Are you ready to share your vision?”

She gave a small nod. “First I need your word—”

“You dare to ask something from me!”

“Yes, I need your word that you will not harm my daughter.” After a few minutes of staring her down, I realized she was serious. She would die before she gave me what I wanted to know. I hated the power she held over me. It was only one little girl, but if I didn’t want to know so badly, I would have killed the woman and her daughter out of spite.

“Fine, I give you my word, I will not harm your daughter...unless she breaks the rules. I

cannot have chaos.” She agreed, and I got Bek to bring her daughter into the chambers.

“Mama!” shouted the girl. Tears covered both mother and daughter’s identical eyes. Their embrace made me nauseated, and my patience grew thin.

“Now!” I barked, “what did you see?” She trembled as she held her daughter close, then met my cold gaze.

“Your downfall.”