

Sneak Peek

Under the Cover of Darkness

Zabashi

Book Two

By

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“I need that PROPHECY!” Virticus roared, throwing small vials of orbs across his lair and shattering them against the stone wall.

“My lord, if I may, we’ve been searching for the *Books of Za’* for, well, years. There very well may not be any such books. Maybe they’re just a—a myth,” stuttered the short, round man with pale skin and a large red bump on the side of his bald head.

“Norman,” Virticus hissed through gritted teeth. “*The Books of Za’* are real. I know your little mind may not possess the aptitude for knowledge like mine, but that is no excuse to be this ignorant!” Virticus looked upon the small man with distaste. “Long ago, a piece of scripture written in the *GruDir Prophecy* was revealed to me. It told of a time when a powerful being would be born who would be my downfall. Now, I need to find the *Books of Za’* so I can have the entire prophecy. Do you

understand?" Virticus glared down at the trembling man.

"Y—yes." Norman bobbed his head. "Of course, my lord."

"Now, go find me someone who can be of use to me, someone with the foresight to find my books!"

"Someone like me," an unfamiliar voice said from the doorway.

His eyes snapped to the intruder as a flame ignited in his hand. Leaning against his door was a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair. He didn't know what was more mesmerizing: the tight royal blue dress or her deep, intense grey eyes. The mystery woman strolled through his lair as if she owned the place.

"How did you get in here?" he demanded, glaring at the woman before him.

"It wasn't hard, really." She shrugged. "You should have better men watching the place."

Usually, Virticus would have killed anyone who came into his fortress in the manner that she did. However, there was something about her. Something intriguing.

"My name is Larissa, and I have something to share with you." She ran her finger along the dragon and wolf heads of his large, dark throne without ever taking her eyes off him.

“Norman, you’re dismissed,” Virticus said, eyeing her closely. He wanted to see what she had to offer. Alone.

Norman fled from the lair at once.

Virticus turned his gaze back to Larissa and grinned. “You have one minute to tell me what you’re doing here before I kill you.”

Keeping her mystical gaze on him, Larissa slid onto his throne and crossed her long, toned legs, unintimidated. “The being you seek will be born in the year of the red moon,” Larissa said, staring into his icy gaze.

“How do you know that?” he asked, taking her in with much more interest.

“I saw it.” She leaned back into his chair, running her hands along the engraved, sculpted sides. “I have the power of foresight.”

“Who—”

Her gaze lowered. “I cannot see who the person is. I’m being blocked somehow. It could be that the child isn’t born yet, or someone immensely powerful is blocking me.” She met his gaze once more. “You may want to kill me, but I see myself being of exceptional use to you—and your legacy.”

“Why do you want to help me?” he asked, observing her. He trusted no one.

“You are the most commanding force Zabashi has had in centuries—not since *Malice*. I would like you to stay in power. In return, I’d like to be by your side when *we* make—” she plucked a berry from a bowl on his side table “—history,” she winked.

“We,” he said with a grin.

“We,” she repeated, eating the berry.

“How do I find the one chosen to stop me?”

“From what I can foresee, it’s not during this moment in time; you’ll have a few years to prepare and build a better infrastructure. You have until the end of the red moon. That will be your chance to kill the child.”

“The end of the red moon? That’s almost—” He furrowed his brow. “Nine years away!”

Larissa’s lips curved as she rose from his throne. “Exactly,” she cooed, standing in front of him. “That’s more than enough time to develop a stronger demonic force.” She twirled a strand of his long, dark hair with her finger. “Among other things. So, do we have an agreement?”

He stared into her intense eyes. He had to admit she seemed like fun.

Virticus clapped, summoning his top lieutenant. “If you can take Lance, the position is yours.”

She winked and sauntered over to Lance, who attacked her instantly.

Virticus watched her move effortlessly as she took on Lance with precision. He raised an eyebrow, somewhat surprised. Lance was formidable and twice her size—yet the way she flipped onto his shoulders and brought him to the ground proved size didn't matter. Larissa's moves were impeccable; it took only minutes for her to defeat Lance. If she could beat his top lieutenant in five minutes without a scratch, he wanted Larissa on his side. No, by his side.

Lance lay on the floor, bleeding. Impressed, Virticus stared into Larissa's eyes for a moment—she might be of use to him. Lance jumped up and charged at her. She was quick, sending a blast of purple mist that immobilized Lance. Impressive and useful, he thought. Virticus was powerful, but even he did not control that ability—yet. Keeping his cold eyes locked on hers, Virticus sent a fireball at Lance, who exploded in raging screams.

“You're hired,” he said, approaching Larissa. “Now tell me, Rissa, where will the chosen one be born?”

She tilted her head slightly with a coy smile. “You'll find the child near Rabicca.”

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